

David, besides gold and silver to an immense value*.

When Shishak had returned into the land of Egypt, Rehoboam caused a number of shields and bucklers to be made in brass, and substituted them in the place of the golden ones which had been taken away. The succeeding part of the reign of Rehoboam was not interrupted by any remarkable event: and he died at the age of fifty-seven years, seventeen of which he held the sovereign rule. He was a man of weak intellects and haughty disposition, and suffered his kingdom and himself to be ruined by not following the good advice given him. He was interred among the kings at Jerusalem, and succeeded by his son Abijah, in the eighteenth year after the ten tribes had submitted to his government.

Death of Jeroboam's child foretold by the prophet.

Let us return to Jeroboam, whose wickedness exceeded all bounds. He daily fixed up altars in the high places, and from the lowest classes of the people caused priests to be ordained; for which insults, God caused a merited judgment to fall heavily upon him and his family. At this period his son Obimes was afflicted with sickness, and he ordered his wife to dress herself as a person in a private station, and go to the prophet Ahijah, who had formerly predicted that he should himself obtain the royal dignity. Go to the prophet (said he) and enquire whether the boy will be freed from his illness. She followed her husband's directions, and departed for Shilo, where the prophet then dwelt. During the time she was upon her journey, Ahijah, whose sight was much impaired by age, was addressed by a voice from heaven, informing him that the woman was coming to his house, and upon what occasion; what questions she would put to him, and what answers he should return. When she approached the door, he spoke to her as the wife of Jeroboam, and told her not to attempt to conceal who she was, for that the power who had given him previous information of her arrival, and inspired him with what he was about to say, could not be deceived. Return (said he) to your husband, and assure him that the Almighty hath thus spoken: "As I deprived the house of David of the regal authority, and from a mean station in life exalted thee to the dignity of a throne; and as thou hast,

with the greatest ingratitude, deserted me, and impiously put up gods of thy own invention, made by the hands of men, and preferred them before the Creator of the universe, I will, therefore, immediately extirpate thee and thy house from the face of the earth, and give your carcases to be eaten by the dogs, and the birds of the air; and another king shall be in thy stead, who shall not suffer one man of thy family to remain alive; nor shall the people themselves avoid punishment, for they shall be driven out of the happy land they inhabit, and be scattered beyond the Euphrates, for imitating thy wickedness, and worshipping thy gods in scorn of me and what I have commanded. Hasten to your husband, and inform him what I have now related: and as to the child, it shall expire the instant you enter the city. He shall be interred with a public solemnity, and lamented as the only part of Jeroboam's family who had not merited reprobation."

Terrified at what Ahijah had said, she departed with the utmost speed, and on her arrival, she was exceedingly afflicted to find the words of the prophet verified in regard to the child. She related to her husband a circumstantial account of what Ahijah had communicated†.

CHAP. V.

JEROBOAM King of ISRAEL, is subdued by ABIJAH King of JUDAH. The Death of ABIJAH, who is succeeded by ASA. JEROBOAM dies; and after him his Son NADAB reigns. NADAB is killed by BAASHA, who exterminates the Family of JEROBOAM.

NOTWITHSTANDING all these punishments, Jeroboam still continued to raise great forces, and offered battle to Abijah, who, in his father's right, then reigned over the two tribes. As this prince was but little practised either in civil or military affairs, Jeroboam entertained the utmost confidence of victory. But far from being disinayed, Abijah manifested a conduct which scarcely could be expected at his early time of life, and immediately

* These prodigious treasures, which David and Solomon had amassed, were a great incitement to Shishak to undertake this expedition; and in five years after Solomon's death, they were all carried into Egypt. Hence we may learn what little dependence can be laid on riches, when the possessors of them turn their backs upon God the giver of them, and reject his worship and service.

† The reason why Jeroboam sent his own wife to consult the prophet at Shilo, was to keep the whole transaction an inviolable secret; for had it been divulged, his whole government might have been in danger: because, if his subjects came to understand that he put no confidence in the golden calves, but had recourse to the worshipping of Jehovah, they would forsake these senseless idols, and return to the true worship of the God of Israel, whom they had so imprudently forsaken. The queen then was the only person he could place this confidence in. As a mother, he knew she would be diligent in her inquiry; and, as a wife, faithful in her

report. But there were many reasons why he might desire her to disguise herself: for though Shilo lay within the confines of Ephraim, yet there is sufficient reason to think it was subject to the house of David. It was certainly nearer Jerusalem than Shechem, and therefore Jeroboam thought it not safe to venture his queen in a place under his rival's government, without her putting on some disguise. He knew also, that the prophet Ahijah was offended at the gross idolatry he had introduced; and therefore he thought that her being disguised would be the only means of making the prophet speak without the least reserve. He thought, indeed, that she might pass upon him, when disguised, for another person. But how grossly was he mistaken! It is surprising he could be so far infatuated as to think that the person who was capable of foretelling the fate of his son, should not at the same time be able to see through this fraud and disguise.

collected a body of soldiers from the two tribes, and marched towards mount Samaron, where he established his quarters, and prepared for battle. His army contained four hundred thousand men; and double that force formed the army of Jeroboam.

Jeroboam's
army defeated
with great
slaughter.

A detachment from the army of Jeroboam privately marched in the rear of Abijah's troops, who were greatly alarmed by the event: but their leader encouraged them to preserve their fortitude, exhorting them to depend on the protection of the Almighty, who would render abortive the most consummate treachery levelled against the righteous cause which they were engaged to support. This revived their courage, and they addressed themselves to prayer, till the signal was given; when with loud shouts they attacked the enemy, whom they totally defeated, committing a more dreadful carnage than is recorded either in the Greek or Barbarian annals. Five hundred thousand soldiers fell upon the field of battle. Bethel and Ithen, and all their best fortified towns, were conquered and pillaged. This stroke so weakened Jeroboam, that he was not in condition to renew his attempts during the life of Abijah, who not long afterwards died, after having reigned three years; and he was interred in the sepulchre of his forefathers at Jerusalem. He had, by fourteen women, two and twenty sons, and sixteen daughters, all of whom survived him.

Death of Je-
roboam.

Jeroboam died in the twenty-second year, after being invested with the sovereignty of the ten tribes, and in the second year of the reign of Afa. He was succeeded by his son Nadab, who possessed the kingdom for two years only, during which time he endeavoured to exceed his father in every kind of wickedness. He levied forces, and marched against Gabathon, a city belonging to the Philistines, imagining that he could conquer the place by siege. While this intended enterprize was in agitation, he was treacherously murdered by Baasha, the son of Machel. Baasha assumed the government, and extirpated the whole house of Nadab, agreeable to the prediction of the prophet, that such of the race of Jeroboam as should die in the city the dogs should devour, and the fowls of the air those who should perish in the fields*. These punishments justly fell upon Jeroboam and his house, for deserting the Lord, and for their other impieties.

C H A P. VI.

Amiable Character of ASA, King of JUDEA. He gains a complete Victory over ZARÆUS, King of ÆTHIOPIA. The King of DAMASCUS enters into a Confederacy against BAASHA, King of

ISRAEL, whom CREON kills, and ZIMRI murders his Son and Successor ELAH.

ASA, son of Abijah, and now king of Judea, pursued a conduct very different from that of Jeroboam king of Israel, and his immediate successors; inasmuch as he paid the most rigid observance to every institution both divine and moral. He introduced the most wholesome laws for the better regulating his government, and directed his attention towards correcting the abominable vices which had been introduced among the people. He had three hundred thousand chosen men of the tribe of Judah, whose arms were lances and shields; and from the tribe of Benjamin, two hundred and fifty thousand, provided with bows and bucklers.

In the tenth year of the government of Afa, Zaræus, king of Æthiopia, led against him a body of forces, consisting of one hundred thousand horse, nine hundred thousand foot, and three hundred chariots. On his arrival at Maresa, a city of Judah, Afa encamped his army in the valley of Saphatha, at a small distance from the city, and prepared for battle.

Observing the formidable power of the enemy, Afa invoked the aid of the Almighty, declaring, that he had taken up arms only through the confidence he reposed in him, and that his assistance would more than compensate for the inferiority of numbers, and every disadvantage. God attended to the intreaties of Afa, and, by a sign, gave him to understand that he should prove victorious. With this assurance, he proceeded to the encounter, gained an absolute victory, and pursued the enemy with great slaughter to the plain of Gera.

Afa defeats the
Ethiopian
army.

Having obtained immense booty from the plunder of the town of Gerar, and the camp of his adversary, Afa directed his march towards Jerusalem, near which place, the prophet Azariah, having ordered him to halt, spoke to the following effect: "It hath pleased the Almighty, on account of your virtues, to give you this signal victory; and if you proceed in a similar discharge of your duty, you may be assured that success will attend all your future undertakings; but if otherwise, you will suffer the most dreadful calamities; and a period will arrive, when there will not be a priest qualified for the holy office, or a true prophet to be found amongst you. Your cities will be razed, and your people dispersed through the earth, without any fixed place of residence. Exercise yourselves, therefore, in acts of piety, before it is too late, and unanimously offer up your thanks to God for the happiness you at present enjoy." Afa, and all his army, received great comfort from these words; and they continued particularly careful in paying the strictest attention to their religion and laws. To enforce the latter

* There is a remarkable similarity between Jeroboam and Baasha in their lives and in their deaths, in their sons and in their family: for as Nadab the son of Jeroboam reigned only two years, so Elah the son of Baasha reigned no more; and as Nadab was killed with the sword, so also was Elah.

Afa appointed proper officers throughout the kingdom.

Baasha usurps the kingdom of Israel.

Baasha, who murdered Jeroboam's son, and usurped the kingdom, reigned four years. His palace was at Tarshish, and he far exceeded both Jeroboam and his son in every kind of wickedness. He was guilty of the greatest tyranny and oppression, and set even the Almighty at defiance. Jehu, the prophet, therefore, by the command of God, informed him, that he was resolved to extirpate him and his whole race, as he had the family of Jeroboam; for as he followed the wicked example of Jeroboam, it was proper he should equal him in his sufferings. Notwithstanding these threats, Baasha still persisted in his iniquitous courses, as if he had expected a reward for his sins, rather than a punishment: at length he advanced with some forces to Ramath*, which is about forty furlongs distant from Jerusalem, and a place of some consequence. This city he fortified, considering it as an advantageous situation for making incursions into the kingdom of Afa; who, being rather apprehensive of his intentions, and reflecting on what ill consequences might attend his people, by suffering so numerous an army near them, immediately sent an embassy, with large gifts to the king of Damascus, intreating him to become his ally, from a regard to

His towns attacked and burnt, and himself afterwards murdered.

that affection which their families had always entertained for each other. The presents of Afa, and the requested alliance, were accepted by the king of Damascus, who detached himself from Baasha, attacked his towns, and burnt and plundered several of them, among which were Achion, Dan, and Abelmaen. As soon as Baasha was informed of these proceedings, he left Ramath, and returned to the care of affairs in his own kingdom. From the materials left at the departure of Baasha, two strong towns were built by Afa, who called one of them Gaba, and the other Maspha. After this, Baasha never more entered the field, for he was murdered by Creon, and interred in the city of Arsanen. He was succeeded by his son Elah, who after he had reigned two years, was, while he was drinking with Ofa, his household steward, killed by Zimri, one of his masters of horse, during the absence of his guards, who were then laying siege to Gabatha, a city belonging to the Philistines.

CHAP. VII.

ELAH, King of ISRAEL, being murdered by ZIMRI, OMRI is chosen King by the Army. ZIMRI destroys himself and the Palace by Fire. OMRI is succeeded by AHAB, whose Ruin is predicted by

* This city was in the tribe of Benjamin, south of Jerusalem. It was fortified and garrisoned to prevent the Israelites from going to worship at Jerusalem, as they had been permitted in the former

ELIAS. JEHU ascends the Throne of ISRAEL, and HAZAEL becomes King of ASSYRIA. JEZEBEL causes NABOTH to be stoned.

AFTER the murder of Elah, Zimri became king of Israel, and totally exterminated the family of Baasha, according to Jehu's prophecy. As soon as the king's death was known to the army, which was then before Gabathon, and that Zimri had usurped the kingdom, they immediately elected Omri, the captain of the guards, to reign over them. After raising the siege, he marched directly to Tirzah, which he took by storm. Zimri perceiving there was no guard in the city, retired into one of the apartments of the palace, to which he set fire, and consumed the whole building, himself perishing in the flames, after a reign of only seven days. Every thing was now in the most embarrassed state; and the nation formed itself into two parties, the one faction supporting the interest of Omri, and the other that of Thaman: but the former succeeded, for Thaman was killed, and Omri enjoyed the whole kingdom. Afa had now reigned thirty years, Omri filled the throne twelve years, half of which time he reigned at Tirzah, and the remainder at Mareon, which is called Samaria by the Greeks. The mountain on which it was erected, was purchased of a man whose name was Samar, from whom Omri called it Samareon. He excelled all his predecessors in wickedness; and, like them, by daily acts of impiety, turned the affections of his subjects from the duty they owed their Creator. God therefore made all these kings the instruments of destroying each other, till at length they were totally extirpated. Omri died at Samaria, and was succeeded by his son Ahab. We have here an excellent proof of God's goodness; in directing the affairs of men, of his making the good happy, and totally destroying those who disobey him; for Afa, who reigned over Jerusalem, and the two tribes, was the only one who enjoyed felicity: and in consequence of his uniform integrity, he possessed the favour of his Creator to a very advanced time of life. He died after he had reigned forty-one years, and was succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat, whom he begat upon Abidah, and who inherited his father's virtues, and regulated his conduct by the example of David, his intrepid and pious ancestor.

Elah, Zimri, and Omri, reign successively.

Twenty-two years did Ahab, king of the Israelites, reside in Samaria, where every alteration he made in the government was an injury thereto. He copied the vices of predecessors, particularly those of Jeroboam, whose golden calves he worshipped, besides committing other enormities. Having married Jezebel, daughter of Eth-baal, king of Tyre and Sidon, he seduced him to worship the gods of her country.

Ahab reigns wickedly, and promotes idol worship.

reign; and thereby this politic king thought he should guard against any insurrection or revolt of his own subjects.

This woman was rash, violent, and ungovernable. She caused a temple to be built, in honour of Baal; and had groves of trees planted, in which priests and false prophets performed services of idolatry. These proceedings gratified Ahab, who took delight in the priests, and their extravagant worship.

Elias foretells a drought of three years duration.

At this time a prophet, named Elias, a native of Gilead, waited on the king, and said, that "on his leaving him, neither rain nor dew should fall in the province, till his return." Having thus said, he departed, and travelled towards the south, till arriving at a river, he there remained for the convenience of the water, and was supplied with meat by ravens. The drought increased till the river was dried up, when Elias was directed by the Almighty to go to a town between Tyre and Sidon, called Sarepta, where he would meet with a widow woman who would supply his necessities.

The widow's meal and oil miraculously increased.

Hereupon he set forward, and when near the place, beheld the woman picking up sticks, whom he asked for water; and, as she was going for it, bid her bring bread also. She said, a handful of meal, and a little oil, was all she had to keep herself and son from starving, and she was now gathering sticks to bake it into a cake. The prophet encouraged her to let him partake of it, on the assurance that, when they were all satisfied, her barrel should be constantly supplied with meal, and her cruse with oil, till the earth should be replenished with rain by the goodness of God. She obeyed the prophet; and, though they constantly fed, found her stock as constantly replenished, till the dry season ended.

Elias restores to life his hostess's child.

The son of the woman who had entertained Elias, falling very ill, she attributed the misfortune to him; saying, "This man whom I have fed has brought this judgment upon me, on a discovery of my sins." At length, when the child was thought to be dead, the prophet said, "Give him to me, and I will recover him to life;" and taking him to his chamber, he placed him on the bed, and prayed that God would restore him; for that the death of the son, while he remained in the family, would appear to be a severe requital of the mother's goodness to him. The prayers of Elias were heard; God restored the child; and the mother was all gratitude, and confessed that the Spirit of God directed the actions of the prophet*.

Rain is promised.

Soon after this, Elias was commissioned to acquaint Ahab, that rain would speedily fall. By this time the famine raged to such a degree, that the people were on the point of starving; nor was there food for the cattle. Obadiah, who superintended the royal stables and fields, was now sent for by the king, who ordered him to seek near the rivers

and ditches, for grass for the horses and other cattle, and also to find the prophet, who had been long sought for in vain. Now Obadiah was a righteous man, who had heretofore hid in caves and supported one hundred prophets, during Jezebel's persecution of them.

Obadiah had no sooner left the king, than he met Elias, who bid him tell his master that he was coming to him. "Wherefore (said Obadiah) should you dispatch me with such a message, who am sent in search of you, that the king may inflict a tormenting death on me? When I am gone, the spirit by which you are governed may lead you another way, and then my life will pay the forfeit. Have more concern for my safety. You know my zeal for your fraternity, by my preservation of the hundred prophets, whom I still support in the caves." The prophet, however, insisted on his going, and solemnly swore to attend Ahab. When the king found he was coming, he hastened to meet him, and in a rage exclaimed, "Is it not you that are the plague of the Israelites? Is it not you to whom this drought and famine are owing?" The prophet replied, that Ahab and his household occasioned their own distresses, by the introduction of false gods, and departing from the true religion. Elias now demanded an assembly of the people on mount Carmel, and that Jezebel's prophets, and the prophets of the groves, might be present. Ahab assembled them; and Elias standing in the midst, said, "Wherefore hesitate you betwixt two opinions? If you think ours the true God, worship him, and keep his commands: or if you prefer the worship of false gods, the choice is your's." No reply being made, Elias proceeded thus: "Here am I, a single prophet, against three hundred: if you would ascertain which is the true religion, I will place an ox on a pile of wood, but not set it on fire: let the other prophets do the same, and implore their gods to inflame the pile; by which the true worship will be distinguished from the false." This mode of determination being acceptable to the multitude, Ahab's prophets laid their ox on the pile; and when they had offered their incantations a long while, Elias ridiculed them, bidding them speak louder, for their gods might be asleep, or on a journey. From morning till noon they continued their exorcisms, cutting and flashing their bodies; but the effect was not produced. Elias being now to sacrifice, bid the people draw near, and observe that no fire was secretly conveyed to his pile. Having taken twelve stones†, that is one for each tribe, he made an altar of them, round which a deep ditch was cut: then placed his wood on the altar, and on it the sacrifice, throwing four vessels of clear water on the altar, which filled the surround-

* Though the woman had before sufficient reason to believe that Elijah was a prophet, yet upon his not curing her son when he lay sick, her faith began to fail. But upon seeing him raised from the dead, her faith revived with her son; and, through the joy of having him restored, she considered this last miracle as much greater than the former.

† This, as observed above, being in allusion to the number of tribes, was probably intended also to shew, that all the Israelites, though now divided into two nations, ought to be united by the same band of love and unity, and to adopt one and the same mode of worship; namely, that of the true and living God, whose temple was at Jerusalem.

ing ditch. All being prepared, the prophet called on God to convince the unbelievers; and, while he was yet speaking, fire descended from heaven, burnt up the sacrifice, and dried the water. This miracle astonished the Israelites, who bowed to the ground in adoration of the only living and true God. Elias then ordered all the false prophets to be put to death, which being done, the people departed.

The prophet foretells a great fall of rain.

The prophet now ascended mount Carmel, and, sitting on the ground, with his head on his knees, commanded his servant to climb a rock near the sea, and look out for a cloud. After six fruitless attempts, he said he saw something about the size of a man's hand in the air, of a blackish colour. Elias hearing this, sent to bid Ahab hasten to the city, or a violent storm of rain would overtake him; and indeed a great rain fell, and the whole atmosphere was clouded, by the time that he had reached Jezreel, to which city Elias, by God's immediate support, ran before his chariot.

Elias, on Jezebel's murder, flies to Beersheba.

Jezebel hearing of the deeds of Elias, and how he had caused the death of her prophets, sent and threatened his destruction. Hereupon, he fled to Beersheba, where leaving his servant, he departed into the wilderness, and laying down on the ground, wished for death. "I am no more worthy, O God (said he), than those who have preceded me; nor have I any desire to live." Having slept under a tree, he found himself awakened by an invisible agent; when rising and looking round him, he saw meat and drink, with which he refreshed himself, and then repaired to mount Sinai, where he found a cave, into which he went, with an intention of residing in it. In this place he heard a voice, demanding why he left the city, and wandered thus in the desert; to which he replied, that the queen had threatened his life, for having occasioned the death of the false prophets, and declared the only true God to whom worship was due. The voice now instructed him to leave the cave on the following day, and act as he should be directed. On his quitting the place next day, there was an earthquake, and then a blazing fire in the air, which was succeeded by a short silence, and that by a still voice, which bade him be of good courage, for his enemies should not triumph over him: it

He anoints Hazael king of Aram, and Jehu king over Israel.

likewise directed him to return by the way of Damascus, where Hazael should be anointed king of Aram, and Jehu, the son of Nimshi, king over Israel, by his hands; he was also to anoint Elisha, of Abel, prophet in his stead; for the divine wrath would cut off the wicked from the land, and Hazael should destroy those that escaped the sword of Jehu. Hereupon the prophet departed; and finding Elisha, the son of Shaphat, with other people, plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, he threw his cloak over him: on which Elisha immediately prophesied, and prepared to follow Elias, but first requested permission to bid farewell to his parents, which being done, he attached himself to Elias, as his disciple and companion.

Adjacent to the gardens of Ahab, king of Samaria, lay a vineyard, belonging to Naboth, of Jezreel, which vineyard Ahab wishing to add to his gardens, frequently asked Naboth to sell him, or accept other land in exchange for it; but this Naboth refused, as it was a possession which had been the particular gift of providence. Ahab was so chagrined at the refusal, that he became melancholy, abstained from his food, and neglected to bathe according to custom, and fell sick. On this alteration, Jezebel became anxious to know the cause of it; and, on her repeated urgency, Ahab recited the story of Naboth, and expatiated on the rudeness of his behaviour. "I intreated him (said he) with fair words; and descended below the dignity of a king in my address to him; and all I could gain by this conduct, was an absolute refusal." The queen gave him all possible encouragement to recover his spirits, and to be no longer anxious on the subject, for she would take care that Naboth should be punished for the insult. Having said this, she wrote letters to the elders and principal men of Jezreel, in the name of Ahab, importing that a fast should be proclaimed and an assembly convened, in which a place among the chiefs of the people should be given to Naboth. That three witnesses should be provided, who should swear that he had blasphemed God, and spoken evil of the king: and that on this evidence, Naboth should be convicted, and his sentence be, that the people should stone him to death.

Ahab covets Naboth's vineyard.

The queen's orders were obeyed in every particular: Naboth was convicted, and received sentence, which was speedily executed on him. Intelligence of these transactions being carried to Jezebel, she repaired to the king, and informing him that Naboth was dispatched, said he might take possession of the vineyard without farther ceremony. This news gave Ahab so much satisfaction, that he immediately set forward on a journey towards the spot thus dearly purchased: but the prophet Elias was sent by God, to represent the sin of his taking possession of the vineyard, which was acquired by the murder of the right owner. Ahab seeing the prophet advancing, went to him, confessed what had been done, and offered to make reparation. By the order, and in the name of the Almighty, Elias acquainted him, that "where the blood of Naboth had been licked by the dogs, they should likewise lick the blood of Ahab and Jezebel; and that the crime of taking away the life of an innocent man, by perjury, should be punished by the extirpation of their whole race." Ahab was so affected by the denunciation of this judgment, that he became deeply penitent for his sins; clothed himself in sackcloth, fasted, went barefoot, and gave every other testimony of unfeigned sorrow. Hereupon the prophet was commissioned by God to acquaint him, that, in consideration of his contrition, the judgment which had been threatened should be postponed during his life, though it should certainly take place in that of his son: and hereupon the prophet departed.

Naboth murdered at the instance of Jezebel, who, with Ahab, are threatened with the divine vengeance.

CHAP. VIII.

AHAB being besieged in SAMARIA by ADAD, or BENHADAD, the latter is repulsed. In the following Year, ADAD is conquered in Battle, and applies for Mercy to AHAB, who grants it, and dismisses him in a friendly Manner, for which he is reproved by the Prophet.

Adad, king of Syria, invades Ahab's dominions, and lays siege to Samaria.

THUS situated were the affairs of Ahab, when Adad, king of Syria and Damascus, raising a large army, and thirty-two kings from beyond the river Euphrates uniting with him, they jointly marched against Ahab; who, fearing to encounter so immense a multitude in the plains, retired to fortified places, to defend himself. Samaria, a place strong by nature, and being defended by a garrison, walls, and other works, was the particular retreat of Ahab. Against this place Adad brought his army, and made preparations for the attack; but first sent a herald to Ahab, to require leave to send ambassadors with his demands. This being agreed to, the ambassadors represented, that the wives, children, and riches of Ahab were at the disposal of his enemy, who, however, would raise the siege, and withdraw his army, if Ahab would acknowledge his power, and give him leave to take what he thought proper. To this Ahab replied, that himself and his possessions were all at the service of Adad*: but the latter sent other ambassadors, demanding, that his servants and officers might, on the following day, search the houses, lodgings, &c. of the king and his domestics, and carry off whatever they thought proper.

On this, Ahab determined to call a council of his friends, whom he thus addressed: "Adad has sent me two proposals, by the first of which he agreed to raise the siege, on my acknowledging myself, my wives, and my children, to be at his disposal; which I consented to, because I would not let any interest of my own supersede the public good: but his second proposal is, that they be permitted to make a general search, and carry off what they please, which is only a pretence to widen the breach between us. They thought, doubtless, that I should remain firm to the first contract: but now they demand a delivery of my people and country, which they may be assured I shall not comply with; and that a war will be the consequence: but I am determined to abide by your advice." On this all the council reprobated the insolence of Adad, and voted for war. The answer then given the ambassadors was, "That the first demand would yet be complied with by the king; but that the honour and safety of the citizens required that he should refuse the second." This answer so mortified Adad, that he sent a third message, import-

ing that Ahab should not trust in the strength of his fortrefs, for he would raise works above his walls, which he could do by each of his soldiers contributing a handful of earth. To this Ahab sent ^{His terms answer,} "That not with their tongues, ^{jested,} but with their swords, men of courage should debate." When this message arrived, Adad was at supper with the thirty-two kings, and he gave instant orders to prepare for the siege. In the interim, Ahab and his people were in the utmost despondency; but a prophet going to him, assured him, that God would grant his people a victory over their numerous enemies. Ahab was anxious to know the immediate instruments of the victory; when the prophet said, he should himself be at the head of the sons of the nobles. These being summoned, and Ahab having learnt that his enemy was indulging in the height of luxurious revelry, the city gates were thrown open, and they sallied out. Adad hearing hereof, sent a party, with directions to conduct them, bound, into his presence. At this time the army of Ahab was ready within the walls, to issue forth when necessary. The ^{Defeat of the} valiant young nobles having attacked the ^{Syrian army.} guards, many of whom they killed, and pursued the rest to their tents; Ahab and his army rushed out, attacked and routed the enemy, who were most of them drunk and unarmed. Those who could, escaped by flight; among them was Adad, who was saved by the speed of his horse. The Syrians being pursued, such as were overtaken were killed. The plunder, in gold, silver, equipages, and Adad's own chariot and horses, was very great, and was conducted to the city by the conquerors.

Notwithstanding this victory, the prophet told Ahab that his enemy would be ready to attack him in the spring, and bid him prepare for it; which he did with vigour. Adad having collected his shattered army, his friends advised him not to engage again in the mountains; saying, that the god of the Israelites was the god of the mountains; but they would have lost the battle in the plains. They also advised the dismissing of the thirty-two kings, but to keep their troops, over whom experienced officers might be appointed, and that recruits of horse and foot should supply the place of the slain. This advice pleased the king, who complied with it; and on the approach of spring, encamped in a large plain near the city of Apheca. Ahab advanced with his forces, and pitched opposite the Syrians, though greatly inferior in number. During this posture of affairs, the prophet, in the name of God, assured the Israelites of victory, for the God of the mountains was likewise God of the vallies. During six days the armies lay thus encamped, and on the seventh advanced to battle. The contest was at first obstinate: but the Syrians unable to stand the shock, turned, and fled, the enemy pursuing them

Adad makes a second expedition against Ahab, and is again overcome.

* Ahab seems not only to have complied with the insolent demand of Benhadad, but likewise to have made a greater submission than he could expect; which shewed so much abjectness, that Ben-

hadad increased his demands, and augmented his insolence in proportion to the pusillanimity of Ahab.

closely. Many were slain in the pursuit; some killed in the flight by their own chariots and fellow-soldiers; some trod to death, and some torn to pieces. A few only, their numbers considered, reached Apheca, their only place of refuge. Under the walls of that city, it was calculated that twenty-seven thousand were buried; and those killed in battle were estimated at one hundred thousand.

He applies for mercy to Ahab, who spares his life.

Adad having secreted himself in a cave, with several of his faithful adherents, some of them extolled the natural generosity of the Israelites, and advised the king to submit to the mercy of Ahab, which they were confident would be extended to him. Adad agreeing hereto, a number of people were chosen to supplicate mercy; for which purpose they were dressed in sackcloth, with halters round their necks; and in this guise they went to Ahab, to solicit the life of Adad, who acknowledged himself his prisoner, engaging that he would always think himself such. To this Ahab said, "I rejoice at his safety; and you may assure him, in my name, that my own brother could not be more welcome to me than he shall be."

An oath being sworn that the person of Adad should be safe, the supplicants departed to the cave, and brought him to Ahab, who was sitting in his carriage. When he saw the royal captive, he extended his right hand, saluted him, seated him by his side, and pledged his honour for his safety*. Adad acknowledged this goodness, which he said should be gratefully remembered: that the lands which had been taken from the Israelites should be restored; and that Ahab should be as welcome a guest at Damascus, as the father of Adad had been at Samaria. A league was now made betwixt the parties, and Adad being loaded with presents, took his leave.

Ahab's ill-timed leniency reprehended by the prophet.

Soon after this event, a prophet named Micaiah requested an Hebrew to strike him on the head, as an act of obedience to the will of God. The party refused; on which the prophet said he should be torn by a lion; which happened accordingly: and the prophet applied to another man, who struck him so that his head streamed with blood. Micaiah, binding up the wound, repaired to the king, and told him that he was a foldier, to whom an officer had committed the care of a prisoner, who having escaped, he himself was obliged to fly for fear of punishment. Ahab approving the said officer's severity, the prophet uncovered his head, and made himself known. This device was intended to impress on the mind of Ahab the impropriety of letting so vile a wretch as Adad go at large: "And (added the prophet) the time advances when yourself and your army shall be destroyed by this Adad whom you have permitted to

escape." The prophet's freedom so affronted Ahab, that he ordered him into prison; but the reflection on the prophecy sat heavy on his mind.

CHAP. IX.

JEHOSHAPHAT's great Power, exemplary Virtues, and Happiness. JEHIORAM espouses the Daughter of AHAB, King of Israel, whom JEHOSHAPHAT supports in the War against ADAD.

JEHOSHAPHAT greatly extended his territories, and established garrisons and governors in the several cities within his dominions, as well as those which had been obtained from Jeroboam by his grandfather Abijah. His life was a continued series of piety and justice, and he was rewarded by the blessing and protection of the Almighty. His riches and fame were considerably augmented by the gifts of neighbouring monarchs, whose munificence bore testimony to their approbation of the irreproachable integrity of his life.

Eminent qualities of Jehoshaphat.

Jehoshaphat assembled the priests and elders, in the third year of his sovereignty, and directed them to nominate commissioners for the purpose of preserving a strict adherence to the duties of religion, and the legal institutions delivered by Moses. This attention to the important articles of religion and law proved so satisfactory to the people, that they became emulous to exceed each other in executing the king's commands. Besides the advantage of a perfect state of domestic tranquillity, he enjoyed the satisfaction of living upon terms of amity with the neighbouring princes. The usual tribute was regularly paid by the Philistines, as was the annual stipend of six hundred and thirty lambs, and an equal number of kids by the Arabians. As a security against invasions, he kept his places of strength in a state of defence, and a well-disciplined body of troops in constant pay. Edra was appointed to the command of three hundred thousand shield-bearers, selected from the tribe of Judah: and Johannon had the command of two hundred thousand. The same officers also commanded two hundred thousand archers belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. Under another leader named Ochobai, were one hundred and eighty thousand men, armed with bucklers.

He sets about a reformation in religion.

A marriage was celebrated between Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, and Gotholia, daughter of Ahab, who reigned over the ten tribes. Ahab provided a magnificent entertainment at Samaria for Jehoshaphat

Marriage of Jehoram to Ahab's daughter.

* The lenity of Ahab on this occasion was very remarkable: to call a person brother (see 1 Kings xx. 32.) who had determined his destruction, was a great pitch of humanity; and to forgive one, who had been guilty of the most atrocious blasphemy against God, shewed in it an indolence of mind which was unworthy of pity, and a dis-

regard for the safety of his nation, which would naturally cause its subversion. This ill-timed humanity, so inconsistent with his character as the father of his people, the servant of the true God, and his vicegerent in the throne, justly deserved the sentence denounced against him by the prophet.

and

and the troops by whom he was attended. Having meditated the recovery of Ramoth-Gilead, which had been conquered by the king of Syria, Ahab requested the assistance of Jehoshaphat, who consented to unite his endeavours towards effecting the intended enterprise, and summoned his troops from Jerusalem to Samaria. These kings proceeded to a certain distance from the town, and, each being seated on a throne, they reviewed and paid their forces. A peace having subsisted for the space of three years between Ahab king of Israel, and Adad king of Syria, Jehoshaphat recommended that, if any prophets could be found, their advice should be taken as to the expediency of commencing hostilities.

The false prophesying in favour of Ahab, Micaiah is sent for by Jehoshaphat.

The king of Israel called an assembly of his false prophets, the number of whom amounted to about four hundred, and he directed them to make enquiry whether an attempt to recover the city of Ramoth would be attended with success. They unanimously persuaded him to prosecute the war, saying, Adad would be vanquished, and a second time made prisoner. A suspicion being conceived by Jehoshaphat that these men were not favoured of God, he inquired of Ahab, whether he had not other prophets to whom he could apply. He was answered by Ahab, that there was one other, named Micaiah, who was the son of Imia, but that he detested the man for having predicted only unhappy events, and had ordered him to prison for having attempted to persuade him that he would forfeit his life in the approaching war. Jehoshaphat advised that Micaiah might be called into the presence of Ahab; and an eunuch, who was an attendant of the bed-chamber, was dispatched to conduct him from the gaol. During the progress of their journey, the messenger related, that the prophets had declared the event of the war would prove favourable to Ahab. Micaiah said, that whatever the inspiration of the Almighty should dictate, he would, without prevarication or reserve, report to Ahab. The king put the question to him, enjoining him neither

He predicts Ahab's defeat and death in the expedition.

to extenuate or aggravate the truth. He said that he had seen the people of Israel, like sheep without a shepherd, dispersed and pursued by the Syrians; and that by this representation the Lord had intimated, that only the king should fall in the engagement. Ahab, having heard this prophecy, asked Jehoshaphat, whether he was not now convinced that he had not wrongfully accused the man. Upon which Micaiah said, "I have no enmity towards you: the prediction was the effect of an inspiration from the Almighty, by whose express command it was faithfully delivered to you: but by the flattering impositions of the false prophets, you are persuaded to engage in a war which will prove your destruction."

* Zedekiah had used Micaiah with great indignity, and by his question to him would have insinuated that he was a false prophet; but in punishment of his abuse, and in vindication of Micaiah's di-

The king became much disturbed by the firmness with which Micaiah persisted to support this prediction.

Zedekiah dissuaded the king from paying the least regard to what Micaiah had said, declaring the whole to be a palpable fiction; and in confirmation of this, he said, that he had spoken in direct contradiction to a prophecy of Elias, who had asserted that the king's blood should be licked by the dogs, in the field where they had licked the blood of Naboth. "I will now (said he) strike this man on the face, and if he be a prophet of God, may my arm wither as did that of Jeroboam, when he lifted it against the prophet Jaddon." He struck Micaiah, and as no judgment ensued, Ahab was confirmed in the design of engaging in a war with the king of Syria. Zedekiah now presented the king with horns of iron, saying, that under the semblance of these horns, it was intimated by the Lord that he should push the Syrians to extremity and finally destroy them. Micaiah told Zedekiah, that he would be shortly called to a very severe account for the impositions he had been guilty of, and driven to seek his safety in hiding places*. The king being highly incensed against Micaiah, commanded Apion, the governor of the city, to confine him in prison, and allow him no other sustenance than bread and water, till his return from the war.

The confederate kings led their forces toward Ramoth, whence Adad came forth to meet them. In order to avoid the event which had been foretold by Micaiah, the king wore the dress of a private man, and he was personated by a native of Jerusalem, habited in the royal robes. Adad charged his officers to direct their arms against the king of Israel, without regard to his subjects. Observing Jehoshaphat at the head of the troops, the Syrians pressed upon him, but discovering their mistake, they retired. A domestic of Adad, named Aman, shot a random arrow, which passing through the joints of Ahab's armour, penetrated his lungs. Apprehending that this unfortunate circumstance might depress the spirit of the troops, the wounded monarch ordered his charioteer to remove a small distance from the army; and having remained in his chariot nearly till sun-setting, he expired. The armies took the field in the morning, and continued harrassing each other the whole day, but Ahab was the only man slain. On the approach of night, the Syrians retired to their tents: and when an herald had proclaimed the death of Ahab, the people dispersed. The remains of the king were interred at Samaria; and upon washing the blood from the chariot, at a neighbouring fountain, the dogs licked it up, according to the prophecy of Elias. This fountain was afterwards used as a bath for common women.

The battle being joined, Ahab is slain.

Prophecy of Elias fulfilled.

vine mission, he was again inspired with a second prophecy; which being fulfilled, as well as that denounced against Ahab, was a farther illustration of Micaiah's integrity, and Zedekiah's falsehood.

BOOK

B O O K IX.

Containing the JEWISH HISTORY, from A. M. 3048, to 3224.

C H A P. I.

The MOABITES and their Confederates, conquered by JEHOSHAPHAT. The Death of AHAZIAH, agreeable to the Prediction of ELIAS. He is succeeded by JEHORAM, who being joined by JEHOSHAPHAT and the King of IDUMÆA, they conquer the MOABITES.

Jehoshaphat
reproved for
joining with
Ahab.

JEHU, the prophet, meeting Jehoshaphat on his return to Jerusalem, after his junction with Ahab, against Adad, told him how much the Almighty was offended at the alliance; but said, that for his former obedience to the law of God, he would find pardon, and deliverance from his foes. Hereupon the king sought his peace with God by prayer, offering sacrifice, and ordering that the people throughout his dominions should be instructed in the laws of Moses, and in the ancient religion. He likewise appointed magistrates of the cities and large towns, who were ordered to distribute justice to all ranks of people without favour or partiality. Good order being settled among the two tribes, the king repaired to Jerusalem, where, from among the priests and Levites, he selected judges, who were instructed to act uprightly; and directed, that when matters of consequence were brought before them from the adjacent cities, they should not determine but on the coolest deliberation; since a deficiency of justice in the city where the temple of God and the palace of the king were erected, would be highly dishonourable. Ahaziah, the priest, was appointed to preside in holy matters, and Zebediah in civil.

The Moabites,
&c. invading
Judea, Jeho-
shaphat con-
venes an as-
sembly, and
prays for di-
vine aid.

About this period, the Moabites, Ammonites, and Aramites, having hired great numbers of troops, advanced to the city of Engedi, near the lake of Asphaltites, about thirty-eight miles from Jerusalem, with a view of giving battle to Jehoshaphat; who no sooner learnt that they had passed the lake, than he convened an assembly, and standing before the temple, implored the protection of heaven against the enemy.

They are en-
couraged by a
prophet.

During their devotions, Jahaziel, a prophet, stood up, and said, that their prayers were heard, and God would grant

them victory in the defence of their religion. He advised him to march the next day, and they should find their enemies encamped on a hill called Sis (signifying an eminence) between Jerusalem and Engedi: where God would fight the battle for them, while they might only look on, as spectators of the action. When the prophet had ended, Jehoshaphat and his people fell on the ground in adoration, while the hymns and musical instruments of the Levites accompanied their devotions.

On the following day the king rose early, and going into the desert near the city of Tekoa, told the people to rely on God by believing his prophet, and not to form in battle array. He directed the priests with their trumpets to advance, followed by the Levites and singers, as on a day of victory and triumph. This advice being obeyed, the Almighty struck such a terror into the enemy, that they attacked each other, and fought with such incredible fury, that they all fell sacrifices to their mutual rage. On a view of the valley, Jehoshaphat found it covered with dead bodies, and triumphantly rejoicing in a victory obtained without bloodshed, permitted the soldiers to make booty of all the spoils, which were so considerable as to take three days to carry them off.

The king's sa-
lutory advice
and mea-
sures.

At the end of four days the people assembled in the valley of Berachah, where they offered thanks to God for the merciful exertion of his power. From this circumstance the place was called the Valley of Blessings, which name it still retains. Hence the army proceeded to Jerusalem, where feasts and sacrifices employed several days. This signal victory impressed all foreign princes and nations with a high opinion of the piety of Jehoshaphat, as a person peculiarly favoured of heaven; and this sentiment attended him through life. In the mean time Jehoshaphat was in friendship with Ahaziah son of Ahab, in conjunction with whom he fitted out ships for the gold trade; but the whole project failed, all the ships being lost, partly through tempestuous weather, and partly from the vessels being ill adapted to the seas they were to navigate*.

He gives
thanks to God
for his mira-
culous inter-
position on his
behalf.

In the reign of Ahaziah, king of Israel, Elias was translated, and no account was

Translation of
Elias.

ever

* The unnatural league Jehoshaphat made with this idolatrous prince was, by the hand of Providence, the real cause of this disaster.

The wickedness of Ahaziah and his people was extremely great. He was not moved by the untimely death of his father; but followed

ever afterwards heard of him: but he left behind him his disciple Elisha, of whom mention has been already made. In like manner Enoch was translated, before the flood, as it is recorded in holy writ. Jehoram succeeding his brother in the government, determined to go to war with Mesha, king of the Moabites, on his refusal to pay an annual tribute of two hundred thousand unhorn sheep, in consideration of what had been heretofore paid to Ahab his father; and he gained a complete victory over them. Some little time after this, Jehoshaphat lived in an easy retirement, and then died in Jerusalem, in the twenty-fifth year of his reign, and the sixtieth of his age; and was interred in a most pompous manner.

CHAP. II.

JEHORAM succeeds JEHOSEPHAT. Miracles wrought by ELISHA. ADAD besieges SAMARIA. The Siege miraculously raised. ADAD murdered by HAZAEL, who assumes the Government. JEHORAM, for his great Wickedness, is threatened by ELISHA.

Jehoram succeeds his father Jehoshaphat.

JEHORAM, the eldest of several sons of Jehoshaphat, succeeded his father in the sovereignty. He was named after his mother's brother, who was lately returned from the war against the Moabites, and had brought with him Elisha the prophet, of whom many things are mentioned in holy writ, which are well worthy of regard. Elisha was applied to by the wife of Obadiah, steward to Ahab, who hinted that he was acquainted with the rage of Jezebel against the prophets; and of her husband having supported an hundred of them in the cave, by which he had so greatly involved himself in debt, that herself and children were likely to become slaves to the creditors: on which she begged the prophet's assistance, in consideration of her husband's merit. Hereupon Elisha demanded what her house afforded; and on her saying only a little oil in a cruse, he directed her to borrow a number of empty vessels and pots of her neighbours, and, making fast her chamber-door, to pour a little oil into each, and they would be filled by the power of God. She did so; and having returned to the prophet with an account of her proceedings, he bid her sell the oil, and discharge her debts, and she would have something left for her family. By this means she experienced a very seasonable deliverance.

Elisha being informed of a conspiracy against Jehoram, and that Adad meant to attack him in a

particular place when he went to hunt, advised the king not to go, by which his life was preserved. Adad was so enraged hereat, that he charged his servants with infidelity, in discovering what themselves only could know. One of them replied, that he ought not to suspect them, while his enemy had so faithful a spy as Elisha, who was able to divine his most secret thoughts. Hereupon the king sent a party to enquire after Elisha, who learnt he was at Dothan; on which chariots and horsemen were sent to take him into custody. They surrounded the town in the evening, so that no person could go in or out; and the prophet's servant halted to him in the morning, to acquaint him with what had happened. The prophet bade him be of good courage, and rely on the Providence of God; and instantly prayed for some token of his protection, to confirm the faith of the servant. In consequence hereof, a number of chariots and horses appeared about Elisha, as a guard, and were visible to the servant; upon which all his fears were dissipated.

Elisha now implored the Almighty to blind his enemies to such a degree, that they should not know him from any other person; which petition being complied with, he went among the troops, and demanded who and for what they were searching. "For the prophet Elisha" (said they), on which he bid them follow him, and he would direct them to the place where he was. Now their intellects being as much clouded as their eyes, they followed him to Samaria, and were no sooner within the city, than he desired Jehoram to make the gates fast, and confine them. The prophet now prayed once more, that the Syrians might be restored to fight; and his prayers being heard, they were astonished to find that they were within the walls of the enemies city, and wholly at their mercy.

The affrighted Syrians were doubting how to act in this situation, when the king advised that they might be put to death; but to this the prophet objected, as a dishonourable proceeding, except towards persons conquered in war: "These men (said he) had no hostile intention against this country, and appear to be mere agents in the hand of Providence." The prophet, therefore, advised that they should be treated hospitably, and left to their own liberty, after they had been properly entertained. Hereupon Jehoram, in pursuance of the prophet's advice, entertained them liberally, and dismissed them. On their return, they gave the king their master a minute account of what had happened, which greatly affected him, and convinced him that this miracle was wrought by the immediate hand of Heaven, and that the prophet was divinely

Elisha leads the blinded Syrian army into Samaria.

Miracles performed by Elisha, who multiplies the oil.

At the prophet's entreaty, they are released and sent home.

his pernicious example, still seducing the people, and provoking the God of Israel by his abominable idolatries. The author of the book of Chronicles informs us, that his impiety was so provoking, that God had abandoned him, and would not prosper the naval expedition of Jehoshaphat, because he joined the fleet of this vicious prince. And the wickedness of Ahaziah, so great in itself, was

No. 9.

highly aggravated by his making the people to sin. By his evil example and authority he corrupted their worship, and justly drew upon himself the guilt of their transgressions.

* Though a conqueror is at liberty to put his enemies to the sword, yet the laws of humanity and compassion should always restrain us from treating with the utmost severity such as surrender themselves,

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divinely inspired when he delivered the prediction in the name of God. Adad resolved that, henceforward, he would never seek to injure the king of Israel in a treacherous manner: but, confiding in his numbers and strength, would engage him in open war.

Adad renews
hostilities
against Jeho-
ram.

Thus resolved, Adad collected a numerous army, with which he marched against Jehoram; who thinking his forces inadequate to the risk of a battle in the plains, remained within the walls of Samaria; which being strongly fortified, Adad hesitated whether he should attack him in form, or endeavour to reduce it by famine. At length the place was besieged, and the garrison was so reduced for want of provisions, that the head of an ass was sold for eighty pieces of silver, and five pieces was the price of a pint of pigeon's dung, as the sauce for it. In this distress Jehoram was apprehensive, that some person might inform the enemy how greatly the famine had reduced them; for which reason he daily walked round the fortifications, had an eye upon the guards, and was very attentive that no spy should enter the city in a private manner.

A previous
famine in Sa-
maria.

While the king was thus employed, a woman demanded his assistance. He supposed she came to beg of him, and said, "How can I assist you, who have neither barns nor wine-presses?" Hereupon the woman said, she asked not for food but for justice, and wished he would determine a debate between another woman and herself. The king asking her meaning, she told him that her neighbour and herself being both ready to perish for food, having each a male infant, agreed to kill their children in turn, to prevent themselves from starving. She said her child was killed and dressed on the preceding day, and the other woman had a share of it; but now that she ought to partake of the other child, the woman had departed from her promise, and concealed it. This narrative almost

The king
threatens to
put Eliha to
death.

distracted Jehoram, who tore his garments, and exclaimed, that he was never completely wretched till that moment: "And this, (said he) would not have happened, if the prophet had applied to God in my favour; but his life shall pay the forfeit:" and, in the first impulse of his rage, he sent an officer to cut off the head of the prophet.

Elisha was not unacquainted with this resolution of the king, and while he was in company with his disciples, he told them, that Jehoram had commissioned an officer to head a party who were to destroy him. "Therefore, (said he), keep an eye on them, and when they approach, shut the door till the king comes; for he has altered his intention, and is now on the way to counteract what he ordered." These

directions were obeyed, and the party was shut out till the arrival of Jehoram, who had made all possible haste to prevent his commands respecting the life of the prophet being executed.

The king had no sooner arrived, than he began to revile the prophet, who could suffer them to endure such extreme distress, without offering one prayer to God on their behalf. In answer hereto the prophet said, that by the same hour on the day following, provisions should be so cheap in Samaria, that the market price of a measure of fine flour should be only a shekel, and the same sum for two measures of barley. This prediction was credited by the king and his attendants, who had heretofore had sufficient proofs of the prophet's veracity. Hereupon they had as much faith in the prophecy as if it had been already accomplished: but one of the king's favourite officers who commanded a third of the army, and was then in familiar conversation, leaning on the king, said, "What you have now declared is as credible as that it should rain flour and barley from heaven*"; and I should as readily assent to it." To this the prophet replied, that what had been foretold should infallibly happen, and that he should be a witness of it, without partaking of the benefit: which accordingly came to pass.

Eliha pro-
mises plenty
the next day.

At this time four leprous persons lived without the gates of Samaria, and it was not customary to admit any such within the walls. The famine raged so violently in the city that no provision could be hoped for from that quarter, and to remain where they were, threatened equal destruction: on which they resolved to submit to the mercy of the enemy, who would either spare their lives, or destroy them in a more eligible way than starving. Being all of the same sentiment, they departed by night to the camp of the Syrians, who, on the instant, were struck with an imagination that they heard the trampling of horses, and the noise of armed men invading them; on which they repaired in haste to Adad, and acquainted him that Jehoram and his allies were on the march within hearing. This story was the more readily believed by Adad, because his own imagination had painted the same scene: wherefore every man began to shift for himself, and the whole army retired in confusion, each anxious to save his own life, and leaving horses, carriages and treasure, behind them. The lepers arriving at the tents of the Syrians, and finding all quiet, refreshed themselves with eating and drinking, and then carried away gold and other rich effects, which they buried in a hole they had dug for that purpose. Having four times loaded themselves in this manner, and finding the enemy quite retreated, they considered that they ought, on

Behaviour of
the lepers.

The Syrians
abandon their
camp.

themselves, and implore our mercy. Besides the humanity and charity of this action, it was both prudent and politic, as it was the best natural means to mollify the hearts of these Syrians.

* In describing a large shower, or great fall of rain, the sacred writers use the phrase of "opening the windows of heaven;" see

2 Kings vii. 2. This unseasonable ridicule, therefore, implies that the nobleman thought that such a sudden transition from famine to plenty, predicted by the prophet, deserved no credit, and was as improbable as to expect that it should rain corn.

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the first discovery, to have acquainted Jehoram, and the people in the city, with this event: on which they hastened back to Samaria, and arriving at the walls of the city, called aloud to the watch that the camp was abandoned by the enemy. They likewise, at the same time, sent notice hereof by the king's guards: on which a council was summoned, to whom Jehoram delivered his sentiments, that it was an artifice of the enemy to draw his subjects into an ambush. "Probably, (said he), they despaired of starving us, and have therefore had recourse to this stratagem. Now, for this reason, I would be guarded against this treachery, and not embark in an affair that may totally ruin our cause." Hereupon one of the council, premising that his majesty had formed a right judgment, hinted that it would be proper to send two horsemen as far as Jordan to learn the truth: that if they should be made prisoners, the loss would not be great, and it might serve as a caution to others. The king acceded to this proposal, and dispatched the messengers, who soon returned with an account that not an enemy was to be seen;

which is pil-
laged by the
Israelites.

but that there was plenty of corn and arms, and abundance of things which the Syrians appeared to have left in their hurry.

This intelligence induced the king to send out people to pillage the camp of Adad, where they obtained an immense booty in gold, silver, horses, and other cattle, and an amazing quantity of corn; so great, indeed, that the former scarcity was forgotten in the present plenty; and, agreeable to Elisha's prophecy, a measure of flour and two of barley, were sold each for a shekel; containing a bushel and a half, Italian measure: but the officer before-named, who commanded a third of the army, received no benefit thereby, for, being stationed at the gate, by the king's command, he was crushed to death by the crowd.

Adad, being
taken ill, sends
a messenger to
Elisha, to in-
quire concern-
ing the issue.

By this time Adad had retired in safety to Damascus; and having learnt that the hasty retreat from the camp was the consequence only of their own fears, he considered it as the immediate judgment of

heaven, and fell ill through the anxiety of his mind. Elisha now advanced towards Damascus, which Adad being informed of, sent Hazael with rich presents to the prophet, and bade him enquire whether the king would survive his disease. Forty camels being loaded with valuable effects, Hazael proceeded on his commission, and meeting the prophet, saluted him with the most profound respect, produced his presents, and asked him in the king's name, what

Elisha fore-
tells the death
of Adad, and
advancement
of Hazael.

would be the issue of his disorder. Elisha said, the king would not live; but bade him conceal the intelligence from him. Hazael was shocked at this news; and Elisha wept extremely, in consideration

of the future distresses of the people. Hazael demanding of the prophet the cause of his grief, he replied, "I weep to think what misery you will occasion to the Israelites. Their principal men shall be put to the sword by you, who shall likewise destroy the cities by fire, kill their children by dashing them against the stones, and rip others from the mothers' wombs." Hazael asked how he could be the author of such distresses? to which the prophet said, "God has declared to me that you are to reign in Syria." Hereupon Hazael departed, and told Adad he should recover of his disorder: but visiting him on the following day, he took a wet cloth*, with which he strangled him, and usurped the government.

C H A P. III.

The ARABIANS ravage ISRAEL. JEHORAM's deplorable Death. He is succeeded by his Son AHAZIAH.

NOT long after the prediction of Elisha concerning Hazael, the Arabians on the confines of Ethiopia, in company with other barbarians, assembled, and forced their way into Jehoram's kingdom. Having laid waste the country as they went, they entered the royal palace, and stripped it, and stabbed all the wives and children of the king, except only his son Ahaziah, who with great difficulty escaped from their rage. This misfortune was succeeded by Jehoram being seized with the disorder which the prophet had predicted, which was so pestilential, that it was justly deemed the consequence of the immediate wrath of God; his bowels daily falling from him in his own view. His subjects even triumphed in his distress, and considered it as due to his execrable wickedness. When he died, his corpse was denied the honour of a royal funeral, for they would not place it in the tomb of his father. His reign was eight years, and his age forty; and Ahaziah his son succeeded him in the government of the people of Judah.

The death of Adad afforded a prospect to Jehoram, king of Israel, of the recovery of Ramoth-Gilead, for which purpose he raised a large army, and marched towards that city. An arrow shot by a Syrian wounding him, on the first attack, he was obliged to retire to Jezreel, to obtain a cure; leaving his army under the command of Jehu, who soon compelled the town to yield. It was Jehoram's intention to wage war against the Syrians, as soon as he should be recovered. In the interim, Elisha dispatched one of the disciples to Ramoth, to anoint Jehu with holy oil, and pronounce

Jehoram
wounded by a
Syrian at Ra-
moth-Gilead.

* He suffocated him with the cloth, which he pretended to lay on his face to cool him. Some copies of our author read a net, and others a coverlid, which commentators endeavour to reconcile by asserting, that the coverlid was made of net-

work. But as the meshes would have given the king room enough to perspire through them, their opinion seems more agreeable to the context who think it was either a coverlid of goat's hair, or else a thick cloth, which would imbibe a large quantity of water.

him

him king, by the divine authority. This messenger was likewise ordered to leave the place with expedition, and to keep his business a secret from every one. Finding Jehu with his officers, he ^{Jehu anointed king.} begged to speak to him in private; and Jehu retiring with him to his closet, was anointed king, with directions to destroy the house of Ahab, and revenge the death of the prophets whom Jezebel had caused to be inhumanly murdered. The messenger said farther, that as Jehoram the son of Nebat, and all the family of Baasha, had fallen sacrifices to their vices, so the whole race of Ahab should be utterly demolished. Having delivered his commission, he retired as privately as possible, and Jehu returned to his officers. These were anxious to know the business of the messenger, whom they thought was not in his senses. "No (said Jehu), he spoke like a madman*." This only excited their curiosity to know the particulars; on which Jehu told them, he had declared him king, by the command of God. Hereupon the officers taking each his cloak, piled them one on another, to form a kind of temporary throne; on which Jehu being seated, they sounded horns and trumpets, congratulated him on his succession, and saluted him as king. At this time Jehoram was at Jezreel, to be cured of the wound he had received at Ramoth: and Ahaziah, his sister's son, was likewise there on a visit to him. Hereupon Jehu marched his army to Jezreel, where he proposed to surprise them both: but he gave strict orders to his soldiers, not to lend the least intelligence to Jehoram, as the test of their loyalty to himself.

^{Jehoram and Ahaziah killed by Jehu.} The army immediately obeyed the orders of Jehu, stationing themselves upon the passes towards Jezreel, and effectually prevented any intelligence being communicated to the enemy. In the mean time, Jehu mounted his chariot, and, being attended by a party of chosen troops, proceeded towards the city. This party being observed by a spy, related his discovery to Jehoram, who immediately ordered a horseman to go up to the party, and learn of whom it was composed. The man obeyed; and upon his making enquiry relative to the state of the army, Jehu ordered him, without concerning himself about the troops, to fall into the rear and join the march. The spy having given notice that the messenger had joined the party which was advancing towards the town, another courier was dispatched, and he was also detained by Jehu: upon which the king mounted his chariot, and being accompanied by his kinsman, Ahaziah, the king of Judah, went forth towards Jehu, who continued his march at a regular and moderate pace. Upon his ar-

rival in the field of Naboth, Jehoram questioned Jehu concerning the situation of his troops. Instead of giving an answer, Jehu said he might boast of an abandoned prostitute, in the person of his mother. Upon this, Jehoram observed to the king of Judah, that it was evident his destruction had been conspired: and as he was providing for his safety by flight, Jehu let fly an arrow, which penetrating his heart, he fell from his chariot; and Jehu recollecting that he had heard Elijah pronounce that Ahab and his whole race should perish in the field which he had usurped from Naboth, ordered Bidkar, who commanded a third part of his forces, to cast the body of Jehoram into that field. Ahaziah apprehending himself to be in danger, turned into a private road, but being pursued and wounded by an arrow which was pointed at him by Jehu, he dismounted from his chariot, took horse, and fled to the city of Megiddo, where he soon fell a victim to the wound he had received. His remains were interred at Jerusalem. He reigned one year, during which period he proved himself to be a man of more iniquitous principles than his predecessor.

CHAP. IV.

Jehu puts JEZEBEL to Death, extirpates the Race of AHAB, with the idolatrous Priests, and demolishes the Temple of BAAL.

^{Death of Jezebel.} WHEN Jehu made his entry into the city of Jezreel, queen Jezebel being sumptuously apparelled, placed herself at a turret window, in order to view the procession; and as he was passing, she said, "A faithful subject that, who kills his sovereign!" This being noticed by Jehu, he demanded who the woman was, and ordered her to descend; but, as she did not comply, he commanded the eunuchs† by whom she was attended, to cast her down. They obeyed: and the walls of the tower, against which she struck in falling, were stained with her blood. Jehu and his followers proceeding to the palace, rode over the body, and trampled it under foot. After having remained a short time in the palace, Jehu gave orders that, from a respect to the exalted station of Jezebel, her domestics should cause her remains to be buried with the honours due to her rank: but only a part of the skull, the palms of her hands, and soles of her feet, could be found, the rest having been devoured by the dogs. This circumstance gave the new king

* The sacred historian (2 Kings, ix. 11.) makes the imputation of madness in the prophet to proceed from the other officers, who inquired of Jehu, "Whence came this mad fellow to thee?" and indeed, the abruptness of his address, the terror painted on his countenance, the haste with which he fled, the general contempt which men of a military life have for the priesthood, joined to the contempt which idolaters have for the prophets of the true God,

might all coincide to make the rest of the captains look on the prophet in this unfavourable light.

† These persons, in the Eastern countries, attended upon queens in their chambers, and, by their great care and diligence, were often promoted to places of great trust and profit; as appears from the Hebrew word, which is sometimes used to signify a great officer of state, who dwells in the palace, and is near the person of the sovereign.

additional veneration towards the prophecies of Elijah, who had foretold that in Jezreel the flesh of Jezebel should be eaten by dogs.

The seventy sons of Ahab resided at this time in Samaria. In order to be convinced of the disposition of the people towards him, Jehu wrote letters to the governors of the young princes, and the principal magistrates of the town, saying, that as they possessed numerous fortified towns, and other places of strength, and were abundantly provided with troops, chariots, and every implement of war, it would be acting a commendable part to select from the youths one who should be most worthy to assume the regal dignity, and under his command to avenge the death of their late sovereign. These letters being taken under consideration, the result was, that it would be a highly impolitic and dangerous procedure, to dispute the power of a man who had already vanquished two powerful kings: they therefore informed Jehu, that they would acknowledge the sovereignty of no other man than himself, and declared that they would implicitly submit to his commands. Jehu wrote again, requiring them, as a testimony of their obedience, to send him the heads and hands of the sons of Ahab. Hereupon

Ahab's seventy sons slain.

a conference was held between the magistrates and the governors of the princes, and they came to a resolution of complying with the requisition of Jehu. He was at supper when intelligence was delivered, that the heads and hands of the princes were arrived: he ordered them to be placed in heaps, one on each side of the palace gate. Going forth the following morning to view them, he said to the multitude, "It is true that I killed the king my master, but by whom have his sons been slain?" He applied himself to convince the people, that the sacrifice of the house of Ahab was agreeable to the will of the Almighty, and the prediction which he had dictated to his prophet. Having put to death all the persons he could discover of the family of Ahab, he departed for Samaria. On his way, he joined company with forty-two of the relations of Ahaziah, king of Jerusalem, who informed him, that the purpose of their journey was to acknowledge allegiance to Jehoram and Ahaziah: for they were ignorant that those princes had been slain by Jehu. He caused all these persons to be put to death. He afterwards met with Jehonadab, a man of strict integrity, who applauded his zealous endeavours for extirminating the race of Ahab. Inviting him to take a place in his chariot, and to accompany him to Samaria, Jehu said he should bear witness, that he would put all the apostates to the only true God to the sword; and that men of virtue derived satisfaction from inflicting a just punishment upon the wicked. They repaired to the city, where Jehu caused the relations of Ahab to be put to death, as fast as they could be discovered. To prevent the escape of the false prophets and idolatrous priests, he suggested the following stratagem; he declared himself determined to observe a more scrupulous attention to the worship of Baal than had been paid by Ahab, and that he meant to

No. 9.

offer a great sacrifice to the idol; on which occasion he required the attendance of the priests and prophets, on the penalty of forfeiting their lives. On the appointed day they assembled at Samaria, and were presented with vestments, in which they habited themselves preparatory to their religious ceremonies. Jehu, accompanied by Jehonadab, repaired to the temple of Baal, and caused all persons to evacuate the building, who were not servants to the idol, under the pretext of not suffering the ceremony to be profaned by the presence of unqualified persons. When the apostates were on the point of commencing their abominable worship, Jehu Baal's priests and worshippers slain. gave a signal to a party of fourscore men, who were stationed near the entrance, upon which they rushed in upon the priests and prophets, and put them all to death. They were enjoined not to spare the lives of either prophets or priests, on pain of being themselves put to death. Further, to purify the city from the most abominable sacrilege, Jehu's men set fire to the royal palace, which was intirely consumed. Baal was the idol of the Syrians, to which Ahab had dedicated an altar, in compliment to his father-in-law, Ithobal, king of Tyre and Sidon; and besides appointing priests and prophets, provided every requisite for their religious ceremonies. Though Jehu still permitted the adoration of the Israelites towards the golden calves, the Almighty, in consideration of the severities he had inflicted upon the apostates, was pleased to intimate, by the agency of a prophet, that his posterity, till the fourth generation, should reign over the people of Israel.

CHAP. V.

ATHALIAH conspires the Destruction of the Line of DAVID. JOASH, the Son of AHAZIAH, is preserved by JEHOIADA, the High-Priest, and anointed King at JERUSALEM.

ATHALIAH, daughter of Ahab, king of Israel, and widow of Jehoram, king of Judah, being informed of the devastation which Jehu had made in the iniquitous family of her father, formed a determination of revenging the deaths of her brother Jehoram, Ahaziah, her son, and other kindred, by so effectually exterminating the line of David, as not to suffer a man to escape her vengeance, who should boast an hereditary claim to the throne of Judah. She accordingly gave orders, that the sons of Ahaziah should be slain: but the nurse of Joash, who was then a year old, concealed the infant among the bodies of his deceased brethren; and upon Jehoshabab, sister of Ahaziah, and wife of Jehoiada, the high-priest, entering the palace, she perceived the child, and secretly conveyed him to her dwelling, and thence into the temple, where, without the circumstance

Athaliah conspires the destruction of Ahaziah's sons and kindred.

X x

cumstance being known to any person except her husband, she carefully nourished him during the six years of Athaliah's reign over the two tribes in Judea*.

Joash anointed
king by Jeho-
iada the high-
priest.

Jehoiada, in the seventh year, produced the child to five captains, and prevailed upon them to unite their endeavours towards investing him with the regal dignity. Having bound themselves by an oath of fidelity and secrecy, the captains departed, in order to summon the priests, Levites, and the principal men of the tribes, in the name of the high-priest, to assemble at Jerusalem. Being arrived, Jehoiada informed them that, on condition of engaging in an oath of secrecy, he would communicate to them a matter of the highest importance to the public weal, wherein he should have occasion to request their assistance. He administered the oath, and then pointing to Joash, said, "Behold your king: he is the only surviving branch of the house of David, whose posterity it was the pleasure of the Almighty to promise should continue to reign over us. It is my advice, that you form yourselves into three parties; one to guard the king in the temple; another to possess themselves of the several avenues to the buildings; and the third to guard the open gate leading to the palace. Such as are unprovided with arms, may follow their inclinations, as to remaining in the temple, or otherwise: but no persons bearing weapons must be admitted to the building, except they be priests." He appointed certain priests and Levites to remain near the king, as the guard of his person, keeping their swords constantly unsheathed, and to let any man who should attempt to force into the temple with arms; and to employ the utmost vigilance towards the personal safety of the new sovereign. The persons assembled on the occasion, unanimously approved the conduct of the high-priest; whose next business was to open a magazine, and deliver to the centurions, priests, and Levites, arrows, lances, and other implements of war, which had been deposited in the temple by David. The arms being distributed, the centurions, priests, and Levites, stationed themselves without the temple, which they intirely surrounded: and as they stood so near as to be able to take each other by the hand, none could obtain admission whom it was judged expedient to exclude. Joash, wearing a royal crown, was now produced; and being anointed with the holy oil, the high-priest, with the usual formalities, proclaimed him king. The ceremony was accompanied with reiterated acclamations; and the persons who attended on the occasion, joined in wishes that Joash might enjoy a long and happy reign, and prove victorious over his enemies.

The shouts of the people reached the palace, and proved terribly alarming to Athaliah, who summoned her guards, and repaired to the temple, where she

gained a ready admittance, but her attendants were not suffered to accompany her. Perceiving Joash seated on the throne, and wearing a crown of royalty, she vehemently called for the usurper to be destroyed. Jehoiada ordered her to be taken into custody, and to be put to death at the brook of Kidron, saying that the temple was not to be polluted, by the blood of a person so abandoned to wickedness. The officers appointed to execute the commission, were directed to put any man to death who should attempt a rescue.

The sentence pronounced by Jehoiada ^{Athaliah slain.} being executed upon Athaliah, he assembled the populace in the temple, and administered the oath of allegiance to the new king. Joash now bound himself under the solemnity of an oath, to a faithful discharge of the religious duties, and a rigid observance of the commandments of God, which had been transmitted to us by Moses. These ceremonies being concluded, the people hastened to the temple, which, with a view to ingratiate themselves in the favour of Ahab, Athaliah, and her husband Jehoram, had built and dedicated to the idol Baal: this building they intirely laid in ruins, and put to death a priest of Baal, named Mattan.

Agreeable to the institution of David, ^{Jehoiada restores the worship of God.} the holy temple of Jerusalem was committed to the care of the priests and Levites; and, according to the law of Moses, Jehoiada appointed a solemn sacrifice and incense to be offered each day: and he selected a number of the Levites, to prevent the temple being polluted by unpurified persons gaining admittance. Joash was now conducted from the temple to the royal palace; and being seated on the throne, was again declared king, amidst the universal shouts and acclamations of the people. The death of Athaliah, and the succession of Joash to the sovereignty, were events so agreeable to the multitude, that they employed several days in feasting and merriment. The mother of Joash was a woman of Beertheba, named Zibiah. During the life of Jehoiada, Joash strictly adhered to the duties of religion and the laws of his country. On his arrival to a state of manhood, he obtained the approbation of the high-priest to espouse two women, by each of whom he had issue.

CHAP. VI.

JEHU dies, and is succeeded in the Government of ISRAEL by his Son, JEHOAHAZ. The Degeneracy of JOASH, who causes ZECHARIAH to be stoned to Death. The Siege of JERUSALEM by HAZAEL. JOASH dies.

* The terrible fate of these royal families cannot be read without horror. The whole offspring of Ahab was cut off for their idolatry, and the kings of Judah having contracted an affinity with the house

of Ahab, were so destroyed by three successive massacres, that there was but one left.

A Desperate war was prosecuted by Hazael, king of Syria, against Jehu, king of the Israelites, in the course of which an immense tract of land, eastward of the Jordan, was laid waste, great havoc was committed upon the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and the cities of Gilead and Batanæa were vanquished and plundered. These places were entirely consumed by fire, and the inhabitants, without distinction of age or sex, were put to the sword: and these enterprises were accomplished with very little opposition on the part of Jehu, who held the religion and laws of God in contempt*. In the twenty-seventh year of his reign over Israel, Jehu died; and his remains were buried at Samaria. Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, succeeded to the throne of Israel.

Degeneracy of the king and people.

After the decease of Jehoiada, Joash, and the principal people of his dominions degenerated into an utter contempt of the holy religion. The Almighty sent prophets to expostulate with them on their abominable apostacy: but the vengeance denounced against them, and the example afforded them in the fate of their predecessors and families, upon whom the judgment of heaven had been inflicted, as a punishment for the enormity of their crimes, were not sufficient to effect a reformation. Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, exhorted the king and the people to repentance, as the means of avoiding the dreadful judgments which would inevitably be the consequence of persisting in their iniquity. The king, regardless of all the services which had been rendered him by his father, caused Zechariah to be stoned to death in the temple. With his dying breath, he appealed to the Almighty, as his judge and witness, that he suffered for having administered good counsel, and for being son of a man who had effectually laboured in the service of the king. Soon after this, Hazael subdued and plundered the city of Gath, and then led his troops towards Jerusalem. Terrified at the approach of the Syrian army, Joash entered into a composition with Hazael, to whom he surrendered the immense treasure contained in the temple, as a consideration for his raising the siege. A short time having elapsed, Joash fell sick; and this circumstance was taken advantage of by the friends of Zechariah, who attacked him by surprise, and took away his life. Joash slain. He lived forty-seven years. He was interred at Jerusalem: but his impious courses had rendered him so obnoxious, that his body was denied a place in the royal sepulchre.

* Strange that a man so jealous of the honour of the Lord of Hosts, as to slay the whole race of Ahab, and utterly destroy all the priests, prophets, and principal worshippers of Baal, should himself depart from the observance of the holy commandment, and as the historian informs us, should hold the laws of God in contempt, and become a worshipper of stocks and stones.

† This was an information by action, whereby the prophet informed the king of the victory he should gain over the Assyrians, to console him on account of his own approaching death. His shooting the arrow eastward, was explained by the prophet to sig-

C H A P. VII

JOASH succeeded by his Son AMAZIAH. JEHOAH AZ obtains the divine Assistance against HAZAEL. JOASH, the Son of JEHOAH AZ, becomes King. The Destruction of the ASSYRIANS foretold by ELISHA. HAZAEL dying, the Kingdom of SYRIA descends to ADAD; his Son.

THE government of Judah descended to Joash, from his father Amaziah; and when Joash had reigned Amaziah succeeds his father Joash. twenty-one years, Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, began a reign, which lasted seventeen years, over the people of Israel, in Samaria. His conduct was very different from that of his father, since, by his disregard to every thing that was praise-worthy, he imitated the worst of his ancestors. In the interim, the great force of the king of Syria, who had over-run many of his cities, and destroyed numbers of the inhabitants, was reduced to ten thousand foot, and five hundred horse. Elisha had predicted this misfortune to the Israelites, in informing Hazael that he should destroy his lord, and take on himself the government of Damascus and Syria. At this unhappy period, Jehoiada humbled himself before the Lord, intreating relief from the oppressions of Hazael; and God being pleased to hear his prayers, peace and happiness were restored to his dominions.

Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, succeeded to the government of Israel and Samaria, Joash, king of Israel, visits Elisha. in the thirty-seventh year of the reign of his name-sake Joash, king of Judah. He reigned sixteen years, and was in all respects the reverse of his father, being a man of most exemplary character. At this time, Elisha, the prophet, was very old; and being on his death-bed, Joash made him a visit, wept over him, and treated him as the father and friend of his country. He said, that while the prophet lived, his prayers and predictions would defend them against their enemies, to whose mercy he should be left when he was departed: "Wherefore (said he) I would rather die with you, than live without you."

The prophet was much affected with this generous sorrow, and ordering a bow and arrows, bid the king shoot them†. After shooting three times, he left off; on which the prophet said, if more shafts had been discharged, he should have over-run the whole kingdom of Syria; but as he had shot only thrice, he should gain three

Emblematical prediction of the prophet.

nify his deliverance from the Syrians; and his ordering him to shoot the other arrows against the ground, had not the king been very dull of apprehension, or very far gone in infidelity, must have been understood by him to signify a repetition of these victories. To stop, therefore, when he knew beforehand what this action meant, was an instance of the highest degree of supineness; and, as such, justly excited the indignation of the prophet, who could not but grieve at the calamities which threatened his country, on account of the incredulity or remissness of their king.

victories

victories over them, in which the lands they had taken from his father, should be recovered. Hereupon the king left Elisha, who soon afterwards died. The prophet was highly celebrated for the uprightness of his character, and the many miracles he wrought, an account of which is still preserved on the records of the Hebrews. He was buried in a most magnificent manner, agreeable to the merit of so illustrious a man. A little time afterwards some thieves having murdered a traveller, threw the body into the tomb of the prophet; but it had no sooner touched him, than the man came to life. Thus his miracles lasted even after his death.

Death of Hazael.

The death of Hazael soon happening, the son of Adad succeeded of course to the government of Syria; and Joash now obtained three victories over him, by which the Israelites recovered the country of Syria, as Elisha had foretold. Jeroboam succeeded to the government, on the death of Joash his father.

C H A P. VIII.

The AMALEKITES, EDMITES, and GABILITES, defeated by AMAZIAH. He is conquered and taken Prisoner by JOASH. He saves his Life by giving up JERUSALEM. He is murdered by his Subjects, and succeeded by his Son UZZIAH.

Character of Amaziah king of Judah.

AMAZIAH was advanced to rule over the tribe of Judah, in Jerusalem, in the reign of Joash king of Israel. Jehoaddan, a native of Jerusalem, was his mother. From his youth he was remarkable for his love of integrity; and the first thing he did was to punish the murderers of his father, who were all brought to justice; but he punished not their children; following herein the sentiments of Moses, who held it wrong to chastise children for the crimes of their parents. Amaziah now enlisted, and appointed centurions over such of the men of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, as were about twenty years of age. Having determined to wage war against the Amalekites, Edomites, and Gabilites, he agreed to pay one hundred talents of silver to the king of the Israelites, for twenty thousand of his forces. When he was ready to march against his enemies, a prophet advised him to discharge the Israelites, for they were an abandoned people, whose destruction would attend that of those who were concerned with them; besides, with God's help, his own army was sufficient to destroy his enemies. As the king had already paid for his forces, he did not much like this advice; but being resolved to submit to the will of God, as expressed by the prophet, he dismissed them, saying, "he would freely

give that as a bounty, which had been received as wages." When these troops were gone, he advanced with his own forces, and conquered his enemies, ten thousand of whom he killed in one battle, and drove the other ten thousand to the extremity of a mountain which overlooks Arabia, down which they were thrown, and killed; after which, Amaziah returned with immense treasure. In the interim, the twenty thousand discharged troops were so enraged at the rejection of their services, that they invaded the king's dominions, wasted the country quite to Bethsemer, killed three thousand of the inhabitants, and drove off great numbers of cattle.

This victory so elevated Amaziah, that he forgot the God of battle, and departed to the worship of the idols of the Amalekites. Hereupon the prophet went to him, and expressed his astonishment at his worshipping those gods, who, so far from protecting others, were unable to defend themselves, but were carried, with the rest of the booty, by the Hebrews to Jerusalem. The king bade him say no more, at his peril; to which the prophet only replied, that he would desert; but that the vengeance of heaven would be the certain consequence of such a horrid superstition.

Notwithstanding this, Amaziah was so flushed with his late success, that, regardless of the intervention of Providence, he wrote to Joash, king of the Israelites, a letter, requiring such submission from him and his people, as had heretofore been paid to David and Solomon, his ancestors; and threatened that the sword should decide the difference, in case of refusal. To this haughty letter, Joash sent an answer to the following purport: "A thistle that grew on mount Lebanon lent, on a certain time, to a cyprus-tree growing on the same spot, saying, give thy daughter in marriage to my son: on which a wild beast trod the thistle to the ground*. Learn hence to lower your ambition, nor aim at things so much above you. Be cautious lest your pride, on having conquered the Amalekites, should lead you to such actions as may produce the loss of your kingdom and life."

Amaziah was now much more enraged than before, and Providence leaving him to the influence of his own passions, he prepared for battle: the forces were drawn up on each side; but the troops of Amaziah no sooner saw the enemy, than they precipitately fled, and left the king to be taken prisoner. The opponents refused him quarter, but on the condition that the gates of Jerusalem should be thrown open to them. Necessity and the fear of death prevailed; and a breach of three hundred cubits wide being made in the wall, Joash entered the city in a triumphal chariot, with Amaziah his prisoner preceding him. Joash having

Lapses into idolatry.

Sends a haughty challenge to Joash.

He is defeated, and taken prisoner, by Joash, who takes Jerusalem and plunders the temple.

* This is a very significant allegory, in which Joash, under the figure of a thistle (a low, contemptible weed, but greatly elevated on account of some accidental advantages), intimates what would cer-

tainly be the fate of Amaziah, if he continued to provoke a prince of his strength and power.—His refusing to follow this advice, soon afterwards proved his ruin.

Engraved for D^r. BRADSHAW'S New Edition of JOSEPHUS



*A Person infatuated being thrown into the Tomb of Elisha,
immediately receives, on touching the reliques of the prophet.*

made prize of the gold, silver, holy utensils, and other treasure found in the palace and temple, gave the king his liberty, and retired with his booty to Samaria. It was in the fourteenth year of the reign of Amaziah that this misfortune happened to Jerusalem, the people of which conspiring against him, he fled to Lachish; but thither they pursued, and destroyed him. His body being carried to Jerusalem, was interred with regal honours. Thus ended the life of a king, who owed his misfortunes to his departure from the true religion. He died at the age of fifty-one, having governed twenty-nine years; and Uzziah, his son, succeeded to the throne.

CHAP. IX.

UZZIAH's Victories. His Departure from God, and Punishment. He is succeeded by his Son JONATHAN. ZECHARIAH, killed by SHALLUM, who seizes the Government, SHALLUM killed by MANAHM, and is succeeded by his Son PEKAHIAH. He is murdered by PEKAH, who reigns in his stead, and is invaded by TIGLATH-PILESER. JOTHAM, King of JUDAH; a pious Prince, in whose Reign the Destruction of NINEVEH, and the ASSYRIAN Empire, is foretold by NAHUM.

Reign of Jeroboam over Israel.

JEROBOAM, the son of Joash, became king of Israel in the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah. He reigned forty years, and held his court in the palace of his forefathers, at Samaria. He was addicted to idolatry, and was of a mind utterly depraved; and many were the judgments against the Israelites, in consequence of his wicked course of life. The prophet Jonah had predicted of him, that he should conquer the Syrians, and extend his dominions to the city of Hamath northwards, and southward to the lake Asphaltites, which had been formerly allowed by Joshua as the bounds of the land of Canaan. This prophecy related Jeroboam, that he seized from the Syrians the lands thus described, and annexed them to his own dominions; thereby verifying the prophet's prediction.

Jonah was instructed by God to go to Nineveh, and there to preach destruction to that wicked city, and the kingdom: but, unwilling to be the author of such bad news, he took his passage at Joppa, on board a ship which was bound to Tarshish, in Cilicia. During the voyage, the wind blew so tempestuously, that the commander, seamen, and even the pilot, despaired of ever making land. While some of the crew were at prayers, and others labouring to save the ship, it was observed that Jonah lay on his face, without lending any assistance. The storm becoming more violent, it was conceived that this judgment arose from the guilt of some person on board, and they agreed to cast lots to discover the offender. This being done, the lot fell on Jonah;

No. 9.

upon which they enquired who and what he was; to which he answered, "I am an Hebrew, and a prophet of God; but I have occasioned this storm, and you must throw me overboard, if you mean to save yourselves and the ship." At first they thought it extremely inhuman, thus to devote to certain destruction a man who had put himself under their care; but at length his authority, their own fears, and the urgent necessity of the case (for the ship was just sinking), determined them to cast him overboard; and on that moment the storm subsided. We are farther told, that he was swallowed by a great fish, which threw him up, three days afterwards, alive, and unhurt, on the coast of the Euxine Sea*. The prophet having besought and procured God's pardon for disobeying his commands, proceeded to Nineveh; where having exalted himself so as to be properly heard, he foretold that the empire of Asia was nearly at a period: and departed, when he had thus fulfilled his commission.

Uzziah, on the day of a solemn festival, having clothed himself in the dress of a priest, went to the temple, to offer incense on the golden altar; on which, the high-priest, Azariah, and eighty other priests, hastily repairing to the temple, protested against such an assumption of the sacerdotal rights, which had ever been the peculiar privilege of the priests of the house of Aaron. Azariah enjoined him to desist from such profanity; but the king bidding them depart, at their peril, an earthquake shook the temple, and opened the roof of it, through which a sun-beam darting, struck the impious prince with leprosy. Another miracle succeeded this: not far to the west of the city, at a place called Eroge, the same earthquake divided a mountain in the middle, and part of it rolling half a mile, stopped on the east side of an opposite mountain, closed up the highway, and covered the royal gardens with part of its contents. The king being a leper, the priests advised him to depart the city, as one unfit for society; and his spirit was so broken by his illness, that he obeyed them. His son Jotham assumed the government, and the king having languished awhile in retirement, died, and was buried in his gardens, in a tomb erected on the occasion. He reigned near fifty-two years, and was near sixty-eight years of age.

About this time, Shallum, son of Jabesh, a domestic of Zechariah, king of the Israelites, murdered his master, before he had reigned seven months, and assumed the government: but news hereof reaching Menahem, who commanded an army at Tirzah, he marched to Samaria, when Shallum had governed only thirty days, routed him in battle, put him to the sword, and appropriated to himself the ensigns of royalty. Menahem returned with his army to Tirzah, but the citizens refusing him

Uzziah, for usurping the office of high-priest, is smitten with leprosy.

Shallum murders Zechariah, and usurps the government; but is slain by Menahem, who succeeds to the throne.

* Josephus was mistaken as to the place, as is proved by Bochart, a learned and respectable historian.

admittance, he ravaged the adjacent country, and, with unheard-of cruelty, caused all the men, women, and children, to be destroyed: and his reign of ten years over Israel, was of a piece with this commencement. Soon after the above massacre, Pul, king of Assyria, threatened to invade him; but he compounded the matter, by paying a thousand talents of silver, at the rate of fifty shekels a head. This prince was buried at Samaria, and succeeded by his son Pekahiah, whose inhuman disposition equalled that of his father. When Pekahiah had reigned two years, he was murdered at a public feast by Pekah, son of Remaliah, who reigned about twenty years, and died with a character equally distinguished by his impiety to God, and his want of common justice to his fellow-creatures.

Pekahiah slain by Pekah, who reigns in his stead.

The Israelites captivated by the Syrians.

Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, made incursions on the Israelites during the reign of the above-mentioned Pekah, and having conquered the land of Gilead, the country beyond Jordan, and the adjacent part of Galilee, with Assora, and Cydida, made captives of the inhabitants, whom he conveyed to his own country*.

Jotham, a pious and virtuous sovereign over Judah.

The tribe of Judah, in Jerusalem, was now governed by Jotham, the son of Uzziah, by Jerusalem, a native of the city. This prince was distinguished by his devotion, justice, and public spirit. He rectified all abuses, and kept every thing in proper order. The galleries and porches of the temple were repaired by him, and the city walls prevented from going to decay. He built large and strong towers; subjected the Ammonites to the payment of one hundred talents, and thirty thousand measures of wheat and barley annually. He raised his kingdom to a state of splendor; and while his people were dreaded abroad, they were happy at home.

Nahum's prophecy.

The prophet Nahum, who lived in this king's reign, predicted the destruction of Nineveh, and the Assyrian empire, in words to this purpose: "Nineveh shall resemble a fish-pool, the waters of which are agitated by a violent wind. The storm shall occasion the people to fly, and cry one to another, Take with you your gold and silver; but this will be disregarded, as life shall be held more valuable than riches. Divided in sentiments, they shall run weeping and lamenting among each other, their knees trembling under them, and despair in their countenances. They shall ask what will become of the habitations of the lions, and the dams of the lions whelps; and the Lord shall reply, that Nineveh shall be cut off from the face of the earth, and the devastations of the wild beasts she has sent into the world shall cease." This prophecy was fulfilled at the end of one hundred and fifteen years.

* This was the second captivity or deportation of the Israelites, the first being made by Pul, who carried away the two tribes and a half, situated beyond Jordan. The king of Assyria carried away

Ahaz succeeded to the throne of his father Jotham, who died in the sixteenth year of his reign, and the forty-first of his age. Ahaz was distinguished by his imitating the kings of Israel in their idolatry, and by his violation of the laws of his country, beyond any prince who had preceded him. He raised altars in Jerusalem, on which he sacrificed to idols, and even offered his son, as a burnt-offering, according to the custom of the Canaanites; and committed other acts equally atrocious. During this conduct, Rezin king of Damascus, and Pekah king of the Israelites, uniting their armies, marched and besieged Jerusalem; which, however, was so fortified, that they were compelled to desist from the attack.

Infamous character of Ahaz, who succeeds his father.

In the mean time, the king of Syria took possession of the city of Elath, near the Red Sea, destroyed all the inhabitants, and supplied their places by a colony of Syrians. Soon afterwards he seized on several castles and fortresses, slaughtered the Hebrews in a dreadful manner, acquired great plunder, and then retreated to Damascus with his victorious army. The king of Jerusalem having learnt that the Syrians were departed, advanced his army against the king of Israel: but such was the displeasure of God against him for his impiety, that he lost one hundred and twenty thousand men in the battle; in which, Amiah, the son of Ahaz, fell in personal contest with Zechariah, general of the Israelites; who likewise killed Azica, captain of the guards, and took prisoner Elkanah, general of the Hebrew forces.

C H A P. X.

SYRIA laid waste; REZIN, King of DAMASCUS, killed, and the Place taken. AHAAZ dies, and is succeeded by his Son, HEZEKIAH. PEKAH killed, and the Kingdom seized by HOSEA; who is made tributary to SALMANEZER. The Worship of GOD restored by HEZEKIAH, by whom the PHILISTINES are conquered.

AHAZ being now reduced to demand help towards carrying on the war, sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser, king of the Assyrians, with sumptuous gifts and offers of large sums of money, on the condition of his aiding him against the Israelites, and the people of Damascus and Syria. That prince immediately marched to the assistance of Ahaz, and in conjunction with him ravaged Syria, possessed himself of Damascus, and stabbed Rezin, the king thereof. He sent the inhabitants of Damascus to Upper Media; and filled the place with his own subjects. The land of the

The Assyrians assist Ahaz.

the golden calf which Jeroboam set up at Bethel; the other in Dan was taken away by Pul, when he invaded Galilee, in which province that city stood.

Israelites

Israelites was in great measure depopulated, and immense numbers of prisoners taken. This being done, Ahaz seized the gold and silver in the royal treasury, and in the temple, together with the rich presents, and carried the whole to Damascus, where he delivered it to the king of Assyria, in gratitude for his assistance, and returned to Jerusalem.

His shameful
departure
from the true
worship.

Ahaz was so destitute of all sense of true religion, that he worshipped the gods of the Syrians, in the hope of their favouring his arms; on the contrary, when he had been overcome, he paid adoration to the Assyrians' gods; so that any kind of idolatry was equal to him; but he despised the worship of the true God, according to the religion of his forefathers*, which brought on him the vengeance of heaven. Such was his contempt for the worship of the true God, that having robbed the temple of all its most valuable effects, he ordered the doors to be kept fast, to prevent others from offering up their devotions there.

Death of
Ahaz.

After a continued course of impiety, he died in the sixteenth year of his reign, aged thirty-six years, and was succeeded by his son Hezekiah. At this period, by the treachery of Hosea, a favourite at court, Pekah, king of Israel, was deprived of his government and life, Hosea continuing nine years in possession of his usurped authority. His life and conduct proved that he believed not in God, and was one of the most abandoned of men. Being attacked by Salmanezer, king of the Assyrians, he was conquered, and obliged to become tributary, being rejected by that God whom he had despised.

Hezekiah
succeeds Ahaz
his father, and effects a
thorough re-
formation in
religion.

Hezekiah became king of Jerusalem in the fourth year of Hosea's reign. He was a prince of superior abilities, and celebrated for his regard to equity and piety. On his first advancement to the throne, he determined to adjust the great business of religion; and thereupon summoning his priests and Levites, he addressed them to the following purport: "It is unnecessary for me to remind you of the misfortunes consequent on my father's sins, in your refusing the worship due to God, and uniting with him in the adoration of his idols: but as experience hath now taught you, how dreadful a thing it is to trifle with heaven, I recommend that all past failings may be buried in oblivion; that you, and the priests, and the Levites, cleanse yourselves from former pollutions; then opening the doors of the holy place, purify it by sacrifices and consecrations; on which you may hope for future prosperity, as well as present pardon." The royal advice was so acceptable, that the priests immediately repaired to the temple, which they stripped of its impurities, prepared their

holy vessels, and placed sacrifices on the altar, agreeable to the custom of the Jews. In the interim, the king dispatched messengers throughout his territories to demand the attendance of the people to the feast of the unleavened bread, which, through the impiety of former kings, had been long neglected. The messengers also warned the Israelites to cease all superstitious worship, and return to that of the God of truth; promising, in the king's name, that they should be equally free as his own people, to pass to and from this feast: they were also told that their interests, rather than that of the king, gave rise to this invitation, and it was hoped they would find their advantage in it. The Israelites, however, treated the messengers with contempt, and insulted the prophets; who recommended a return to their duty, and told them what misery would result from their disobedience: nay, they even seized and put to death several of the prophets, and proceeded from one impiety to another, till the vengeance of God yielded them up a prey to their enemies, as will be hereafter seen. Of the tribes of Zebulon, Manasseh, and Issachar, however, multitudes attended to the words of the prophets, and repaired to Hezekiah, at Jerusalem, to offer up their devotions.

His message
to the Israel-
ites treated
with disdain.

The concourse being assembled, the king, accompanied by the princes and people, proceeded to the temple, where Hezekiah offered, of bulls, rams, and goats, seven each, on his own account. Having first placed his hands on the heads of the beasts, the priests cut their throats, and then burnt without dividing them; while the Levites made a circle, and sang divine hymns to musical instruments, the other priests forming the chorus. This ended, both king and people worshipped God with their faces bowed to the ground. Exclusive hereof, the king sacrificed seventy bullocks, a hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; and likewise gave, as a feast for the multitude, six hundred bullocks, and three thousand other cattle. The priests having ended their ceremonies, the king and people feasted together, and combined in the praise of God.

Offerings in
the temple
revived.

Now approached the feast of unleavened bread; and during the preparation for it, sacrifices were made for seven days, and Hezekiah gave the multitude two thousand bulls, and seven thousand cattle of various kinds. The king's example was followed by the princes, who gave a thousand bulls, and fourteen hundred other cattle; so that so sumptuous a treat had not been known since the days of Solomon.

Feast of un-
leavened
bread.

This festival being ended, and Jerusalem being purified from the idols which had disgraced its wor-

* The covenant which God had made with his people was, that he should be their tutelary deity and king; but not worshipped in the same manner as the tutelary deities of the neighbouring nations, who adored the tutelary gods of other nations in conjunction with their own. On the contrary, the God of Israel restrained all their worship to himself by express laws, and still strengthened this part of

their constitution by assuming the character of their king; for as the separate characters of king and God centered in one object, they could not be guilty of idolatry without being guilty of rebellion at the same time. So admirable was the constitution of the theocracy, under which the Israelites were!

Hezekiah
purges Jeru-
salem of idols.

ship, a general purification took place throughout all the country. Hezekiah now ordered daily sacrifices to be offered out of his own possessions, and directed the people to present tenths and first-fruits to the priests and Levites; so that their attendance on the altar was not interrupted by other affairs. He likewise built granaries and store-houses, in which corn and fruit were kept for the use of them and their families: so that all things began now to run in the ancient channel.

His success
against the
Philistines.

After this restoration of good order, Hezekiah waged war against the Philistines, and united to his own dominions all their cities from Gath to Gaza. In the interim the king of Assyria required the tribute of him which had been heretofore paid to his father, and threatened an invasion in case of refusal: but Hezekiah paid no regard to these threats; relying on the mercy of Heaven, the consciousness of his own integrity, and the assistance of the prophet Isaiah, whom he knew would inform him of such things as were to come to pass.

C H A P. XI.

SAMARIA taken by SALMANAZAR, who ravages the Kingdom of ISRAEL, takes King HOSEA Prisoner, and transplants the People. A Colony of CHUTHITES placed in ISRAEL.

Capture of
Samaria, by
Salmanazer,
who ravages
the country,
and takes
Hosea
prisoner.

IN the seventh year of Hosea, king of Israel, Salmanezer, king of Assyria, having learnt that Hosea was combined against him with So, king of Egypt, he advanced his army against the city of Samaria, which, having resisted his attacks for more than two years, was taken by assault, in the seventh year of the reign of Hezekiah, king of Jerusalem. The kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the capture of this place, Hosea being taken prisoner, and the inhabitants removed into Media and Persia: Salmanezer bringing people from the borders of Chuthah, a river of Persia, to supply the place of the Israelites in the land of Samaria.

* The main cause of these calamities is very properly accounted for by the sacred penman, who observes (2 Kings xvii. 14.), that they did not believe in the Lord their God; or, in other words, they did not believe the prophets of the Lord, when they foretold them the consequences of their sins; for they never rejected his worship entirely, but worshipped him in conjunction with idols.

† The transplanting these people into the dominions of the Israelites, occasioned a corrupt mixture of religions; for the sacred historian, (see 2 Kings xvii. 29, 30, 31.) inform us, that "every nation made gods of their own; there were, Succoth-benoth, Nergal, Nibhez, and Tartak.

As the words Succoth-benoth signify the tabernacle of daughters, they probably refer to those infamous places in which young women prostituted themselves in honour of the goddesses Mylete, or Venus. Cuth was a province of Assyria, and perhaps the same which Moses tells us is encompassed by the river Gihon, and therefore the same with

Captivity of
the ten tribes
of Israel.

It was about nine hundred and forty-seven years from their departure from Egypt, eight hundred from the time of Joshua, and two hundred and forty from Rehoboam's revolt, that the ten tribes were thus translated. Such was the wretched fate of a people, who disdained subjection to the laws, and despised the admonitions of the prophets, who forewarned them that a continued course of impiety would certainly end in their ruin*. These misfortunes arose from the revolt of the Israelites, and their advancing to the regal dignity Jeroboam, who setting up idolatry in defiance of the laws of God, and inducing his people to follow such a bad example, justly provoked the wrath of the Almighty. The above-named Salmanezer, who ransacked and triumphed over all Syria and Phœnicia, is mentioned by Menander, in his history of the Tyrians.

The Chuthites in Samaria being plagued for their idolatry, send for an Israelitish priest.

The people newly planted in Samaria were called Chuthites†, from the river Chuthah in Persia, whence they were brought by Salmanezer. They consisted of five nations, each worshipping their own gods, which they brought with them: on which the wrath of heaven descended on them for their idolatry, and afflicted them with a pestilence that nearly destroyed them. All human methods of relief being fruitless, the Oracle advised them to pay adoration to the true God, as the only means of having their evils redressed. Hereupon they dispatched messengers to the king of Assyria, entreating him that some of the priests, who had been made prisoners with the Israelites, might be sent to them. This was complied with; and on the arrival of the priests, the Chuthites desired them to read the law of Moses, which they did, and likewise expounded it, shewing the reasonableness of the worship: whereupon the Chuthites began the study and practice of the true religion, and the plague ceased in a short time. The Hebrews still call these people Chuthites, but Samaritans is the name they bear among the Greeks. They are a most unprincipled people, still adapting their conduct to the change of circumstances. When the Jews are in a prosperous situation, they claim a kindred to them; but when misfortunes surround them, they say, "We are strangers, who came from a distant country, and have no connections with you."

the country which the Greeks call Susiana; and which is, to this day, called by the inhabitants Chusistan. With regard to the god Nergal, we may infer that, as the word *ner* signifies a lamp, these Chuthites, who were afterwards called Persians, adored fire; and, we are informed that, in honour to the sun, they kept a perpetual flame burning on their altars. The city here mentioned was situated in a province of Syria, lying on the Orontes. But what idol is here meant by the word *Asinna*? As it is well known that the Syrians adored the sun, and as *asuman*, or *surman*, in the Persian language, signifies heaven, it is probable that the Syrians derived from thence the name of their god, who was represented by a large stone pillar, of a conical or pyramidal form, the hieroglyphic of fire. *Nibhas*, or *nibhasar*, both in the Hebrew and Chaldee, with a small variation, denote quick, swift, rapid, &c. and *tartak*, in the same language, signifies a chariot.

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The DESTRUCTION of SAMARIA.

B O O K X.

HISTORICAL OCCURRENCES from the YEAR of the WORLD 3224 to 3425.

C H A P. I.

SENNACHERIB leads a powerful Army towards JERUSALEM, and besieges it. The Prophet ISAIAH assures HEZEKIAH of the Assistance of the Almighty.

Jerusalem besieged by the Assyrian army.

SENNACHERIB, king of Assyria, in the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah, having subdued all the cities of Judah and Benjamin, led his army towards Jerusalem, whence an embassy was dispatched to propose terms of accommodation, and to offer him tribute. He accepted the proposals, and bound himself with the solemnity of an oath to decline hostilities, on condition of being paid thirty talents of gold and three hundred of silver. Hezekiah paid the stipulated sum, in confidence that the enemy would evacuate his dominions: but, regardless of the treaty which he had sworn to observe, he appointed his lieutenant general Rabshaketh, with Tharata and Anacharis, to direct the war against Jerusalem, himself taking the lead of an army against the Egyptians and Ethiopians. The commissioners who had been deputed by Sennacherib, having caused the camp to be removed within sight of the walls of Jerusalem, dispatched a courier to demand a parley with Hezekiah. Judging it unsafe to go in person, he ordered Eliakim, his deputy-governor, and Shebna and Joah, the keepers of the records, to repair to the Assyrian army. Rabshaketh, in a peremptory voice, bade them enquire of their master, wherefore he had presumed to dispute admitting the army into the city, and hesitated to acknowledge submission to the great and powerful Sennacherib. He said that Egypt was not in a condition to withstand the Assyrian army, and therefore if Hezekiah flattered himself in the hope of assistance from that quarter, he would be deceived; for he would be trusting to a broken reed*, which would wound the hand that pressed it. He desired them to inform Hezekiah, that the present expedition was undertaken by the direction of the Lord, who had already granted Sennacherib a complete victory over the Israelites, and would certainly render him equally successful in the war against Jerusalem. Rabshaketh spoke in Hebrew, in which language he was well versed; and Eliakim, apprehending that his address being gene-

Rabshaketh's insolent speech to the Jews.

rally understood might have an unfavourable effect upon the multitude, requested him to proceed in the Syriac tongue: but being apprised of the motive on which a change of language was advised, he exalted his voice, and continued his harangue in Hebrew.

The purport of his discourse being communicated to Hezekiah, he cloathed himself in sackcloth, according to the custom of the country, to denote his humiliation, and falling prostrate on the ground, fervently prayed for the assistance and protection of the Lord. He charged a number of his select friends to accompany some of the priests to the prophet Isaiah, whom they were to entreat to exert his endeavours, by prayers and sacrifices, for obtaining the assistance and protection of the Almighty, and for humbling the power and pride of the enemy. Isaiah yielded to the request made to him on the part of Hezekiah; and was authorized by the Oracle to declare to him that, without proceeding to an engagement, the Assyrians should be compelled to make a shameful retreat, with the loss of a considerable part of the army: that Sennacherib should not succeed in the war against the Egyptians; and that, on returning to his kingdom, he should die by the hands of his two sons.

Hezekiah, in an humble manner, craves the divine aid.

At this time Hezekiah received letters from the king of Assyria, expostulating on the dangerous policy of attempting to maintain a defence against a monarch who had reduced so many warlike nations to subjection, and menacing a general slaughter of men, women, and children, if the gates of the city were not thrown open to his army. Hezekiah having reposed an absolute confidence in the truth and power of the Almighty, paid no regard to these letters, which he folded up and laid in the temple. He continued to offer up supplications in favour of the people, till the return of Isaiah, who reported to him the following answer: "That his petition having prevailed, no injury was to be apprehended from the enemy; and that the period was approaching, when the people would be restored to the peaceful enjoyment of their possessions."

Sennacherib's threatening message to Hezekiah.

The king of Assyria, on his return from the war in Egypt, found, that in the night after the siege had been commenced against Jerusalem, his army had sustained

Judicial pestilence in Sennacherib's army.

* This comparison is excellently adapted to denote an ally, that is not only weak and unable to help, but also dangerous to those who rely on him for succour: and his representing the power of
No. 10.

Egypt to be as brittle as the reeds growing on the banks of the Nile (for to these doubtless the Syrian orator alludes), is a great beauty in the similitude.

a dreadful havock; general officers, tribunes, and private soldiers, amounting to one hundred and eighty thousand, having fallen a sacrifice to the judicial vengeance of heaven*. Sennacherib considered the pestilence as an effect of the divine wrath; and dreading that the mortality would prevail among his remaining people, he led them with the utmost expedition to the city of Nineveh, at which place he held his court. Some time after his return, he was murdered in the temple dedicated to the idol Arascus, by Adramelek, and Sharezar, his two eldest sons, who took refuge in Armenia. Esarhaddon, the third son of Sennacherib, succeeded to the throne.

CHAP. II.

The Life of HEZEKIAH prolonged for Fifteen Years. A Treaty of Alliance concluded between BALAD, King of BABYLON, and HEZEKIAH. ISAIAH predicts the Captivity of the ISRAELITES, and the Calamities to be inflicted upon HEZEKIAH and his Posterity. HEZEKIAH dies.

Hezekiah's dangerous sickness.

CONSCIOUS that his preservation had been effected by the intervention of Divine Providence, in causing a judicial plague to prevail in the Assyrian army, Hezekiah now humbled himself in prayer and thanksgivings to God. While he was occupied in this holy business, he was afflicted with so grievous a distemper, that his physicians entertained no expectation of his recovery; and, in this extremity, he fervently prayed to the Lord to prolong his life till he should become the father of a son, to whom the sovereignty might be transmitted. On the consideration that being destitute of an heir to the government, proved the source of greater affliction than he experienced from being deprived of the grandeur and other advantages of a throne, the Almighty accepted his supplications, and commissioned the prophet Isaiah to assure him, that his afflictions should be removed in three days; that fifteen years should be added to his life, and that he should beget a son who should succeed him in the government. The message from the Lord was of so extraordinary a nature, that Hezekiah could not avoid entertaining a doubt of its authenticity; and he therefore desired the prophet to afford a proof of the divine commission by the performance of some miracle. Being asked what evidence he required, the king said, that the moving of the shadow on his dial ten degrees backwards, would give him perfect satisfaction. This prodigy was wrought, and Hezekiah being soon afterwards restored to perfect health, re-

* This tremendous act forced him to retreat with shame and confusion, and made it visible to all the nations, especially to the Jews, that JEHOVAH was a God "mighty in strength and excellent in

paired to the temple, where he devoutly prayed to, and worshipped God.

About this period the Medes obtained a conquest over the Assyrian empire. Balad, the king of Babylon, dispatched ambassadors charged with presents for Hezekiah, to whom they were authorized to propose terms of alliance. These ambassadors were graciously received, and after Hezekiah had magnificently entertained them, shewn them his armoury, and the immense treasures which he possessed in gold and silver, he dismissed them with gifts of value for king Balad. Isaiah questioned Hezekiah respecting the ambassadors; and he answered, that they had been sent to him by the king of Babylon, and that he had shewn them the treasures of his palace, that they might be enabled to make a just report of his wealth and power to their master. Upon this, the prophet said, "I am commissioned to inform you, that in a short time your treasures shall be conveyed to Babylon; and that many of your posterity are destined, after being deprived of virility, to serve as eunuchs in the court of Babylon. These events will inevitably transpire, for they have been predicted by the Lord." This information deeply afflicted Hezekiah, both on his own account and on that of his family: and he said, that since the judgment of heaven could not be averted, he had only to supplicate, that he might pass the remainder of his life in a state of tranquillity. Isaiah and twelve other prophets faithfully committed their predictions to writing, that posterity might be convinced of their acting under the sanction of the divine commission. Hezekiah died in the five and fiftieth year of his age, and in the twenty-ninth year of his sovereignty.

Concludes an alliance with Balad king of Babylon.

Death of Hezekiah.

CHAP. III.

The Iniquity of MANASSEH, the Son and Successor of HEZEKIAH. The King of BABYLON conquers JUDEA, and takes MANASSEH Prisoner; but upon his Repentance, he restores him to his Government. The Death of MANASSEH, who is succeeded by his Son AMON. In the Second Year of his Reign, AMON is murdered, and his Son JOSIAH is proclaimed King.

MANASSEH succeeded his father Hezekiah in the government; his mother's name was Hephzipah, a native of Jerusalem. This prince acted on principles directly opposite to those of his father. Influenced by the pernicious example of those around him, and open to the flattery of sycophants, who were averse to the refor-

Manasseh's wicked reign.

power;" that he was truly, what he styled himself, "The Lord of hosts;" and that "there was no other god that could deliver after this sort."

mation

mation established by his pious predecessor, he rushed into the commission of the most daring impieties, and those abominable idolatries for which the Hebrews were on many occasions severely punished. He even dared to profane the holy temple. He barbarously persecuted men of the most exemplary piety; and the very prophets were sacrificed to his insatiable lust of blood; scarcely a day passing, whereon some of these pious men were not made victims of his cruelty. The Almighty sent prophets to exhort the king and the people to repent of their crimes, on the penalty of suffering punishments equal to what had been inflicted upon their brethren, the Israelites. These admonitions were treated with contempt; and the king and people of Judæa continuing to pursue their usual courses of iniquity, the Almighty was pleased to stir up against him a powerful enemy in the king of Babylon and Chaldæa, whose forces obtained a complete victory over Manasseh, who was surprised and made a prisoner of war. His dominions being ravaged, and himself at the mercy of the conqueror, this unhappy prince fervently supplicated the Almighty to cause his enemy to treat him with clemency and tenderness. The Lord, in commiseration of his sufferings, listened to his prayers: and, after some time had elapsed, the king of Babylon restored him to his throne.

He repents, is pardoned, and restored.

Manasseh now exerted his utmost abilities to make every possible atonement for his former crimes. He purified the city, consecrated the holy temple anew, and made it the business of his life to manifest a due reverence and gratitude towards his Creator. Conscious that his former guilt had, in a great measure, been the cause of the miseries which his people had endured, he endeavoured to effect a reformation among them, both by his example and authority. He caused an altar to be erected agreeable to the directions of Moses, upon which daily oblations were made: and having restored the religious ceremonies to their original purity, he directed his attention towards improving the fortifications of the city. He made the necessary reparations in the old walls, and, as a further security, encompassed them with new ones. He erected divers strong and lofty towers, and provided the out-works with all necessary provisions and stores. During the remainder of his reign, his veneration to God suffered no abatement, and he was considered as one of the most happy sovereigns. At the age of sixty-seven, and in the fifty-fifth year of his reign, he died, and was interred in the royal garden. His son

Amon succeeds Manasseh, his father.

Amon, by Elmasema, a native of the city of Jabat, succeeded to the throne. He followed the profligate examples which his father afforded in the early time of his life: and

his mal-administration, induced some of his intimate friends and domestics to conspire his death, which they effected in the twentieth year of his life, and in the second of his government. The public punished the murderers by death. The remains of this prince were deposited in the sepulchre of his father. Upon the decease of Amon, Josiah his son, who was at that time about eight years old, ascended the throne.

• C H A P. IV.

JOSIAH abolishes the worship of Idols, and makes excellent Regulations in religious and civil Affairs.

THE mother of Josiah was a native of Boscath, and her name was Jehida. The new king was of a gracious disposition, and naturally attached to virtue. He proposed the truly excellent example of David as the rule of his conduct through life. Before he had completed his twelfth year, he gave a signal instance of piety, by extirpating the abominable worship of idols, and restoring the people to the religion of the true God*. Such of the ordinances of his predecessors as he found productive of ill consequences, he abolished: such institutions as were expedient he retained; and to those which required alterations, he made amendments, which would have conferred honour upon the most consummate wisdom, and the experience of advanced years. He caused all the groves and altars which his apostate predecessors had dedicated to the idolatrous worship, to be destroyed, and attached the people to a due reverence towards the worship of the living God. He appointed commissioners to superintend the manners of the people, and determine on the merits of causes depending between individuals; and he rigidly adhered to the administration of public justice. He deputed commissioners to receive contributions of gold and silver for the purpose of repairing the temple; but, averse to give cause of complaint, his subjects were at liberty either to promote or decline the subscription. The contributions being deposited in the treasury, Amashiah, governor of the city; Shaphan, the scribe; Joash, the recorder; and Hilkiah, the high-priest, were nominated to engage artificers, provide materials, and regulate the expences of the intended reparations. The rebuilding the temple proved a lasting monument of the exemplary piety of Josiah.

Excellent character of Josiah, son and successor of Manasseh.

In the eighteenth year of his reign, Josiah directed Hilkiah to apply what gold and silver should remain, after defraying the expences incidental to the edifice, in

He gives directions for restoring the true worship.

* The sacred writings, on this part of the Jewish history, inform us, that so many and aggravating were the provocations of the Israelites against God in the preceding reigns, that all the piety of Josiah, his great care and indefatigable industry to extirpate idolatry, were not sufficient to obtain a revocation of the sentence the

Almighty had pronounced against Judah: for it seems, that though the people complied with the present reformation, yet their compliance proceeded principally from a fear of incurring the king's displeasure, or of feeling the severity of his justice.

the formation of cups, chalices, and other vessels and utensils for the service of the holy religion; and he ordered that all the gold and silver deposited in the royal treasury, should be manufactured into vessels for the same purpose. Upon removing the treasure,

The bones of Moses found. the high-priest discovered the sacred books of Moses; which he delivered to Shaphan, the scribe, who, after having perused them, repaired to the king, and informed him, that his commands had been obeyed; adding, that he had found the books of Moses. Hilkiah read these books to the king, who, upon hearing their contents, in an agony of grief, tore his clothes, and called for certain particular friends. On their arrival, he desired them to accompany the high-priest to the prophetess Huldah, the wife of Shallum, who was a man of distinguished reputation; requesting that they would unite their endeavours, to prevail upon her to make intercession with the Almighty for pardon towards himself and his subjects; saying, there was great reason to apprehend, that the vengeance of heaven would be directed towards the present generation, as a punishment for the iniquities of their progenitors; and that without obtaining a reconciliation with the Lord, they should be dispersed over the face of the earth, and terminate their lives in misery. Upon the king's order being communicated to the prophetess, she directed them to report this answer: "That the im-

Huldah's prophetic denunciation. pious superstition of the people, and their contempt of the menacing predictions of the prophets, had incurred the wrath of heaven; that the people would be banished from their native land, and be deprived of the blessings of life; and that no supplications could prevail, to avert the judgment which the Lord had irrevocably pronounced. However (continued the prophetess), report to Josiah, that, from a regard to his piety, the Almighty will not inflict these punishments during his life; but that immediately after his decease, the divine vengeance will be executed upon the people in general, without distinction."

Josiah causes the law to be read to an assembly of the people at Jerusalem. Hereupon, Josiah dispatched messengers to the several cities within his dominions, commanding the priests, Levites, and his subjects in general, to repair to Jerusalem: and upon their being assembled, the books of Moses were read to them: after which, the king advanced to an eminence in the midst of the multitude, and administered the oath of obedience to the laws of Moses, and the holy worship and religion of God: and the people bound themselves under this engagement with unanimous approbation. After the sacrifices had been made, prayers were put forth for obtaining the blessing of the Almighty. The king enjoined the high-priest to take a particular survey of the vessels and other plate contained in the temple, and effectually

His efforts to extirpate idolatry.

to destroy such articles as had been dedicated by his predecessors to the service of the idolatrous religion. The king's commands were punctually obeyed, and the remnants of the utensils were cast away. In obedience to the command of Josiah, all the priests who were not of the line of Aaron were put to death.

Burns the bones of the false prophets. The reformation of the city of Jerusalem being effected, Josiah made a journey through his kingdom, and destroyed every evidence which remained of Jeroboam's superstition and idolatry: and the bones of the false prophets, he caused to be burnt upon the altar which Jeroboam had erected. Thus, after the expiration of three hundred and sixty-one years, was the prediction of the prophet verified; for he declared, that these events should be accomplished by a man of the race of David named Josiah. The king, in person, and by the agency of messengers, applied to the Israelites who had escaped from the captivity of the Assyrians, with a view to reclaim them from the abominable adoration of idols, and to inspire them with a just sense of their duty towards the eternal God. The figures of horses dedicated to the sun*, and placed over the porch of the temple, he caused to be destroyed; and he appointed officers to make strict enquiry within the towns and villages of his dominions, for the relics of idolatry, which he commanded them utterly to destroy.

Josiah celebrates the passover. After this purification of his realm, he assembled the people at Jerusalem for the purpose of celebrating the feast of unleavened bread, or the passover; and on this occasion he gave from his own store thirty goats, one thousand lambs, and three thousand oxen: the principal priest presented to the others of the sacerdotal order two thousand six hundred lambs; and the chiefs of the Levites gave to their tribe five thousand lambs, and five hundred oxen. A solemn sacrifice was made of these victims, according to the precepts of Moses: and the ceremony was performed under the direction of the priests. An exact conformity to the law and ancient usage was observed on the celebration of this festival, which was the most solemn that had been known since the time of the prophet Samuel.

C H A P. V.

PHARAOH-NECHO is opposed by JOSIAH, who is slain, and succeeded by his Son JEHOIAHAZ, who is made Captive, and dies in Egypt. ELIAKIM is made king by PHARAOH.

IN process of time, the army of Pharaoh-Necho proceeded under his command towards the Euphrates, to attack the Medes and Babylonians (who had over-

Josiah refusing to grant the king of Egypt a passage through his

* It is certain that all the people of the East worshipped the sun, and consecrated horses to it, because they were, perhaps, the hieroglyphic by which that luminary was represented. The ancients had also a notion that the sun itself was carried about in a chariot;

and therefore chariots, as well as horses, were dedicated to it; and in them the king and his great officers went out at the east gate of the city every morning, to salute and adore the sun, at its coming above the horizon.

run

country, is slain by an Egyptian.

run the empire of Assyria), and subdued Asia to his dominion. Having proceeded to Megiddo, a place subject to Josiah, the latter refused to let Pharaoh pass; on which he dispatched a messenger to tell Josiah, that his designs were not hostile to him, but he wished to march towards the Euphrates, and hoped the king would not compel him to force his way. Josiah, however, persisted to deny him a passage, as if hereby impelled by a kind of fatality to bring on his own ruin: for while he was riding to and fro, giving orders to his army, an Egyptian shot him with an arrow, by which he was so dreadfully wounded, that he gave orders for his army to retreat, and went himself to Jerusalem, where he expired, in the thirty-first year of his reign, and at the age of thirty-nine. He was interred with great solemnity, in the burial-place of his ancestors, and several days were devoted to public mourning for his death. Jeremiah, the prophet, wrote an elegy on this occasion, in which he foretold the near approach of the Babylonish captivity, and the misfortunes consequent thereon. This elegy is still in being. Ezekiel, the prophet, likewise left two books of prediction on this subject, in which he foretells the calamities which should follow this revolution. Both these prophets were of the line of the priesthood; Jeremiah dwelt at Jerusalem from the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, till the city and temple were destroyed.

Jehoahaz succeeding, is soon after deposed by Pharaoh, who transfers the government to Jehoiakim.

Jehoahaz, who was twenty-three years old at the death of Josiah, now assumed the sovereign authority, and held his court at Jerusalem. His mother was named Hamutal; and he was a prince of a profane and irreligious disposition. When the king of Egypt returned from the wars, he dispatched a messenger to Jehoahaz to attend him at Hamath in Syria, when he deposed him, put him in chains, and transferred the government to his elder brother by the father's side, who was named Eliakim; but, on this occasion, assumed the name of Jehoiakim. The Egyptian made this prince his tributary, by taxing his country to the amount of one talent of gold, and one hundred of silver. * Jehoahaz he took with him into Egypt, where he died, having reigned only three months and ten days. Zabida, of Raman, was the mother of Jehoiakim, who bore the character of a malicious, revengeful man, who neglected the worship of God, and had no compassion for his fellow-creatures.

C H A P. VI.

PHARAOH, defeated by NEBUCHADNEZZAR, to whom JEHOIAKIM becomes tributary.

* From this place to the end of this book, Vossius cautions us not to pay too implicit a regard to Josephus, who is supposed, on No. 10.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR * proceeded with a large army to Carchabesa, near the Euphrates, in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, with a view to make war on Pharaoh-Necho, and reduce all Syria. Pharaoh raised a large army, and took the field to oppose him, and the armies engaging, on the banks of the Euphrates, Pharaoh was compelled to retire, with the loss of several thousands of his troops. After this, in the eighth year of Jehoiakim's reign, and the fourth of Nebuchadnezzar's, the Babylonians invaded Judea, and threatened destruction to its inhabitants, unless they paid a tribute, like the rest of the Syrians. Jehoiakim, terrified by these threats, purchased his peace, and paid contributions for three years; but in the fourth, hearing that the king of Egypt was advancing against the Babylonians, he refused to pay tribute. He was, however, misinformed; for the Egyptians were afraid to attack the Babylonians; which agreed with Jeremiah's prediction, that the Egyptians would be no better than a broken reed to depend on. This prophet likewise foretold, that the Babylonians should soon destroy Jerusalem, and take Jehoiakim captive. These predictions were generally despised; and there were a few persons who advised the exhibiting articles against the prophet, as a promoter of sedition. This being done, the majority of the council would have punished him with death; but others were for dismissing him; alledging, that other prophets, among whom was Micah, had predicted the same calamities; and instead of being punished for it, were highly honoured as the prophets of God. Attention being paid hereto, the prophet was dismissed.

Pharaoh defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, who takes Jerusalem, and makes Jehoiakim captive.

Jeremiah now reduced his prophecies to writing; and in the ninth month of the fifteenth year of Jehoiakim's reign, on the assembling of the people in the temple, on a solemn fast, he publicly read his book, containing predictions of the misfortunes to the people, city, and temple. On hearing the contents, the princes took the book from the prophet, and advised him and Baruch, his scribe, immediately to secrete themselves. They then took the book to the king, who ordered his secretary to read it; but was so enraged at it, that he tore and burnt it: commanding that Jeremiah and Baruch should be instantly brought before him, to receive sentence of punishment: but they had previously absconded.

Jeremiah's book of prophecy torn and burnt by the king's order.

Jehoiakim, soon after the above events, being terrified by the predictions of Jeremiah, admitted Nebuchadnezzar and all his army into the city, on friendly terms, without having taken any measures for his own security, or even thought of excluding the Babylonians; who had no sooner got footing in the city, than he violated the rights of friendship, by putting the king to the sword,

Nebuchadnezzar, being admitted into Jerusalem by Jehoiakim, perfidiously puts him to death.

some occasions, to shew more partiality to his countrymen than is agreeable with truth.

with all the principal young men of Jerusalem. He then ordered the body of the king to be thrown into the fields without the walls of the city, and advanced his son Jehoiachin to the government of the city and country. He made prisoners of about three thousand persons of distinction and eminence, whom he carried to Babylon in captivity; among whom was Ezekiel the prophet, then a very young man. Thus ended the life of Jehoiakim, at the age of thirty-six years, after a reign of eleven years. The mother of his successor, Jehoiachin, was named Nebuihta, who was a native of Jerusalem.

The Assyrian army enter Jerusalem, and, seizing Jehoiachin, &c. send them prisoners to Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar having revolved the former proceedings in his mind, repented his having placed Jehoiachin on the throne; considering that the young king would not easily forget the murder of his father, but would seek for the most favourable opportunity to revenge his death. These reflections produced a resolution to send an army to attack Jerusalem; and Jehoiachin, who was a prince of a mild disposition, and a lover of equity, agreed with Nebuchadnezzar's officers to surrender the place, on the condition that both it, and the inhabitants, should remain uninjured: and for the ratification of this treaty, the king's mother and relations were given up as hostages. At the end of one year, however, Nebuchadnezzar broke his agreement, and ordered his officers to seize the young men of the city, with artificers of all kinds, and convey them to him in fetters. This being done, ten thousand eight hundred and thirty-two persons were made captives, and confined in prison, among whom were Jehoiachin, his mother, and relations.

CHAP. VII.

ZEDEKIAH advanced to the Government, but restricted not to assist the EGYPTIANS. ZEDEKIAH breaking his Covenant, JERUSALEM is besieged by NEBUCHADNEZZAR. PHARAOH, King of EGYPT, attempting to raise the Siege, is routed by NEBUCHADNEZZAR, who returns to the Attack.

Zedekiah raised to the throne.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR having imprisoned Jehoiachin, elevated his uncle Zedekiah to the government, binding him, by a solemn oath, neither to make innovations, or take part with the Egyptians. When Zedekiah began to rule, he was twenty-one years old; and he had a brother, by the same mother, named Jehoiakim. The above prince was deficient in all virtues, and associated with young men as abandoned as himself: so that Jeremiah the prophet frequently conjured him

to the practice of religion; advised him not to listen to flatterers and false prophets, who filled his imagination with ideas that the Babylonians would not again attack Jerusalem†; and that whenever the Egyptians fought, they should conquer them; which the prophet said would not happen. Zedekiah would listen to, and appeared convinced by the arguments of Jeremiah; but no sooner did he mix with his old companions, than all the good advice was forgotten.

At this time, Ezekiel, who resided at Babylon, predicted the destruction of the temple, and sent his prophecy to Jerusalem. The two prophets agreed that the city should be taken by force, and Zedekiah carried into captivity: Jeremiah said, that the king should convey him prisoner to Babylon, while Ezekiel predicted that he should not see that city. This apparent inconsistency in the prophecies led Zedekiah to doubt the truth of the whole: but it will hereafter be seen, that he was mistaken in his conjecture.

Prophecies of Ezekiel and Jeremiah.

At the end of eight years, Zedekiah violated his oath to Nebuchadnezzar, by taking part with the Egyptians; thinking that, jointly, they could subdue the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar immediately marched, ravaged Zedekiah's country, seized his cattle and fortrefs, and proceeded to the siege of Jerusalem. Pharaoh learning how Zedekiah was pressed, advanced to his relief, with a view to raise the siege. Nebuchadnezzar having intimation hereof, would not wait his approach, but proceeded to give him battle, and, in one contest, drove him out of Syria. This circumstance suspending the siege, the false prophets represented to Zedekiah how absurd it was to fear that the Hebrews would be carried captive to Babylon: whereas it was more probable, that the prisoners already taken would be brought back, and the plate and treasure, which had been carried from the temple, restored. In contradiction hereto, Jeremiah charged the false prophets with being impostors; said, that no good was to be hoped for from the Egyptians; but that they should be first conquered, and then the army of Babylon return to the siege: that those who escaped death by sword and famine, should have their houses ransacked, their goods stolen, and the city and temple plundered, while themselves should be carried into captivity. The people in general paid great attention to what the prophet said; but the most eminent people, and the unprincipled in general, considered and treated him as a mad-man. Jeremiah having proceeded twenty furlongs from Jerusalem, in the way to Anathoth (his birth-place), he was met by a magistrate, who confined him, on pretence that he was deserting to the king of Babylon. He urged in vain that they charged him falsely: he was hereupon hurried be-

Zedekiah, for his treacherous conduct, punished by Nebuchadnezzar.

† Jeremiah, by God's command, made him bonds and yokes, which he sent by the ambassadors of the princes who congratulated Zedekiah on his accession to the throne, with this message from God, "that he had given all their countries to the king of Babylon, and

therefore their wisest course would be, to submit to his yoke; which if they refused, both they and their countries would most certainly be destroyed." This prediction was afterwards verified.

fore a tribunal of justice, examined, tortured, and condemned to death; and remained some time under that sentence.

Jeremiah's ill usage from the princes. In the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, the king of Babylon again besieged Jerusalem with a large army, and, for a year and a half, exerted all his art and strength to conquer it; but the city, though enfeebled by famine and pestilence, did not yield. At this time Jeremiah, who was in prison, called to the people to open the gates, and admit the Babylonians, as the only means to prevent their destruction: he said, those who remained in the city would be destroyed by famine or sword; but the enemy would spare such as fled out to them. Hereupon the princes went to the king, and represented the prophet as one whose idle tales would delude the multitude; insinuating, that the people appeared resolute to defend the city to the uttermost, till their courage was abated by his predictions. The disposition of the king would not have led him to extremities; but urged as he was, and unwilling to disoblige persons of their rank, he permitted them to dispose of the prophet as they pleased. Hereupon they repaired to the prison, and taking out Jeremiah, lowered him with a rope into a

He is taken out of the dungeon by the king's order.

pit, where they left him up to the neck in mud, that he might be suffocated. An Ethiopian, one of the king's favourite servants, informing his majesty of his situation, he ordered him to select thirty men who could be depended on, who should take ropes, and instantly release him. This being done, the prophet was privately introduced to the king, who asked him if he could relieve his distress by the interposition of heaven. Jeremiah replied in the affirmative; "but (said he) your people will neither credit me, nor take my advice. Those who call themselves your friends, are my foes: they consider me as an hypocrite, and are now combining my destruction: but where are now those deceivers, that persuaded the people no danger could arise from the Babylonians? However, sir, my life may pay the forfeit, if I tell you the truth." On this the king swore to the prophet that his life should be safe; whereupon the latter said, "Deliver up the city to the king of Babylon. This is the only method to be safe from personal harm, to avoid the dangers which threaten you, save the temple from being burnt, and the city from being raised to the ground. If you neglect this advice, I declare in the name, and by the order of God, that all kinds of misfortunes will surround you; and to you will be attributed the destruction of yourself, family, and people." Zedekiah told him, he inclined to pursue his advice, for the public good; but he was apprehensive that some of his people, who had gone over to the Babylonians, would advise the king

to destroy him. The prophet told him to be easy on this head; for, on giving up the city, himself, his wives, and children should be safe, and the temple should sustain no injury. Hereupon, he bade the prophet depart, enjoining him not to divulge a single syllable of what had passed, even to the princes: and if any one should inquire respecting the visit, he should say he had been to solicit his liberty of the king. The prophet complied in all respects with these injunctions.

CHAP. VIII.

JERUSALEM taken; the City, Palace, and Temple ransacked and burnt. ZEDEKIAH's Children and Friends slain; his Eyes put out, and himself carried Captive to BABYLON. JEREMIAH committed to the Care of GEDALIAH. ISHMAEL's Treachery. The EGYPTIANS subdued, and carried Prisoners to BABYLON. Account of DANIEL, SHADRACH, MESHACH, and ABEDNEGO. DANIEL interprets the King's Dreams. NEBUCHADNEZZAR's Death.

THE siege of Jerusalem went on vigorously. The Babylonians completed their works, having raised towers all round the city, so as to drive the invaded parties from its walls. The place, though a prey to the plague and famine, was obstinately defended; every scheme of protection being opposed to that of attack, during the space of a year and a half: but at length, want of provisions and forces, compelled its surrender, when Zedekiah had reigned eleven years, three months and nine days. It was delivered at midnight to Neriglissar, Arbaces, Emegar, Nabonares, and Enchiramus, officers of Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah seeing the troops enter the temple, absconded, by a narrow pass, to the desert, with his wives, children, officers, and friends*: but advice of this being given to the Babylonians, they pursued them early in the morning, and surrounded them near Jericho. The friends of Zedekiah flying to secure themselves, he and his wives and children, with a few adherents, were easily made prisoners, and conducted to the king, who no sooner saw, than he reproached Zedekiah, saying, "Had I not your promise to conduct, for my advantage, the power I invested you with? I made you a king in the stead of your brother Jehoiakim, and you have endeavoured to repay me, by using your interest to my ruin. But you are now become my prisoner, through the justice of God, for the punishment of your ingratitude." The king hav-

Jerusalem taken.

* It is difficult to conceive how the besieged could make their escape, by any narrow pass, seeing their enemies the Chaldeans had encompassed the city. The Jews think there was a subterraneous passage from the palace to the plains of Jericho, and that it

was through this they retired. But as no such subterraneous passage is mentioned by the sacred historian, it seems more probable, that the Chaldeans being now making their assault in the opposite part of the city, this was left unguarded.

ing thus said, ordered his wives and children to be put to death in the sight of himself and the other prisoners; and then directed Zedekiah's eyes to be put out, and himself conducted to Babylon in chains.

Agreement
of the two
prophets.

Thus were the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel verified; the former saying he should be made prisoner, speak with, and see the king, and be carried to Babylon: the latter, that he should be carried to Babylon, and not see the king there; which he could not do, since his eyes were first put out. By this we may see the wisdom and power of God, and the regularity of the operations of his counsels. We may learn to reverence the prescience of the Deity, and to know that all events are ordered by his providence, and come to pass according to his will. It is likewise a remedy against that incredulity which prevents our knowledge of threatened evils.

The race of kings descended from David was now extinct, after a successive reign of twenty-one princes, and during a series of five hundred and fifteen years six months and ten days; but this includes the reign of Saul for twenty years, who was of a different tribe.

Jerusalem,
with the pa-
lace and tem-
ple, ransacked
and burnt.

After the above signal victory, Nebuchadnezzar dispatched his principal officer, Nebuzar-Adan, to Jerusalem, to ransack and burn both palace and temple, to raze the city to the ground, and conduct the captive inhabitants to Babylon. Nebuzar-Adan executed his orders in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, taking all the gold and silver vessels from the temple, the brazen pillars, the tables and candlesticks of gold, and Solomon's large laver: after which he burnt the city, palace, and temple, to the ground. This happened in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. The temple had been built four hundred and seventy years six months and ten days. It was one thousand and sixty-two years six months and ten days from the Israelites leaving Egypt, and three thousand five hundred and thirty-five years six months and ten days after the creation of the world.

Prisoners of
eminence.

Nebuzar-Adan took the following prisoners, namely, Seraiah, the high-priest; Sepheniah, next in rank; three principal keepers of the temple; seven of the king's friends; the chief eunuch of the bed-chamber; the secretary to the king, and other persons of distinction, in all about threescore, and conducted them to the king, at the city of Reblath in Syria. The king ordered the high-priest, and others of the first rank, to be beheaded there: but the majority of the prisoners were carried to Babylon with Zedekiah, among whom was Jehozadock the high-priest, who was son to the above-named Seraiah.

* The words in scripture (Jer. xi. 14.) are, "Baalis, king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael," &c. Now it is necessary to observe, that the word "Baalis" is rather a name of office than a proper name, by which we may understand the Queen-mother, who was guardian of the king of the Ammonites during his minority. Ish-

On the king's return to Babylon, Zedekiah was thrown into prison, where he expired; and he was buried with regal honours. The king gave Jehozadock his liberty, assigned dwellings for the prisoners in Babylon, and dedicated to his idols the holy vessels which had been taken from the temple. The general Nebuzar-Adan had committed the majority of the captives to the command of Gedaliah, a man distinguished by his justice and benevolence, who allowed to each man a certain portion of land for his subsistence, on paying the king a tribute. Jeremiah was released from prison: and the governor having received the king's orders to treat him well, Gedaliah offered him either to go to Babylon, or, if he chose another place of residence, he would write to the king respecting the matter. Jeremiah answered, that he would rather live among the ruins of his native land. This being told to Nebuzar-Adan, he directed Gedaliah to provide properly for him, and sent the prophet some valuable presents. Jeremiah having obtained the liberty of his servant Baruch, chose him for his companion, and fixed on Mizpah for his residence. Baruch was the son of Neriah, nobly descended, and a great master of his native language.

Death of
Zedekiah.

Jeremiah
favoured
treated.

Gedaliah was very kind to those who fled during the siege, and this benevolence to the fugitives so raised his credit among the surrounding nations, that numbers came to him, and formed a large settlement, having lands assigned them, for which they paid the king of Babylon a fixed tribute. Gedaliah's goodness to the settlers so engaged the esteem of Johanan and the other principal men, that having intelligence of a conspiracy forming against him, by Ishmael and the king of the Ammonites*, they informed him that the former wished to destroy him, and reign over the Israelites. To counteract this plan, they requested his permission to destroy Ishmael; for they thought the Israelites would be ruined by the continuance of the plot. Gedaliah said, he deemed it impossible that any man could so far deviate from all sense of moral obligation as to seek the destruction of his preserver: but if this was the case, he would not so far violate the laws of hospitality as to take the life of the man who had sheltered himself under his protection. On this declaration, Johanan and his friends departed.

Gedaliah and
his friends
barbarously
slaughtered.

A visit being made about a month after this, to Gedaliah, by Ishmael and ten of his friends, they were most hospitably treated. The glass having gone round, till Gedaliah, and his party were somewhat elevated, the others treacherously murdered them all. This happening at midnight, they sallied into the streets, destroying Jews and Babylonians indiscriminately. The following day a party of eighty men came from the coun-

mael, mentioned in this verse, was a Jew, and a descendant from David, who seems to have had some pretensions to the throne at this time, and to have made an alliance with the queen-mother of the Ammonites, to render his designs more successful.

try, with presents for Gedaliah, but were unacquainted with the preceding murders. Ishmael invited them in, as to Gedaliah; but closing the doors, caused them to be murdered, and thrown into a pit: but some of them were spared, on a promise of discovering where corn, cloaths, and other effects, were hid in the earth: but the men in general of Mizpah, with the women and children, were carried off; among whom were Zedekiah's daughters, who had been left under Gedaliah's protection, by Nebuzar-Adan.

Ishmael flees to the king of the Ammonites.

This being done, Ishmael repaired to the king of the Ammonites with the news; but Johanan, and the other principal people, having heard of the death of Gedaliah, and the cruelties at Mizpah, combined their forces, and pursued Ishmael, whom they came up with near the fountain of Hebron. The captives, seeing the pursuers, ran to them in rapture; while Ishmael and eight of his followers, hastened to the king of the Ammonites. In the interim, Johanan, with the eunuchs, women, children, and others, who had fled from Ishmael, proceeded to Mandra, where they rested one day, doubting if they should depart to Egypt, lest the Babylonians should attack them, in revenge of the murder of Gedaliah. But resolving to consult Jeremiah, they bound themselves by an oath to follow his directions. The prophet promised them an answer; and at the end of ten days he was visited by the Almighty, who directed him to tell Johanan and the other chiefs, that "if they remained in their present situation, they

Jeremiah enjoins the Jews not to go to Egypt; but they disobey, and are again captivated.

should be secure against the Babylonians; but if they went into Egypt, they must expect judgments similar to those which had befallen their brethren." Instead of giving credit to this message, they thought it was an invention of Jeremiah, in favour of his servant Baruch, and calculated to leave them a prey to the Babylonians: on which Johanan and his adherents seized on Jeremiah and Baruch, and departed into Egypt; where being arrived, the prophet had a vision from heaven, which informed him that an army should be brought into Egypt by the king of Babylon, the country conquered, part of the people slain, and the rest carried captives to Babylon: and this the prophet was to declare to the people. This prediction was verified in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, who making an incursion into Cœlo-Syria, subjected that country, then went against the Ammonites and Moabites, whom having subdued, he penetrated into Egypt, killed the reigning king, advanced another in his stead, and carried prisoners to Babylon such of the Jews as he found in the country.

† It was the custom of most nations, before their meals, to make an offering of some part of what they were to eat or drink to their gods, as a thankful acknowledgment, that every thing they enjoyed was their gift; so that every entertainment had something in it of the nature of a sacrifice. This practice generally prevailing, made

No. 10.

Thus the Hebrews were twice carried prisoners beyond the Euphrates. The Assyrians, in the reign of Hosea, first carried away the ten tribes; and Nebuchadnezzar, on the conquest of Jerusalem, made captives of the other two. Salmanezer removed the Chuthites from Media and Persia into the land of the Israelites, where they took the name of Samaritans; but the king of Babylon left no settlers in the room of the two tribes he carried away. Hence it happened, that, for the space of seventy years, Judea, Jerusalem, and the temple, were totally abandoned. One hundred and thirty-six years six months and ten days elapsed, between the captivity of the ten tribes and the departure of the other two.

Salmanezer transplants the Chuthites to Samaria.

Some of the finest young men among the Jews being selected for Nebuchadnezzar's particular service, had tutors appointed to instruct them in the learning of Chaldæa: and some of them were castrated, agreeable to the custom of the country. Among them were four relations of Zedekiah, viz. Daniel, Ananias, Mishael, and Azariah; but their names were changed to Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. The king was equally pleased with the goodness of their tempers and strength of their judgments, and directed provisions to be sent them from his own table: but Daniel, considering that such elegant viands suited not their situation, applied to Aschanes, the eunuch, and begged that, instead of the king's provisions, they might eat pulse or dates, or any homely food†. The eunuch expressed a readiness to gratify them; but said, that if they should grow lean on such food, and decline in health and complexion, the king might suspect what had happened, especially if their companions looked better than they did, which might endanger his life. However, they urged the eunuch to make the experiment, saying they could return to their former food, if this was found not to agree with them. The trial being made, the eunuch found they increased in health of body and vigour of mind; on which he kept to himself the king's allowance. A course of this temperance so strengthened their faculties, that they rapidly increased in Hebrew and Chaldæan learning; particularly Daniel, who became a proficient in their arts, undertook to expound dreams, and had sometimes visions of his own.

Nebuchadnezzar treats Daniel and his companions with singular respect.

Nebuchadnezzar, two years after the conquest of Egypt, had a dream, and its interpretation, which he forgot in the morning; on which he sent for the Chaldæans, magi, and prophets, and told them what had happened, but demanded their interpretation. They told him this was impossible; but if he would recite the dream,

The king's remarkable dream.

Daniel and his friends look upon the provisions coming from the king's table as no better than meats offered to idols, and, by such offering, became polluted and unclean. He was likewise prohibited eating particular meats by the law of Moses, and these very meats might have been in vogue among the Babylonians.

3 B

they

they would explain it. Hereupon the king demanded their compliance, which they said was out of their power; on which he ordered them to be put to death. Daniel hearing of the intended execution, went to Arioch, the captain of the guards, to enquire the cause; on which the captain informed him they were to die, because they could not explain a dream which the king had forgot. On this Daniel requested they might be respited for one night, and he hoped God would enable him to interpret the dream. The captain acquainting the king with this circumstance, the execution was suspended. The friends of Daniel retired with him to his chamber, where they spent the night in prayer, that God would be pleased to reveal to Daniel the dream which the king had forgotten. Their prayers were heard, and God made known to Daniel both the dream and its interpretation. He arose early in the morning, and repairing to the men under sentence of death, bade them be of good courage, for he was certain of delivering them. They returned their joint thanks to heaven, and then Daniel went to Arioch, desiring to be introduced to the king, whose dream he could now interpret.

Daniel, being sent for, interprets it.

Daniel no sooner saw the king, than he said he did not approach him from motives of vanity, or a pretence of possessing more wisdom than the Chaldeans and magi; but that God, in pity to the unfortunate, had permitted him to explain the king's dream. "I consult (said he) your honour, in the endeavour to save the lives of those worthy men, whom you would destroy, for not being able to reveal a secret which it was not in the power of human wisdom to discover. Your dream was to the following purport: having reflected on the fate of your dominions after your decease, you dreamt that you saw a statue standing upright, the head of which was gold, the arms and shoulders silver, the belly and thighs of brass, and the legs and feet of iron. To your sight a stone then broke from a mountain, and falling on this statue, overthrew it, and crushed it so, that the dust of the gold, silver, brass, and iron, was blown by the wind to the uttermost part of the earth, while the stone increased to the size of a mountain. The interpretation of your dream is, that yourself and the preceding kings of Babylon are meant by the golden head: the hands and shoulders signify, that your empire shall be destroyed by two kings: the brass imports that a king from the west, clothed in brazen armour, shall overturn their empire: and a man clad in iron, which is stronger than gold, silver, or brass, is to subdue this last king." Daniel likewise explained the meaning of the stone †,

† This stone is represented as "cut out of the mountain without hands:" the kingdom of Christ was first set up, while the Roman empire was in its full strength with "legs of iron." This great empire, described in its strong and flourishing state, with "legs of iron," was afterwards divided into ten lesser kingdoms, the remains of which are still subsisting. The image is still standing upon its feet and toes of iron and clay: the kingdom of Christ is yet "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence;" but the stone will one day smite the image upon the feet and toes, and destroy it utterly,

which I omit, as I write of past, not of future events. The curious, however, may refer to the book of Daniel in the Holy Scriptures.

Struck with astonishment, Nebuchadnezzar owned the above to be his dream; and, bowing to the ground, worshipped Daniel, bestowing on him the name of his god Belteshazzar. He likewise commissioned Daniel, in conjunction with some of his relations, to rule over the whole province. Daniel and his friends were much envied for this promotion, which seemed to threaten their lives, as appears by the following narrative.

Nebuchadnezzar fixed up, in the plain of Babylon, a golden image, sixty cubits high, and six broad. On the dedication of this image he summoned a meeting of the princes, officers, &c. throughout his dominions, and caused proclamation to be made by the sound of trumpet, that all should prostrate themselves, and worship the image, on pain of being thrown into the fiery furnace. The trumpet being sounded, all the people fell down in adoration, except Daniel and his kinsmen, who refusing thus to violate the laws of their country, information was laid against them, and they were thrown into the fire. The providence of God now so interposed on their behalf, that they remained unhurt amidst the flames, which had not even the power to scorch them. This circumstance struck the king with such an idea of the goodness of God in the preservation of his servants, that he ever afterwards held them in great honour and esteem.

A golden image erected for worship.

Soon after this event Nebuchadnezzar had a second dream, which was that, "after being driven out from his kingdom, and living seven years among the beasts of the forest, he should be restored to his former rank and splendor." On this dream also the king consulted his wise men, but Daniel alone could interpret it; and agreeable to his explanation it happened, that after Nebuchadnezzar had spent seven years in absolute solitude, during which no person attempted to seize his government, it pleased God to restore him to the regal power. He died in the forty-third year of his age; having been distinguished for his vigilance, and a better fortune than attended any of his predecessors.

Nebuchadnezzar's second dream, and its interpretation by Daniel.

C H A P. IX.

EVILMERODACH sets JEHOIAKIM at Liberty. BELSHAZZAR besieged in BABYLON, by CY-

and will itself "become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth;" or in the words of the apostle (Rev. xi. 15.), "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord," &c. We have therefore seen the kingdom of the "stone," but we have not yet seen the kingdom of the "mountain." Some parts of this prophecy still remain to be fulfilled: but the exact completion of the other parts will not suffer us to doubt of the accomplishment of the rest also, in due season.

RUS and DARIUS. A Vision expounded to BEL-SHAZZAR by DANIEL. CYRUS takes BABYLON. DANIEL becomes the Favourite of DARIUS. His wonderful Predictions.

Jehoiakim set at liberty.

EVIL-MERODACH succeeding his father Nebuchadnezzar, gave liberty to Jehoiakim, king of Jerusalem, made him various presents, reposed great confidence in him, and committed the government of the palace at Babylon to his care.

Evil-Merodach reigned eighteen years, and was succeeded by his son Niglifar, who having reigned forty years, the kingdom devolved to his son Labarodochus, who died at the end of nine months, when the sovereign rule descended to Belshazzar, who was called Nabonadon by the Babylonians. Against this prince, Cyrus, king of Persia, and Darius, king of the Medes, waged war; and when they were besieging Babylon, an astonishing vision appeared to Belshazzar.

Belshazzar's vision.

While he was surrounded by his courtiers and concubines at supper, the table being decorated with vessels of silver, he profanely called for the sacred vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar, after the sack of Jerusalem, had deposited in the temple, though he never applied them to vulgar uses. Belshazzar being elevated with liquor, was talking profanely of the true God, when looking towards the wall, he beheld a hand, writing some words thereon, which terrified him to such a degree, that he instantly assembled his wise men and Chaldeans, to discover the meaning of the words. Having consulted together, they declared their total ignorance of the whole.

Hereupon the king, utterly distressed in mind, ordered proclamation to be made throughout his dominions, that whoever could interpret the writing, should receive as a reward a royal purple robe, and a gold chain, and should rank as third man in the kingdom; on which the wise men once more assembled, each anxious to develop the secret; but their labours proved altogether fruitless. This second disappointment made the king perfectly miserable; on which his grandmother informed him, that among the prisoners whom Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem, there was a man of great wisdom and penetration, who appeared to be actuated by a divine spirit in the resolving abstruse questions; and she, therefore, advised him to send for Daniel, question him respecting the writing, and offer him every encouragement to speak the truth, however disagreeable that truth might be.

Belshazzar confessed he had heard of Daniel's wisdom, and took her advice in sending for him*. When he approached the royal presence, the king assured him, that all which he had promised in his proclamation should be made good, if he could resolve the question, which would extend his fame

wherever the affair should be heard of. Daniel declined accepting either presents or honourable distinctions, saying, "Wisdom is the gift of heaven, not to be purchased or corrupted by bribes, but ever disposed freely to assist those who want her advice. The writing predicts that your death is near. You ought to have been warned by the fate of your great predecessor, for his contempt of heaven, and regulated your conduct by the principles of religion. Nebuchadnezzar, as you well know, was driven from the society of men, and obliged to herd with beasts; till, on his humble penitence, God was pleased to re-instate him in his government; a blessing he ever afterwards acknowledged with the most devout gratitude. But so little are you influenced by his example, that you openly blaspheme God, and, in the company of your harlots, profane the vessels of his holy altar. This impious conduct hath brought on you the vengeance of God; and this writing is predictive of your fate. By MENE is implied *number*; which portends, that the days of your life and reign shall be few. TEKEL signifies *weight*; and intimates, that your concluding reign is weighed in the balance. PERES imports a *fragment*; and declares, that the Medes and Persians shall divide your kingdom." Dejected as the king was at this interpretation, which foretold his destruction, yet he conferred on Daniel all that had been promised; for he considered that, however fatal the news might be to him, the prophet had acted the part of a conscientious man, in telling him the real truth.

Expounded by Daniel.

Soon after this, the city of Babylon fell into the hands of Cyrus, who took it in the seventh year of the reign of Belshazzar, who is deemed the last king of the family of Nebuchadnezzar. Darius was sixty-two years old when Babylon was taken, by the aid of his kinsman, Cyrus, the son of Astyages. Cyrus took Daniel with him to Media, where he promoted him to the rank of one of the three chief governors, under whom were three hundred and sixty others, as Darius had originally modelled the government. Darius had such veneration for Daniel, that he seldom engaged in any business of consequence without his advice, which drew on him the envy of the other favourites at court: but Daniel was particularly cautious not to fall into their snares. He was wholly above receiving a bribe, and took only a legal acknowledgment for a favour conferred: yet this did not deter his enemies from combining his destruction, which they attempted in the following manner.

Cyrus takes Babylon, and promotes Daniel.

As Daniel regularly prayed to God three times every day, his opponents sought to entrap him from this circumstance; on which they made application to Darius, in the name, and by order of the officers of state, to issue an order, that whosoever should solicit any thing, from God or man, for thirty days, should be thrown into

Conspiracy against Daniel.

* Though his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had promoted Daniel to considerable places of honour, yet Belshazzar knew but little of him; which argues his being a weak, vicious prince, according

to the character which historians give of him, leaving the care of public business to his mother.

the lions den. Darius unaware of their intentions, passed the decree. This circumstance shocked all the people except Daniel, who continued to worship God publicly, as if the order to the contrary had never issued. His enemies had now a pretence for their proceedings, and immediately waiting on the king, informed him that Daniel was the only person who despised the royal proclamation, by continuing his worship; which, they said, was not done from a motive of religion, but in mere contradiction to the king's authority*. Their malice was the more violent, from an apprehension they entertained, that the king's partiality for Daniel might induce him to pardon the supposed offence: on which they pressed him for immediate justice on the delinquent, whom they insisted should be cast into the lions den.

Who is thrown into the lions' den, and miraculously preserved; but his enemies destroyed therein.

Darius, compelled to yield to their importunities, told Daniel he had no doubt but the life of so good a man, would be protected by the immediate interference of divine Providence. Daniel being put into the den, the mouth of it was made close by a large stone, and Darius having sealed the door with the royal signet, returned to his palace. The king was so troubled, that he could neither eat nor sleep during the night; and in the morning early, he repaired to the den, where he found the seal unbroken, and every thing as he had left it. Darius looking through the grate, called Daniel by his name, to enquire if he was safe and well, on which the prophet answered in the affirmative: on which the king ordered him to be set free; but the enemies of Daniel denied that this was a providential deliverance; insisting, that the reason why Daniel remained unhurt, was, that the lions had then no appetite. Darius was so enraged at this palpable malice, that he ordered the lions to be fed till they were perfectly satisfied, and then that the accusers of Daniel should be put in among them; saying, "If the lions touch them not, it is because they are filled; but if they destroy them, the preservation of Daniel must be ascribed to Providence." They were no sooner thrown in, than the Providence of God was manifested by their being torn to pieces.

Darius publicly acknowledges the true God.

Soon after this wonderful destruction of Daniel's enemies, Darius caused proclamation to be made throughout all his dominions, that his subjects should acknowledge the God of Daniel as the only true God. He likewise made the prophet his most particular favourite, and advanced him to the highest honours. Daniel having now acquired universal esteem, built a magnificent edifice at Ecbatane, the capital of Media, which is equally wonderful for its beauty and strength.

* In order to aggravate his fault, they added, that he was a foreigner, one of the children of the captivity, and, though brought thither as a captive, dared to offer a public affront to the laws of a king whose favour and protection he enjoyed. Daniel, on the other hand, pleaded in his defence, that his having disobeyed the king's decree, was not done out of contumacy, but purely to pre-

The life of Daniel is pregnant with many remarkable circumstances worthy of notice. Exclusive of the gift of prophecy, he was happy in the enjoyment of the highest reputation both with prince and people; and his writings still extant, prove that he was admitted to the immediate conversation of God, who revealed to him not only future events, but the particular time when those events should happen. Other prophets generally foretold misfortunes, by which they made enemies both of princes and people; but Daniel possessed the esteem of both, from the good news he had the happiness to reveal. It was also universally allowed, that his predictions were infallible, which may be also judged from the works which he has left us.

Daniel highly favoured of God and man.

Daniel relates, that as he was enjoying the air with his friends, at Susa, the capital of Persia, they were suddenly surprized by an earthquake, on which his friends fled, and left him astonished on the ground. In this situation somebody seemed to touch him, bid him rise, and he should see what would happen to his countrymen in future ages. On his getting up, he saw a ram with several horns, one of which was higher than the rest: looking westward, he beheld a goat passing through the air, which attacked the ram, beat him twice down, and trod on him. Then a large horn grew from the forehead of the goat, which being broke, four more arose in its stead, directed to the four quarters of the heavens. The prophet writes, that from one of these came forth a small horn, which, on its increase, was to make war against the Jews, destroy Jerusalem, and abolish the ceremonies of the temple; and all sacrifices, for 1296 days. Daniel thus expounds this vision. The Medes and Persians are intimated by the ram: their following kings by the horns, and the last of their sovereigns, by the last horn, as his wealth and power was to exceed the rest. A king of Greece, who should destroy the Persian empire, is meant by the goat. The horn on the goat's forehead, means the first of their kings, and the four budding horns, their successors, who, though not allied to them, should divide their dominions; that these should reign many years, and from them a king should arise, who should wage war against the Jewish nation, abolish the laws, destroy their commonwealth, plunder their temple, and prevent for three years all worship and sacrifice. This misfortune happened under Antiochus Epiphanes.

Daniel wrote many wonderful predictions concerning the Roman empire, and its inroads on the Jews, which he has left in writing as a proof of their divine authority, by their accomplishment †. This ought to confound

His prophecies respecting events of Providence.

serve a good conscience, which is the only true principle of loyalty and obedience. See Dan. vi. 13. 22.

† What was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar concerning the four great empires of the world, was again revealed to Daniel, with some additions and enlargements, about forty-eight years after. But what was represented to Nebuchadnezzar in the form of a great image, was exhibited

confound the Epicureans, who deny an over-ruling Providence, and contend that all things happen without divine direction; which is as absurd, as it would be to turn a ship loose to the mercy of the winds and waves without a pilot. When I reflect on the pro-

phesies of Daniel, I am astonished at the ignorance and irreligion of those people who deny a Providence; for how could it happen, that things predicted in one age, should be punctually fulfilled in another, if all things were left to mere chance?

exhibited to Daniel in the shape of *great wild beasts*. The reason of this difference might be, that this image appeared with a glorious lustre in the imagination of Nebuchadnezzar, whose mind was wholly taken up with the admiration of worldly pomp and splendor; whereas

the same monarchies were represented to Daniel under the shape of fierce wild beasts, as being the great supporters of idolatry and tyranny.

B O O K XI.

OCCURRENCES from the YEAR of the WORLD 3425 to 3635.

C H A P. I.

CYRUS commands his Officers and Governors to assist the JEWS in rebuilding the City and Temple at JERUSALEM.

Zeal of Cyrus in behalf of the Jews.

IN the seventieth year of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and in the first year of the reign of Cyrus, the Almighty accomplished the prediction which he made by the prophet Jeremiah, previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, that, "After a bondage for the space of seventy years, under Nebuchadnezzar, and his successors, the Hebrews should be re-established in their former state of happiness and splendor." The Lord was pleased to incline Cyrus to circulate letters throughout Asia, purporting, that the God adored by the Israelites was the eternal Being, through whose bounty he enjoyed the regal dignity; and that he had found himself honourably mentioned by the prophets of ancient date, and represented by them as the man who should cause Jerusalem to be rebuilt, and restore the Hebrews to their former state of grandeur and independency. Cyrus had read the prophecies of Isaiah, which had been written two hundred and ten years previous to his birth; and which included a revelation from the Lord, that he would create a man named Cyrus, who should reign over many powerful nations, and give the Hebrews possession of their native land. This

prediction was delivered one hundred and forty years before the destruction of the temple. Cyrus entertained a due veneration towards the prophecies respecting himself; and having summoned the principal people among the Jews at Babylon, he informed them, that he would grant passports to such of their nation as should be inclined to return to their native country; and that they should be at liberty to rebuild the city and temple of Jerusalem; adding, that he would command his governors, and other officers on the confines of Judæa, and provide them with gold, silver, and other materials for constructing the edifice, and likewise beasts for sacrifice; and he observed, that the blessing of the Lord would certainly attend the righteous undertaking. The principal people of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with the priests and Levites, immediately departed for Jerusalem: but many of the Jews determined to remain at Babylon, rather than relinquish the possessions they had obtained in that city*.

When the people who had accepted the proposal of Cyrus for rebuilding the temple, arrived at Jerusalem, great contributions were made in gold, silver, horses, and other cattle. Numbers attended the ceremony of oblations, and the ancient forms of religious institutions, with as great punctuality as was observed when the city was first erected. Cyrus had sent to

Their contributions for supporting the work.

* One reason why the bulk of the Jews (who were originally pastors, and lovers of agriculture) might rather chuse to live in the country than at Jerusalem, was, because it was more suited to their genius and manner of life: they might also be terrified from going thither, on account of the many enemies they should be exposed to. We do not read that Daniel took the advantage of the edict which Cyrus made in favour of the Jews; and therefore we may suppose,

that as he did not return with them to Jerusalem, the king might require his continuance with him; and Daniel might rather consent to it, as having thereby a better opportunity to befriend his countrymen upon any exigence. For this purpose, it is highly probable that he attended the Persian court, which, after the taking and despoiling of Babylon, resided in summer at Shusham, or Susa, and in winter at Ecbatana.

Jerusalem the holy vessels and other utensils which had been taken from the temple, and conveyed to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Mithridates, or Mithradates, the king's treasurer, being charged to deliver them to the care of Abassar, in whose possession they were to remain till the temple should be completed, when he was authorized to deposit them with the priests and magistrates.

The number of persons who were released by Cyrus from the captivity in Babylon, and returned to Jerusalem, was forty-two thousand four hundred and sixty-two.

The Jews applied themselves with the greatest industry to form the foundation of the temple; but they had made no considerable progress, when application was made by the neighbouring nations, requesting the princes and governors, who had been appointed to superintend the work, to prevent farther proceedings. The most strenuous opposers of the intended structure, were the Chuthites, whom, after he had expelled the Jews, Salmanasser, king of Assyria, led to repopulate Samaria. Considerable bribes and flattering promises prevailed upon the commissioners to neglect the execution of the important undertaking: and Cyrus being at this time engaged in the war against the Massagetes, was entirely unacquainted with the suspension of his commands. He at length fell a victim to the rage of war; and the government was assumed by his son Cambyses, who, soon after his return from the conquest of Egypt, died in the city of Damalcus, after he had reigned six years. The government was transferred to the Magi, who held the administration one year, at the expiration of which period, Darius, the son of Hytaspes, was advanced to the throne by the seven Satrapæ, or the heads of the seven principal Persian families, and the unanimous suffrages of the people.

C H A P. II.

An Assembly of the JEWS convened by ZERUBBABEL and JESUS the High Priests, by whose Means the Foundation of the Temple is laid, and Part of the Superstructure raised.

ZERUBBABEL, the leader, and Jesus, the high priest, in the seventh month after the Jews had retired from Babylon, issued orders for an assembly of the people at Jerusalem. These orders being cheerfully complied with, an altar was erected, according to the institution of Moses, on the spot where the altar had stood in former times. Hereupon the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries were greatly offended; and indeed they were enemies to the Jews, and inclined to obstruct all their operations.

About this period, the feast of the tabernacles occurred, according to the order of the Mosaic law,

* Ezra was not only famous for writing, but for explaining the things contained in the scriptures: for as *sepher* signifies a book, so *sepher* denotes one skilled and learned in that book; and as there was no book comparable to the book of the law, therefore, *sepher* became

and it was followed by the daily oblations, the sacrifices of the Sabbaths, and the new moons and other sacred festivals. From the first day of the seventh month people repaired to Jerusalem in order to discharge such vows as they had bound themselves to perform.

The building was now commenced, and immense sums were expended amongst the various artificers, and in making the necessary provisions for those who were employed in the conveyance of materials. The Sidonians liberally assisted in the undertaking: they conveyed vast numbers of cedar planks from Libanus, and framed a great number of boats, which they removed to the port of Joppa, agreeable to the directions of Cyrus, which Darius had confirmed and ordered to be carried into execution.

The foundation of the temple having been completed in the second month of the second year after the return of the Jews, they began to raise the superstructure on the first day of the third month; the direction of the work being entrusted to such of the Levites who were twenty years of age and upwards, Jesus, the high-priest, his sons and brothers, Zolmiel, and others, who executed their several commissions with such industry that a progress was made in the undertaking greatly superior to the most sanguine expectations.

The priests, habited in sacerdotal garments, and provided with musical instruments, repaired to the temple, and being joined by the Levites and the sons of Asaph, the sacred hymns of David were sung, agreeable to the original institution. The priests, Levites, and others, who had been witnesses to the astonishing magnificence of the former structure, with violent exclamations of sorrow, lamented the great inferiority of the new temple; but such as were not qualified to judge of the disproportion were perfectly satisfied.

Xerxes, the son and successor of Darius, was the heir of his father's virtues. He confirmed to the Jews all the favours his predecessors had promised. At this time Joiakim, the son of Jehu, was high-priest; but the high-priest of the Jews was Esdras, an inhabitant of Babylon, distinguished by his piety, and honoured by the general esteem. He was an adept in the law of Moses, which rendered him a particular favourite with the King. Esdras having resolved to go to Jerusalem, and to take with him a number of Babylonian Jews, requested the king to grant him a commendatory letter to the governors of Syria; which favour was obtained, and the most happy consequences ensued.

The feast of tabernacles having commenced, and the people being assembled in the eastern part of the temple, Esdras, at their desire, stood in the midst of them, and read the law of God: which service continued from morning till noon, to the great instruction of the audience, who learnt the laws of truth and uprightness*, and

Esdras reads the law to the people.

a name of great dignity, and signified one that taught God's law, and instructed the people out of it; such was Ezra, who is called *sephan mahir*, a ready scribe, Ezra vii. 6.

were taught to reflect on the fate of their forefathers, in consequence of the violation of those laws, the observance of which would have ensured their happiness. This reflection melted them into tears, which Esdras observing, bade them go home and make themselves easy: observing that the festival was rather profaned by their grief. He advised that they should eat, drink, and rejoice, and regard the festival no farther than as it might prevent their being again guilty of their former error. They took his advice, and having spent eight days in feasting, every man returned home, with acknowledgements to Esdras for the reformation he had occasioned. The hearts of the people of Israel were won by the conduct of Esdras, who lived honourably: died at a great age, in Jerusalem, and was interred in a most pompous manner. Nearly at the same time died Joiakim, the high-priest, who was succeeded by his son, Eliashib.

Nehemiah's measures for peopling the city.

The fortifications being completed, Nehemiah and the people offered sacrifice, and made a feast of eight days, which greatly chagrined the Syrians. Nehemiah considering that the city was but thinly inhabited, prevailed on the priests and Levites to reside therein, promising to provide them houses at his own expence. He also directed that the husbandmen should carry their tithes into the city for the support of the priests and Levites, the duty of whose offices ought not to be interrupted by worldly cares. These directions were readily obeyed, and the city soon became more populous. These things happened in the twenty-eighth year of the reign of Xerxes. After many worthy actions, Nehemiah died in a good old age: and he will be ever remembered with gratitude, for his goodness in the reparation of the walls of Jerusalem.

C H A P. III.

ARTAXERXES dismisses his Wife VASHTI, and marries ESTHER, MORDECAI'S Neice. HAMAN advises the Destruction of the JEWS, and that MORDECAI be put to Death. HAMAN hanged on the Gibbet provided for MORDECAI, and the latter delivered.

ON the death of Xerxes, his son Artaxerxes succeeded to the government of the Persians, and no sooner commenced his reign, than he appointed governors over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces between Ethiopia and India. In his third year he ordered a grand entertainment at Susa, at which his friends and great officers were entertained for one hundred and eighty days. The ambassadors of other nations attended this entertainment for seven days, and the feast was conducted in the following manner. A tent was erected on pillars of gold and silver, cov-

Description of the great feast of Artaxerxes.

vered with purple and fine linen, large enough to contain some thousands of people. The wine was served in vessels of gold and silver, adorned with stones of great value. The attendants were directed (as usual among the Persians) that no one should be compelled to drink more than he chose; and proclamation was made, that a certain number of days should be appointed as a festival for the general welfare of the kingdom. Vasthi the queen had a separate apartment where she entertained her women. Her beauty was so great, that the king sent for her, that his company might see her; but in obedience to the rigid laws of Persia, (where a woman only sees her domestics) she refused to attend: the eunuchs were repeatedly sent to summon her, but she still persisted in her refusal. This so incensed the king, that, when the feast was ended, he advised with the seven commissioners appointed to interpret the laws of Persia, how he should act in this case of his wife's refusal. Mechæus, one of the commissioners, said that the offence was not simply against the king, but of dangerous precedent to his subjects, whose wives might be taught disobedience to their husbands, if the queen's presumption should go unpunished; wherefore he advised that the king should issue a proclamation, importing that he had banished Vasthi for ever from his court and presence, and would take another wife in her stead. The king's love for the queen pleaded so powerfully for his living with her, and the laws so much to the contrary, that he knew not how to act. While he was almost distracted with his own thoughts, his friends advised him to consider the unreasonableness of his attachment to one woman, when he had only to chuse among the whole sex, and fix on that wife who should be most agreeable to him. They urged that the former wife would soon be forgotten, in the charms and conversation of a new one.

Vasthi punished for her imprudent conduct.

In consequence of this advice, persons were deputed to search through the king's dominions for some distinguished beauty; and at length they found at Babylon a maid named Esther, the elegance and grace of whose person rendered her the object of universal admiration. Her parents being dead, she had been educated in the house of her uncle Mordecai, a man of great distinction, of the tribe of Benjamin. Esther being committed to the care of the king's eunuchs, was attended with great respect, and furnished with perfumes, essences, and such other things as ladies use, to improve their charms. She thus continued with four hundred other virgins, for six months, at the end of which the king received them alternately to his bed; but when Esther's turn came, her conversation and behaviour so charmed the king, that he resolved to marry her, and accordingly celebrated his nuptials in the month Adar, being the twelfth month of the seventh year of his reign. He dispatched messengers to proclaim the marriage feast, which lasted a month, at which the king entertained the principal men of the Medes, Persians, and other nations. When the queen

The advancement of Esther.

queen entered the palace, the king put the crown on her head and thenceforward lived with her without inquiring respecting her country. In the mean time her uncle Mordecai removed to Susa, and often enquired at the palace for the welfare of Esther, whom he loved as tenderly as if he had been her father.

About this time the king issued orders, that when he should sit on the throne, no persons should approach him without being commanded to attend, on the forfeiture of their heads; and the officers attended with axes, to execute such as disobeyed*. But the king held in his hand a golden sceptre, which he extended when he chose to give such as disobeyed the order: and their touching this sceptre, sealed their pardon.

Mordecai discovers a conspiracy against the king.

Bigthan and Teresh, two of the eunuchs of the chamber, now plotted the destruction of the king; but Barnabafus, a Jew by descent, who was servant to one of them, told Mordecai of the affair, who made it known to the king, by the means of Esther; on which the conspirators were seized, convicted, and executed. For this service Mordecai was admitted a domestic in the palace, and the circumstance was entered on record to his honour.

Haman, being promoted, is a great enemy to the Jews.

The king promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha, an Amalekite, who was often at court, where, agreeable to the king's pleasure, both Persians and strangers paid him great homage. Mordecai alone bowed not to him, such obedience being against the custom of his country. This being remarked by Haman, he enquired who he was; and learning that he was a Jew, exclaimed at his insolence in affronting him to whom the natives paid such respect. Haman now conceived a scheme of revenge, not only against Mordecai, but the Jews in general, remembering that these people had formerly beaten his countrymen, the Amalekites, and driven them out of their land. Hereupon Haman repaired to the king, hinting that the Jews were a vile race, of bad tempers, disagreeable manners, and superstitious in their ceremonies; who lurked about his dominions, and appeared to be the enemies of mankind by their general behaviour. He then besought the king to oblige him in the highest degree, by ordering the utter extirpation of these people: "And (said he) that your revenue may not suffer hereby, I will, out of my own estate, pay into your treasury forty thousand talents of silver; for I shall be happy in the loss of part of my private fortune, so that these abandoned people are but rooted out of your dominions." In answer hereto, the king refused to take Haman's money, but bid him deal with the Jews as he thought proper; whereupon the

latter gave orders for publishing throughout the king's dominions the following edict:

"*ARTAXERXES the great King, to the one hundred and twenty-seven Governors of the Provinces of INDIA and ETHIOPIA, greeting.*

"Forasmuch as God hath given me the supreme rule over numerous nations, and as much command over the rest of the world, as gratifieth my highest ambition: I am disposed, therefore, not to tyrannise over my subjects, but to rule them with a gentle hand, to secure them in peace and freedom, and to settle their tranquillity on a firm basis. These things I have maturely considered; and being informed by Haman, my favourite friend and counsellor, on whose allegiance, discretion and justice, I can depend, and who stands first in my esteem, that a barbarous people have intermixed with my subjects, who presume to govern themselves by their own laws, and prescribe a rule of conduct contrary to good order and subjection: a people, who in their manners and behaviour hold our monarchy and administration in defiance: you are therefore hereby commanded, that when Haman (whom you are to deem as a father,) shall give notice who are meant by this proclamation, that, in pursuance of this decree, you put all the said people to the sword, men, women, and children, without distinction: and I farther enjoin, that this be executed on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of the present year; that one day may compleat the destruction of your enemies and mine, and our lives be spent in peace and security."

Cruel edict for destroying the Jews.

This order was soon circulated through all the towns of the empire, and the people prepared to destroy the Jews on the fixed day: nor was the disposition at Susa less violent against them, than in other places. In the interim, the king and Haman spent their time in feasting and drinking; but the people of reflection were shocked at the approaching massacre.

Mordecai no sooner learnt the purport of the proclamation, than he rent his cloaths, covered himself with sackcloth, threw ashes on his head, and went through the city, protesting against the king's edict, but stopped at the gate of the palace, which no man durst enter in such a dress: in all other places the Jews were likewise abandoned to grief. The queen learning that Mordecai was at the palace-gate in such a habit, sent and begged that he would change his dress: but he replied that he would not, till the cause of it was removed. The queen sent Hatach, one of

Mordecai's lamentation, and injunction to Esther to patronise them.

* For the preservation of royal dignity, it was enacted, in the reign of Darius king of Media, that no person should be admitted into the king's presence; but that, if he had any business with him, he should transact it by the intercourse of his ministers. This custom passed from the Medes to the Persians, though the reason of the

law, at first, was not only to secure the king's person, but to support the power of some great officers of state, by having only the privilege of speaking to the king themselves, and such as they thought proper to introduce.

the king's eunuchs, to learn Mordecai's reason for such an appearance; on which he told him the particulars of the king's order for the destruction of the Jews; and what a sum of money Haman had offered for the grant. He gave Hatach a copy of the original order, to communicate to the queen; and begged his interest with the king to spare the lives of a whole people; entreating him not to hesitate, for Haman was perpetually traducing the Jews to the king, and would certainly succeed if not counteracted. The eunuch told this to the queen, who sent word to Mordecai, that to interrupt the king on his throne, without orders to attend, was an offence punishable with loss of life, except the king granted pardon by extending his sceptre. Mordecai now urged the messenger to remind the queen, that not her personal safety only, but that of a whole people was to be regarded; cautioning her not to omit so charitable an office; and hinting that if she did, Providence would preserve the Jews, and she and her family might hereafter lie at their mercy*. Esther now directed the eunuch to tell her uncle that he should assemble the Jews at Susa, and order a fast of three days for the queen's safety; saying, that herself and attendants would observe the same, and at the end of that time she would go to the king at the hazard of her life. The queen's orders were obeyed by Mordecai, who fasted and humbled himself, beseeching God to extend his mercy to penitent sinners, and to away the malice of their enemies; for that not their own crimes, but the pride of Haman, had reduced them to that distress; by which a nation who refused to violate the divine laws, was to be rooted out. The Israelites prayed to the same purpose, beseeching God to avert his judgments. The queen wore a mourning veil, according to the custom of her country, prostrated herself on the ground, and abstained from food and all refreshments for three days; and implored God to incline the king's heart in her favour, to render her person and words more acceptable than ever in his sight, that their enemies might be confounded, and her unhappy countrymen escape the snare that had been laid for them.

Esther intercedes with the king in behalf of the Jews.

Three days being thus spent in humiliation, the queen, dressed herself in her royal attire, took with her two handmaids, and advanced to the king, leaning on one, while the others followed in her train. Dignity, elegance, and comeliness, were mingled in her appearance. The king was seated on his throne, most superbly dressed in the royal robes, adorned with precious stones, gold, and pearl. The queen trembled at the grandeur of the sight; and fancying that the king looked displeased, fainted in the arms of one of her attendants. The king, shocked at this accident, descended from the throne, caught her in his arms, and assured her

that, though she came unsent for, no punishment should follow, as the law was intended to restrain the subjects, and had no reference to her, who was his partner in the sovereign authority. Thus saying, he laid the sceptre lightly on her neck, and gave it into her hands; which dissipated all her fears. Having recovered the use of speech, she said she could not account for her sudden illness, but that her heart failed on the splendid appearance of the king. These words were spoken in such a weak and languishing tone, that the king, impressed by the idea of what she suffered, said, he would grant any thing, even to the half of his kingdom, to her petition. Esther only begged he would that day bring Haman with him, and accept of a treat she had provided. They both went, and when elevated with liquor, the king bade her only name her request, and it should be complied with: on which she solicited, that he and Haman would attend her the following day, when she would prefer her petition. This pleased the king, and enraptured Haman, who was not a little proud of this eminent distinction. In his way home, he met Mordecai in the palace, who paid him no respect; on which he went to his wife Zeresh, and several of his friends, whom he informed on what terms he was with the king and queen, with whom he had supped, and received a similar invitation for the following day: "but yet (said he) the insolence of Mordecai chagrins me." Zeresh advised him to erect a gallows fifty cubits high, and obtain the king's permission to hang Mordecai on it in the morning. He took her advice, and the gallows was put up within his own palace. But the providence of God defeated the hopes of Haman; for the king being unable to sleep that night, arose, and ordered his secretary to bring him a number of state papers for his perusal. On reading them, the king found that great honours and riches had been bestowed on one man for his valour; that the fidelity of a second to his prince had made his fortune: at length, he came to the account of the conspiracy of the eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, of which Mordecai had made discovery. The king bade the secretary stop here, and asked him if the party had been rewarded for his services; to which the other said, that no reward was mentioned in that account. The secretary was then ordered to enquire the hour; and bringing word that it was day-break, the king bade him see if any of his friends were at the gate of the palace. He there found Haman, with his petition against the life of Mordecai. The king being told that Haman waited, ordered him in, and said, "As I esteem you my best friend, I wish for your advice: but what honours, consistent with my own dignity, and my affection for the party, shall I bestow on the man who has conferred the greatest obligation on me?" Haman, thinking this question related to himself, said, that the

* Not only the Jews, but a great many others in Shushan, might be concerned at the horrid decree Haman had procured for destroying that people, either because they were related to them, or en-

gaged with them in worldly concerns, or perhaps out of mere humanity and compassion to so vast a number of innocent people, now appointed as sheep for the slaughter.

man thus to be distinguished should be clothed in the royal apparel, be presented with a chain of gold, and being mounted on the king's own horse, his majesty should direct one of his confident friends to march before him through the city, and proclaim, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour." The king appearing pleased

Haman com-
manded to do
honour to
Mordecai.

with this proposal, said, "Do you take the horse, apparel, and golden chain, and having found Mordecai the Jew, dress him, see him mounted, and walk before him as the herald; for you, being my most worthy friend, are the most proper person to execute what you have advised. This honour shall be done to Mordecai, because I owe my life to his zeal." Haman was confounded at this order, but obliged to comply; wherefore he took the horse, the royal apparel, and chain of gold, and went in search of Mordecai, whom he found clothed in sackcloth at the gate of the palace, and desired him to put on the purple robes. Mordecai, ignorant of what had passed, thought Haman intended to ridicule him, and therefore treated him as one who meant to insult the unfortunate. The matter being explained, Mordecai was convinced that the king intended him this honour, in reward of his preventing the effects of the eunuchs' conspiracy; whereupon he put on the robes, invested him with the chain, and, getting on the horse, rode through the city: Haman preceding him with this proclamation: "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour." This ceremony being ended, Mordecai repaired to the king, while Haman went home dejected, and informed his wife and friends of what had happened: on hearing whereof they were convinced that they could not wreak their vengeance on Mordecai, who appeared to be protected by heaven.

During their conversation, some eunuchs came from the queen to summon Haman to supper: Sabuchadas, one of the eunuchs, seeing a gibbet in the court-yard, inquired who it was intended for; and being told for Mordecai, the queen's uncle, he said no more. While they were at supper, the king again desired the queen to make her demand, and it should not be refused. On this she recited the imminent danger of the Jews; lamented that herself and countrymen were devoted to destruction, and said, that was the subject on which she wished to speak to the king. She was unwilling to interrupt business of state, and thought that if her countrymen had been only doomed to slavery, the sentence might have been submitted to; but she implored his majesty to put a stop to their total destruction. The king immediately asked who had a design to destroy them? to which

the queen answered that, in mere malice, Haman had given such advice. The king being hurt by this discourse, retired to the garden: and in the mean time, Haman, who saw the gathering storm, besought the queen's pardon for his errors, and threw himself on the bed by her, in a posture of humiliation*. At this instant the king returned, and observing Haman in this situation, reproached him as a villain for attempting the honour of the queen; accompanying what he said with such violent action, that Haman was at a loss to reply. Sabuchadas, the eunuch above-mentioned, now told the king of the gibbet erected in Haman's court, for the execution of Mordecai: hereupon the king gave orders that Haman should be hanged on the very gibbet he had prepared for the other. Thus wonderful was the wisdom of Providence, in bringing Haman to the very punishment he had designed for another.

The king
highly incen-
sed at Haman.

Haman being executed, his estate was given to the queen, who had by this time informed the king of her affinity to Mordecai; on which the king sent for him, and gave him the ring which had been heretofore entrusted with Haman, and the queen bestowed on him the estates of the delinquent. She next reminded the king of the letters Haman had dispatched through the empire; and begged that he would ease the Jews of their apprehensions, saying that her own life was involved in the safety of her friends. The king assured her nothing should happen to the Jews without her consent; and permitted her to write to them in his name, and the letters should be delivered throughout his dominions, sealed with the royal signet, which would give them sufficient validity.

Execution of
Haman.

Persons were immediately dispatched with the royal proclamation in favour of the Jews. In the mean time, Mordecai, coming out of the palace, dressed in the royal robe, gown and chain, the Jews triumphed in this circumstance as a prelude to their happiness; and the joy was extreme wherever the king's letters were published. People of other nations were likewise so affected, that many of them were circumcised in order to escape as Jews. On receiving this letter, the princes, magistrates, and governors, dreading the resentment of Mordecai, paid more than usual respect to the Jews.

The publication of the king's cause, the Jews of Susa to destroy their enemies; and the king informing the queen hereof, asked her if she had any thing to demand, for he should not refuse her request. She begged that Haman's ten sons might be hanged on the gibbet†, and that the Jews might be allowed one

Effects of the
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* It is the universal custom of the eastern nations to recline on a couch while they eat their meals; and while the queen was in this posture, Haman prostrated himself before her. It must be merely a pretence of Artaxerxes, to charge Haman with any indecent design, since all other circumstances militated too much against him to admit of it, and consequently prevented his forming any other project

than that which tended to the preservation of his life, which is now apprehended to be in danger.

† There is, in the Hebrew copies of the book of Esther, a singular matter for preserving the memory of the manner in which these young gentlemen were put to death; and in this circumstance we follow them in our translation, yet the meaning of it is but little known.



The City of SUSA, with the Execution of HAMAN.

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one other day of revenge. This being granted, they assembled on the following day, and killed near three hundred more at Susa; and it was judged that seventy-five thousand more were destroyed throughout the empire. The slaughter at Susa was on the thirteenth; that in the country on the fourteenth of the twelfth month; which days are still celebrated as festivals among the Jews, agreeable to an order of Mordecai, for a perpetual remembrance to posterity, that the days intended for their destruction proved those of their deliverance: and these days are now called *Purim*, or feasts of Preservation*. Mordecai continued in great credit with the king and queen, and so directed public affairs, that the Jews flourished wonderfully during his administration.

C H A P. IV.

ELIASHIB, the High-Priest, succeeded by JUDAS. JESUS slain in the Temple, by his Brother JOHN. MANASSEH, Brother of JADDUS, the High-Priest, married to SANBALLAT's Daughter, NICASA.

On the 1st of the month of Nisan, the Jews are commanded by the Lord to observe the feast of the Passover.
THE high-priest, Eliashib, being dead, was succeeded by his son Judas, and he, by his son John. This John caused the temple to be profaned by Bagoses, a leader of Artaxerxes' troops, levying a fine on the Jews of fifty drachmas daily, for each lamb they sacrificed, to be paid before the offerings commenced. The cause of this fine was as follows. The brother of John was named Jesus, and Bagoses being his intimate friend, sought to elevate him to the priesthood. Jesus, presuming upon this distinction, quarrelled with his brother in the temple, and the latter, much enraged, attacked and killed him: a

known. The names of the sons of Haman make the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses of the 9th chapter of Esther; by which division of the names in a perpendicular course of verses, it is easy for the reader to consider them as divided into three columns, or as hanging upon three strings; three upon a string, one above another. The names in the Hebrew copies are much more exactly ranged for this way of considering them; particularly in the parchment copy for the service on this feast. The intention of which ranging or division, is to signify, that Haman's sons were hanged one above another in one perpendicular line.

The day before the opening of the feast, the Jews observe as a fast, because on that day, say they, their fathers did so when they were threatened with the danger above-mentioned, and were assembled for their common defence. The two following days are Bacchanalian, or days of high feasting and mirth, particularly of high drinking. The Chaffan reads the whole book of Esther, without pause or hesitation: it is kept for this service, fairly written on a large skin of parchment rolled on a cylinder of wood. Both sexes of all ages and conditions (except very young children) are enjoined, for the better preservation of the remembrance of the matters now commemorated, to read or assist at the reading of that whole book. When the parchment is unfolded, the Chaffan says, "Blessed be God, the King of the world, who hath sanctified us, and command-

ed us to read the Magilla" (a Talmud treatise so called, which treats of the feast of Purim.) "Blessed be God, who in those days, at this time (so runs the Hebrew) wrought miracles for our fathers." As often as, in the course of the reading, he names Haman, the auditory says, "Let his name be blotted out; he may the name of the wicked rot!" The boys, at the same time, clench their fists and strike them together, and hissing at the name of Haman, make a great and clamorous noise. The names of the ten sons of that proud Persian are read with one and the same breath, because, say the Jews, they were all hanged, and all expired, at the same moment of time.

When the Chaffan has finished the reading, every one says, "Curse be Haman; blessed be Mordecai; curse be Zeresh (the wife of Haman); but blessed be Esther; Curse be all idolaters; but blessed be all the Israelites; and blessed likewise be Harboneh (one of the king's chamberlains), by whose hands Haman was hanged."

On this feast, they send presents to one another (the men to men, and women to women); and give to the poor. And, for the promotion of mirth, men put on the apparel of women, and women put on the apparel of men. This is forbidden in the law of Moses: but the Jews say, 'tis no sin on this occasion, because it is done only to heighten the festivity.

Manasseh,

Manasseh, that on the king's return he would ratify all his promises; as he had no doubt, but the Macedonians would be routed on the first encounter. In this, however, he was mistaken; for Darius was defeated, his army being chiefly cut off, his mother, wife, and children made captives, and he obliged to save himself by a precipitate flight. In the mean time, Alexander marched into Syria, made capture of Sidon and Damascus, and besieged Tyre. He now wrote to the high-priest of the Jews, claiming the assistance heretofore given to Darius, and demanding that his army might be supplied with necessaries, which should be paid for punctually. The high-priest returned a short answer, intimating that they had sworn not to bear arms against Darius, during their lives. This answer enraged Alexander, who, however, proceeded in his attack of Tyre, but vowed that, when he had conquered it, he would attack the high-priest, and teach his people not to violate their oaths. Alexander soon conquered Tyre, and then proceeded to reduce the Persian government at Gaza.

Sanballat revolts from Darius to Alexander, who permits him to build a temple at Gerizim.

Sanballat, finding that Alexander lay before Tyre, repaired to him with eight thousand men, thus abandoning his faith to Darius. Alexander received him graciously, and bid him speak freely; on which he said that his son-in-law, Manasseh, brother to Jaddus, high-priest of the Jews, was following him with a great concourse of people, who requested leave to erect a temple in that province. Sanballat intimated likewise how much Alexander's interest was concerned in this permission, as the Jews, who were very numerous, might be as troublesome to him, as they had heretofore been to the Syrians. The request was granted, and they began to build the temple, of which Manasseh was to be the high-priest, and his descendents, by Sanballat's daughter, to succeed to that honour. At the end of nine months, Sanballat died, and Alexander having made a conquest of Gaza, proceeded towards Jerusalem. Jaddus the high-priest was now confounded to think how he should behave to a prince whose former commands he had disobeyed: on which he ordered prayers and sacrifices for the general prosperity of the people. On the following night it was revealed to Jaddus in a dream, that he should adorn the city with garlands and flowers, open the gates, and let the people, dressed in white, go out to meet Alexander; himself and the other priests preceding, in their proper habits. In the morning, Jaddus, highly rejoiced, told the citizens what had been revealed, and proceeded to make the necessary preparations for meeting the king.

Jaddus meets Alexander, by whom he is graciously received.

Learning that he approached, Jaddus, with the priests and people, went on to a place called Sapha, (or the place of prospect) from its commanding a view of the

city and temple. The Chaldeans and Phœnicians thought to destroy and plunder the high-priest and people; but it happened otherwise: for Alexander, seeing the people walking in white, the priests in silk robes, and the high priest in purple, embroidered with gold, wearing his mitre, and having on his forehead a golden plate, with the name of God on it, advanced alone, paid homage to the inscription, and complimented the high-priest*. Hereupon the Jews gathered in crowds, and proclaimed the praise of Alexander. This behaviour astonished the kings of Persia and others; and Parmenio asked Alexander how it happened that he, whom almost every man worshipped, should bow to a priest of the Jews. Alexander replied, "I worship not this man; but his God. Some time since I saw this very person, in the same habit, at Dion, in Macedonia. I was debating how to conquer Asia, when he bade me conduct my army over the river, and I should subdue the empire of Persia. On seeing him in this habit, the idea of my dream recurs, and I am sure this is the person who encouraged me to this expedition: thus convinced of the divine interposition, I have no doubt of success against the Persians." Having said this, the king saluted Jaddus, and the other priests escorting him into the city, he advanced to the temple, and offered sacrifice. Alexander paid great respect to the high-priest, who, on the conclusion of the ceremony, shewed him a prophecy of Daniel, which predicted that in future time, a Greek king should conquer the empire of Persia. Alexander perceiving that this meant himself, was highly gratified, and discharged the people till the following day, when they were to make known what they desired he should do for them: On their meeting, the high-priest said, they wished to enjoy their own laws, to be freed from a tribute paid once in seven years; and to possess the same privileges as the Jews of Media and Babylon; all which Alexander granted, and said farther, that if any of them chose to enlist in his army, they should have the free exercise of their religion; on which many of them engaged in his service.

Alexander having adjusted affairs at Jerusalem, proceeded to different places, and was well received in them all. The city of Sichem, near the mount Gerizim, was at this time the chief residence of the Samaritans, who retained their own disposition of being friends to the Jews in prosperity. Alexander was met by the Sichemites (accompanied by the troops Sanballat had sent), who, with apparent joy, begged he would honour their city and temple with a visit. The king spoke kindly to them, and promised a visit on his return. They then asked a remittance of the seventh year's tribute. Alexander demanded of what nation they were; they answered Hebrews, but the Sidonians called them Sichemites.

The Samaritans of Sichem apply to Alexander, for exemption from tribute.

* This account does not materially differ from that given by Stackhouse, who relates, that Jaddus went out in his pontifical robes, with the priests attending him in their proper habits, and, upon an eminence, waited the coming of Alexander; whom seeing

at some distance, he moved towards him in this solemn pomp; which struck the king with such an awe, that, as he drew near, he bowed down to him, and saluted him with a religious veneration, to the great surprize of all who attended him.

Samuel J. Bradshaw's, Version of JOSEPHUS)



*The High Priest of the Jews goes out to meet and pay his homage
to Alexander who was incensed, but that Queen shews a regard to the High
Priest, and worships the Name of the Lord.*

The consideration of their request postponed.

They were then asked if they were Jews; but they answered in the negative; upon which Alexander said, "The favour you ask I have granted to the Jews; and when I return, and am better informed, I shall indulge you in what may be thought reasonable." Saying this, the king dismissed the Sichemites; but took Sanballat's troops with him to Egypt, where they had lands allotted them; but they were afterwards placed in garrison in Thebes, where they had the same indulgence.

Alexander dying, his empire was divided among his successors. The temple of Gerizim remained untouched. When the Jews at Jerusalem violated their laws, by a breach of the sabbath, or eating meats that were forbidden, they used to take sanctuary with the Sichemites, pretending that they were falsely accused. Jaddus, the high-priest, died at this period, and was succeeded by his son Onias.

Death of Alexander and Jaddus.

B O O K XII.

Containing the HISTORY of the JEWISH TRANSACTIONS, from the YEAR of the WORLD 3635, to 3804.

C H A P. I.

The MACEDONIAN Empire divided into Principalities, after the Decease of ALEXANDER. PTOLEMY obtains Possession of JERUSALEM.

Partition of the Macedonian empire.

ALEXANDER died, after having obtained an intire conquest over the Persian empire, and established divers regulations in Jerusalem, as we have already mentioned; and his kingdom was divided among the chiefs of his army. Antigonus assumed the command of Asia; Seleucus, that of Babylon and the bordering countries; the Hellespont was under Lyfimachus; Cassander reigned over Macedon; and Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, over Egypt. These princes severally aimed at universal sovereignty, and the consequence was a war of long duration, in the course of which great numbers of people were sacrificed, and many capital cities utterly destroyed. The country of Syria was particularly affected by these contentions, during the reign of Ptolemy, who was called the saviour: but no man less deserved that honourable distinction*.

Ptolemy gets possession of Jerusalem by treachery, and takes many of the Jews prisoners.

This Ptolemy, under the pretext of a religious motive, obtained admittance to the city of Jerusalem on the sabbath, and gained possession of the place, without opposition, the Jews being prohibited the use of arms on that sacred day. In his history of the successors of Alexander, Agathar-

chides, the Cnidian, says, "The people called Jews, inhabiting the strongly fortified and populous city of Jerusalem, submitted to the intolerable oppression of Ptolemy, from a superstitious regard to their sabbath, by which they were withheld from taking up arms to repulse the invader." Ptolemy made captives of a great number of Jews from Jerusalem, Samaria, and mount Gerizim, and transplanted them into Egypt. The answer of the Jews to Alexander, after he had vanquished Darius, convinced Ptolemy that they were a people who paid a sacred observance to an oath; and on this consideration, having first sworn them to fidelity to himself and his successors, he entrusted them to defend several places of strength, appointed them to offices of considerable trust, and admitted them to the same privileges in Alexandria which were enjoyed by the Macedonians. The liberality of Ptolemy, and the fertility of the country, induced great numbers of Jews to repair to Egypt. The ancient laws and customs were a continual source of dissensions among the Jews and Samaritans; the former declaring the temple at Jerusalem to be the only holy place, and the others as positively insisting in favour of the temple at Gerizim: and in these contests many lives were lost.

Philadelphus succeeded his father Ptolemy (who was called the saviour) in the government of Egypt. On the following

The captive Jews restored to freedom.

* Ptolemy was a man intirely given up to his lusts and voluptuous delights. Drinking, gaming, and lasciviousness, were the whole employments of his life. Agathoclea his concubine, and Agathocles his brother (who was his catamite) governed him absolutely; and when Arsinoe (who was both his sister and wife) complained of the neglect which, by means of these two favourites, was

put upon her, this so offended the king and his catamite, that orders were given to have her put to death: but he did not long survive her; for, having worn out a strong constitution by his intemperance and debaucheries, he ended his life before he had lived out half the ordinary term allotted to man.

occasion he restored to freedom one hundred and twenty thousand Jews who were captives in Egypt. Demetrius Phalereus, who was appointed to the care of the royal library, with remarkable industry laboured to procure all the books which were deserving a place in the king's study. Being asked by Philadelphus how many books he had collected, Demetrius replied, that the number amounted to two hundred thousand volumes, which he hoped soon to increase to five hundred thousand, having learnt that the Jews possessed a vast number of manuscripts on the subject of their laws, ceremonies and customs, which would prove a valuable acquisition to the royal library; he observed, that though the characters and language of the Hebrews bore some affinity to the Greek, yet there were many niceties peculiar to each tongue, which would contribute to render the translation a work of difficulty, but that it might notwithstanding be accomplished if the king should judge it expedient to incur the expence of the undertaking.

Ptolemy Philadelphus orders a translation of the Jewish laws to be made into Greek, by seventy-two elders.

Philadelphus expressed an entire approbation of what had been intimated by his librarian: and dispatched a letter to the high-priest of the Jews, requesting his assistance towards the intended acquisition. Aristæus, whose wisdom and modesty had obtained him a distinguished

place in the king's esteem, had long cherished the hope of restoring the Jews to freedom; and determining to avail himself of the favourable opportunity which now offered, he applied to Sosibius, Tarantinus, and Andræus, captains of the guards, entreating them to join their interests for effecting the desired purpose. Having received their promise of assistance, he thus addressed the king:

"Your majesty having been pleased to signify a desire of having a translation of the laws of the Jews, I humbly apprehend that the business cannot be fairly executed while so many of the people from whom you expect assistance remain in bondage. To relieve their distress is an act worthy your exalted station and character, since we all worship the Almighty God under the several names of Jove, Jupiter, à Juvando. From a veneration of the universal Creator, you may be inclined to restore the miserable captives to the land assigned them by Providence. I do not presume to espouse the cause of these people on account of a family alliance, but entirely on the consideration that we are the servants of the same God, to whom the solicited clemency will prove highly acceptable."

The king's great liberality on behalf of the Jews.

The king inquired of Aristæus what number of Jews were in bondage; and he was informed by Andræus, that they amounted to about one hundred and twenty thousand: upon this, the king asked Aristæus whether he thought he had requested a moderate favour. It was observed by Sosibius, and others, that compassion towards the miserable was worthy the royal character, in gratitude for having been advanced to the sovereignty. Philadelphus was perfectly satisfied with the conduct of the persons who had in-

terceded in favour of the captives, and ordered that, on the ensuing pay-day, his soldiers, exclusive of their usual stipend, should receive an hundred and twenty drachmas in lieu of every Jew whom they held in slavery; promising further to extend his clemency in compliance with the request of Aristæus, or rather with the decrees of Providence, and that the whole should be ratified by a proclamation emancipating the Jews who had been made prisoners during his father's reign, as well as those who had fallen into captivity before and subsequent to that period. He was informed that the deliverance of these people would incur an expence of at least forty talents: and he said that notwithstanding the sum was considerable, his promise should be punctually fulfilled.

The king ordered Demetrius to publish the particulars concerning the translation of the books and records of the Jews. Upon a register was inserted a transcript of the petition of Demetrius, a list of the donations towards the undertaking, with the names of the several subscribers, and the letters which had passed on the occasion; so that the munificence of the king, and the liberal assistance afforded towards perfecting the work, might be apparent on the first view. His munificence, and the many valuable presents which he made to the temple, were beyond description splendid, and exceeded every thing done by former monarchs; I mean those who were not descendants of Abraham, but raised up by the Almighty to shew favour to the people of Israel.

C H A P. II.

The Liberality of the King of ASIA towards the JEWS. CLEOPATRA, Daughter of ANTIOCHUS the GREAT, married to the King of EGYPT.

SO celebrated were the Jews for their faith and their military skill, that Seleucus, surnamed Nicanor, admitted them to the immunities of Antioch, and his several cities throughout Asia and Lower Syria; and to this day they enjoy the privileges granted to them, in common with the Greeks and Macedonians. The Jews being prohibited the use of foreign oil, the Olympic officers had it in commission from the government, to allow them, in lieu thereof, a portion of money. In the following war, the people of Antioch insisted upon the Jews being abridged of this privilege; but Mutianus, governor of the province of Syria, would not comply with their requisitions. The people of Alexandria urged the disfranchisement of the Jews, during the reign of Vespasian and his son Titus: the Romans honourably opposed the measure, which the above-mentioned princes could not be induced to countenance. Notwithstanding the provocation of an obstinate war and rebellion, they nobly declined a gratification of their passions, and rejected the intercession of two powerful nations, on the consideration that the privileges of the Jews could not be abridged without a violation of justice. Their former

former defects prevailed over their present offences; and the princes said, that private interest should not seduce them to take mean advantages. They urged, that such of our people as had taken up arms against the Romans, had been sufficiently punished in the course of the war; and to abridge the sacred rights of those who had not committed offence, would be equally contrary to the principles of reason and justice.

The generosity of Marcus Agrippa towards the Jews stands on record. He defended them against their enemies, and entered into various leagues with the neighbouring princes for their common defence.

Antiochus perfected a bond of friendship with Ptolemy, by marrying his daughter Cleopatra. For a marriage-portion he received half of Cœlo-Syria, Phœnicia, Judea, and Samaria, which being let to hire to the principal people of the provinces, the rents were paid into the royal treasury.

The pride of the Samaritans now induced them to insult the Jews, several of whom they made captives. This happened in the time of Onias the high priest, who was so weak and covetous that he refused the usual tribute of twenty talents, which his predecessors had constantly paid to the king. Ptolemy Euergetes, the father of Philopater, was so affronted at this conduct, that he sent an ambassador to Jerusalem to demand the payment, and threatened to fix a plantation there, and quarter an army on the country, in case of a refusal. The Jews were extremely terrified at this message; but Onias, whose ruling passion was the love of money, was determined to abide the consequence.

Joseph, a young man, nephew of Onias the high-priest, was remarkable for his prudence and integrity. Being at Ptolemaïs, his mother sent him notice of the above message; on which he went to Onias, and reproached him with his disregard to the welfare of the public, to whom he owed his promotion; saying that, at least he should go to the king, and endeavour to obtain a remission of part of the tribute. This Onias absolutely declined; on which Joseph desired to go in his place, which was granted. Joseph therefore assembled the people in the temple; told them he would wait on the king, and hoped his uncle's remissness would have no ill consequence. They thankfully left the business to him; on which he invited the king's commissioner to a splendid treat, which lasted several days, made him rich presents, and told him he would follow him to his master. The commissioner returning into Egypt, spoke of the ingratitude of Onias; but mentioned Joseph (who would soon be there) in terms of such high respect, that the king, and the queen Cleopatra, wished to see him.

Joseph now sent to his friends in Samaria, to raise money to furnish his equipage, which cost near twenty thousand drachmas, in cloaths, horses, carriages, plate, &c. On his road to Alexandria, he fell in company with some of the princes and nobles of Syria and Phœnicia, who were going to the king, to

purchase his revenue, which was annually sold to the best bidder. These people ridiculed the appearance of Joseph and his retinue; but he proceeded to Alexandria, where learning that the king was at Memphis, he went forward, and met him in his chariot, with the queen, and Athenion, the very commissioner whom Joseph had treated at Jerusalem. Athenion no sooner saw him, than he told the king that was the young man of whom he had spoken so highly. On this, Ptolemy took him into his carriage, and mentioned how ill he had been treated by Onias. Joseph replied, "An old man is a second time a child; impute nothing to Onias beyond what his age will excuse: for us who have youth, and the power of our faculties, we will give proof of our dutiful attachment." This speech so pleased the king, that he gave orders that Joseph should be lodged in the palace, and treated him at his own table; a circumstance that gave great disgust to the Syrians.

The day arriving when the branches of the revenue were to be sold, the nobles above-mentioned offered eight thousand talents for the duties of Cœlo-Syria, Phœnicia, and Samaria; on which, Joseph bid double the sum; which pleased the king, who asked him what security he could give. Joseph said his securities were undoubted; and the king bidding him name them, he replied he had no doubt that the king and queen would be mutually bound for his integrity. Hereupon the king trusted him with the receipt of the revenue, without other security; a circumstance that extremely mortified the intended purchasers.

Thus commissioned, Joseph solicited a guard of two thousand soldiers, to aid him in levying the duties; which being granted, he borrowed five hundred talents in Alexandria, and proceeded towards Syria. On his arrival at Ascalon, the people not only refused to pay the tribute, but insulted him; whereupon he punished twenty of the ringleaders, and raised a thousand talents from their forfeited estates, which he sent to the king, with an account of his proceedings. This so pleased the king, that he left him wholly to his own conduct; and the rest of the Syrians, struck by the above example, paid their taxes without hesitation. The people of Scythopolis following those of Ascalon in refusing to pay the tribute, Joseph dealt with them as with the others, applying the forfeitures to the use of the king. In the course of business, Joseph procured many valuable presents both to the king and his ministers.

Twenty-two years Joseph lived in prosperity, during which he had seven sons by one wife, and one, named Hyrcanus, by the daughter of his brother Solymius, whom he married in consequence of the following incident. Journeying to Alexandria with his brother, to find a Jew of rank proper to marry his daughter, Joseph, being at supper with the king, fell in love with a maid who was dancing to entertain his majesty. He told the secret to his brother, wishing, that

Joseph is treated with singular honour and respect.

He is appointed receiver-general of the revenue.

Circumstances preceding the birth of Hyrcanus.

Joseph's advice to Onias rejected.

Goes on an embassy to Ptolemy, with whom he has an interview.

that as he could not lawfully marry her, he would privately introduce them to each other. The brother promised, but put his daughter to bed; and Joseph, having drank too freely, discovered not the deception. This deceit was repeatedly practised, till Joseph, wholly enamoured, lamented to his brother the improbability of the king's permitting the match. Solyminus bade him be at rest; said he might lawfully enjoy the woman as his wife, and revealed the whole secret: saying, he permitted this affront to his daughter, rather than that his brother should commit a heinous offence. Joseph was all gratitude for this instance of friendship, and married the daughter, who was the mother of Hyrcanus. At thirteen years old, Hyrcanus was such a miracle of good sense and benevolence, that he became the object of envy to all his elder brothers.

His extraordinary talents.

Joseph, willing to make proof of the abilities of his children, placed all of them, except Hyrcanus, under experienced masters; but they made no proficiency. He then sent Hyrcanus a journey of seven days into the desert, with three hundred pair of oxen, to plow and sow; first privately taking away the lines that were to fasten the yoke to the plough. The youth, on his arrival, missing the lines, some husbandmen advised him to send to his father for them; but, unwilling to lose so much time, he gave orders for ten yoke of oxen to be killed, the flesh of which he distributed among his workmen, and had the skins cut into thongs, with which he fastened the oxen to the ploughs, did his business, and returned to his father. Joseph was enraptured at this prudence of his son, and embraced him in token of his approbation of such conduct: but the brothers hated Hyrcanus for his superior abilities.

Hyrcanus appointed a congratulatory feast on the birth of a son.

Soon after this, Joseph heard that the queen was brought to bed of a son, and that the princes and great men of Syria were hastening to court, to congratulate the king on the occasion. Joseph's age prevented his attendance; but he severally asked his sons to go; one of whom said he should not choose to appear before the king; a second was unacquainted with the ways of the court, &c. but they united in wishing Hyrcanus might be sent. Hereupon, Joseph called him, and asked him how he would conduct himself if sent on this business. Hyrcanus said he should think it an honour to be so employed, and would not put his father to much expence; hinting that ten thousand drachmas would defray the charge. Joseph paused, admiring his moderation, when the son said, "I would not recommend the sending from this place any presents to the king; but write to your agent at Alexandria to furnish me with proper gifts." On consideration, Joseph thought that ten talents might make the necessary purchases; on which he gave his son letters of credit to Arion, who had then three thousand talents in hand, Joseph using to remit the collections in Syria to him, to be transmitted to the royal treasury. Hyrcanus immediately went to Arion with his letters, while his brothers secretly laboured to destroy him. Arion asking what sum would be sufficient, Hyrcanus said, "A thousand

talents." "What! (said the former) to be wasted in luxury; no, sir, your father's fortune was made by industry, and you would do well to follow his example: I will give you only ten talents, and those I will see expended in the presents." He proceeded in this manner, till Hyrcanus had him committed to prison. At this time, Arion's wife, who was on good terms with the queen, carried the news to her mistress, and the queen told it to the king, with reflections on the young man's conduct. Hereupon, the king sent a message to Hyrcanus, wondering that he did not fulfil his father's commission, and still more that he had imprisoned the agent; ordering him to attend immediately, and clear himself of the charge alledged against him. Hyrcanus bade the messenger tell the king, that by the laws of the Jews no man was to eat the flesh of any sacrifice, who had not himself first offered sacrifice in the temple: that his case was similar, and he could not wait on the king till he had procured the presents which his father had provided as a testimony of his duty and gratitude; and that with regard to punishing a refractory servant, he thought himself justified: for the ill example of an inferior might at length reach the king himself; as where authority is despised, the precedent is dangerous. The king was charmed when he heard of this dignity of sentiment in so young a man.

His vindication to the king.

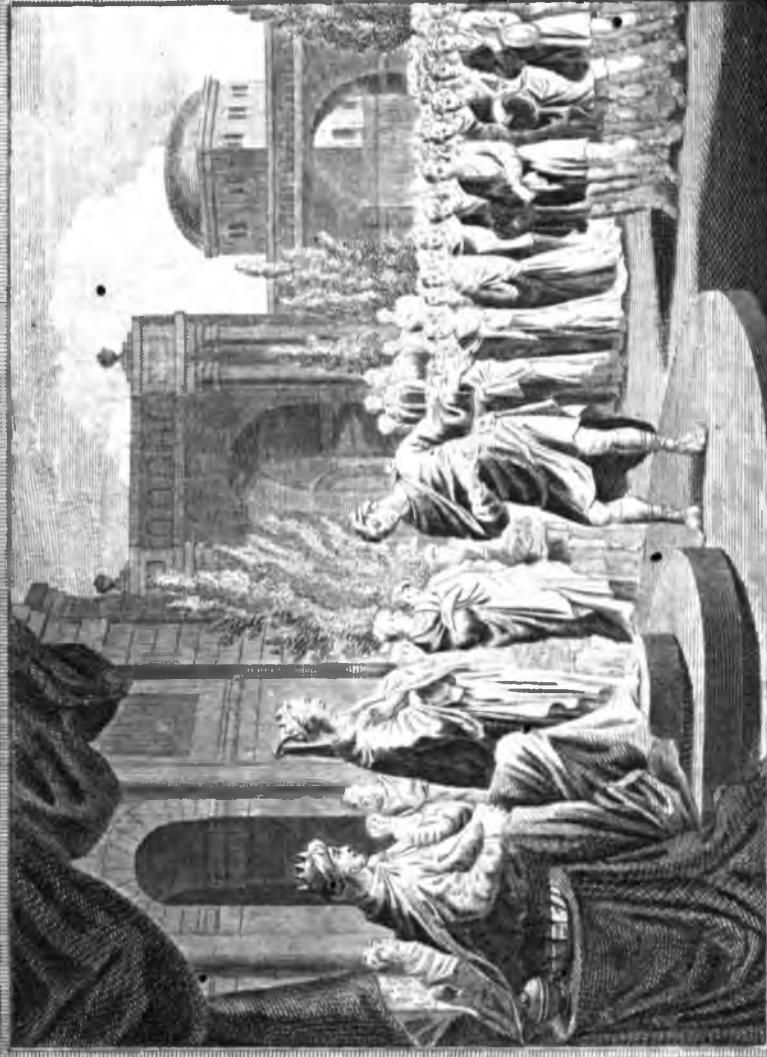
By this time Arion found he had no interest with the king; on which he compounded for his liberty, by paying the thousand talents to Hyrcanus, who immediately went to court, and was admitted to the royal table. Hyrcanus now privately bought of the merchants one hundred fine young men, and the same number of accomplished girls, at a talent each. Himself and other persons of distinction, being invited to dine with the king, the master of the ceremonies placed Hyrcanus at the bottom of the table, on the score of his youth. The company agreed to lay their bones on Hyrcanus's plate, and then introduced Tryphon, the king's jester, to ridicule him; which he attempted, by bidding the king notice the circumstance, and saying, that so had Hyrcanus's father picked the bones of all Syria. The king, smiling, asked Hyrcanus how he came by so many bones? "Sir (said he, looking on the company,) dogs eat bones as well as meat; but men put the bones aside." This pleased the king, who praised him, and recommended him to general respect. On the following day, Hyrcanus privately inquired of the servants, what their masters intended to present the king on the birth of the prince: some said twelve talents, and others more or less; while Hyrcanus pretended to be uneasy that he could give only five talents. The servants told this to their masters, thinking the youth would be disgraced in the king's opinion, by the smallness of his present. On the following day, the highest gift was twenty talents, except that of Hyrcanus, who gave the hundred boys and girls, and with each a talent besides. This gift astonished the king and his friends; but exclusive

He obtains of Arion 1000 talents, to present to the king.

Hyrcanus's poignant repartee.

Superior magnificence of his presents to the king.

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Herod the Great, youngest Son of Joseph, being sent to congratulate King Ptolemy on the Birth of his infant Son, presents him with two hundred beautiful Youths and Virgins.

And is graciously received.

exclusive hereof, Hyrcanus gave gratuities to the king's officers, to counteract the plots of his brothers, who had sought his destruction. The conduct of Hyrcanus so struck the king, that he promised to grant any favour he should ask; on which he requested only letters to his father and brothers. Hereupon the king dismissed him honourably, made him princely presents, and gave him the requested letters to his family.

The brethren of Hyrcanus conspire against his life.

When the brothers of Hyrcanus learnt how the king and queen had received him, and how much his reputation was advanced by this expedition, they combined to meet him without the town, and put him to death: nor was their father (who was disgusted at the expence of the presents) wholly unapprised of this affair, though his fear of the king occasioned his concealing it. In fact, the brothers met, and attacked Hyrcanus, whose attendants killed two of them, and wounded several of their followers, the rest escaping to Jerusalem. Hyrcanus proceeded thither; but finding no respect paid him, he went over the river Jordan, where he collected the royal duties from the Barbarians, for the rest of his life. This happened when Seleucus, son of Antiochus the great, reigned over Asia. About this period, Joseph, the father of Hyrcanus, died, after having collected the public duties of Syria, Phœnicia, and Samaria, for twenty-two years; and bearing the character of a courageous and pious man. Near the same period died Onias, the uncle, who was succeeded in the priesthood by his son Simon, who likewise dying, was succeeded by his son Onias; who received, from Arius king of Lacedæmon, an embassy, the contents of which are as follow:

ARIUS, King of LACEDÆMON, wishes Health to ONIAS.

Letter from Arius to Onias.

"AN ancient manuscript having fallen into our hands, proving the relationship between our families, and that we are descended from the line of Abraham, it appears equitable that all possible good offices should be mutually done by persons so nearly related. We therefore offer you every service in our power; and shall henceforward deem your concerns as our own, and consider our interests as the same. Our faithful servant Demoteles will deliver you this letter, which is written on one page in quarto, and sealed with the white figure of an eagle, grasping in her talons a dragon."

Joseph being dead, there were violent disputes between his sons, the elder making war on the younger, and Simon the high-priest, with the majority of the people, taking part with the former. Hyrcanus remained beyond Jordan, engaged in perpetual war with the Arabians, of whom he killed, and carried into captivity, great numbers. In this country he built a wonderful castle, the walls of white stone, with figures of various animals curiously carved on them. A deep ditch or fish-pond was dug round the castle, and in a mountain

The castle of Hyrcanus.

opposite to it, passages were cut, in length several furlongs, but, for security sake, only wide enough at the mouth for one man to enter. Within the castle were lodging, dining rooms, and other places of entertainment, with stately buildings, courts, gardens, and fountains. This place is on the borders of Arabia, and Judea beyond Jordan, near the land of the Essebonites, and received the name of Tyre. During seven years, which Seleucus reigned in Syria, Hyrcanus held this government. Antiochus succeeded Seleucus: and about this time died Ptolemy king of Egypt, who left two young sons, named Philometer and Physcon. Antiochus being at this time very powerful, Hyrcanus dreading being called to answer for his severities to the Arabians, destroyed himself; and his possessions were seized by Antiochus.

Death of Hyrcanus by his own hands.

CHAP. III.

ONIAS becomes High-Priest; repairs to ANTIOCH, and renounces Religion. ANTIOCHUS breaks into EGYPT, but is repulsed by the ROMANS.

THE high-priest Onias being dead, Antiochus Epiphanes promoted his brother Jesus to the priesthood, during the minority of his son: but the king being displeased with Jesus, deprived him of the dignity, which he bestowed on the younger brother Onias. Now Jesus took the name of Jason, and Onias that of Menelaus. Hereupon the people were divided into factions: Menelaus being supported by the sons of Tobias, and Jason by the people in general, who proving too powerful, Menelaus and his party retired to Antioch, declaring they would renounce the Jewish worship, and follow that of the Greeks; requesting permission to open an academy at Jerusalem for public exercises. This licence being obtained, they abandoned the laws and customs of the Jews, adhered to those of other nations, and became perfect Greeks in appearance, even when naked.

Ease, and the comfortable settlement of his people at home, induced Antiochus to penetrate into Egypt, encouraged hereto partly by the weakness of the sons of Ptolemy, and partly by ambition. Thus determined, he marched a large army to Pelusium, where he conquered Philometer. He then reduced Memphis and other places; and proceeded to Alexandria, in hope of conquering the king, and taking the place. But the Romans commanding him instantly to withdraw, he abandoned his conquests. Heretofore we have spoken only slightly of this king; but we now proceed to the particulars of his taking Jerusalem.

Antiochus, retreating from Egypt, proceeded immediately with his army to Jerusalem; and having gained over a party in the town, the gates were thrown open to him. Hereupon he plundered the city, put great numbers to the sword, and repaired to Antioch with his treasure. The

Expedition of Antiochus against Jerusalem, which he plunders, and commits dreadful barbarities and outrages.

barbarities of this outrage were such, that even those who opened the gates to the troops of Antiochus were not spared. The spoil of the temple was incredible: the holy vessels, golden candlesticks, golden altar, table of shew-bread, curtains, silk and linen embroidery, and even the immense quantity of concealed treasure were all carried away. The people were forbid to offer daily sacrifices, the city was levelled with the ground, and most of the inhabitants, men, women, and children, were either killed or made prisoners. The enemy built a tower in the city, commanding a view of the temple; which they fortified, and filled with Macedonians and apostate Jews. They built an altar in the temple, on which they sacrificed hogs, in derision of the Jews; whom they utterly distressed, because they would not renounce the true God. They likewise built temples, and altars, on which they offered up swine's flesh, in the other cities and towns. They laid penalties on the Jews for circumcising their children, and kept people in pay to extort penalties, or to prosecute them; so that, in the end, most of the Jews submitted to the king's commands: though some were found so courageous as to brave all dangers, rather than violate their laws and religion. These were first severely whipped, and then themselves and wives crucified, those of their children who had been circumcised being hung about their necks. Orders were likewise given to destroy the holy scriptures: and that no person should possess them on pain of death.

Duplicity of
the Samaritans.

The Samaritans finding the wretched state to which the Jews were reduced, now no longer claimed affinity to them, nor spoke of the temple of Gerizim as that of God. They now said they were descended from the Medes and Persians; and resolved to renounce all connection with the wretched race of the Hebrews. They also dedicated their temple at Gerizim to Jupiter, the chief of the heathen deities.

CHAP. IV.

The Messengers, who would compel a false Worship, killed by MATTHIAS and his Sons. The dying Speech and Advice of MATTHIAS.

AT this period, Matthias, a priest, lived at Modim, a village of Judæa. He had five sons, named Johannah, Simon, Judas, Eleazar, and Jonathan.

* The modern Israelites are not less strict (after their way), than their ancient idolatrous brethren were remiss, in keeping the sabbath. Buxtorf, in his Account of the religious Customs and Ceremonies of that people, has given us the following singular prohibitions, selected from among many others, which regard their observance of this holy day.

1. If, on the sabbath, a Jew arrives at home, or elsewhere, on a horse or ass (as, by means of the privilege of the sabbath-day's journey, he may) he is at liberty to ease his beast, when he puts him up,

Matthias would frequently lament to his sons, the wretched state of the Jews, whose city was laid waste, and temple profaned; and he used to say how much more noble it would be to sacrifice their lives in defence of their country, religion, and laws, than to live in so base and servile a state.

When the king's officers came to execute the royal orders, they applied to Matthias, as a man whose conduct might influence others, and commanded him to worship as directed. This he refused, saying, that if every other person submitted, he would not, and would advise his sons never to abandon their ancient religion. While Matthias was thus speaking, a Jew came forward, to sacrifice according to the new edict; which so enraged Matthias and his sons that they killed not only the Jew, but Apelles, the king's officer, with his guard, who were endeavouring to enforce the new worship. The altar was overturned in the contest; while Matthias exclaimed, "Follow me, you that regard your honour or religion!" Hereupon Matthias and his sons retired to the wilderness, leaving their property behind them; and were soon followed by numbers of people, who resided in caves a considerable time. News hereof being brought to the king's officers, they drew the troops from the castle of Jerusalem, and advancing to the wilderness, advised the Jews to submission, to prevent the necessity of destroying them. To this the Jews turned a deaf ear; on which their opponents fixed on the sabbath for destroying them, which they did by burning them in their caves, no resistance being made; for such was the reverence that the Jews had for the day, that, rather than profane it, they would perish*. About a thousand men, women, and children were thus suffocated underground: but numbers escaped, and united themselves under Matthias. This venerable man now instructed them that, in case of necessity, they ought to defend themselves on the sabbath, as well as at other times; or their enemies would always take the advantage, and attack them when no resistance was to be dreaded. They were hereby convinced of the propriety of using arms on the sabbath on urgent occasions; and the practice has continued to this day. Matthias now drew together all the people who had dispersed themselves, and lurked about in dread of the enemy; and finding himself at the head of a considerable army, destroyed the idol altars, put to the sword such apostates as could be found, ordered the circumcision of children, and drove off such of the king's officers as were appointed to restrain that practice.

At

by loosing the girths; but it is a profanation to take off the saddle. If the beast shakes it off, all is well enough, say the Rabbins; for that is a thing the Jew hath no hand in. But in such a case, the Jew must let the saddle lie, fall how it may.

2. If, on the sabbath, he leads a horse with a bridle, he must take care that such a portion of the reins hang beneath his hand, or between his hand and the bit, as that he cannot be supposed, instead of leading the horse, to assist only in carrying the bridle.

3. It is lawful on the sabbath-day to leap over a ditch, but not to wade

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Matthews exhorts his Disciples to walk in the paths of Virtue.

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Thus did they, by the Authority of Antiochus, unto the Jews, every Month, to as many
as were found in the Cities.

At the end of a year from this period, Matthias finding that his death approached, summoned his sons, and addressed them as follows: "My life is drawing to the close; but ere I leave you, I charge you to be firm in the cause I have asserted. Re-

wade through the water, lest, say the Rabbins, a necessity should arise for profaning the day, by drying the stockings.

4. A Jew is not to wear a sword, or any such thing as a weapon or warlike accoutrement, on the sabbath: nor is a taylor, at this time, to go out of his house with a needle sticking on his clothes.

5. The paralytic, and the lame person, who cannot walk without a stick or cane, is permitted the use of one on the sabbath: but the blind, who are not lame, must handle no such thing. The use of stilts, for passing over water or dirt, is at this time unlawful; because, say the Rabbins, very sagaciously, though the stilts seem to carry a man, yet in fact 'tis the man who carries them: and no one must incur himself with any thing, on the sabbath, that hath but the smallest resemblance to, or the least nature of, a burden.

6. A plaster that is on a wound may be continued; but if it drops off, it is not to be put on again, nor any thing in its stead, till the sabbath is gone.

7. A Jew ought not to carry either gold or silver, or any sort of money about him on the sabbath: and if at any time he finds a purse of money, he is not to meddle with it.

8. While the dirt which is upon his coat, cloak, or stockings is moist, he may scrape it off with the nails of his fingers; but if it is dry, he must let it remain till the sabbath is ended; because, say the Rabbins, the scraping it off when it is dry, makes a dust; which gives the matter the look of pounding or grinding. If his hands happen to be bedaubed with dirt, he may wipe them upon a cow's tail, or upon the mane or tail of a horse, but not with a towel, or any linen whatever, lest a necessity should arise, of which he would be the cause, of washing it before the sabbath is spent.

9. If a Jew spies a flea upon him on the sabbath, he is not to catch it, unless it bites him; in which case he may lay hold of it, if he can, and throw it from him; but he must be sure not to kill it; because a flea, say the Rabbins, was created, like other creatures, out of the earth: but he may crack a louse; because, says the same learned gentleman, a louse is generated, not of the earth, but of the sweat of man's body. But in this latter case, the rabbinical body is opposed by Rabbi Eliezer, who in the Talmud maintains, that he who cracks a louse on the sabbath, is as guilty as he who on that day kills a camel. And there are many doubts upon the matter to this day.

10. A Jew is forbidden to climb a tree upon the sabbath, lest he should rub or break any thing off; the stripping of the smallest twig at that time being judged a profanation.

11. If corn be thrown to poultry on the sabbath, care must be taken that the feathered family pick it all up, or that it be thrown to them in a place to which no rain can come, lest any of the grain should take root and germinate; for, in such case, this, say the Rabbins, would be sowing on the sabbath; a crime for which there is no expiation.

12. If, on the sabbath, a Jew arrives from sea at an harbour, he is not to go ashore till the sabbath is over, unless he is closely pursued, and his life is in danger.

We shall close this subject, by adding a curious narrative concerning it, taken from a Jewish writer.

"Once upon a time three Jews, who were together upon a journey, being overtaken by the sabbath in a wood, at a great distance from any house or cottage where they might lodge, one of them said, What is to be done? The road is infested with robbers, and the wood is full of wild beasts: is it not, therefore, more advisable for us to go forward, than to expose ourselves to such a host of dangers, by stopping here, out of a scrupulous regard for the sabbath? With two of them this question passed in the affirmative; while the

member my advice, and follow it. Maintain the laws and rights of your country, and, if possible, restore order to a nation almost buried in confusion: nor associate with those who have betrayed it. Disgrace not your father; but, despising all dangers,

other said, he was resolved not to stir a step further till the sabbath was passed. "God," said he, "who hath commanded us to rest on the sabbath, is able to preserve me from danger in the very heart of this wood." And accordingly there he pitched his tent and staid; while his companions pursued their way, and thereby violated the sabbath.

"Being not without a viaticum and a little furniture for the table, he spread a napkin on the ground, and set out his supper; which having hallowed with the customary prayers and benedictions, he fell to with great cheerfulness and appetite; when a fierce and frightful bear of monstrous size presented himself at the tree, and beheld him with such looks of cruelty and famine, that the bones of the good Jew rattled with horror. But in an instant recovering his presence of mind, and strengthening his heart with this reflection, that God was able to preserve him, he threw to the bear a lump of bread; and the bear ate it and kept his station, without the least attempt to plunder or molest him. The Jew, observing his visitor to be so well disposed, took courage, and finished his supper without farther compliment; while the bear looked on, without any token of discontent that he tasted no farther of the Jew's hospitality.

"Supper being over, the Jew betook himself to nocturnal prayer, and after that, to sleep. The bear lay down by him, and the Jew slept soundly; and all went well during the whole night, the Jew not awaking till the morning; when finding the savage creature stretch'd at his repose hard by him, and considering how peaceably things had been carried, and the manifest tokens of friendship and good humour on the side of the bear, he lifted up his eyes to the heavens in raptures of gratitude, and betook himself with a joyful heart to the religious offices of the morning, praising God with a fervid bosom for so amazing an instance of his love and protection. In a word, there he dined and supped, and performed all the religious offices of the day; the bear attending him all the time as a guard, and behaving as upon duty, not once offering him the least molestation.

"The sabbath being over, the good Jew pursued his way; while the bear, who was not yet at the end of his commission, marched behind him, keeping him company all that night. Before morning this blessed Israelite was met by his two fellow-travellers, who had left him in the wood, and who this night had fallen into the hands of villains who had robbed them of all they had. As soon as the bear beheld these violators of the sabbath, he flew upon them with all his fierceness, and tore them to pieces, to the great astonishment and terror of the good Jew, who now shook with apprehension that the bear would next fall upon him. While he was in this fright, he was accosted by the villains who had robbed his companions. They asked him who he was, and from whence he came? Trusting in God, and not being ashamed of his nation or religion, he replied, that he was a Jew, and that he came from court (he meant the sabbath, but they believed he meant the court of the sovereign of the country). They then asked him, how he came to be attended by the bear? for they observed the creature respected him. He answered, the king had commanded that the bear should accompany him. Upon which, the robbers whispered to one another—'This Jew must needs be a great favourite of the king, since his majesty hath given him this bear for company. Let us, said one of them, give him all our money, and see him safe out of the wood: it may be an obligation that will prevent his giving notice of us at court, and causing us to be apprehended.' This being agreed to, they loaded the Jew with a present of all their wealth; and, having seen him safe out of the wood, they left him, as did likewise the bear, who then returned to his home. *Valeat et plaudite.*

risk your lives when your country demands them, assured that a restoration to your former liberty will be the recompence that God will bestow. It is true, that our bodies are mortal; but great actions immortalise our memories; and to such actions I would have you aspire. I most earnestly advise you to concord with each other, and to consider how the abilities of each may best promote the interest of you all. For instance, Simon has a depth of judgment; let him be your counsellor. Maccabæus is distinguished by his valour and military skill: appoint him your general. On the whole, attend to what you have in view, and rely on the support of all men of honour and virtue."

This dying speech of Matthias to his sons being concluded, with his prayers that God would succeed their attempts to relieve their countrymen from their oppressions, he departed this life, and was interred at Modim. He was buried in a decent and honourable manner; and soon after his interment, the administration of affairs was placed in the hands of his son Judas, otherwise called Maccabæus, in the one hundred and forty-sixth year from Seleucus the first. The brothers of Judas gave him such aid, that they soon drove the enemy from the country, destroyed the principal delinquents, and cleared the land from all defilements.

The succession of Judas to the command of the army being notified to Apollonius, governor of Samaria, he advanced against him: but Judas met and routed him, destroying great numbers of his people on the spot, killing Apollonius with his own hand, and carrying off his sword. The spoil taken in the camp was very great.

Seron, governor of Cælo-Syria, being informed of this victory, and that reinforcements were constantly coming to Judas, resolved to give him battle; considering himself as bound to reduce those whom he deemed rebels. Having joined a number of fugitive Jews with his own people, he marched and encamped at Bethoron, a village of Judæa. Judas prepared to defend himself: but finding his soldiers discouraged, addressed them as follows: "Brother soldiers; depend not on yourselves, but on God for victory: confidence in him is superior to that in multitudes of men. The history of our ancestors confirms this truth; who, with small numbers, have routed thousands, in defence of their religion, freedom, laws, and families. Truth must prevail, and innocence shall remain unconquered." Thus saying, he led his people to the battle, in which they fought most courageously, killing Seron on the spot, and defeating the army of the Assyrians, who seeing their general fall, betook themselves to flight; each man seeking his own safety. Judas pursued them to the plain, many escaping toward the sea-side; but about eight hundred were slain in the field.

C H A P. V.

LYSIAS commands the Army of ANTIOCHUS. JUDAS MACCABÆUS defeats LYSIAS. JUDAS

proceeds to JERUSALEM, and purifies the Temple. The GALILEANS demand his Assistance.

THESE repeated misfortunes induced Antiochus to raise an extraordinary army of his own people, joined with Greek forces, with which he proposed to invade Judæa in the spring; but his natural benevolence, superadded to the late troubles, had caused such a deficiency in the supplies, that he found the expence of war would be more than proportioned to the revenue. Hereupon he resolved to go first to Persia, to collect cash; and, during his absence, left the command of the country between Ægypt and Euphrates, with the care of some of his troops and elephants, to Lysias, a man of tried integrity; to whom he also committed the care of his son Antiochus, till he should return: and he determined that when he had reduced Judæa, and sold the inhabitants for slaves, the whole country should be destroyed. On issuing these orders, he passed the Euphrates, in the year one hundred and forty-seven.

In order to execute this commission, Lysias placed Ptolemy, son of Dorymenes, with Gorgias and Nicanor, at the head of forty thousand foot, and seven thousand horse, commanding them to march into Judæa. Having encamped on the plain of Emmaus, they were joined by numbers of Syrians, and those of other countries, with vagabond Jews; likewise merchants, and traders, who brought fetters to secure their prisoners. Judas was provided with an army of force; but he bade them not trust in their own strength, but implore the protection of heaven, by wearing sackcloth, by fasting and prayer. This being done, he divided his people into regiments, troops, and companies; having first dismissed the men lately married, and such as had made new purchases: Gorgias, with five thousand foot, and a thousand horse, conducted by some apostate Jews, intended to surprise Judas at night. Hereupon he thought of counteracting the enemy, by attempting to burn the camp, when part of the troops had left it. To effect this, he ordered several fires to be made in his own camp, and then marched in the night towards Emmaus, where the enemy was encamped. In the interim, Gorgias finding the Jews' camp deserted, supposed he had little else to do than to discover and destroy them. At day-break Judas, with three thousand men, arrived at the enemy's camp, and found them well provided: whereupon he told them, that they might safely engage, even if unarmed, for the Providence of God was their special protection. Thus saying, he ordered the charge to be sounded, broke in on them, and put numbers of them to the sword, pursuing them to Gadara, while the rest flew to the plains of Jamnia, Idumæa, and Azotus. About three thousand were slain; but Judas would not permit his troops to touch the spoil, because Gorgias was yet unconquered; but he said, when his troops were conquered, they might seize the booty. He had scarce spoke these words when the soldiers of Gorgias, who were stationed on an adjacent hill, saw their camp smoking, and their friends

friends dead, while the enemy were still able to renew the attack, on which they dispersed in confusion. The victory being thus easily obtained, Judas permitted his people to pillage the field, in which they found gold, silver, scarlet and purple vestments, and other valuable booty, which they carried off in triumph, singing and praising God for the victory.

This defeat so mortified Lysias, that in the following year he entered Judæa with an army of sixty thousand foot, and five thousand horse, and encamped at Bethsura. Judas, undismayed by such numbers, advanced with only ten thousand men, and having offered up a short prayer for success, attacked the enemy, forced their lines, and killed five hundred in the spot. The army of Lysias was so struck with this shock, that they determined to conquer or die: but the commander, marking this effort of despair, withdrew them to Antioch, where he obtained reinforcements, in hopes of greater success on a future occasion.

Animated by these successes, Judas encouraged the Jews to rely on the continued protection of God, and to march to Jerusalem, there to offer sacrifices, and cleanse the temple. Arriving there, they found the gates burnt, the temple abandoned, and weeds overspreading the courts; so that they wept at the deplorable situation of the place. Judas ordered his people to attack the citadel, while he took care of the cleansing of the temple; which he furnished with utensils, vessels, a candlestick, a table, and an altar of incense, all of pure gold. He likewise supplied new doors, and put up veils and hangings on the walls. The altar, which had been profaned by sacrifices and burnt-offerings to idols, was also removed; and a new one, of unhewn stone (agreeable to the directions of Moses), placed in its stead. Lighted tapers were placed in the candlestick, incense offered on the altar, shew-bread placed on the table, and burnt-offerings made, on the 25th of the month Casleu, just three years after the temple had been profaned by Antiochus: and this ceremony of the purification was repeated on the same day, in the one hundred and forty-eighth year of the Olympiad, agreeable to a prediction of the prophet Daniel.

Judas continued this festival eight days, with sacrifices, rejoicing, and feasting, while the air resounded with notes of thanksgiving and praise, and the people were indulged in all reasonable gratifications. The public joy was so great on this restoration of religion and law, that an anniversary, of eight days celebration, was appointed to be held for ever, and which is still called the "Feast of Lights;" which, I presume, alludes to that light which Heaven on this occasion peculiarly granted. In the interim, Judas caused the walls of the city to be repaired, and fortified with towers; he also stationed a garrison at Bethsura, and effectually fortified the place.

The increasing power of the Jews instigated the neighbouring nations to do them every possible injury; and many of them they destroyed by artifice, while Judas did his utmost to defeat their machinati-

No. 11.

ons. At this period he attacked Acrabatan, where he got great booty, after destroying the Edomites, and blocking up the sons of Baan (their commander) in fortified places, where they lay to attack the Jews; but these places were taken, and laid in ashes, those who protected them being destroyed. When Judas had routed these people, he attacked the Ammonites, commanded by Timotheus; conquered them, took the city of Jazar, set it on fire, made captives of the wives and children, and returned in triumph. As soon as he was gone, the people assembled at Galaad, and attempted to surprise the Jews in that district; who taking refuge in the fortress of Dametha, informed Judas that Timotheus meant to attack them, and begged his assistance. At this instant messengers from Galilee brought complaint to Judas, that a conspiracy was formed against them by the inhabitants of Ptolemais, Tyre, and Sidon.

CHAP. VI.

GALILEE relieved by SIMON, Brother of JUDAS.

A Victory obtained over the AMMONITES by JUDAS and JONATHAN. JUDAS transports the JEWS near GALAAD into JUDÆA. JUDAS takes EPHRON by Assault, and puts all the Men to the Sword. GORGIAS defeats JOSEPH and AZARIAS.

SIMON, the brother of Judas, was now sent, with three hundred select men, to assist the Jews at Galilee, while himself and Jonathan, his other brother, marched with eight thousand, to Galaad; the rest of the army being left to the care of Joseph and Azarias, with orders not to fight till he came back again. When Simon arrived at Galilee he attacked the enemy, and destroyed three thousand, pursuing them to the gates of Ptolemais. Having stripped the vanquished, they redeemed the prisoners with the spoils, and returned to Jerusalem with them.

Judas and his brother Jonathan having marched three days into the wilderness beyond Jordan, the Nabathites received them amicably, and informed them of the distress of their countrymen confined in Galaad, advising them to hasten to relieve them, by the way of the desert. During this expedition they reduced the town of Barasa, burnt it, and put to the sword all who were capable of bearing arms. Night now advanced; but Judas proceeded to a castle, in which he had learnt some Jews were besieged. Arriving there early in the morning, he found the enemy prepared to scale the place; on which he separated his troops into three divisions, and exhorted them to be valiant, in aid of their countrymen; whereupon, on the second trumpet sounding, the enemy was attacked in the rear. Timotheus finding that Judas was the commander, his men precipitately fled, being pursued by the Jews,

Jews, who killed eight thousand of them. During the pursuit Judas took the city of Mallam, which was destroyed by fire, all the male inhabitants being put to death. This fate likewise attended Casphan, Bosor, and other places, of which conquest was made.

Timotheus assembling a large army, aided by a band of Arabians and other forces, passed the river, and encamped near Raphan, where he animated his troops to behave courageously, and prevent the Jews passing that river, on which, he said, the issue of the war depended. Judas finding that Timotheus was prepared for battle, passed the river, attacked and routed him, his people seeking their safety in flight. Some of them repaired to the temple of Carnaim, in hope of protection: but Judas destroyed the town, put the inhabitants to the sword, and caused the temple to be burnt.

He now collected the Israelites in Galaad, and carried them into Judæa, with their families and effects. As the city of Ephron was in his direct road, he asked for permission to pass through it; but this being denied, he prepared his troops to attack it; and conquered it in one day and night, putting all the men to the sword, reducing the place to ashes, and marching his army over the bodies of the dead. Having passed the river Jordan, he proceeded through the plain of Bethsan to Judæa, the people offering sacrifices, and singing songs and hymns of joy, in gratitude for their safety; for not a single Jew was lost in all this expedition.

Simon having marched into Galilee against the people of Ptolemæis; Judas and his brother Jonathan being gone against those of Galaad; Joseph and Azarias, who had been left as a guard in Judæa, in the absence of Simon, thought it disgraceful not to distinguish themselves; they therefore proceeded to Jamnia, where Gorgias, the governor, encountered them, killed two thousand of them, and pursued their shattered forces to the confines of Judæa. This misfortune befell them, in consequence of disobeying their commander, whose orders were "not to fight till he came back again."

In the interim, Judas carried on a vigorous war against the Edomites; for, besides the destruction of Hebron, they demolished Marissa, and plundered Azotus, returning to Jerusalem in all the pride of conquest.

At this time Antiochus, proceeding through his higher provinces, was informed of a rich city in Persia, named Elymais, in which was a grand temple dedicated to Diana, containing sumptuous presents of all kinds, and, among the rest, the shields and breast-plates of Alexander, son of Philip, king of Macedon. This information so struck Antiochus, that he proceeded with his army to assault the place; but the inhabitants resisted bravely, drove him off, and pursued his forces even to Babylon, destroying numbers of them in the pursuit. While he was lamenting this defeat, news arrived that his other troops, who had been destined to attack the Jews, were discomfited, and that the strength of those peo-

ple increased daily. Oppressed with these repeated misfortunes, he fell sick; and finding himself near death, summoned his friends to attend him, and told them the cause of his disorder. "My punishment (said he) is but just, for profaning the temple of the Jews, and despising the God of heaven;" and having said these words, he departed this life. I am astonished at Polybius (otherwise a writer of credit) who ascribes this judgment on Antiochus, to his design of rilling the temple of Diana: whereas his sacrilege on the temple of Jerusalem was actually committed; and the imputation of his calamities and death to that act, would have been therefore more reasonable and just.

CHAP. VII.

ANTIOCHUS EUPATOR, Son and Successor of ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, is proclaimed King by LYSIAS. JERUSALEM besieged by JUDAS. ANTIOCHUS lays Siege to BETHSURA. The Death of ELEAZAR. JUDAS returns to the Siege of JERUSALEM. The Temple is bravely defended.

WHEN Antiochus found his death was approaching, he sent for a confidential friend named Philip, to whom he committed the crown, royal robes, and signet, in trust for his son Antiochus, then under age, adjuring him to superintend the education of his son, and secure the crown till he should be fit to govern. The event of his death, which happened in the year one hundred and forty-nine, was no sooner announced, than Lysias proclaimed his son king, by the name of Eupator.

In the mean time, the Macedonians, who, with some revolted Jews, were stationed in Jerusalem, sallied out to prevent the Jews worshipping in the temple, which was easily done, as it was commanded by the castle. Hereupon Judas ordered machines and battering-engines to be prepared, to assault the place; but while this was doing, sundry persons deserted to Antiochus, and represented their unhappy situation, in obeying his commands, by which they were likely to become captives to Judas. On this the young prince ordered his troops to be collected, and disciplined, and that new levies should be raised, which soon produced an army of twenty thousand horse, one hundred thousand foot, and thirty-two elephants. Thus provided, he marched from Antioch to Idumæa, and thence to Bethsura, a place fortified by art and nature. This place he assaulted in vain; for all his efforts were frustrated. In the interim Judas, hearing of his approach, raised the siege, marched to meet him, and pitched his tents about thirty furlongs from him, in the freights of Bethzachariah. Antiochus leaving the Bethzarites, encamped near Judas, directing his army to march and arrange themselves in order by day-

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Antiochus Epiphanes besieges Bethsura a Town in Judea and takes it.

day-light; but the narrowness of the place obliged them to go in files, one elephant preceding a thousand foot and five hundred horse; the elephants having on their backs castles filled with archers; while the other troops ascended the hills, under the command of officers of experienced valour. They made the attack from this height with the loudest acclamations, so that the vallies re-echoed with the noise: but Judas received them undauntedly, and killed six hundred on the first attack. During the engagement, Eleazar, brother of Judas, observing an elephant more gaily caparisoned than the rest, and presuming that the king rode this beast, forced himself through the guards, killed several of his opponents, got under the elephant's belly, and wounded him mortally; but was himself crushed to death by the weight of the beast in falling.

At length Judas, finding the number of the enemy too great for him, returned to the siege of Jerusalem, while part of the army of Antiochus went to the same place, and the rest to Bethfura. The number of troops, superadded to the want of provisions, so discouraged the people of Bethfura, that they agreed to deliver up the place, on condition that no violence should be offered to them. As far as preserving their lives, Antiochus kept his engagement, but drove the inhabitants naked from the town, and placed his own people in their stead. The temple, however, was obstinately defended, every attack of the enemy being counter-worked: but the people were distressed for want of bread; for this happening when the stores of the last year were eaten, and in the seventh year, when the Jews, by their laws, could neither plow nor sow, many of them abandoned the place in want of provisions; so that very few were left to defend it.

At this time the king, and Lyfias his general, received information that the government was usurped by Philip, who was marching out of Persia towards them, at the head of his army: on which they resolved to abandon the siege, and attack him; but to keep their intention so secret, that neither officers nor soldiers should judge of their design. To effect which, the king bade Lyfias represent to them the strength of the place, and how tedious a business it would be to take it: that corn grew scarce; that the king was wanted in another place; and the best way would be to yield the people the use of their religion and laws, which being all they contended for, the king might depart at his pleasure. This proposal was highly acceptable to the army.

This plan being laid, Antiochus sent a messenger to offer peace to the besieged, with full liberty of conscience and the enjoyment of their rights, which he bound himself by oath to protect; on which they delivered up the temple: but he immediately, contrary to his engagements, levelled the walls with the ground, and carried the

high-priest Onias (otherwise Menelaus) with him to Antioch. This was done in consequence of the advice of Lyfias, who said that Onias must be destroyed if ever he wished to live at ease, or see the Jews in peaceable subjection, for he had instigated his father to compel them to a religion contrary to their opinion. Hereupon Onias was sent to Berrhœa in Syria, where he was slain, by the king's order, after being high-priest ten years. Onias was a bad man, who, to secure himself in power, had caused the Jews to depart from their laws and worship. Alcimus, otherwise called Jacimus, was his successor.

Philip having now assumed the government, Antiochus marched against, conquered, made him prisoner, and ordered his being put to death. The king having given the priesthood to Alcimus, who was not of the sacerdotal line, the young son of Onias departed to Ptolemy, king of Ægypt, and was received favourably by him and his queen Cleopatra, who gave him a port in Heliopolis, where he built a temple, modelled after that at Jerusalem.

CHAP. VIII.

TRIPOLIS seized by DEMETRIUS. ANTIOCHUS and LYSIAS put to Death. JUDAS complained of to DEMETRIUS, by ALCIMUS. An Army sent against JUDAS, and the Priesthood settled on ALCIMUS. He puts the Friends of JUDAS to Death, and then flies for Support to DEMETRIUS.

ABOUT this time, Demetrius, the son of Seleucus, having fled from Rome, seized Tripolis, in Syria, assumed the crown, and invaded the country, the people of which readily submitted, and delivered to him Antiochus and Lyfias as prisoners, whom he ordered to instant death. In the train of Demetrius were great numbers of profligate Jews, who had been banished for various offences. These were headed by Alcimus, the high-priest; they bitterly inveighed against the Jews in general, but particularly against Judas and his brethren, whom they accused of destroying numbers of the king's friends, and driving the complainants out of the country: they therefore desired Demetrius to send some person to Judæa, to witness what devastation Judas had been guilty of.

Hereupon Demetrius joined Bacchides, governor of Mesopotamia, in a commission with Alcimus, and dispatched them with an army, to attack Judas and his adherents. Bacchides marched from Antioch to Judæa, where he invited Judas to treat on terms of friendship: but his design was only to ensnare him. Judas reflecting that with such an army he could not come as a friend, stood on his guard, and gave no credit to his professions; but some of his people went over to the opposite party, presuming that their countryman, Alcimus,

Valiant exploit of Eleazar.

Antiochus takes Bethfura.

He retires from the siege of Jerusalem.

The temple delivered up to Antiochus, who breaks his engagement, and causes Onias to be slain.

Demetrius seizes on Tripolis, assumes the crown, and puts Antiochus and Lyfias to death.

Bacchides enforces and illustrates the Jews.

Alcimus, would not injure them; especially, as a solemn oath was sworn that they should be safe: but, in violation of this oath, Bacchides caused sixty of them to be immediately slain; which perfidious act prevented any more from approaching him. This being done, Bacchides went to Bethseth, where he caused several deserters and other disaffected people to be slain; and leaving part of his army to protect the province, he returned to Demetrius at Antioch, having first issued orders that Alcimus should be obeyed in his absence.

Alcimus inimical and cruel to the Jews.

During this period, the views of Alcimus were directed to secure himself in the office of high-priest; to effect which, he endeavoured to ingratiate himself with the people by fair words and obliging behaviour; by which he soon doubled the number of forces that had been left with him; but they consisted chiefly of renegades, destroying such Jews as were friends to Judas, wherever they met them. Judas reflecting on this conduct of a set of abandoned wretches, had recourse to the laws of retaliation against Alcimus, who finding himself unequal to the contest, retired hastily to Demetrius, at Antioch, whom he irritated against Judas, setting forth the great mischief he had already done, and the farther danger to be apprehended from him, unless an army was sent to check his proceedings.

CHAP. IX.

NICANOR sent with an Army against JUDAS, and endeavours by Treachery to inveigle him. NICANOR's Army conquered by JUDAS, and himself slain. ALCIMUS dies suddenly. The People choose JUDAS for his Successor. JUDAS forms an Alliance with the ROMANS.

Nicanor commissioned to attack Judas, and destroy his forces.

DEMETRIUS, uneasy at the growing power of Judas, and fearful of its consequences, gave the command of a large army to Nicanor, whom he commissioned to attack Judas, and afford no quarter to his troops. Nicanor proceeded on this commission; but considering that his opponent might possibly be ruined by the arts of treachery, he sent for Judas, to whom he said, "Wherefore should we risk all on the uncertain chance of war, when we may better adjust matters by negotiation? I pledge my most solemn oath for your security. Peace alone is my object; which you may imagine by the number of friends I have brought with me, to testify our master's goodwill and affection to all the Jewish race." This speech had such an effect, that Nicanor and his friends were received with frankness; on which Nicanor gave a hint to seize Judas: but the latter had the happiness to discover the plot, and retreated in time to his own people. This detection of treachery put an end to all thought of treaty, and a battle was fought near Capharsalama, in

which Judas was routed, and retired to the castle of Jerusalem for refuge.

Nicanor happening to pass near the temple, a number of priests and elders met him, and shewed him the sacrifices they were going to offer for the happiness of Demetrius. On this, Nicanor profanely swore, that if Judas was not delivered up to him, he would soon return, destroy the temple, and leave it in utter ruin. The priests, in great dejection, prayed that God would protect his temple and his ministers from the fury of the foe. Nicanor now left Jerusalem and encamped at Bethoron, where a great force from Syria joined him. In the interim Judas pitched his tents at Adasi, about thirty furlongs from the enemy, having only a thousand men under his command. He encouraged his troops by saying, that though the number of the enemy was great, they fought in the cause of God, whose power could crush multitudes; and advised them rather to think on their own valour, than the numbers they were to encounter.

"Attack them courageously (said he) and leave the rest to heaven." A battle ensued, at first vigorous on both sides; but Nicanor (after performing wonders of valour) being killed, and many of his forces, his people threw away their arms, and fled with the utmost precipitation. In the interim Judas pursued the fugitives, to whom he gave no quarter; proclaiming his victory by sound of trumpet in all the cities and towns he passed through. This brought together the country people, who attacked the fugitives with such fury, that not a man escaped of the whole army, which had consisted of nine thousand. This happened on the thirteenth of the month Adar, in the memory of which we to this day celebrate an annual thanksgiving. After this victory, the Jews had some respite from war, and hope of future peace; but this was of short continuance.

Nicanor killed, and his army routed.

The high-priest, Alcimus, now gave orders for pulling down the old wall of the sanctuary, and demolishing the whole works of the ancient prophets: but had no sooner spoken than he dropped down speechless to the ground, languished awhile, and then died, after having been high-priest four years. On his death, the people unanimously chose Judas to succeed him. The new high-priest was disposed to enter into a league with the Romans, from their fame in conquering the Gauls, Spaniards, Carthaginians, &c. Hereupon he dispatched his friends, Eupolemus the son of John, and Jason the son of Eleazar, as ambassadors to Rome, requesting that they might be received as allies, and that Demetrius might be applied to, not to trouble the Jews any farther. This proposal proved agreeable to the senate, who consented to the league, caused this consent to be engraved on tables of brass, deposited the original in the capitol, and sent a copy of it to Jerusalem. The purport of the articles was, "That no people subject to the Romans should hereafter make war on the Jews, or supply their enemies with money, shipping, corn, &c. and that the Jews should be

Death of Alcimus, the high-priest, who is succeeded by Judas.

Treaty of alliance with the Romans.

be

be held to the same terms, in case the Romans should be attacked. That if the Jews demanded any future alteration of their agreement, the consent of the whole people should be necessary to ratify it." Eupolemus the son of John, Jason son of Eleazar, Judas the high-priest, and Simon his brother, commander of the army, registered this resolution of the senate. This is the first alliance which the Jews and the Romans made.

C H A P. X.

DEMETRIUS sends BACCHIDES into JUDEA, with an Army. JUDAS encounters him with only eight hundred Men. The Magnanimity of JUDAS.

Bacchides sent into Judea with an army.

DEMETRIUS hearing of the death of Nicanor, and the defeat of the army, dispatched Bacchides again into Judea, with fresh troops. This general encamped at Arbela, a town of Galilee, where he forced many Jews from the caves to which they had retreated. Hence he repaired to Jerusalem, where he learnt that Judas and his associates were at Bethseth, to which place he marched with twenty-two thousand foot, and two thousand horse; while Judas had only a thousand men, two hundred of whom deserted him. Thus distressed for men, and having no opportunity of recruiting his forces, yet Judas resolved to hazard a battle, and encouraged his people to stand by him in all extremities. They represented to him how vain an attempt it would be, to engage against such superior numbers; and advised him rather to retreat with caution, and recruit his forces. To this Judas replied, "It shall never be said of me that I turn my

back to an enemy. If it be the will of God that we now fall, let his will be done; but let us not, by an ignominious death, destroy all the credit of a life of glory." His soldiers were so animated by this speech that they resolved to abide the contest.

The army of Bacchides was disposed in the following manner. The front was composed of light armed men and archers, supported by a body of Macedonians, while there were two wings of horse, the right wing being commanded by Bacchides. In this disposition they advanced towards the enemy, sounded a charge, gave a loud shout, and began the attack. The forces of Judas sustained the shock bravely. The battle continued from morning till near sun-set, when Judas seeing Bacchides with his right wing pressing hard on his men, relieved them with a band of courageous youths, who broke their line, and pursued them as far as Aza. The left wing of the enemy now pursued Judas so closely, that, seeing no chance of escape, he and his adherents determined to sell their lives dearly, and fought their enemies till they were overcome through mere fatigue. Judas being killed in the battle, his troops fled; but his brothers, Simon and Jonathan, having prevailed on the enemy to give them his body, carried it to Modin, where it was interred with great pomp, in the family sepulchre, and a public mourning of several days appointed in honour of his memory. Thus died Judas Maccabæus, a brave and benevolent man, who forgot not the injunction of his father Matthias, who commanded him to decline no danger in defence of his countrymen; in compliance with which injunction, he obtained great honour while he was three years high-priest; and by relieving his friends from the hands of the Macedonians.

Battle between Judas and Bacchides, in which the former nobly dies in defence of his country.

B O O K XIII.

Containing the HISTORY of the JEWISH TRANSACTIONS, from the YEAR of
the WORLD 3804, to 3898.

C H A P. I.

JUDAS succeeded by JONATHAN, who, with SIMON, retires to the Wilderness, and they are pursued by BACCHIDES. JOHN and his Companions destroyed by the Sons of AMARÆUS. JONATHAN assaulted by BACCHIDES on the Sabbath. JONATHAN destroys Two Thousand of the Enemy, and retreats. BACCHIDES fortifies the Citadel of JERUSALEM, and other Places. Revenge taken for the Death of JOHN. BACCHIDES puts to Death
No. 11.

Fifty Jewish Deserters. JONATHAN and SIMON fortify themselves in BETHLAGA.

IMMEDIATELY after the death of Judas, the apostate Jews resumed their ancient enmity, and persecuted their honest countrymen with more malice than before. A general famine now spread over the land; so that through distress for bread on one hand, and the difficulty of defending themselves against their enemies

Malice of the apostate Jews.

on the other, many of the Jews were in a manner compelled to adhere to the faction of the Macedonians. Bacchides now entrusted a principal share of the government to the apostate Jews, who seized the former friends of Judas, and delivered them to Bacchides, who tortured them to death. The Jews were never so deplorably miserable since the Babylonish captivity, as at this period: so that the late adherents of Judas entreated Jonathan to follow his brother's example, in risking his life for the liberties of his country; and besought him to assume the command, for without a leader they must be all lost. Jonathan replied, that he was ready to do or suffer any thing for the public welfare; on which he was elected general, by common consent.

Jonathan succeeding his brother Judas, Bacchides lays snares for him.

Bacchides hearing of this election, and considering that Jonathan was not less likely to give trouble to the Macedonians than his brother Judas, concerted how he might destroy him; but himself and his brother Simon having intelligence of such a design, collected what force he could, withdrew to a neighbouring desert, and pitched their tents near the pool of Asphar. Bacchides considering this retreat as a flight, marched his army after them, and encamped beyond Jordan. Jonathan being informed hereof, sent his brother John to the Arabian Nabathites, requesting permission to leave his baggage with them, till he had fought Bacchides; but the sons of Amaraeus having notice of this embassy, sallied from Medaba, took the baggage and carriages, and killed John and all his people; but this outrage was afterwards properly revenged.

Jonathan attacked by Bacchides, whom he repulses.

Intelligence being given to Bacchides where Jonathan was encamped, he fixed on the sabbath to attack him, presuming that his people would not fight on that day; but Jonathan representing that, as the enemy was before, and the river behind, they had no chance of escape without fighting, they appealed to heaven for the success of their cause, and instantly attacked the enemy, of whom they killed great numbers. In the interim, Bacchides assailed Jonathan, and made a furious stroke at him, which he parried, and retreated with his people to the other side of the river, whither the enemy durst not follow them. Bacchides, having lost near two thousand men, retired to Jerusalem, which he fortified in the strongest manner, and kept in it as hostages the sons of the principal men of the country. He likewise fortified Jericho, Emmaus, Bethoron, Bethel, Thamnatha, Pharaon, Techoa, and Gazara; which places were supplied with garrisons, ready to make excursions on the Jews.

Jonathan and Simon fall upon the enemy, as they are celebrating a wedding.

About this time, Jonathan and Simon received intelligence of a pompous wedding to be celebrated between one of the sons of Amaraeus, and the daughter of an Arabian of distinction. The wedding was to be attended by the sons of Amaraeus, and the bride to be escorted from the city of Gabatha, in great

splendor. This opportunity was seized to revenge the death of John; and the brothers, having placed an ambush in the mountains, hurried towards Medaba, to attack the people who were to attend the wedding. The bride and bridegroom, with four hundred friends, including wives and children, making their appearance, the party rushed out, destroyed them all, and carried off the whole booty; after which they retreated to their former station.

Bacchides, having left garrisons in Judæa, returned home, and the Jews remained in some sort of peace for two years; a circumstance that gave great disturbance to the apostates, who solicited Demetrius to destroy Jonathan and his people, which they said might be effected by surprise in a single night. This proposition being acceded to by the king, he sent Bacchides on this business into Judæa, who, on his arrival, dispatched letters to the king's officers and friends in the country, to assist in making Jonathan captive. Hereupon they contrived how they might get him into their hands; but Jonathan having been forewarned, acted cautiously, so that several repeated trials failed; which so exasperated Bacchides, that he attributed the ill success of the undertaking to the treachery of the apostate Jews, who, he said, trifled with the royal orders; and he put fifty of their principal men to death, in the first transports of his rage. At length Jonathan and his brother, finding Bacchides too powerful for them, retired into the wilderness, and raised walls round the village of Bethalaga, to serve them for a retreat on an emergency. Bacchides being informed hereof, marched towards them with all his forces, and being joined by a body of Jews, began the attack of Bethalaga, which he continued for several days; during which it was obstinately defended. Matters being thus situated, Jonathan, having committed the defence of the place to his brother Simon, collected a number of forces in the neighbourhood, and marching privately in the night, attacked Bacchides in his encampment, killing great numbers of his people. Simon soon discovered that this havoc was made by his brother; on which he sallied forth, burnt the enemy's works, destroyed many of their forces, and returned to his intrenchments. This double attack, and the failure of an attempt in which he thought himself sure of succeeding, almost distracted Bacchides; but he laid all the blame on the apostate Jews, who advised the king in this business. His only concern now was how to draw off his army without disgrace either to himself or his sovereign.

The apostates solicit Demetrius, that Jonathan and his party may be taken off.

Bacchides betrays Jonathan, in Bethalaga, who by stratagem defeats his design.

CHAP. II.

A League betwixt JONATHAN and BACCHIDES, the latter of whom quits JUDÆA. JONATHAN fixes on MACHMAS as the Place of his Residence.

BACCHIDES

Jonathan and
Bacchides
conclude a
peace.

BACCHIDES was now deliberating how to act; when Jonathan having received an intimation of what was passing in his mind, dispatched a messenger to him, with proposals for a league of mutual friendship, on condition of the exchange of prisoners. Bacchides saw in this proposal so fair an opportunity of his abandoning the siege without disgrace, that he immediately acceded thereto: on which the prisoners were exchanged on both sides, and the respective commanders bound themselves by a solemn oath that no farther hostilities should be committed. This agreement being ratified, Bacchides returned to Antioch to the king, and never again entered Judæa with his army. This state of peace and safety was very acceptable to Jonathan, who retreated to Machmas, where he employed his time in the distribution of law and justice, and the other cares of government. He was zealous in asserting the laws, and clearing the country of false brethren, and false worship.

Alexander
seizes Ptole-
mais in Syria,
and Demetri-
us marches
against him.

Alexander, the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, aided by a confederacy of the soldiers in garrison at Ptolemais in Syria, took possession of that place, in the year one hundred and sixty. This confederacy arose from an aversion the soldiers had to Demetrius, whose pride and indolence were such, that he immured himself in one of his fortified castles near Antioch, where he was excluded from all visitors, and spent his time in the most indolent manner, wholly neglecting the cares of the government, a circumstance that produced him many enemies: but on this news of Alexander having taken possession of Ptolemais, he assembled his army, and marched to give him battle.

Alliance be-
tween Deme-
trius and Jo-
nathan.

On the occasion above-mentioned, Demetrius dispatched messengers with letters to Jonathan, proposing a firm alliance between them. This was done to prevent Alexander being first in a proposal of the kind, in resentment of the insults and injuries he had formerly sustained. These letters intimated that Jonathan should raise men, provide arms, and set at liberty those hostages who had been committed prisoners to the castle by Bacchides. On receipt of the dispatches Jonathan repaired to Jerusalem, where he read them publicly to the soldiers and the people. The fugitives and profligates in the citadel were surprised at this sudden return of Jonathan to favour: but he proceeded to make his levies, and gave liberty to the hostages, with orders for them to return in

Jonathan re-
pairs and for-
tifies Jerusa-
lem.

safety to their friends. Jonathan now took up his residence at Jerusalem, which he altered, repaired and fortified, erecting for its defence strong walls, composed of stones of a prodigious size. On this alteration of Jerusalem, those Macedonians who had been stationed in different garrisons through the country, retired to Antioch: while the Jewish deserters, and others, who were at Bethsura, and in the tower of Jerusalem, remained in their present situation, not thinking it safe for them to retreat.

Jonathan
made high-
priest.

The character of Jonathan, his valour and courageous actions against the Macedonians, and the insults that had been offered him both by Demetrius and Bacchides, were not unknown to Alexander; who having been informed of the late offers and pretensions of Demetrius, assembled his friends, and represented to them that nothing could be more prudent than an alliance with Jonathan. The council being of the same opinion, Alexander immediately dispatched an embassy with a letter to the following purport:

“ALEXANDER the King, to JONATHAN his Brother, greeting.

“HAVING long since been informed of thy character for honour, faith and courage, and deeming thee every way worthy our best regards, we have dispatched ambassadors to offer thee our friendship and alliance, and have commissioned them to treat of the same: and by these presents, and our royal authority, we constitute and ordain thee high-priest of the Jews, and rank thee in the number of the king's friends; and we likewise present thee with a crown of gold and a purple robe: entertaining no doubt of a proper return being made by thee for this instance of our regard and esteem.”

On the arrival of this embassy, which happened on the day of the feast of tabernacles, Jonathan put on the robe of the high-priest; precisely at the end of four years from the death of his brother Judas, during which time the office had been vacant: and from henceforward Jonathan was diligent to increase his troops, and provide more arms.

At this period Alexander assembled a large army, partly composed of such as had gone over to him from Demetrius, in Syria, and partly of his own troops, with which he advanced to attack the enemy. Soon after the battle commenced, the right wing of Alexander's forces was pressed hard by the left of Demetrius, who pulled their advantage even to the plundering of the camp: but Alexander's troops forced the opposite column, where Demetrius fought in person, till it was totally routed. Demetrius acted wonders, killing, and pursuing his enemies, and defending himself; till at length his horse plunged into a bog, and being oppressed by multitudes, he was obliged to yield; which, however, he disdained for some time to do, fighting on foot till his body was covered with darts and arrows. Thus died Demetrius, at the end of a reign of eleven years.

Battle be-
tween Alex-
ander and
Demetrius, in
which the lat-
ter is killed.

C H A P. III.

ONIAS proposes to build a Temple in EGYPT, like that in JERUSALEM. A Dispute between the JEWS and SAMARITANS, concerning the true Temple.

Temple. The matter referred to the King, who declares in favour of JERUSALEM.

Proposal of Onias to build a temple in Egypt.

AT this time Onias, the son of Onias the high-priest, dwelt in a kind of exile with Ptolemy Philometer at Alexandria. This Onias, considering how Judæa had been ravaged by the Macedonians, and with a view to acquire fame to himself, determined to try to obtain permission of Ptolemy, and his queen Cleopatra, to build a temple in Egypt similar to that at Jerusalem, in which he proposed that priests and Levites of his own family should officiate. He was inspired with this idea by a prediction of the prophet Isaiah, of six hundred years standing, intimating, that in future ages a Jew should erect a temple in Egypt to the glory of God.

The grant being made, Onias began immediately to build the temple, and raise the altar, on the plan of that at Jerusalem, though the dimensions were much less. When the building was finished, he found a number of priests and Levites of his own sentiments, to perform the several parts of divine worship.

Dispute between the Jews and Samaritans, concerning their temples, referred to the king.

About this period a most violent dispute happened at Alexandria, between the Jews and Samaritans, the latter of whom had built a temple at Gerizim, in the time of Alexander the Great. This dispute, which regarded the temple, and the mode of worshipping, stood as follows: the Jews insisted that there was no temple authorized by the laws of Moses, but that at Jerusalem; while the Samaritans were equally sanguine for the temple of Gerizim. Both parties agreed to refer the dispute to the decision of the king and his ministers, with allowance that counsel might be heard on each side, and that the party in the wrong should suffer death. Andronicus, the son of Meffalan, was appointed to plead for the Jews, and Sabbæus and Theodosius for the Samaritans. Both parties were bound on oath before God and the king, to offer nothing contrary to law. The Jews of Alexandria were uneasy for their advocate, and grieved to think that any doubt should be made of the sacred authority of the temple of Jerusalem, the noblest structure in the universe. The

Who decides in favour of that in Jerusalem.

king having summoned his counsellors to try the issue, a debate arose who should speak first; when Sabbæus and Theodosius yielding that point to Andronicus, he began by stating the antiquity and sanctity of the temple at Jerusalem; proved the legality of its original foundation: displayed the regular order of the priesthood through a succession of ages; adverted to the splendor and dignity of the place, as it had been at all times celebrated; and spoke of the magnificent bounty of the kings of Asia towards it; whereas the temple of Gerizim had been little more noticed than if no such place had ever been built. These pleadings determined the king in favour of the temple of Jerusalem, and he accordingly gave sentence of death against Sabbæus and Theodosius.

Demetrius being dead (as hath been heretofore mentioned) Alexander assumed the government of Syria; soon after which he wrote a letter to Ptolemy Philometer, proposing a match between himself and his daughter; and intimating that there would be no disgrace in an alliance, after the conquest of Demetrius, and the recovery of a kingdom which was his own in right of his father. This proposal was highly satisfactory to Ptolemy, who sent a letter to Demetrius, congratulating him on his late success, promising to bestow his daughter on him in marriage. He farther promised to meet him at Ptolemais, with his daughter, where the wedding should be celebrated. Soon after writing this letter, Ptolemy took his daughter to the appointed place, where Alexander attending, the parties were married, and he received as a wedding portion, a sum becoming the dignity of the father. Alexander invited the high-priest Jonathan to the wedding, where both the monarchs received him in a distinguished manner, and made him large presents; Alexander particularly directing him to wear a purple robe on the occasion, and take a seat next himself on the throne; and giving orders to his principal officers to attend him into the city, and proclaim that no man should insult, abuse, or otherwise ill-treat him, on pain of abiding the consequences. Some enemies of Jonathan had come to the place, with a view to defame him; but on this gracious declaration they absconded, in apprehension of the ill consequences that might arise to themselves.

Marriage of Alexander with Cleopatra.

High honours conferred on Jonathan.

C H A P. IV.

An Army conducted into CILICIA by DEMETRIUS NICANOR. JONATHAN routs APOLLONIUS, whom he pursues to AZOTUS, and fires the Temple of DAGON. PTOLEMY marches to join ALEXANDER. PTOLEMY takes his Daughter from ALEXANDER, and marries her to DEMETRIUS. ALEXANDER defeated by PTOLEMY and DEMETRIUS. The Citadel of JERUSALEM besieged by JONATHAN. The Army of the latter discharged, and their Affections lost.

DEMETRIUS the younger, being supplied with a body of troops that Lathenes had hired, embarked and sailed with them from Crete into Cilicia, in the year 165. This alarmed Alexander, who instantly marched from Phœnicia to Antioch, to secure his affairs before the arrival of Demetrius; but Alexander leaving the care of Cœlo-Syria to Apollonius, he marched an army into Jamnia, where he sent a challenge to the high-priest, Jonathan, accusing him for living at ease, and withdrawing himself from the public service: defying him to meet him with his sword in the openfield, and putting the issue on their single contest: boasting, likewise, that he was at the head of a

Demetrius enters Cilicia with an army.

number

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The death of Amnonius

number of the bravest men in the empire, whose valour had frequently made the ancestors of Jonathan yield.

Jonathan drives Apollonius from Joppa, and pursues him to Azotus.

On this defiance, Jonathan, with his brother Simon, and ten thousand select men, marched from Jerusalem, and encamped at Joppa, the gates of which were shut by a garrison of Apollonius, which soon surrendered, on Jonathan's preparing to attack the place. Apollonius hearing that Jonathan was in possession of Joppa, marched, and encamped in the fields near that place. Hereupon Jonathan advanced, and pursued him towards Azotus; but when Apollonius found him on a particular spot, he faced about to engage, having first planted a thousand horse to attack Jonathan in the rear: but he being aware of this disposition, formed his men in a square figure, to fight every way. Jonathan ordered his brother Simon to charge the body of the enemy, while his own men should only receive the darts and arrows which fell on their bucklers. In this situation they stood so close, that nothing could penetrate them; and when the enemy was fatigued by this fruitless mode of attack, the troops of Simon broke in, and put the main body to flight. Jonathan pursued them to Azotus, killed numbers of the fugitives, and drove the rest into the temple of Dagon, which he burnt to the ground: nor did he stop here; for he set fire to the city, and to several adjacent villages. It was reckoned that about eight thousand men were either slain or burnt. Jonathan having defeated this army, advanced to Ascalon, and encamped near that city, the inhabitants of which brought him presents, as a testimony of their esteem, which he gratefully received, and then went back in triumph to Jerusalem, laden with spoils. Alexander pretended to be greatly pleased with this defeat of Apollonius, who, he said, had undertaken the expedition against a friend and ally without his consent; and in token of his approbation of Jonathan's conduct, he made him governor of Accaron, and presented him with a golden buckle, a gift heretofore peculiar to the royal family.

He burns the temple of Dagon, and sets fire to the city, &c.

Ptolemy kindly entertains Jonathan.

About this period Ptolemy Philometer arrived in Syria, with land and sea-forces, to assist Alexander, his son-in-law. Agreeable to the king's order, he was received with universal respect, except at Azotus, where the people complained of the burning of the temple of Dagon, and reviled Jonathan, who had ravaged the country with fire and sword. Jonathan met Ptolemy at Joppa, conducted him to the river Eleutherus, and then returned to Jerusalem, having been received with great marks of distinction.

Alexander lays a snare for Ptolemy;

Ptolemy arriving at the city of Ptolemais, had nearly fallen a sacrifice to the treachery of Alexander, on a plan concerted by Ammonius. The plot being discovered, Ptolemy wrote to Alexander, and demanded justice on the delinquent: but Alexander refused to deliver him, confessing that himself had a share in the plot:

No. 11.

on which Ptolemy conceived a mortal hatred to him. Ammonius afterwards lost his life, while he was seeking his safety in the disguise of a woman's dress.

The above-mentioned conduct of Alexander so disgusted Ptolemy, that he took his daughter from him, and engaged in a league with Demetrius, on condition of being restored to his father's kingdom, and receiving the hand of Cleopatra in marriage. Demetrius was equally pleased with the wife, and the proposed terms; but Ptolemy had no easy matter to procure the consent of the people to receive, as a king, the man whom they deemed an enemy: but their hatred to Alexander was so great that they complied. Hereupon Ptolemy entered into Antioch, where the citizens and soldiers proclaimed him king of Asia and Egypt. He was a man of honour, discretion and temperance, and so conducted his affairs, as to afford satisfaction to his own people without giving disgust to the Romans. Having summoned a council of the people of Antioch, he advised them to receive Demetrius as king; hoped that all past enmity would be forgotten, on a sense of the present obligation; said that he would himself be bound for his faithful execution of the trust reposed, and that he would content himself with the government of Egypt only. These arguments procured the regal government to Demetrius, by consent of the people.

who takes his daughter Cleopatra from Alexander.

A vast army brought out of Cilicia, under the command of Alexander, was now ravaging Syria, and the country round Antioch, with fire and sword. Hereupon Ptolemy and Demetrius attacked, routed him, and compelled him to fly to Arabia. During this battle, Ptolemy's horse, being frightened by the braying of an elephant, threw him, and his enemies wounded him in many parts of the head, so that he must have died on the spot, but was rescued by some of his guards. He lay speechless four days; but on the fifth he began to recover, when the head of Alexander, which had been cut off by Zebelus, an Arabian prince, was presented to him; but he died soon after he had pleased himself with the sight. The above-mentioned Alexander reigned five years, and was succeeded by Demetrius, who appears to have been of a cruel disposition, from his treatment of Ptolemy's soldiers, to whom he owed obligations on his marriage with Cleopatra. This conduct so disgusted the soldiers, that they left their elephants behind them, and went to Alexandria.

Ptolemy and his son-in-law Demetrius overcome Alexander.

At this period, the high-priest Jonathan, having collected what forces he could in Judæa, laid siege to Jerusalem, to expel the garrison of Macedonians, and drive out the Jews who had taken sanctuary. The people in the place at first defied Jonathan; but soon sent out scouts to demand succour of Demetrius, who instantly marched from Antioch, and arriving at Ptolemais, sent to Jonathan to attend him. On this the latter took presents of gold and silver, fine robes, and other valuable effects, which he gave to Demetrius, being attended by the priests and elders: but during this time

Jerusalem besieged by Jonathan.

time the siege went forward as before. The king, equally gratified by the presents, and the behaviour of those who offered them, confirmed Jonathan in the office of high-priest; and was so far from paying regard to the calumnious insinuations of the apostate Jews, that upon Jonathan's requesting an abatement of three hundred talents for the tribute of Judæa, with the dependent provinces of Samaria, Joppa, and Galilee, he sent away the following dispatches:

"*DEMETRIUS the King greets his Brother JONATHAN, and the rest of the JEWISH Nation.*

"YOU are hereby to understand that we have lately written a letter to our trusty and well-beloved cousin Lathenes, a copy of which is herewith transmitted.

"*DEMETRIUS the King, to his Father LASTHENES, greeting.*

"SUCH is the sense we entertain of the return that our friends, the Jews, have from time to time made to our good will, that we are resolved to give them some distinguishing testimony of our esteem. Wherefore we hereby command that the governments of Aphereima, Lydda, and Ramatha, with all the lands dependent on them, which were taken from the Samaritans, be assigned to the use of Judæa: and we exempt the priests at Jerusalem from all taxes heretofore paid to our ancestors, as well those called crown taxes, and on salt-pits, as those on corn and fruit: and we command that for the future nothing of the kind be demanded. Take care that a copy of this letter be sent to Jonathan, and let it be hung up in a distinguished part of the holy temple."

All things being now in a peaceable train, Demetrius dismissed his army without giving them their full pay; and retained only a number of mercenary troops, which had been collected in Crete, and other adjacent islands. This discharge of the troops, without gratuity, alienated the affections of his people; for his ancestors had been accustomed to keep them in pay, in peace as well as in war.

CHAP. V.

TRYPHON's Revolt, and treacherous Conduct. The Citadel besieged by JONATHAN. ANTIOCHUS crowned by TRYPHON. DEMETRIUS defeated. He encamps before CEDASA. JONATHAN's Troops desert him; but are rallied, and obtain the Victory. His Embassy to ROME and LACEDÆMON. Account of the PHARISEES, SADDUCEES, and ESSENES. ARSACES defeats DEMETRIUS, and takes him Prisoner.

THE uneasiness which prevailed among the troops of Demetrius, being remarked by Tryphon, a native of Apamia, and heretofore one of Alexander's officers, he applied to Malchus, tutor to Antiochus, son of Alexander, representing the disposition of Demetrius's troops, and offering to restore Antiochus to the throne of his father. Malchus hesitated: but was at length induced to comply, and committed Antiochus to the care of Tryphon.

Tryphon offers to restore Antiochus to the throne of his father.

During this period, Jonathan was besieging the city of Jerusalem; he resolved to expel the fugitive Jews from the garrison, as well as from other fortresses in the country. On this occasion he sent messengers with farther presents to Demetrius, requesting him to withdraw his men from the fortresses. Demetrius answered, that he was willing to oblige him in that, and more important concerns, as soon as the war should be ended; and intreated him, by the rites of friendship, to send him a supply of forces, as his own people had fled to the enemy. Jonathan sent him three thousand men, in consequence of this request.

Jonathan reinforces the army of Demetrius.

Demetrius, both on his father's account, and his own, was now become extremely obnoxious to the people of Antioch: inasmuch that, on hearing of the aid from Jonathan, they assembled in arms, and surrounded the palace, as if with a view to attack it: but their intention was to seize him on his coming out. Hereupon Demetrius drew up his hired troops, and those sent by Jonathan, and attacked the assailants; but superior numbers obliged them to retreat into the palace, from the battlements of which they threw darts and arrows at the enemy, which obliged them to take shelter in different houses. The Jews now fired the city, the houses of which standing close, and the buildings being chiefly of wood, burnt with great fury. The inhabitants fled from house to house, the Jews pursuing and destroying them. Their whole care now was to save their wives and children: but still the Jews, taking advantage of the confusion, in obedience to the king's order, killed great numbers, and obliged the rest to lay down their arms, and surrender at discretion. Thus ended the battle; Demetrius pardoned the rebels, and gave the spoils to the Jews, whom he sent back to Jonathan, with acknowledgements that the victory was owing to their valour: but he did not long continue in this disposition; but threatened to attack Jonathan, if the same tribute which the Jews had formerly paid to his ancestors, were not paid to himself. This threat would have been made good, but that Tryphon arriving with young Antiochus, placed the crown on his head, and being assisted by the soldiers, from whom Demetrius had withheld their accustomed pay, attacked the latter, conquered him in a sea-engagement, seized on his elephants, made capture of the city of Antioch, and compelled him to retreat to Cilicia for safety.

The discontented Antiochians attempt to seize on Demetrius.

The Jews burn the city.

Ingratitude of Demetrius to Jonathan.

Antiochus

Jonathan greatly honoured by Antiochus.

Antiochus now sent an exprefs to Jonathan, confirming to him the office of high-priest, putting him in poffeffion of the four governments annexed to Judæa, and giving the command of his forces, from Tyre to Sidon, to his brother Simon. He likewise enrolled him in the lift of his friends, and fent him feveral drinking cups of gold, with a gold buckle, purple robes, &c. commiffioning him to wear thefe badges of dignity. Thefe marks of diftinction fo ftruck Jonathan, that he fent a joint meffage to Antiochus and Tryphon, offering to unite with them againft Demetrius as a common enemy.

He brings over feveral cities to espoufe his caufe.

Jonathan being commiffioned to raife forces, attempted it in Syria, Phœnicia, and the towns and cities adjacent; but though he was received with refpect, he got no troops. Hence he went to Alkalon, where he was received in form, and had prefents made him: here he reprefented to the people, that it was their intereft to affift Antiochus againft Demetrius: and they promifed to take arms. Proceeding to Gaza, on the fame defign, the gates were fhut againft him, and the people refolved to adhere to Demetrius. Hereupon Jonathan divided his army, affaulting the town with one part, while the country was burnt and laid wafte by the other. The inhabitants neither finding relief, nor having hope of any from Demetrius, and feeing no profpect but of deftruction before them, fent deputies to make fubmiffion to Jonathan, who received them in the moft friendly manner; accepted their propofals, and fent their hostages to Jerufalem, while he proceeded towards Damafcus.

Simon takes the fortrefs of Bethfura.

In the interim Demetrius had a large army encamped near Cedafa, bordering on Tyre and Galilee, with a view to entice Jonathan out of his way: but he continued his route, leaving the care of Judæa to his brother Simon; who, affembling what force he could, marched and attacked the ftrong fortrefs of Bethfura, then in poffeffion of the partizans of Demetrius. The people in the garrifon, apprehenfive that they fhould all be put to the fword, requested Simon's permiffion to march unmolefted to Demetrius: which he granted; and placed another garrifon in their ftead.

Jonathan defean the army of Demetrius.

By this time Jonathan was advanced into the plain of Afor, where he had no idea of any oppofition: but one of Demetrius's parties, having notice of his march, lay in ambufh behind a mountain, while the main body advanced to attack him on the plain. Jonathan gave the beft orders the fhortnefs of the time would permit: but the Jews, feeing the ambufh, were afraid of being furrounded by two parties, and precipitately fled. So general was the terror, that only fifty gallant fellows remained with Jonathan, and the two captains, Mattathias, the fon of Abfalom, and Judas, the fon of Chapfæus. Thefe charged the enemy in front, in fo desperate a manner, that the forces of Demetrius hesitated; on which thofe who had deferted from Jonathan returned, attacked them, killed near two thoufand, and followed the reft even to their tents at Cedafa.

This victory being obtained, Jonathan returned to Jerufalem, whence he difpatched embaffadors to Rome, to renew former alliances, with directions to come back by way of Lacedæmon, on bufinefs of a fimilar nature. The Romans received the embaffadors with high refpect, and difmiffed them with letters, recommending that fafe paffage might be granted them by the kings of Europe and Afia.

His embaffy to Rome and Lacedæmon.

At this time the Jews were divided into three fects, called Pharifees, Sadducees, and Effenes. The opinion of the Pharifees was, that, in fome instances, men were left to their own will, and in others over-ruled by a particular fate. The Sadducees held that a man's condition was in all cafes determined by his own conduft, without any interference of providence; while the Effenes contended that an irrefiftible fate over-ruled every action.

Sects among the Jews.

Jonathan being informed that the forces of Demetrius, which were now augmented, were advancing towards him, haftened to meet them at Amathis, refolved to oppofe their entrance into Judæa. He encamped about fifty furlongs from them, whence he fent spies to difcover their defign; who taking fome prifoners, learnt from them that it was intended to furprize him in his encampment. Hereupon he arranged every thing for his defence, fixed centinels at the out-pofts, and kept his men under arms all night, previously acquainting them with what was intended. Demetrius's commanders learning that their plan had been divulged, were puzzled how to aft, for they were not able to make an open attack: wherefore they decamped in the night, covering their retreat by a number of fires. At day-break Jonathan marched to attack them; when finding the camp abandoned, he purfued them with all expedition; but in vain, for they had retreated to a fecure place beyond the river Eleutherus. He now therefore purfued his courfe to Arabia, plundered the country of the Nabathæans, took multitudes of their cattle, and made many prifoners, which he took to Damafcus, and fold.

Various manœuvres of the adverfe armies

Mean time Simon proceeded through Judæa and Palæftine, and fortified all defensible places, even to Afkalon: which being done, he went forward to Joppa, which he poffeffed himfelf of, and placed a garrifon in it, to prevent the place being delivered to Demetrius by the inhabitants.

Joppa taken by Simon.

When things were in this fituation, Jonathan and Simon retired to Jerufalem, and the people being fummoned to the temple by the high-priest, were directed to repair the walls of the city, fortify them with towers, and to cut off the communication betwixt the city and caftle by another wall: likewise to put the whole country in a ftate of defence by proper garrifons. This advice being approved, Jonathan committed to his brother's care the country department, taking that of the city on himfelf.

The city and temple fortified.

By this time Demetrius had got into Mefopotamia, propofing to ravage that country, and reduce Babyfon. His plan was, to fix the feat of war in the upper

Arfaers defeat Demetrius, and take him prifoner.

provinces,

provinces, the Greek and Macedonian inhabitants of which had invited him thither, with promises of obedience, and offers of assistance against Arsaces, king of Parthia. Encouraged hereby, and thinking that after he had beaten the Parthians, it would be easy to drive Tryphon out of Syria, Demetrius advanced towards them, and was cheerfully received by a large army, at the head of which he attacked Arsaces, who totally routed him, took him prisoner, and destroyed almost all his forces.

C H A P. VI.

TRYPHON's Plot against JONATHAN, whom he infamously betrays, kills a Thousand of his People, and makes him a Prisoner.

THE failure of Demetrius in the last attempt, induced Tryphon to abandon all allegiance to Antiochus, and reflect how he might possess himself of the crown; but as Jonathan was the firm and powerful friend of Antiochus, the scheme was to destroy him first. For this purpose Tryphon went to Bethsan, where he found Jonathan with forty thousand men at his command. Finding his strength unequal to the encounter of such an army, he sought to seduce him by presents and compliments. He directed his officers to obey Jonathan as himself; and proceeded, with great artifice, from one subtlety to another. At length he insinuated that, as the war was over, Jonathan might disband his army, keeping only a proper body guard, and attend him to Ptolemais, which place, and all the adjacent fortresses, he was resolved to put into his possession. Lulled by these arguments and promises, Jonathan dismissed all his army, except three thousand men, two of which he left in Galilee, and went with Tryphon to Ptolemais, with the other thousand. The inhabitants having been previously instructed, shut the gates on his first entering the town, killed all his thousand men, and took him prisoner. Tryphon dispatched a part of his army to Galilee, with a view to destroy Jonathan's two thousand men left there; but these having information of the manner in which Jonathan had been treated, seized their arms, and effected their escape. Tryphon's troops were so convinced that these men would bid equal defiance to death and danger, that they returned without attempting to molest them.

Grief at Jerusalem on Jonathan's imprisonment.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem were extremely afflicted on being informed of the massacre above-mentioned, and the imprisonment of Jonathan, for whom they had the sincerest regard; and in case of whose death, they apprehended the utmost danger from those enemies of whom before they had no fear. Nor were they much mistaken in their conjecture; for, upon the news that Jonathan was put to death (as will hereafter be mentioned), their neighbours combined

against them, as men who had no commander; even Tryphon assembled an army to invade Judæa; but Simon, observing their fears, summoned them together, and addressed them to the following purpose:

"It is unnecessary, friends and countrymen, for me to say that my father, brothers, and myself, have been always ready to expose ourselves for the common liberty: the defence of law and religion, has been the business of our family; nor am I so lost to the authority of example, as to think of preserving my life by the forfeit of my honour. Seek not, therefore, for another commander, since I am willing to lead you wherever great and glorious actions shall call us. I count not myself greater than my brethren, nor value my life more than they did theirs. Never shall it be said that I have departed from the dignity of my family. I have no doubt but God will, by my hands, avenge you of your enemies, deliver you, your wives and children, from those who oppress you, and secure the holy temple from defilement. In a word, is it not because you are considered as sheep without a shepherd, that the present confederacy is in league against you?"

This speech so animated the people, Simon succeeds Jonathan. and dispelled their fears, that they exclaimed, "Simon alone ought to succeed his brothers Judas and Jonathan: let Simon be our general, and we will obey his commands!" Simon now ordered the walls of the city to be repaired and fortified; which being done, he dispatched his friend Jonathan, the son of Abfalom, to Joppa, to clear that town of its inhabitants, lest they should deliver it into the hands of Tryphon.

At this period Tryphon, at the head of Tryphon marches to Judæa. an army, was marching from Ptolemais to Judæa, bringing Jonathan with him as a prisoner. Simon and his troops met him on a mountain that overlooks the plain, near the city of Addida. Tryphon finding that the Jews had elected Simon general, sent him an express, importing that, if he wished his brother's release, he should send a hundred talents of silver, and two of Jonathan's sons, as a security that, after he should be set at liberty, he should not seduce the people of Judæa from their allegiance. Simon had no doubt but a deception was intended; but he thought that if he refused the money as a ransom, or the sons as hostages, the death of his brother might be imputed to him: whereupon he summoned a council, to whom he intimated his suspicion of treachery; but said he thought it would be proper to dispatch both the young men and the money, rather than be thought indifferent with respect to his brother's safety. Hereupon the hostages and money were sent, yet Tryphon refused to give Jonathan his liberty, and continued to ravage the country with his army, till he arrived at Dora, a city of Idumæa, whence he proposed to proceed to Jerusalem: Simon still closely watching his motions.

Intelligence was brought to Tryphon, while on his march, that the garrison of Jerusalem was distressed for provisions, to the relief of which he was desired

to hasten; on which he ordered his horse to be ready to march; but so deep a snow fell in the night, that there was no possibility of proceeding. He now, therefore, returned to Cælo-Syria, and passed through Galaad, near the city of Basca, in which country he caused Jonathan to be put to death, and having buried him, went forward to Antioch. Simon, however, had the remains of Jonathan removed to the sepulchre of his father at Modim, public mourning being made on the occasion, and a superb monument of polished white marble erected to the family. This was on an eminence, and encompassed with arched walks, and resting on pillars each of an entire stone. Simon caused seven pyramids to be erected, viz. for his father, mother, four brothers, and himself; and these were so extraordinary, that they are still celebrated for their beauty and magnificence.

Simon buries
honourably
his brother
Jonathan,
whom Try-
phon had
basely mur-
dered.

Jonathan had now governed, as prince and high-priest, four * years, and was succeeded by his brother Simon, as above-mentioned. Simon, in his first year, relieved the people from the tribute heretofore paid to the Macedonians; and he stood so high in their opinion, that they dated their writings, both public and private, from the years of his government, with the addition of "most worthy patron of the nation." Every public business flourished in his hands. He obtained a victory over the common enemy; destroyed the cities of Gazara, Joppa, and Jamnia; levelled the citadel of Jerusalem with the ground, and so ordered, that it could not afford a refuge for rebels and fugitives, nor be in a condition to annoy the city. To effect this, he advised the digging the mountain on which the castle stood, so that the temple should be left on the higher ground. He assembled the people on this business, to whom he represented the mischiefs already sustained by this castle, and the probable consequences, if an enemy should get possession of it. This argument had such an effect, that they universally agreed to destroy the mountain; and the people worked on it for three years, day and night (relieving each other), till at length the temple had the advantage in point of situation.

Simon demo-
lishes Gazara,
&c.

C H A P. VII.

ANTIOCHUS murdered by TRYPHON, who succeeds to the Crown. His Soldiers desert to CLEOPATRA, who married ANTIOCHUS SOTER. He attacks and conquers TRYPHON, who is slain at APAMIA.

DEMETRIUS Nicanor had not been long made prisoner, when Tryphon privately murdered Antiochus, the son of Alexander, and propagated a

* Scaliger says that Jonathan died after governing the nation eighteen years, and in the fourteenth year of his priesthood.

report that he lost his life by an accident, which happened in his exercises. While the public were intent on this report, Tryphon exerted his utmost influence, and employed both money and friends, to induce them to chuse him king. The friends of Tryphon urged that Demetrius was a captive with the Parthians; and that Antiochus would never forgive those who had deserted his brother. By these insinuations Tryphon paved his way to the throne: but there did not need much artifice in the case; for the people readily combined towards his elevation, from an idea that they who voted for making him king, would be in a fair way to make their own fortunes; so that there was no difficulty in his advancement. Tryphon no sooner became king, than he began to display that turpitude of heart by which he had been distinguished while a private man. His point was no sooner gained, than he threw off the mask, and proved that the name of Tryphon (which signifies a dissolute wretch) very well became him. His disposition proved so disagreeable to the soldiers, that they deserted, and fled to Cleopatra, the wife of Demetrius, who was at that time in retirement with her children at Seleucia, while Antiochus Soter (the brother of Demetrius) was ranging from place to place, the fear of Tryphon preventing almost every one from affording him assistance. Cleopatra, encouraged by advice of her friends, and the appearance of the soldiers who had deserted from Tryphon, and urged by the fears she had lest the people of Seleucia should deliver the place to the usurper, dispatched a message to Antiochus, offering her kingdom to his disposal, and herself in marriage. This proposal being embraced by Antiochus, the people flocked to him in such crowds, that he soon found himself at the head of a large army, with which he marched against Tryphon, conquered him in battle, drove him from Syria to Phœnicia, and at length pent him up in the strong fortress of Dora. Antiochus now dispatched ambassadors to the high-priest Simon, on a treaty of friendship and alliance; and the proposal being accepted, Simon sent him money and provisions towards the maintaining of the siege; articles at that time highly acceptable to Antiochus, who was very grateful for this instance of his friendship. After a while Tryphon escaped from Dora, and fled to a town called Apamia; but the place was taken, and himself put to the sword, before the fourth year of his reign was ended.

Defeat of
Tryphon's
army.

His death.

Antiochus, being naturally covetous and ungrateful, was so far from making a proper acknowledgment of the favours Simon had conferred on him, that he sent Cendebæus with an army to ravage Judæa, and take him prisoner. The idea of this dishonourable perfidy so enraged the venerable man, that in despite of age and infirmity, and with all the ardour of youth, he assembled his army, and marched at the head of it to engage the enemy. Having dispatched his son with a number of select troops, he followed in a different direction with the rest, stationing part of his forces in ambush at every proper place. Thus he had the advantage in every encounter, succeeded

to his utmost wishes, and having renewed his league with the Romans, spent the remainder of his days in peace.

CHAP. VIII.

SIMON treacherously murdered by his Son-in-law PTOLEMY. The Wife and Two of the Children of SIMON made Prisoners; but the Third Son, being apprised of his Danger, escapes to JERUSALEM.

Simon murdered by Ptolemy.

AFTER Simon had held the government of Judæa eight years, he was invited to an entertainment by Ptolemy his son-in-law, and there cruelly murdered by him. Ptolemy made prisoners of the wife and two of the sons of Simon, and employed ruffians to surprise and take away the life of John, the third son, who was called Hyrcanus; but receiving timely information of the treachery, he fled to Jerusalem, where he experienced the most friendly behaviour from the people, who entertained a great veneration for the memory of Simon, and a deadly abhorrence of Ptolemy, whom they courageously repulsed upon his attempting to enter at one gate of the city, after Hyrcanus had gained admittance at another.

Hyrcanus besieges Ptolemy in the castle of Dagon.

Ptolemy retired to the castle of Dagon, which was situated in the neighbourhood of Jericho. As the successor of his father, Hyrcanus assumed the pontifical dignity. He marched to attack the castle to which

Ptolemy had retreated. In the prosecution of this enterprize, the greatest difficulty he had to surmount, was a natural tenderness towards his mother and brethren, whom Ptolemy caused to be whipped and otherwise publicly tormented upon the battlements, threatening, to cast them down unless Hyrcanus immediately raised the siege. This terrible menace abated the resolution of Hyrcanus, who judged, that if he proceeded in his first design, the consequence would be an aggravation of cruelty to his relations. His mother observing his embarrassment, called to him aloud, urging him, without considering the sufferings of herself and her sons, to avenge the injuries his family had received, and expressing a willingness to expire under the most excruciating torments, on condition that the barbarous and unnatural tyrant Ptolemy should meet a punishment proportioned to the enormity of his guilt. This instance of generosity and fortitude animated Hyrcanus to make a vigorous assault; but he observed, that in proportion to the force he exerted for reducing the fort, additional cruelty was exercised upon his mother; and his desire of revenge yielding to filial tenderness, the siege was protracted, till the arrival of the sabbatical year, which put a period to the war. Every seventh year, as well as every seventh day, is observed by the Jews as a time of rest. Upon the conclusion of the war, Ptolemy put the mother and brothers of Hyrcanus to death, and then retired for safety to Philadelphia, the government of which place had been usurped by the tyrant Zeno, who was surnamed Cotyla.

CONCLUSION of the HISTORY of the BIBLE.

CHAP. IX.

JERUSALEM besieged by ANTIOCHUS, who grants a Truce of seven Days. HYRCANUS intercedes for a Compromise; the Siege is raised, and the Parties form an Alliance. The Death of ANTIOCHUS, and the Succession of his Brother DEMETRIUS.

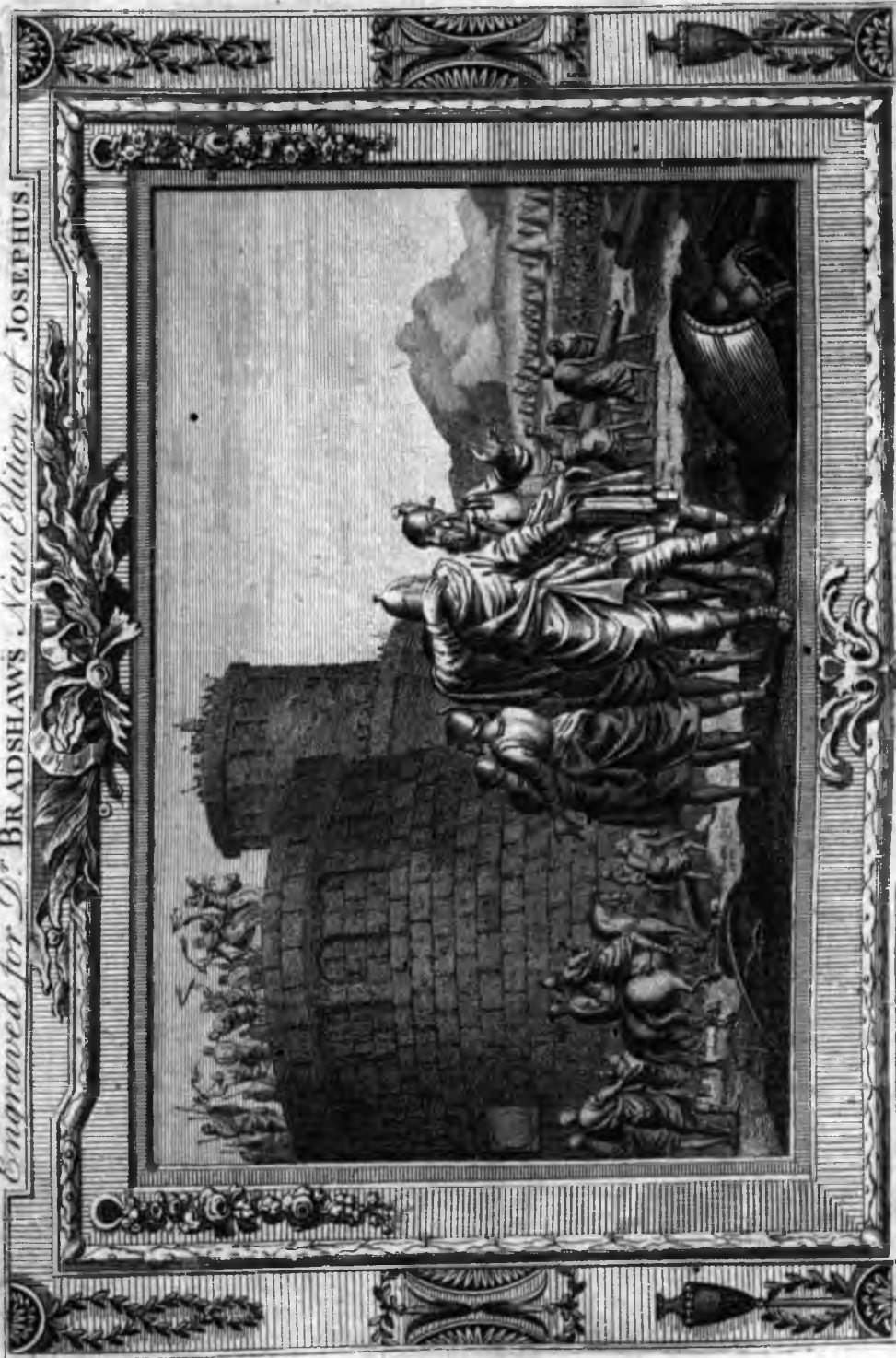
Antiochus lays siege to Jerusalem, which he is compelled to quit.

STIMULATED by the disgraces he had been subjected to by Simon, the father of Hyrcanus, Antiochus, in the fourth year of his reign, in the first of that of Hyrcanus, and in the hundredth* and second Olympiad, made an incursion into Judæa; and having committed great devastation in the country, obliged Hyrcanus to take refuge within the city, which he encompassed with his troops, divided into seven bodies. The great strength of the walls, and

the intrepidity with which the place was defended, prevented any considerable advantage being gained by the assailants for some time. During a short interval the camp was distressed for water; but this inconvenience was removed by a plentiful fall of rain. The northern quarter of the city being judged the least difficult of access, against that part Antiochus directed his greatest force. He erected an hundred turrets, each consisting of three stories, in which he stationed a great number of men for prosecuting the assault. To prevent a reinforcement or communication, he formed a double circumvallation of considerable extent. But notwithstanding these operations, the troops made frequent sallies from the fort to annoy the enemy, at such times as they appeared to be the least prepared for defence; and when these attempts were not likely to succeed, they had the advantage of a safe retreat into the city. Such of the inhabitants as consumed the provisions without bearing arms in support of the common cause, Hyrcanus compelled to evacuate the city; and Antiochus preventing their retreat to the open country, many of them perished under the walls for want of food.

* The 2d of 161st Olympiad, vide Petitus, Eclog. Chronolog. lib. 1. cap. 6.; and Scaliger's notes upon Eusebius, p. 135. Ed. Commelin.

Engraved for D^r BRADSHAW'S New Edition of JOSEPHUS.



Hyrcanus Descending the Fort of Dagon, sees the inhabitants, whipping his Mother, his Brothers upon the wall. He leaves the scene not being able to support the sight of so barbarous an action.

Engraved for Dr. BRADSHAW'S, New Edition of JOSEPHUS.



Simon Maccabees, and his sons taken prisoners, by the treachery of Ptolemy.

On the arrival of the feast of the Tabernacles, the above-mentioned miserable people were again received into the town; and on occasion of this festival, the people applied to Antiochus for a truce of seven days. This request he granted with the utmost readiness; and sent them bulls with gilded horns, and other beasts for sacrifice, gold and silver cups replenished with a variety of the most esteemed perfumes and spices, besides a large supply of provisions. His conduct in every instance was contrary to that of Antiochus Epiphanes, who, upon conquering the city, proved his contempt of the institutions and ceremonies of the Jews, by sacrificing hogs upon the altar, and polluting the holy place with liquor in which the flesh of those animals had been boiled. This affront produced an irreconcilable animosity. The piety of the present Antiochus obtained him the surname of the Pious, and he was held in the highest estimation by all ranks of people.

Hyrcanus
sends an em-
bassy to An-
tiochus.

The generosity of Antiochus encouraged Hyrcanus to dispatch an embassy, requesting that he would permit the Jews to live agreeable to the established laws and customs of their nation. Antiochus, in opposition to the court-faction, complied, on the condition that the Jews should lay down their arms, secure to him the tribute of Joppa and other cities, and admit a garrison into Jerusalem. The garrison was objected to, on the plea of the necessary inconvenience of mixing with strangers; and to compound this matter, an offer was made of five hundred talents, and hostages for a due performance of the treaty. Three hundred talents being paid in part, and the hostages, one of which was the brother of Hyrcanus, being delivered, the siege was raised.

An alliance
concluded be-
tween them.

Hyrcanus caused to be opened the sepulchre of David, a very rich and powerful sovereign, and thence took three thousand talents, whereby he was enabled to hire reinforcements to his army: he was the first among the Jews who entertained foreign troops. He now formed an alliance with Antiochus, and invited that king and his army into the city, where he received and entertained them with the utmost magnificence. As it is recorded by Nicholas Damascenus, he afterwards accompanied Antiochus to the Parthian war. This historian says, "After Antiochus had subdued the Parthian army under the command of Indates, he constructed a triumphal arch upon the banks of the river Lycus; and that at the intercession of Hyrcanus, a Jew, he remained at this place two days: the Jews being forbid by their laws to travel on the festival, which happened to occur at that time." This festival was the feast of Pentecost, which immediately followed the sabbath; and on neither of those days were the people of our nation allowed to travel.

Death of An-
tiochus.

Antiochus gave battle to Arsaces, king of the Parthians, and in this encounter he lost both his life and his army. Upon his kingdom being invaded, Arsaces set at liberty his captive Demetrius, who succeeded his brother Antiochus in the government of Syria.

CHAP. X.

HYRCANUS conquers IDUMEA, and reconciles the Inhabitants to the Jewish Institutions. He negotiates a fresh Treaty with the ROMANS. The Army of DEMETRIUS being entirely routed, he flies to PTOLEMAIS for Shelter: He is seized at TYRE, and put to Death. ALEXANDER slain in Battle.

UPON receiving information of the death of Antiochus, Hyrcanus led his army into Syria, expecting to find that country greatly depopulated; and this conjecture proved to be justly founded. After a siege of six months, he subdued Madaba; and he soon after made himself master of Samaga, and other places in that neighbourhood; he then proceeded to the conquest of Sichem, Gerizim, and the land of the Chuthites, where one of the governors, named Sanballat, in compliment to his son-in-law Manasseh, the brother of Jaddus, the high-priest, having obtained the permission of Alexander, constructed a temple on the model of that at Jerusalem, as we have before related: this temple was destroyed about two hundred years after it had been built. He reduced Adora, Marissa, and other places of strength in Idumaea, and prosecuted his successes till he had subdued the whole province. He then issued a proclamation, enjoining the departure of those who would not submit to circumcision. Rather than abandon the land, the people acquiesced in this, and every other Jewish institution: and since that period, they have been numbered among the people denominated Jews.

Idumea con-
quered by
Hyrcauus.

Hyrcauus, the high-priest now dispatched an embassy to the senate of Rome, with letters on the subject of a renewal of the league of amity. In consequence of these letters, Fanius, son of Marcus Prator, assembled a senate in the field of Mars, on the eighth of the ides of March, Lucius Manlius, son of Lucius Mentina, and Caius Sempronius, son of Caius Falerna, being present to deliberate on the proposed treaty, and other public business which Simon the son of Dositheus, Apollonius son of Alexander, and Diodorus son of Jason, were commissioned to negotiate with the senate. It was stipulated, that restoration should be made of the city and ports of Joppa, Gazara, the fountains, and other places which, in violation of a decree of the senate, had been usurped by Antiochus; that the king's troops should not pass through that or any other part of the Roman territories without permission; and that commissioners should be appointed for estimating the losses consequent on his devastations, for which full reparation should be made. On these conditions, the proposed treaty was accepted by the senate, who assured the honourable deputies on the part of the Jews, that on the first opportunity an answer in form should be returned, and that no injury should in future be offered to them. Fanius was commissioned to supply the ambassadors with money from

The treaty
with Rome
renewed.

from the public treasury, for defraying the charge of their return; and they were likewise furnished with letters of recommendation to the governors and officers of the several places through which they were to pass.

Flight and death of Demetrius. During these transactions, Demetrius was heartily disposed to commence hostilities against Hyrcanus: but he was not in a condition to effect this design, being generally detested by the Syrians and his own soldiers, who uniting in a confederacy against him, requested Ptolemy, otherwise Physcon, king of Egypt, to send to them a descendant of the house of Seleucus, whom they would invest with the sovereignty. Ptolemy sent Alexander surnamed Zebina, attended by a numerous army. An engagement ensued, and Demetrius being defeated, fled to Ptolemais, where Cleopatra, his wife, then resided: but being denied entrance into the city, he repaired to Tyre, where he was seized by his enemies, who, after keeping him some time in a miserable existence, deprived him of life.

Alexander slain in battle. The kingdom of Syria being now under the sovereignty of Alexander Zebina, a league was formed between this new king and Hyrcanus, the high-priest, who soon after was engaged in hostilities with Antiochus Gryphus, son of Demetrius. Alexander supported his ally in this war; and when the armies joined battle, it was his fortune to be slain. Upon the death of Alexander, Antiochus succeeded to the throne of Syria: but he checked his desire of proceeding against the Jews, in consequence of intelligence being communicated to him, that his brother and name-sake Antiochus, who was surnamed Cyzicenus, was raising an army at the town of Cyzicus, for the purpose of opposing his operations. Antiochus Cyzicenus derived his last appellation from the place where he was educated; he was the son of Antiochus Soter, who was slain by the Parthians. We have before observed that Cleopatra was married to two brothers. Upon the arrival of Cyzicenus in Syria, an engagement ensued between him and his brother; and, indeed, they lived in a perpetual state of animosity and warfare. In the mean time,

Prosperous condition of Hyrcanus. Hyrcanus enjoyed an uninterrupted tranquillity; for, upon the decease of Antiochus Soter, he no longer acknowledged himself to be either a subject or ally of the Macedonians. The affairs of Hyrcanus were in a flourishing state during the time of Alexander Zebina, but still more so in the sovereignty of the brothers; for while they were harassing each other to destruction, Cyzicenus was committing devastations in the country, and the other having no assistance from Egypt, he enjoyed perfect ease and safety in Judæa, where he amassed immense wealth.

utterly destroyed. *HYRCANUS abandons the Principles of the PHARISEES, and adopts those of the SADDUCEES. The Death of HYRCANUS.*

THE people of Marissa, though subjects to the king of Syria, were inhabitants of Judæa, and in alliance with the Jews. The indignities they had received from the Samaritans so greatly incensed Hyrcanus, that he determined to direct the whole force of his arms against the strongly fortified city of Samaria: which was rebuilt, and called Sebaste, by Herod. He begirt the town with a ditch of considerable width, and a double wall of great strength, appointing his sons Antigonus and Aristobulus to prosecute the siege; which was conducted with such vigour, that in a short time a terrible famine raged in the city, the inhabitants being reduced to the necessity of supporting themselves on carrion. In this extremity they solicited relief from Antiochus Cyzicenus, who directly marched to their assistance; but was repulsed by Aristobulus, who being joined by Antigonus, they pursued him to Scythopolis.

The brothers returned to Samaria, and renewed the siege; in consequence of which, the people again requested assistance from Cyzicenus; and he prevailed upon Ptolemy, surnamed Lathurus, to supply him with six thousand men. The grant of these troops so greatly offended the mother of Ptolemy, that he was in the most imminent danger of losing his kingdom. With these Egyptian forces Antiochus ravaged part of the country of Hyrcanus; his motive being to entice the troops from the siege by a diversion, as he was not in a condition to oppose the whole force of his antagonist. But, from desertions, many of his troops falling into ambushes, and other accidents, he despaired of success; and appointing Callimander and Epicrates to the conduct of the war, he retired to Tripoli. Callimander engaged in a rash expedition, wherein his army was destroyed and himself slain. The Jews bribed Epicrates to surrender Scythopolis and other places. After a siege which continued a year, Hyrcanus became master of Samaria, which he utterly destroyed, and by forming watercourses, and other measures, the appearance of the spot was entirely changed, and no vestige remained of the buildings. There is a surprising, and perhaps an incredible tradition respecting Hyrcanus. It is related, that being alone offering incense in the temple, a voice from heaven informed him, that his sons had obtained a victory over Antiochus Cyzicenus; and that he immediately went forth to the people, and communicated to them the revelation, which was soon after confirmed. This extraordinary incident is said to have happened at the precise time in which Cyzicenus was defeated.

Not only the Jews of Jerusalem and Alexandria, but those also of Egypt, Cyprus, and other places were now in a flourishing situation: for in consequence of a disagreement between Cleopatra and her son

Hyrcanus besieges Samaria.

Cyzicenus, attempting to release Samaria, is obliged to retire.

Hyrcanus takes and destroys Samaria.

CHAP. XI.

SAMARIA besieged by HYRCANUS. ANTIOCHUS CYZICENUS marches to the Relief of the City, but is repulsed by ARISTOBULUS. SAMARIA is

son Ptolemy Lathurus, the queen had committed the command of her army to Chelcias, and Ananias the son of Onias, by whom a temple, after the model of that at Jerusalem, had been built in the territory of Heliopolis. The queen was wholly influenced by the advice of these men. Strabo, the Cappadocian, says, "Great numbers of those who came with us to Cyprus, as well as those who were afterwards sent thither by Cleopatra, abandoned the queen, and attached themselves to the interest of Ptolemy; but the Jews of Onias's party continued in allegiance to her, in gratitude for the distinction she had bestowed upon their friends and countrymen, Chelcias and Ananias.

The success of Hyrcanus attracted the envy of the Jews, and particularly of that sect called Pharisees†. The influence of this faction was so great, as constantly to prevail over the multitude, even in opposition to the sentiments of the king and the high-priest. Hyrcanus, who had been educated among the Pharisees, invited them to an entertainment; and when his hospitality had caused a circulation of good humour, he addressed them to the following effect: "Since I profess your own principles, it is scarcely necessary to observe, my friends, that my most sanguine wish is to render myself acceptable to the Almighty, and to observe a strict justice to my neighbour. If I have violated my duty, it is your business to admonish me, and it shall be mine to effect a reformation of my conduct." This speech was received with great applause, which afforded Hyrcanus considerable pleasure.

Hyrcanus renounces the Pharisaic principles, and adopts those of the Sadducees. Soon after this, Eleazar, a Pharisee, having brought a false and scandalous charge against Hyrcanus, his friend Jonathan, who was a zealous Sadducee, took that opportunity to prejudice Hyrcanus against the whole sect of the Pharisees, insinuating, that they were all concerned in the defamation. The leaders of the Pharisees being consulted, to know what punishment should be inflicted on the calumniator, they gave it as their opinion, that imprisonment and scourging would be sufficient. This answer fully convinced Hyrcanus, that what Jonathan had suggested was true; and therefore, being greatly incensed against the Pharisees, he abrogated their traditional constitutions, subjected such as should observe them to severe penalties, and ever afterwards attached himself to the Sadducees. During the remaining part of his life, he enjoyed uninterrupted peace and happiness, and died in the thirty-first year of his government, leaving five sons. The Almighty was pleased to bestow upon him three emi-

nent distinctions, viz. the civil government, the high-priesthood, and the spirit of prophecy. He predicted, by a divine revelation, that his two eldest sons would not long enjoy the government; and the prophecy was verified, as will appear in the following chapter.

CHAP. XII.

ARISTOBULUS establishes a Monarchical Government. His Cruelty towards his Mother and Brethren. The Death of ARISTOBULUS.

ARISTOBULUS, the eldest son of Hyrcanus, determined to abolish the principality, and establish an absolute government: and the period at which he effected this was four hundred and eighty-one years after the emancipation of the Jews from captivity in Babylon. He had a particular regard for his next brother, whose name was Antigonus, and he admitted him to some share in the government; but his mother, whom he considered as his rival to sovereignty, Hyrcanus having bequeathed to her all that was in his power to leave, he ordered into close confinement, and his three younger brethren he consigned to the same fate. So horribly unnatural was his cruelty, as actually to starve his mother in her prison, and, on some equally malignant and groundless insinuations, to sacrifice the life of his favourite brother Antigonus. It was some time before Aristobulus would attend to the malevolent suggestions against his brother. On the approach of the feast of the Tabernacles, Aristobulus was confined to his bed by sickness: and at this time Antigonus came from the army in great martial pomp, and, attended by his guards, repaired to the temple, in order to supplicate heaven for the restoration of his brother's health. The enemies of Antigonus insinuated to the king, that the magnificence and state which his brother had assumed, was an evidence that he aspired to the sovereignty. Aristobulus did not give credit to all that was reported concerning his brother, but supposing there to be some foundation for a part, he determined to provide for his own safety, without appearing to be apprehensive of his danger. The king stationed a guard in a subterraneous place in the tower, which has since received the name of Antonia, and commanded them, that if Antigonus came that way unarmed, they should not molest him; but that if they observed him provided for defence, they

A monarchical government established by Aristobulus.

His cruelties.

† These distinguished themselves by their zeal for the traditions of the elders, which they derived from the same origin as the written word itself, pretending that both were delivered to Moses from mount Sinai, and were therefore both of equal authority. From their rigorous observance of these traditions, they looked upon themselves as more holy than other men, and therefore separated themselves from those whom they thought sinners or profane, so as not to eat or drink with them; and hence, from the Hebrew word *pharis*, which

signifies to separate, they had the name of *Pharisees*, or separatists.— Their pretences to extraordinary piety drew after them the common people, who held them in the highest esteem and veneration. They held the existence of angels and spirits; and a resurrection from the dead, that is, of the soul only, by its transmigration into another body, and being born anew with it. See further concerning them in book xviii. c. 2.

should take away his life. Aristobulus dispatched a messenger to request the presence of Antigonus in his apartment, and strictly to enjoin him to come unarmed: but the queen and other of his enemies prevailed upon the messenger to say, that the king desired to see him equipped in an extraordinary fine suit of armour which, it had been told him, he possessed. Unsuspecting the treachery, Antigonus immediately went forth completely armed; and he was slain by the soldiers posted, in the dark passage of the tower of Straton. Judas, whose prophecies had been constantly verified, upon observing Antigonus go to the temple, said to his disciples that he was weary of existence, since his reputation as a prophet was entirely lost; for that he had predicted the death of Antigonus should happen on that day at Straton's tower; but that he was still alive, the place fix hundred furlongs distance, and the day more than half elapsed. Presently after this, news was brought that Antigonus was slain under the tower, according to his presage. This tower was called Straton's tower, as well as that upon the coast, which was afterwards distinguished by the name of Cæsarea.

*Last illness
and death of
Aristobulus.*

The severe upbraidings of conscience for the barbarous murder of his brother greatly increased the distemper of Aristobulus, and a vomiting of blood ensued: as an attendant was conveying some of it away in a vessel, he spilt a part, seemingly by the direction of Providence, on the spot where the marks of Antigonus's blood were yet to be seen. This event, which was supposed to have happened from design, produced some disorder, the cause of which the king anxiously enquired; and having extorted it from his attendants by entreaties and threats, he said, "The all-seeing Power hath detected my iniquity, and my brother's murder hath called down the vengeance of heaven upon me. How long shall I hold that life which is forfeited to the blood of a mother and a brother? Rather why do I not expire on a sudden, than thus yield my life drop by drop, as if the severest punishment was inadequate to my guilt?" Upon uttering these words, Aristobulus, who was surnamed Philellen, signifying "a lover of the Greeks," instantly died, having reigned only one year. He subdued and annexed a considerable

*His acts and
character.*

part of Ituræa to the territory of Judæa, and compelled the people to submit to circumcision and other Jewish institutions, on the penalty of banishment: and he performed other important services to his country. Excepting in respect to the matters already urged against him, he was considered as a man of modesty and justice. On the authority of Timagenes, Strabo speaks of him to this effect. "He was of a good disposition, and in many instances proved himself a friend to the Jews: he extended their jurisdiction over a great part of Ituræa, and united the people in the common bond of circumcision."

reignty: He puts one of his Brothers to Death, and lays Siege to PTOLEMAIS, but abandons the Enterprize. PTOLEMY of ASOCHIS takes the Town by Assault.

SALOME, called Alexandra by the Greeks, restored the three brothers of Aristobulus, her late husband, to liberty; and Jannæus, otherwise called Alexander, who was the eldest, and of a disposition less violent than the others, she raised to the throne. It was the fortune of Alexander to incur his father's aversion soon after his birth; and this is said to be the reason of his displeasure: Hyrcanus had a dream that the Almighty appeared to him, and that upon asking who should be his successor, the resemblance of Alexander was immediately represented to him. This circumstance prejudiced him so much against Alexander, that he sent him to be brought up in Galilee. Alexander caused one of his brothers to be put to death for attempting to supplant him in the government: but he made a generous provision for the other brother, who contented himself in a private station.

*Jannæus,
called also
Alexander,
made king.*

Alexander led an army to Ptolemais, and gave battle to a body of the enemy's forces, whom he compelled to retreat into the city, where he kept them blocked up. Gaza, another sea-coast town, remained at this time unsubdued, as did Dora and the tower of Straton, which were in possession of Zoilus. Antiochus Philometer and his brother Antiochus Cyzicenus, were so exhausted in the wars they had maintained against each other, that the people of Ptolemais expected no relief from them. Zoilus, who had been waiting for the opportunity of making advantage of the prevailing divisions, afforded some relief to Ptolemais, but the force he sent was not sufficient to be of any considerable service. The people of Ptolemais had no hope of relief but from Egypt, and their principal dependence was upon Ptolemy Lathurus, who having been compelled to evacuate his kingdom by his mother Cleopatra, had retired to Cyprus. They sent to him an embassy, commissioned to solicit his assistance against Alexander, and to assure him there was every reason to believe the people of Gaza and Ptolemais would declare in his favour immediately upon his entering Syria, and that he would be supported by Zoilus, the Sidonians, and other neighbouring people. Ptolemy ordered all possible dispatch in the equipment of a fleet for this enterprize.

*He lays siege
to Ptolemais.*

Ptolemy disembarked at Sicamin, and thence marched, at the head of about thirty thousand horse and foot, to Ptolemais. On his arrival before the city, he dispatched an embassy to the people, but they refused to receive the message, and to hold any intercourse with either the king or his agents. This disappointment so greatly embarrassed him, that he knew not what measures to pursue. Zoilus and some commissioners from Gaza represented to Ptolemy, that the Jews and Alexander were committing great devastations in their territories, and

*The people
refuse to treat
with him.*

CHAP. XIII.

JANNÆUS ALEXANDER advanced to the Sove-

and requested his assistance, to repel them. Upon the appearance of Ptolemy, Alexander judged it prudent to raise the siege. He engaged in a secret treaty with Cleopatra to subdue Ptolemy, whom he, at the same time, treated as a friend and ally, offering him four hundred talents of silver, on condition of surrendering to him the usurper Zoilus, and restored to the Jews the lands which he possessed, and had formerly belonged to them. Ptolemy readily embraced the proposal, and seized Zoilus; but upon discovering that Alexander had privately made proposals to Cleopatra, he considered the treaty to be violated, and therefore laid siege to Ptolemais. He appointed one part of his army to prosecute the siege, and led the other to ravage the country of Judæa. Alexander assembled an army, which some assert was composed of fifty, and others of eighty thousand troops, to oppose the operations of Ptolemy, who, taking advantage of the sabbath-day, reduced Asochis, a city in Galilee, by assault, acquired an immense booty, and made about ten thousand of the people prisoners.

Ptolemy takes
Asochis by as-
sault.

C H A P. XIV.

ALEXANDER defeated by PTOLEMY LATHURUS. PTOLEMAIS subdued by CLEOPATRA, who enters into Treaty with ALEXANDER. The Siege of GAZA. APPOLLODOTUS murdered by LYSIMACHUS, who treacherously surrenders the City. ANTIOCHUS CYZICENUS vanquished and put to Death by SELEUCUS. DEMETRIUS EUCAEUS ascends the Throne of DAMASCUS. ANTIOCHUS slain by the PARTHIANS. He is succeeded by PHILIP and DEMETRIUS. Fifty Thousand JEWS killed in a Rebellion.

Ptolemy de-
feats the ar-
my of Alex-
ander, with
great slaugh-
ter.

HAVING subdued Asochis, Ptolemy made an assault upon Sapphoris, but in this attempt he was defeated, and sustained great loss. He then led his army against Alexander, whom he met with in the neighbourhood† of Aslaphus, adjacent to the river of Jordan, and pitched his camp opposite to that of the enemy. The van of Alexander's army was composed of eight thousand of the soldiers called Hecatontomachi, who were provided with brazen bucklers. In the front of his forces Ptolemy had some warriors equipped in the same manner, but his followers were not in general so well armed as their adversaries, and they were therefore the less anxious for an engagement. Philostephanus, an officer of great skill and experience, encouraged them to expect success. They crossed the river; and to this movement Alexander, who was stationed on the opposite shore, made no opposition, judging that he should with less difficulty obtain a conquest if he

could attack the enemy while they were in a situation from which the river behind them would render a retreat impracticable. The battle was sustained with great bravery on both sides: upon a body of Ptolemy's troops giving way, victory seemed to favour Alexander; but upon the arrival of Philostephanus with a reinforcement, the Jews were entirely routed, and pursued by Ptolemy till his soldiers were fatigued, and their weapons blunted by the havoc they made. It is recorded, that thirty thousand men were slain in the encounter; and Timagenes says, in his history, that the number was fifty thousand. Great numbers were made prisoners, and the rest escaped by flight.

After this terrible carnage, Ptolemy went to some villages belonging to the Jews, and commanded his soldiers to murder the women and children, and then to put the parts of their bodies into vessels of water which were to be placed over fires. He had recourse to this bloody stratagem, in order to strike terror into those who had escaped by flight, by inspiring the idea that his army was addicted to feed upon the flesh of an enemy. This shocking barbarity is mentioned both by Strabo and Nicolaus.

Cruel act of
Ptolemy.

Judæa being ravaged, and Gaza subdued, Cleopatra judged it necessary to give a check to the enterprising spirit of her son Ptolemy; and she was farther induced to this, as he had already advanced to the gates of Egypt, and had formed a design of usurping the government. She mustered both her military and naval forces with all possible dispatch, and appointed for her generals two Jews named Chelcias and Ananias. She transported her most valuable treasure, her grand-children, and her last will, to the island of Coas. She sent a strong naval force and her son Alexander to preserve peace in Phœnicia, in which province a revolt was threatened; and she went herself to Ptolemais, where being refused admittance, she ordered the city to be assaulted. Hereupon Ptolemy evacuated Syria, and repaired to Egypt, in the flattering expectation that he should find that country in a defenceless state: but in this attempt he was defeated; and in pursuing Ptolemy, Chelcias, one of the generals of Cleopatra, lost his life in Cœlo-Syria.

Cleopatra en-
deavours to
check him.

The queen detached a body of troops in pursuit of Ptolemy, who was again driven out of his own country, and under the necessity of establishing his winter quarters in Gaza. In the interim she became mistress of Ptolemais, which was taken by assault. The queen received presents from Alexander, whom she treated in a most gracious manner, considering him as a prince violently persecuted, and as having no resource for relief but in herself. The impolicy of suffering such numbers of Jews to remain dependent on the will of one man was urged to Cleopatra, and she was advised to seize Alexander and his kingdom: but this was opposed by Ananias, who pleaded the iniquity of the measure, which would render her an object of the most violent detestation to the honest part

Remains a
league of
friendship
with Alexan-
der.

† In the Thesaurus Geograph. of Ortelius, this place is denominated Asochis, or Aslaphus.

part of the Jewish people. The conduct of Ananias proved highly agreeable to the queen; and she afterwards renewed a league of amity with Alexander, at a city of Cœlo-Syria called Scythopolis.

who besieges and takes Gadara. Alexander being no longer in dread of the power of Ptolemy, led his army against Gadara, in Cœlo-Syria, which after a siege of ten months he subdued; he then proceeded to Amathus, the strongest fort on the river Jordan, where Theodotus, the son of Zeno, had deposited his treasure, and this place he reduced. Theodotus, in revenge for the injury he had received, attacked the Jews by surprize, destroyed ten thousand of them, and made booty of Alexander's baggage. Notwithstanding this misfortune, the king attacked and subdued the sea-coast towns called Raphia and Anthedon, to which Herod afterwards gave the name of Agrippiades. Cleopatra had now returned to Egypt, as had Ptolemy from Gaza to Cyprus. Alexander availed himself of this opportunity to lay siege to the city of Gaza and ravage the country, in order to revenge himself upon the people for having formerly solicited Ptolemy to join in repelling him. Appollodotus, attended by ten thousand citizens and two thousand mercenaries, made an intrepid sally one night upon the camp of the enemy, who supposing Ptolemy had come to the relief of the besieged were greatly disconcerted: but when day-light discovered their mistake, they rallied and charged Appollodotus with so much fury as to kill ten thousand of his party. Notwithstanding their defeat and being threatened by famine, the people of Gaza determined to encounter all difficulties rather than submit to the enemy: and they were encouraged to persist in this resolution by Aretas, an Arabian king; but he did not afford the timely assistance he had promised them.

Gaza surrendered to Alexander, who makes great slaughter of the citizens. Lysimachus being envious of his own brother for the great reputation he had acquired, barbarously murdered him; and then with the concurrence of his adherents, treacherously surrendered the city to Alexander. Upon entering the town, he seemed inclined to moderation: but he soon gave his troops unlimited liberty for destruction, and a terrible carnage ensued, in which, however, as many of the Jews as of the people of Gaza were slain. Some of the inhabitants fired their own houses, that they might not be plundered by the enemy; and some killed their wives and children, preferring that they should die in freedom rather than live in bondage. The senators were in council when Alexander entered the city, and five hundred of them fled to the temple of Apollo for sanctuary, but they were all slain, and the city was pillaged, and entirely destroyed. Alexander now returned to Babylon, after having employed a year in the expedition against Gaza.

Antiochus Gryphus dies, and is succeeded by Seleucus. Nearly at this period Antiochus Gryphus fell a sacrifice to the treachery of Heracleus in the nine-and-twentieth year of his sovereignty, and in the forty-fifth year of his age. He was succeeded in

the government by his son Seleucus, who commenced war against his uncle Antiochus Cyzicenus, whom he subdued in an engagement, and afterwards put to death. Some time after the decease of Cyzicenus, his son Antiochus, surnamed Eusebes, was crowned at Arad. He declared war against Seleucus, whom he defeated and drove out of Syria. Seleucus fled to Cilicia; and notwithstanding he was received in a most friendly manner, he imposed upon the Mopseates the most oppressive taxes, which so greatly incensed them against him that they set fire to the palace, wherein Seleucus and his attendants were consumed.

Antiochus Cyzicenus slain. During the government of Antiochus Cyzicenus in Syria, a brother of Seleucus, who was also named Antiochus, declared war against him, in which Cyzicenus lost his life. He was succeeded in the sovereignty by his brother Philip, who reigned over a part of Syria. Hereupon Ptolemy Lathurus advanced Demetrius Eucærus, his fourth brother, to the throne of Damascus. Antiochus defended himself with singular bravery against his brothers: but he espoused the cause of Laodice, queen of the Galadenes, in the war against the Parthians, by whom he was * slain in battle, after having manifested himself a man of great intrepidity. His own brothers, Philip and Demetrius, succeeded to the government of Syria, as before observed.

Alexander, being insulted by the Jews, slays six thousand of them. About this time Alexander was highly enraged against the people under his command. On the celebration of the feast of the Tabernacles, it was a custom among the Jews to march in procession, carrying boughs of palm and citron. While Alexander was preparing to assist in the usual solemnities, the people threw citrons at him, called him slave, and applied to him other insulting terms. Highly incensed at this conduct, he caused six thousand of the multitude to be slain: and he had a partition of wood fixed up to keep the crowd from the altar. He entertained no esteem for the Syrians, and judged it not prudent to rely on them: but he chose the Pisidians and Cilicians as mercenaries for prosecuting his schemes. He subdued the Arabians, rendered the Moabites and Galaadites tributaries, and destroyed Amathus, without opposition from Theodorus. He declared war against Obed, king of Arabia, during which he was surprized by an ambush in the neighbourhood of Gadara, in Galilee, and forced into a craggy and narrow passage, whence, with infinite difficulty, he retreated to Jerusalem. A rebellion now ensued, which continued for the space of six years, in the course of which no less than fifty thousand lives were lost. The king became extremely desirous to effect a reconciliation: but the more anxiety he expressed on the subject, the more averse were the people to a compliance. At length he asked, by what means he could satisfy them: and the reply was, that he

* Vaillant, in his *Nummi Seleucidorum*, endeavours to prove this an error of Josephus.

would

would do it by cutting his own throat. They solicited the assistance of Demetrius Eucærus against Alexander.

CHAP. XV.

ALEXANDER is defeated by DEMETRIUS EUCÆRUS. ALEXANDER subdues BETHAMA. He massacres Eight Hundred JEWS with their Wives and Children. DEMETRIUS is carried Prisoner to PARTHIA, where he dies.

DEMETRIUS Eucærus led an army consisting of three thousand horse, and forty thousand foot, including auxiliaries, and pitched his camp in the neighbourhood of Sichem. Alexander marched against him at the head of about twenty thousand of his adherents, and about six thousand Greek mercenaries. Alexander employed every stratagem his imagination could suggest, to seduce the troops of his adversary to join him; and a like conduct was pursued by Demetrius towards the Greek mercenaries: but neither of them was able to succeed.

The army of Alexander overcome and put to flight by Demetrius.

The armies joined battle, and Demetrius proved victorious. Great havoc was made on both sides: and the auxiliaries of Alexander fought with astonishing bravery, every man of them yielding his life sword in hand. Alexander fled to the mountains, and compassion for his misfortunes soon after induced six thousand Jews to join him. This reinforcement proved so alarming a circumstance to Demetrius, that he retired. The rest of the Jews continued the war against Alexander, notwithstanding they were vanquished, and great slaughter was made among them in every engagement. At length they were compelled to seek refuge; and most of the Jews, and among them the principal men, fled to Bethama, where they were besieged by Alexander, who, after he had subdued the town, carried them prisoners to Jerusalem, where he exercised upon them the most shocking cruelty. He gave a treat

Horrid cruelties of Alexander.

to his concubines in a turret which commanded an extensive prospect, and for the entertainment of his company he caused eight hundred Jews to be crucified, and the throats of their wives and children to be cut at the same time. Thus were the tortures of these unhappy victims aggravated, by being witnesses to the barbarity executed upon those to whom they were connected by the tenderest bonds. They had revolted against their lawful sovereign, invited foreign powers to support them in rebellion, put his crown and life to the most imminent danger, and drove him to the necessity of relinquishing the possessions he had obtained in the wars against the Moabites and Galaadites, as a gratuity to the king of Arabia, for declining to espouse the cause of his refractory subjects: these, not to mention other circumstances of a similar kind, were

No. 12.

certainly an high provocation to severity of punishment: but yet by no means sufficient to justify his unnatural rigour. The above instance of cruelty rendered Alexander so obnoxious to the Jews, that they distinguished him by the appellation of * Thracidas. About eight thousand of the soldiers who had taken up arms against the king, escaped by night, and lived in retirement during the remaining part of Alexander's reign, which he enjoyed peaceably after the insurrection above-mentioned had been quelled.

From Judæa, Demetrius marched with ten thousand foot and one thousand horse to besiege his brother Philip in the town of Beræa. Straton, the friend of Philip, who held the government of the place, applied to Zizus, a prince of Arabia, and Mithridates Sinaces, king of Parthia, for assistance. They supplied a formidable army to repulse Demetrius, whose people being greatly distressed for water, and perpetually annoyed by the darts and arrows of the confederate powers, at length surrendered, Demetrius being taken prisoner, and sent as a present to Mithridates, king of Parthia. The Antiochians who were found in the camp were allowed to return to Antioch. Mithridates behaved to his prisoner with a degree of liberality and respect that acquired him great honour; but being seized with illness, Demetrius did not long survive. In a short time after Demetrius had been made prisoner, Philip repaired to Antioch, and assumed the government of the Syrian dominions. While he was engaged in an expedition against the Parthians, his brother Antiochus, otherwise called Dionysius, procured himself to be invested with the sovereignty of Damascus. Upon receiving intelligence of this event, Philip immediately repaired to the city, where he gained admittance by means of Milesius, who was governor of the fort, and deposed Antiochus. He offered no gratuity to Milesius, lest it should be imagined that he had been admitted into the town through bribery, rather than the authority of his name and character: and for this neglect that officer seized an opportunity of revenge. While Philip was engaged in his usual exercises and diversions at the circus, Milesius shut the gates of the city against him, and determined again to receive Antiochus; who upon gaining information of what had happened, marched out of Arabia, and entered Judæa with an army of eight thousand foot, and eight hundred horse. Hereupon Alexander caused a ditch to be cut of considerable depth, extending from Caparsaba, which is now called Antipatris, to the sea of Joppa, which was the only passage whereby access could be gained to the town. He also erected a wall of considerable length, and

Demetrius besieges Beræa; but is afterwards taken prisoner, and sent to Parthia, where he dies.

A terrible encounter between Alexander and Antiochus; where in the army of the latter is routed, and himself slain.

* The Thracians being remarkable for a cruelty of disposition, according to Thucydides, and other historical writers.

a number of towers, composed of wood. Antiochus set fire to these wooden fortifications, by which means he gained a passage into Arabia. He proceeded to engage the enemy, who gave way on his first attack; but they soon after advanced with ten thousand horse, and Antiochus encountered them with great vigour, and a bloody contest ensued. Antiochus had so greatly the advantage, that he considered himself secure of victory: but observing one of the wings in danger of being overpowered, he eagerly pressed to its relief, but in the attempt it was his fortune to be slain. The troops were so dispirited by the death of their leader, that they fled in confusion to Cana, where the majority of them perished for want of food. Merely from a principle of opposition to Ptolemy, the son of Mennæus, the people of Damascus elected Aretus to succeed Antiochus Dionysius in the government of Cœlo-Syria. He led an army into Judæa, vanquished Alexander in the neighbourhood of Addida, and after having concluded a treaty with him, returned to Damascus.

Alexander
subdues several
places.

Alexander subdued the city of Dion by assault. After this enterprize he proceeded to Esſa, where Zeno had deposited all his valuable treasure: he environed the place with three walls, after which he reduced it by assault. He then marched against Gaulana, Seleucia, the Vale of Antiochus, and the fortress of Gamala, which places he also conquered by storm. Many accusations of mal-administration having been exhibited against Demetrius, Alexander deprived him of the regal authority. After having employed three years in the above expeditions, Alexander conducted his army back to Jerusalem; and the Jews received him with the warmest congratulations, expressing a perfect satisfaction in his conduct, which had brought their affairs into so prosperous a train.

Extensive do-
minions of the
Jews.

At this period the Jews were in possession of many considerable places in Syria, Idumæa, and Phœnicia: as Apollonia, Joppa, Jamnia, Azotus, Gaza, Anthedon, Raphia, Roinocura, and the tower of Straton, on the sea-coast. In the inland part of Idumæa, they had Adora, Marissa, Samaria, and the mountains of Carmel and Itabyr, Scythopolis, Gadara, Gaulanitis, Seleucia, and *Gabala: in the country of the Moabites, Esſebon, Medaba, Lemba, Oron, Thelithon, and Zara: and in Cilicia, Aulon, and Pella. The last-mentioned city was destroyed in consequence of the inhabitants having refused to adopt the laws and customs of the Jews, who possessed many places in Syria, which we have not particularized.

Alexander's
sickness and
death.

Towards the conclusion of his reign, Alexander became violently addicted to intemperance, the consequence of which was a quartan ague. He was afflicted with this distemper for three years, during which space he still continued his attention to the affairs of government

and the army: but his excesses, and the cares annexed to his station, at length produced his death, which happened on the frontiers of the Gerasens, during the siege of the castle of Ragaba, situated on the other side the river Jordan.

The queen Alexandra judging her comfort beyond the possibility of recovery, gave way to the violence of grief, and lamented the miserable situation to which herself and children would be reduced by his death. "My beloved husband, (said she) what will be the fate of your wife and children if we are deprived of your protection, and left to the mercy of your most inveterate foes!" To this Alexander replied, "I particularly request that you follow the advice I am about to give: as the only effectual means to secure a peaceable succession to yourself and children, keep my decease profoundly secret from the army till the castle shall be subdued; then repair in triumph to Jerusalem with the news of victory; and let your principal care be to ingratiate yourself into the esteem of the Pharisees; for your character will receive its colour from the interest you form with that sect, to whose opinions those of the multitude are entirely subservient. The popular clamour against me has been raised by an opposition to them. On your arrival at Jerusalem, send for the principal men among the Pharisees, expose my corpse before them, and say, that from a veneration of their piety and justice, you resign the body either to be allowed the ceremony of interment, or be treated with contempt and indignity in return for my past unworthy conduct, as their discretion shall dictate; and assure them, that in this, and all other matters of a public nature, you will observe an implicit obedience to their authority. Follow this counsel, and my remains will infallibly receive the honours of a magnificent funeral; and yourself and your offspring will be established in the dignities of the royal station." Having concluded this speech, Alexander expired, in the twenty-seventh year of his sovereignty, and in the forty-ninth of his age.

His queen's
lamentation
thereupon.

CHAP. XVI.

HYRCANUS, the eldest Son of ALEXANDER, is advanced to the pontificate. ARISTOBULUS leads an Army against PTOLEMY. The Siege of PTOLEMAIS by TIGRANES, King of ARMENIA. MITHRIDATES vanquished by LUCULLUS. The Forts belonging to Queen ALEXANDRA submit to ARISTOBULUS, whose Wife and Children she imprisons. ALEXANDRA dies.

THE castle being subdued, the queen, in conformity to the direction of her late husband, delivered the body to the Pharisees, to be disposed of as they should judge expedient, and submitted the administration entirely

Alexandra obtains the good will of the Pharisees.

* Card. Noris, in his book de Epochâ Syromaced. calls this place Gamala.

entirely to their direction. This conduct acquired Alexandra the warmest friendship of the Pharisees, who had hitherto been her most inveterate enemies: they harangued the multitude, highly extolling the merits of Alexander, and lamenting the loss of so excellent a sovereign; and their discourse had such an effect upon the people, that they determined to observe his funeral with a magnificence superior to what had been known on any former occasion.

Hyrcanus raised to the high-priesthood.

Alexander left two sons, the elder of whom was named Hyrcanus, and the other Aristobulus; but the regal dignity he bequeathed to his queen Alexandra. Hyrcanus was not qualified for affairs of state, being naturally disposed to a life of ease. Aristobulus was of an active and intrepid disposition. The disapprobation which the queen expressed of the administration during the life of her husband, obtained her the favour of the people. Through her interest Hyrcanus was appointed to the office of high-priest: this distinction was not given him, on account of his seniority to Aristobulus, but on the consideration that he might be governed with the least difficulty. Though the government was conducted under the authority of the queen's name, she was a mere instrument to the Pharisees, to whose will she exacted a strict obedience in her subjects. The traditions and ordinances of the Pharisees, which had been suppressed by her father-in-law, she caused to be revived, at the instance of this sect, who also obtained her concurrence to the return of exiles, and such other measures as they were inclined to effect. She considerably augmented her own troops, and had a mercenary army in constant pay.

Intrigues and severities of the Pharisees.

In this last, and some other particular instances, she acted independent of the Pharisees. Her great power rendered her so formidable to the neighbouring states, that they sent her hostages as a security for not committing acts of hostility. The Pharisees were perpetually urging the queen to acts which fomented disorders in the government. They became exceedingly importunate for vengeance to be executed upon those who had advised taking away the lives of the eight hundred Jews, of whom we have already spoken. In compliance with their request, Diogenes was put to death, and after him many others. At length the leading men among those who were persecuted by the Pharisees repaired to the queen, Aristobulus being at their head; and his countenance manifested the

Remonstrance of Aristobulus and his adherents against them.

abhorrence he entertained of the public measures. The adherents of Aristobulus represented to the queen, that in the utmost extremity of danger they had preserved an uniform loyalty to their late sovereign, who had generously rewarded their services: and they supplicated, that since they had escaped the perils of war, they might not be sacrificed to the malevolence and treachery of their domestic enemies. They added, that if their persecutors would proceed no further in their sanguinary purpose, from

a respect to their superiors, they would suppress future complaints on what had been already perpetrated. They requested that if their adversaries were permitted to continue their cruelties, the queen would allow them to withdraw, saying they would rather yield their lives in the palace than retire from her jurisdiction without her consent. They observed, that to countenance the declared enemies of her deceased consort, at the expence of his approved friends, would be a severe reproach upon her majesty's honour; and Aretas, the Arabian king, and other hostile powers, would enjoy a peculiar pleasure upon learning that she had driven from her court the men who had been so formidable, that their very names had formerly struck them with terror. They said, that if she was determined to yield every consideration to the ambition of the Pharisees, they had only to solicit her majesty to grant them permission to retire into castles and garrisons, where they would terminate a miserable existence, honourably sharing the common calamities which seemed to await the friends of the deceased king.

These expostulations drew tears from the auditors, who invoked the ghost of Alexander to compassionate those who had been slain, and those whom it was apprehended would experience a similar fate. Aristobulus spoke with the most freedom on the public cause, and he was the least reserved in uttering reproaches upon his mother. The people who were so heavily oppressed were themselves the cause of the calamities they experienced, by vesting the government in the hands of an impetuous and vindictive woman, notwithstanding the empire might have been legally configned to a successor of the male line.

Being greatly embarrassed by the conduct of the malecontents, the queen judged she could not adopt a more expedient measure than that of appointing them to retire to several garrisons and places of strength: but it was stipulated that they should not enter Hyrcania, Alexandrias, and Machæras, in which places she had deposited her jewels and other valuable treasure. Soon after this she sent Aristobulus at the head of an army to oppose Ptolemy, surnamed Mennæus, near Damascus, he being a turbulent prince, and exceedingly vexatious to his neighbours: but he returned without effecting any considerable enterprise.

The queen gives the discontented Pharisees several strong places, reserving others to herself.

While affairs remained in this situation, Alexandra received intelligence that Tigranes, king of Armenia, had marched an immense army into Syria, and that his design was to penetrate into Judæa. In consequence of this alarming intelligence, the queen dispatched an embassy, charged to make compliments and present gifts to Tigranes, who was then encamped before Ptolemais. The queen Selene, otherwise named Cleopatra, who held the government of Syria, animated her subjects to oppose the operations of Tigranes. The ambassadors sent by

Expedition of Tigranes against the Syrians and Jews.

Alexandra

Alexandra on the part of the whole Jewish people, were favourably received, and Tigranes assured them of a friendly disposition, acknowledging that he considered himself highly honoured by the queen's sending an embassy to him at so great a distance. Tigranes subdued Ptolemais, and immediately after that enterprize received information that Mithridates having been routed and pursued by Lucullus, had fled into Siberia; and that Lucullus being unable to overtake him, had marched into Armenia, where he was then committing great devastation. Hereupon Tigranes drew off his army, and resolved to provide for the safety of his own dominions.

Aristobulus forms a design of obtaining the government.

Alexandra being seized with a dangerous illness, Aristobulus judged that he should not meet a more favourable opportunity for executing the designs he had formed. Accompanied only by one attendant, he went privately by night to the forts and castles where the friends of his late father resided. He was greatly dissatisfied with the conduct of his mother; and he became uneasy upon reflecting, that if death should be the consequence of her present indisposition, the whole family would be at the mercy of the Pharisees, who had an absolute authority over their creature Hyrcanus, the next in succession to the government, and that he was totally unqualified for executing a public trust. He communicated his purpose only to his wife, whom leaving, with his children, at Jerusalem, he repaired to Agada, where an inhabitant of distinguished rank, named Galates, gave him a liberal reception. On the day after that of his departure, his absence was observed by Alexandra, who, however, entertained no idea of his intention, till she was informed that several fortresses had submitted to him. For when one place had accepted his proposals, the example was immediately followed by the rest. The queen and her party were thrown into the utmost consternation, judging Aristobulus to be a man qualified to succeed in the enterprize he had undertaken; and they were further alarmed by the dreadful apprehension that they

should be called to a severe account for the barbarities they had exercised upon his friends. The wife and children of Aristobulus were seized, and confined under a strong guard in the citadel adjacent to the temple. The people repaired in great numbers to the prince, who in fifteen days was master of two and twenty castles. He speedily assembled an army from Mount Libanus, Trachonitis, and the neighbouring powers, who were readily inclined to support the stronger party, from the expectation of the advantage they should derive by assisting in the establishment of a new king. Hyrcanus and the elders requested that the queen would give directions as to the measures they were to pursue. They informed her of the great power of Aristobulus, saying their situation was desperate, but that though ruin was to ensue, they could not act without her concurrence. She replied, that the state of her mind and body rendered her wholly incapable of the cares of government, which she resigned entirely to their management: adding, that there was no deficiency either of men or money. Having delivered these words, she expired, in the seventy-third year of her age, and in the ninth of her reign.

The rapid increase of his interest.

Death of Alexandra.

Alexandra was a woman highly ambitious of honour and command, and so particularly assiduous in the dispatch of public business, that she may serve as a worthy example to rulers of the other sex. She attended to present circumstances, without vainly endeavouring to penetrate into futurity. She was moderate in the exercise of her authority, and lived in high reputation for justice and integrity. After her decease, the errors of her government were conspicuous in the calamities experienced by the royal family. The queen having chosen the enemies of her house for her advisers, it is to be justly attributed as the cause of the misfortunes which followed. During her reign, however, she preserved the government in uninterrupted tranquillity.

Her character.

B O O K XIV.

Containing the HISTORY of the TRANSACTIONS, from the YEAR of the WORLD 3898, to 3929.

C H A P. I.

HYRCANUS defeated by ARISTOBULUS. An Accommodation between them.

HYRCANUS entered on the office of high-priest in the third year of the Olympiad one hundred and seventy-seven, when Q. Hortensius, and Q. Metellus Creticus were consuls.

Aristobulus instantly prepared to attack him, and a battle was fought near Jericho, in which Hyrcanus was routed, many of his troops deserting to the opposite party, and himself obliged to take refuge in the citadel, where, by the command of the mother of Aristobulus, his wife and children were imprisoned: the rest of Hyrcanus's troops sought for safety within the

the verge of the temple, but in a little while were induced to submit. The passions of the brothers being at length cooled, they mutually agreed that the possession of the government should be secured to Aristobulus, while Hyrcanus should enjoy his private fortune in the manner most agreeable to himself. This agreement was signed in the temple, and validated by the ceremonies of joining hands, pledging their public faith, and embracing each other in the sight of all the assembly: and this being done, Aristobulus departed to his palace, and Hyrcanus to his private apartments in the same building.

Antipater
stirs up the
Jews against
Aristobulus.

Among the adherents of Hyrcanus was a certain Idumæan, named Antipater, who was a mortal foe to Aristobulus. He was a man of fortune, of an active but litigious disposition; and from an enmity which had long subsisted between him and Aristobulus, he sought to degrade the latter in the opinion of the people, by every possible method of calumny and detraction; and at length so far prevailed, as to excite their jealousy and fear of him. Antipater used to insinuate how unreasonable it was that the elder brother should be superseded by the younger, to the excluding him from his government and birthright; and hinted, that it was a disgrace to the many noble Jews who permitted such an assumption of power. In the same manner he talked to Hyrcanus, whom he advised to secrete himself, since the opposite party could not but have a design on his life, knowing that his brother was not safe while he lived. Hyrcanus was a man of an unsuspecting disposition, on whom this discourse appeared to have little effect; but his brother Aristobulus was of warm and violent passions.

He applies to
Aretas in be-
half of Hyrcanus.

Antipater perceived that his insinuations did not operate on Hyrcanus as he wished: but he still urged him to avoid his brother, till at length he prevailed on him to offer his friendship and services to Aretas, king of Arabia, and claim his protection in return; and this advice appeared the more reasonable, as Arabia was adjacent to Judæa. This resolution being made, Antipater repaired to Aretas, and having obtained his oath not to deliver Hyrcanus into the hands of his enemies, he returned to him with an account of the success of his expedition. Having remained a little while at Jerusalem, he conducted Hyrcanus out of the city by night, and, making long journeys, brought him safe to the city of Petra, where the court of Aretas was kept. He now exerted all his influence with the king to establish Hyrcanus in his paternal right; and, at length, by presents and arguments, induced him to consent. At the same time Hyrcanus promised that if, through the king's means, he should be settled in his government, he would restore the twelve cities which his father had taken from the Arabians.

Aretas promises him
assistance.

C H A P. II.

ARISTOBULUS defeated by ARETAS, who drives
No. 12.

him to the Temple, and assaults him there. The JEWS retire to EGYPT, to celebrate the Feast of unleavened Bread. ONIAS stoned to Death.

ARETAS, encouraged by the promises of Hyrcanus, collected an army of fifty thousand cavalry and infantry, with which he marched against Aristobulus, whom he soon overcame; and many of his troops deserting to Hyrcanus, he retreated to Jerusalem, to which place Aretas pursued him, and attacked him in the temple; most of the people, except the priests, now taking the part of Hyrcanus; while Aretas, with his Jewish, as well as Arabian forces, pressed on with the utmost alacrity. As the feast of unleavened bread approached, at the time this war was depending, the principal Jews retired into Egypt; and at this period Onias, a holy man, secreted himself, in the expectation of a civil war. The Jews, impressed with an idea of the piety of Onias, intreated him, that, as his prayers had formerly delivered them from famine, he would now denounce a curse on Aristobulus and his people, that they might be freed from the miseries of war. Onias hesitated; but the people repeatedly urging him, he stood up in the midst of them, and said, "Thou, O God, art the King of kings; and since it so happens, that we who now stand before thee are thy people, and thy priests are those who are besieged in the temple, I humbly intreat that thou wouldest not listen to the prayers of either party to destroy the other!" Thus saying, a set of villainous Jews stoned him to death; and his barbarous murder was avenged in the following manner. During the attack of the temple, the time of the feast of unleavened bread arrived, when it was customary for the Jews to offer a number of sacrifices: but the parties besieged being deficient, desired the others to supply them; and a thousand drachmas, ready money, for each beast, was the agreed price. The priests and Aristobulus let down this money in a bag, from the wall of the temple: but when the assailants had received it, they refused to deliver the beasts for sacrifice, thus not only robbing men, but defrauding God of the sacrifice intended for his service. On this infamous conduct the priests united in prayer, that God would not permit the crime to escape without punishment. An immediate judgment was the consequence of their prayers: a violent tempest descended, which cut off the fruits of the earth throughout the province: so that fifteen drachmas was the price of a single measure of wheat.

Aretas meets
Aristobulus, and
assaults him
in the temple.

Onias, for his
piety and
philanthropy,
put to death.

At this period Pompey being kept in Armenia, in consequence of a war with Tigranes, dispatched Scarus into Syria, who arriving at Damascus, found that Metellus and Lollius had lately made capture of that city, and therefore proceeded towards Judæa. While he was on his way thither, an ambassador arrived from Hyrcanus, and another from Aristobulus, each to treat of an alliance offer-

Scarus, the
Roman general,
sent into
Judæa, and
disposes the
interest of
Aristobulus.