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# A WAIF—A PRINCE;

OR,

## A MOTHER'S TRIUMPH.

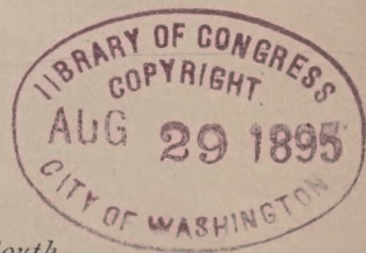
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AN EGYPTIAN STORY OF FICTION AND FACT.

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BY REV. W. T. ANDREWS,

*Of the North Alabama Conference, M. E. Church, South.*



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“And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people.” (Ex. iii. 7.)

“And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses; and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.” (Ex. ii. 10.)

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## DEDICATION.

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To the Talladega congregation, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, of which I was pastor when this book was written; to the Epworth League which I organized in that congregation; and to my dear friend, Miss Marcie Chambers, of that congregation, who gave me much encouragement in the prosecution of the work, this humble volume is respectfully and prayerfully dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.



## PREFACE.

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WHEN you shall have read this book carefully through, you will find not only a reason for, but also a scriptural explanation of, most of the characters named in it. True, there is much fiction, but it is designed to be of that high order which takes the place of a parable, the interpretation of which is, "*It is like this.*" Much of it is historical, both sacred and profane. I have chosen to put before the reader a beautiful lesson, of a mother's great triumph over her enemies by an implicit trust in God, in the form of a story based upon and drawn from real Hebrew life in Egypt. Many of the great events recorded in the Bible which covered a period of many years are told, often, in a single verse of Scripture; such, for instance, as Luke ii. 40: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit," etc. This verse covers twelve years of childhood life and a mother's anxious care, shut up in the sacred privacy of the family home. Again, in Luke ii. 51, 52: "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth," etc. These two verses stretch their historic wings over a period of *eighteen years*, filled with boyhood's dreams and young manhood's aspirations and hopes. Is it too much, therefore, to suppose that the small bit of history contained in Exodus ii. 10, with which this story opens, covering a period of forty years, contains many scenes of sorrow, joy, hope, and fear, and often thrilling adventures of peril and deliverance?

With a nation of two millions of people in cruel bondage for four hundred years, it would be difficult to draw too strongly upon the imagination for scenes of real life among them. In all ages and among all peoples life has been real. Mothers have always been mothers, with about the same or at least similar experiences—trials, crosses, victories, and defeats—in all stations and conditions of life. To draw a picture of this from Hebrew life is the purpose and desire of

THE AUTHOR.

## INTRODUCTION.

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MR. ANDREWS has constructed a pure and profitable story, observing with admirable tact and taste the historical harmonies, illustrating the sacred page with the side lights of Israel's domestic and social life in Egypt, and enforcing lessons of truth and righteousness for the enlightenment and edification of the young. I am glad to have the opportunity, by the author's kind invitation, to write a few introductory words, and incidentally to commend the book heartily to the favorable consideration of the Church.

Historical story-telling requires but little, if any, less study and skill than the reproduction of history itself. Imagination may soar, indeed, on a loftier wing, but the tether of fact must always limit the flight. These conditions of success in this difficult field of authorship Mr. Andrews has in general observed with commendable care. The result is a narrative of events that might well have occurred, full of pleasing situations and surprises, and conveyed in an easy and engaging style, which will secure and reward the attention of those for whom it is mainly intended. It is doubtful whether any thoughtful young person, interested in the Scriptures and in life, will read ten pages of this charming story without completing the volume. The book will no doubt enjoy a popularity commensurate with its merits.

JNO. J. TIGERT.

Nashville, Tenn., *August 2, 1895.*

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# A WAIF—A PRINCE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE COUNTRY.

**M**EMPHIS is situated on the Nile, about one hundred miles from its mouth, and on the western side. It is said to have had a wall of seventeen miles in circumference. It was also the chief seat of learning and religion at this time. Many magnificent temples were built here, and it was the place of untold idolatrous worship. From its walls the views were magnificent, commanding the surrounding country for many miles. It was also very remarkable for healthfulness, compared to much of the country, and especially the southern portion. The modern city of Cairo is about ten miles north of this ancient site. Memphis was the seat of government during the third, fourth, fifth, seventh, and eighth dynasties of Egyptian history. It suffered great reverses, and was sometimes almost totally destroyed during the intervening dynasties between the twelfth and nineteenth; but the reigning Pharaoh of the nineteenth dynasty restored its magnificence, which it continued to hold for many years. His successor removed the seat of government back to Memphis about the

year 1300 B.C., where, in all probability, it was at the time of the exodus. But now we are told that its ancient site can only be located by the pyramids which were a little north, and the dikes—embankments built to protect the city from the inundation—which, of course, were built south of the city. Its glory has departed. What secrets of good and evil shall be revealed in the last day and charged to each individual account of those who lived and acted their part in its history, written and unwritten! For many hundreds of years men thronged its streets and jostled each other in the rush of its mighty currents of business; some in luxury, and some in poverty; some in sorrow, and some in joy; some sinning, and some worshiping; some feasting, and some starving; some oppressed, and some oppressing. They have all hurried on with their life work, good or bad, and millions of them are now without monument or history in this world. Their myriad tongues are silent, but their records will identify each when that great day shall come and the secrets of men shall be revealed. What a revelation of unwritten character that will be! Look at those ancient kings as they appear before the King of heaven. Some of them are the wicked oppressors not only of their prisoners of war, but of their own subjects as well. The great Searcher of hearts will not have to excavate and dig up old buried cities to find their records of evil. “Where are the wages of the oppressed laborers that built your mag-



nificent cities?" demands the Judge of all the earth. "Where is the bread of the thousands who labored for you without wages and with but little food? Where are the thousands of little children that you threw into the Nile to become food for its hungry monsters? Where are the tears of the agonized mothers whose little babes perished at your cruel hands?" O, dust of departed royalty! rest in peace till then, but "know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." None dared to hinder or restrain then, but now thou and thy victims are in the hands of a just God who will be sure to give to all men equal justice.

It will be remembered that at this time there were seven mouths or outlets to the river Nile, covering a distance of about one hundred miles of the southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Some of them are very small, being mere drainage for the lowlands along the coast and for many miles inland. Some fifteen or twenty miles from Memphis the river divides into two principal prongs, which continue to diverge till they reach the sea, and are then about eighty miles apart.

The land of Goshen lay between Memphis and the sea on the eastern side, and about twelve or fifteen miles from the city. This portion of the country was at this time densely populated by the Israelites. They had occupied it about three hundred years, and had increased to something near two millions of souls. I have just said that this

Goshen country lay about twelve or fifteen miles north of Memphis. By this I mean the southern border at the time it was given to the family of Jacob for pasture lands for their flocks and herds. The scriptural name was "the land of Rameses." But it is more than likely that the tribes, as they increased the number of their families, were permitted to extend their borders down the river until, perhaps, they came within four or five miles of the city, though on the opposite side from it.

When, however, "there arose another king which knew not Joseph," these immigrants from the land of Canaan began to be regarded with much less favor, and many of their former liberties were taken away. Doubtless long before the time of which I am writing they were much straitened for room for their numerous tribes; but for more than two hundred years they had known little else but slavery and hardship. They were restricted to this delta region for homes, though as laborers they were taken to different parts of the kingdom. There were two important reasons why they were kept in such perpetual bondage and not even allowed to go when God himself had sent for them and ordered their release. First, the Egyptians feared them as enemies; and secondly, these Egyptians would be greatly damaged by the loss of their labor. Therefore "their lives are made bitter with service," that they might be profitable to the king, and also disqualified for doing him harm as enemies.

Rameses II. was the Pharaoh (the Egyptian name for king) at this time. He was a cruel tyrant, but withal a great builder; indeed, he is said to have been the greatest builder of all the Pharaohs. He erected a great many large and magnificent superstructures at Memphis, although his capital was at Thebes. Yet all this work was done by his prisoners of war and the forced labor of the Hebrews. Wretched people! Thine oppressor seems now to be rapidly nearing the unbearable point of cruelty.

## CHAPTER II.

### TWO PHASES OF LIFE.

IT has been one of those bright days in autumn, so peculiar to that season of the year when the sweltering heat of summer has given way to the cool September breezes, which come sweeping down over the delta from the Mediterranean sea-coast, driving away the heavy fogs and imparting a deep blue to the overspreading sky; just such a day as is needed to quicken the sluggish life-circulation after the depressing effect of the hot summer in this Egyptian climate. The sun is just touching the rim of the western horizon, throwing his slanting rays in a cheerful glow over lakes, rivers, and fields, covering them with a golden shield of light fit to inspire the brush of the artist, but hanging just out of the reach of his glorious art.

Two men, of more than ordinary intelligence in appearance, may be seen walking together along one of those frequented highways leading from the city of Memphis northward through the delta. They evidently belong to some one of the numerous Hebrew families, and are going to their homes in one of the Hebrew villages, with which that part of the country abounds.

“I hear that there has been quite a little commotion in court circles of late,” said Amram.

‘How so?’ inquired Ophron, his companion.

“Well, you see, Jambres and Jannes, two of the sacred scribes of Pharaoh Rameses II., are particularly unfriendly to our people on account of their worship of the living God. Being prominent leaders in the worship of Egyptian idols, they are jealous of all who do not bow down to these gods.\* Jambres loses no opportunity to stir more persecution and get heavier burdens laid upon the Hebrews. This time he has resorted to quite a new movement, which I fear will kindle the fire of persecution very much.”

“What new imposition has this old astrologer been getting off now?” asked Ophron sarcastically.

“It is in the form of a new and startling prophecy, and well may you call it imposition when you consider his probable purpose. But God may sometimes use these men to set forth a greater truth than they themselves are aware of. Nothing

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\*Amenophis IV., who reigned near the end of the eighteenth dynasty, attempted to reform the religion of Egypt, and establish the worship of God instead of polytheism. He went so far as to close the temples and efface the images of the deities. He erected monuments on which the ceremonies of his new worship are found represented. It bears a striking resemblance to the external forms of Israelitish worship in the wilderness as described in the books of Moses. The persecution of the Hebrews began shortly after this period; and it is supposed that the monotheism of Amenophis IV. had its origin in Hebrew influence, and the reaction which followed may have started the persecution.

is farther from their purpose than to say anything good of our people, or help in any way to put forward the purpose of God in bringing about the final deliverance of the Hebrew nation from bondage.”

“True, but their wicked zeal to keep favor with the king drives them into such nonsensical vagaries that one can scarcely credit anything they say.”

“Yet their influence over the king in the use of these arts is very great, and bodes no good to us.”

“What is the prophecy with which they have alarmed him this time, and how did you learn it?”

“Well, you know that ‘court secrets’ have sometimes leaked out of the royal circles through the young princess, Thermuthis. She is very intelligent, and is said to be as good as she is intelligent, and as beautiful as she is good. She is not much liked by many of the king’s courtiers, and particularly these priests and astrologers, because she is not in sympathy with their hatred of the Hebrews and their abuse of the laborers. She sometimes visits the public works with her father, who is very much devoted to her. He gratifies all her reasonable wishes, and she is never unreasonable. He never restrains her free expression, but rather enjoys and encourages it. This, however, she never does upon matters of business, but it is only when her tender, womanly nature is stirred by some new outbreak of cruelty to prisoners or servants that her ‘woman’s weapon,’ the tongue, causes some of the would-be wise counselors of his majesty to open their eyes. Very recently she has

been making pretty free use of this privilege. Not long since she was present when the king was entertaining some of his friends in the royal guest chamber, when he had these astrologers called to read from their books of prophecy. Among some new sayings of the prophets was this alarming one, uttered by Jambres: 'About this time there shall be born unto the Israelites a child, who, if allowed to be reared, will bring the Egyptian dominion low, and shall lift up the Hebrews. He shall excel all men who have been before him in virtue, and shall obtain a glory that shall be remembered through all the ages.' "

"May the God of our fathers grant it soon to come to pass!" groaned Ophron; "and yet if the king believe it, alas for our people! his hand of oppression will fall still more heavily upon them."

"True, and these words impress me as being something wonderful, because of their agreement with our ancient records and tradition. Father Ishmael very recently read to us from one of these records how that our father Jacob (otherwise called Israel) strictly enjoined upon his son Joseph, saying: 'I am to be gathered unto my people; bury me with my fathers in the land of Canaan.' And when our father Joseph came to die, he said: 'God will surely visit you and bring you out of this land, and ye shall carry my bones from hence.' And who can say that he will not also raise up for us a great leader who shall go before us into the land of our fathers? "

“And how has the saying seemed to affect the mind of the king?”

“Oh, it has put him all in a rage; and he alternately abuses the old priest for prophesying evil, and then gives vent to his wrath by threatening to exterminate the Hebrew race. This prophecy has become the talk of all the royal circles, and the princess looks upon it as a splendid joke, and tries to comfort her father accordingly. But you see the king has been a great deal perplexed of late with his eastern wars; for while he has been successful in gaining great victories, yet some of his conquests have not only been very expensive, but also very disastrous to his army.”

Here the conversation of the two friends and Hebrew brothers necessarily terminated, for they had now reached the front entrance to Amram's dwelling. A bright little boy of two years of age, waited at the gate to spring into the arms of his father, while the wife and a beautiful little girl of five years were at the door also expecting the return of the husband and father. Ophron exchanges the usual friendly greetings with the family, and as he lives about a quarter of a league farther on, proceeded alone, musing upon the strange things which Amram had told him. “What strange things are happening about us? What does it all mean? That old hater of our people is on track of some evil to us, I warrant. And he is only one of many who are willingly cooperating with him. If he can only stir up the su-



perstitious wrath of the king, he will have accomplished his purpose; for then he can easily turn it into the channel of jealousy and bring great trouble upon us, more than we already have. There is no end to the devices of cruelty to be invented by the human mind when aroused by jealous hate. Why, only this very day one of our Hebrew brothers was beaten very severely by one of the taskmasters. As a result, he will not be able to take his place for many days. Then he will be required to do double work for the time he has lost." So ran the thoughts of this Hebrew laborer, which is not an undue representation of their true condition at this time.

Now, since we have seen one phase of life from the standpoint of two of the more fortunate of Hebrew laborers, whose opportunities for learning what is going on about them are far better than many of their brethren, let us now take a view of it from the standpoint of the poor fellow who was so cruelly beaten by the taskmaster, which is, doubtless, only one of hundreds of instances occurring every day. The family may be found in their humble home near what was designated as "No. 14," which is only one of numerous places where bricks are made. There are more of them now than at any time in all the history of the kingdom of Egypt. This is the most prosperous period of all the known periods of its great history. There are thousands of buildings in process of construction, principally at Thebes, Memphis, and Ta-

nis. This requires a great increase in the manufacture of bricks, which is done chiefly by the Hebrews.

Here in these yards and mortar-pits may doubtless be witnessed daily most revolting scenes of cruelty to the laborers, and perhaps death itself is no uncommon occurrence. But let not the reader conclude that there are no hearts in all the land of Egypt favorable to the oppressed laborers, or that there are no rebellious, refractory natures among these laborers. For while the great majority of the taskmasters are unfeeling and relentless, yet there are to be found some who are not only humane but who often try to lighten the burdens of the feeble and overtasked.

But here we are at the entrance of the humble dwelling of the wounded man. How poor! The room is bare of furniture: a few mats used for sitting upon, two couches made of straw such as is gathered from the fields for purposes of brick-making, some wooden boxes and rudely constructed shelves upon which are piled a variety of articles of a very superannuated character. The injured man lay on one of these beds in a delirium of fever. The wife kneels beside him, bathing his hot forehead with cooling water.

“I trust you are better,” she said soothingly, as at that moment he aroused to semi-consciousness.

But, scarcely realizing his true situation, he groaned with pain. Then, for a moment, placing his hand over his eyes, as if trying to collect his confused senses, the dreadful reality of his condi-

tion gradually dawned upon him, and he opened his eyes and sorrowfully replied to his wife's solicitous half-inquiry: "I know not that I am better. I am in a sad plight. I have doubtless been disabled so that I shall not be in my place for many days. Then, alas! our daily supply of food, which is meager enough at best, will be cut off by half until I am able for my duties again. But this is not all; I shall, on taking my place again, be required to do double work till my lost time is made up. For this I have great fear lest my enfeebled strength be overtaxed and I shall fail altogether."

Here the poor fellow, quite overcome by the gloomy prospect, again covered his face with his hands and wept whilst he prayed, saying: "O God of our fathers, hear thy people's cry, and deliver them speedily!" (See Exodus iii. 7.)

Need we linger longer here? To do so would be only to prolong the scene of distress from which you are doubtless glad to turn away. Yet the picture is not overdrawn. Thousands of such things, and worse, were witnessed about this period of the Hebrew bondage. On some of the recently discovered monuments are depicted scenes of these task-masters beating the Hebrew laborers with rods. Sometimes there would occur a case of rebellion: a Hebrew would resist the Egyptian, as in the case when Moses interfered. But this always brought more trouble. Our next chapter will be an illustration of this.

## CHAPTER III.

### ANOTHER VIEW.

NOW, let it be remembered that we are in Egypt, and the time is about fifteen hundred years before the Christian era. Also, do not forget that life then with those who lived was just as real as life is now with us. Although the surroundings are entirely different, yet the influences for good or evil had about the same effect upon human character and human action then as now, or at any other period of the world's history. Human nature in all of its essential features has ever been the same. There has never been a time when good influences to help men to be better, and evil ones to make them worse, have not existed in some form or degree; and there have always been found some ready to yield to each of these to their hurt or betterment. While no evil-doer will be excused for his sins on account of a strong influence outside of himself which led him into them, yet no agent of evil will escape the consequences of the evil which he has produced and set in motion. What or who the serpent was that deceived the woman it would be exceedingly speculative to undertake to say, but one thing is certain: the curse fell upon that serpent *alone* for the part taken in that fatal transaction. "*Because thou hast done this,*" is the divine reason given. How-

ever good or bad its condition before, now it is changed for the worse. Its food and locomotion both are to be dust and in the dust henceforth.

Sin curses everything and everybody in league with it. Every agent of Satan is partaker of Satan's curse. So intense is God's hatred toward wrong that he caused a statute to be put into Israel's ancient code that even the ox that should kill a man should suffer the death penalty. In reading the history of Jeroboam you are impressed with the fact that that wretched man's name is never mentioned without the quotation of the blasting shame of his life accompanying it: "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, *who caused Israel to sin.*" A sin that only involves oneself is dreadful, but to deliberately plan to get others to sin is to invite the curse of God. The following incident illustrates how others may be involved in the consequences, but not the guilt, of another's sins.

As I have before said, all the Hebrew laborers were not amiable by any means, nor were all of the taskmasters heartless characters. Even if it should be true that not more than one in a hundred of the latter was a kind-hearted man—and possibly there were not more—yet even that number proves the truth of the statement. So also if we find a like ratio of refractory laborers, the theory is maintained. And such never failed to bring trouble upon their fellows. It has ever been, and will always be, true that "one sinner destroyeth much good." Amram was not a common laborer

in the brickyards; and although he had little or no leisure from work, yet his lot was a much better one than that of those who labored in the mortar-pits. He was a mechanic whose time was taken up chiefly in making and repairing implements for general use at the yards. Such work would keep from four to six men busy at each yard. Amram and Ophron were the chief mechanics at "No. 14," as it was known. These men, and especially Amram, were far above the average Hebrew in point of intelligence and piety. And when you know that Jochebed, his wife, was altogether his equal, if not even his superior, in some things, you will be prepared to appreciate the additional fact that their two little children were remarkable for their beauty and intelligence. Miriam, the little six-year-old girl, was modest and bright. She was so devoted to truth and right that her mother would not hesitate to trust her in the greatest emergencies. Aaron, the three-year-old boy, was remarkable for his ready speech, quick comprehension, and clear, honest expression.

One day these two children were at play near the public highway when one of the royal carriages was passing, in which was the young princess Thermuthis, accompanied by two of her maids. The carriage was preceded by four horsemen and followed by a like number. The royal lady observed the children as she was passing, and was struck with their singular beauty and intelligent look. The slight acquaintance the reader has had

with this lady is doubtless sufficient to give him to understand that her prejudice against the Hebrews was not so great as to cause her to think it a degradation to speak to one of them. She ordered the carriage and attendants to stop a little while that she might question these children for her own satisfaction.

“Are you Hebrew children?” inquired the princess.

“Yes, ma’am,” quickly answered little Miriam.

“Do your parents live near here, little girl?”

“Just up there,” pointing to their humble dwelling.

“What is your name?”

“Miriam.”

“And my name is Aaron, son of Amram,” promptly spoke up the little boy, unasked.

“Indeed; and pray who is Amram, your father, of whom you speak with seeming pride?” said the lady, much interested in the ready speech of the bright little fellow.

“He is Amram, of the house of Levi, and labors at ‘No. 14,’” answered the intelligent little boy.

Now, if there was any one thing that a Hebrew father was *sure* to teach his son more than another, it was to distinguish his family, or “tribe” to which he belonged. It was not only a matter of record, but of carefully preserved tradition also. Hence the readiness with which this child, who could scarcely speak plainly, answered this ques-

tion. It sounded so much like wisdom beyond the years of a child that the interest of the princess grew into astonishment. Yet it was no more than what almost any child might be taught to say, and at the same time such was the principal method of education at this period of their history.

“You are very young to know these things. Who taught you these lessons?”

“My father Amram, and father Ishmael.”

“And who is father Ishmael?”

“He is our prophet-teacher of the law and records.”

Let us pause here in this story long enough to contrast that age with the present. This picture is not highly colored, but only what had been seen and heard in many homes of that oppressed people. To-day we have the advantages of Sunday school and the public sanctuary, and how many children really know the Scriptures? Their “law and records,” answering to our Scriptures, were very crude and disconnected; and yet about ninety years after the period of which we write the law and commandments were given in form, and the very method of which we speak was enjoined as a custom in their homes forever, viz., *Teach them in the family*. “Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” (Deut. vi. 7.) We have only to follow God’s instructions respecting



our children, and they are safe; ignore or neglect them, and disaster is sure to follow. The great need of this Christian age is thoroughly to utilize the power of the Bible in the salvation of the children by faithfully teaching it to them as God directs that it shall be done. It should compose more of the family conversation than any other one topic. If the child's instructions in the Scriptures be left alone to the Sunday school, it will not only be meager, but the parents will be guilty of the neglect of the scriptural and religious education of their children in the face of God's plain command. This divine and ancient method of instruction had not gone out of use when Timothy was educated, for "from a child" he knew the Holy Scriptures.

The king's daughter was not disloyal either to her father or the Egyptian government, nor did she at any time design to give his enemies encouragement. He doubtless would have disapproved of this undue familiarity with these Hebrew children, but she pitied helplessness, and appreciated loveliness and virtue wherever found. When you know more of her, you will not only admire the nobleness of her nature in many respects, but also her heroic championship of right, mercy, and truth.

Just while this little interesting interview was going on with the children, there came the sound of boisterous talking from the direction of the river, and not very far away from where they

were, but beyond a sudden turn in the road, so that the persons talking could not be seen. But evidently they were approaching. Instantly the eight horsemen formed in line between the advancing parties and the royal carriage, with drawn swords. The children ran away in great fright toward their home, which was not very far away. Their mother's quick ear caught the sound of the confusion, and came out to call the little ones in. The occupants of the carriage looked uneasy, but quietly awaited the issue. By this time three men could be seen. Two of them were trying to control and quiet a third, who was evidently *intoxicated*. His talk was loud and profane. There were marks of blood upon his person and bruises about his face, strongly indicating that he had been in a personal combat with some one. The two men in charge of the inebriate, seeing the royal vehicle just in front of them, forced their unwilling charge off the highway into a narrow alley leading to one of the back streets, but not until he had blurted out many loud imprecations against the king and the whole Egyptian nation. The carriage now passed on, but alas! all the neighbors knew too well what the unfortunate scene would bring upon them. Now, you would like to know who were these actors in it. They were all workmen from "No. 14." The drunken man's name was Hophni. Being intoxicated he had resisted the authority of the chief master of the works, who was a rough, overbear-

ing Egyptian, and a fight had ensued in which the taskmaster had been considerably worsted. Hophni was almost a giant in strength, but he would have been far from resisting the officer if he had not been drunk, because experience and observation had long ago taught the Hebrew laborers that resistance only brought greater trouble. Everything was now in confusion for a little while. Amram and Ophron had taken charge of the unruly Hophni, and hurried him off to prevent further bloodshed. The united strength of the two men succeeded in forcing him to go with them to his home. It being about the time for the work of the day to end, all of the workmen now dispersed. In the neighborhood where the drunken man lived all are in suspense, waiting to see what will be the result of the trouble. They know full well that it is sure to bring to grief not only poor, wicked Hophni, but many of his innocent friends with him. But they cannot tell just what form the calamity will come in. A few hours, or perhaps moments, will decide. We will see.

Amram and Ophron having safely gotten their burden to his home, they left him and started for their own. His poor wife was in great distress, for she dreaded the consequences which she knew were sure to follow. His little children wept for both fright and shame. It was now almost dark. As our friends Amram and Ophron were hurrying along in the thick shadows, they heard the clatter of horses' feet. The unmistakable clanking of

swords told them plainly that soldiers were coming. They quickly stepped into the shadows of some small trees, and not a moment too soon, for they had scarcely done so when a squadron of soldiers swept by in full gallop, going in the direction of poor Hophni's home, headed by the angry taskmaster.

“Halt!” shouted the leader when they were in front of the unfortunate man's house. Some dismounted and went in. Then quickly followed a scene to make the heart sick, but, alas! of frequent occurrence with these unhappy people. The very sight of them put Hophni in a rage, and the tiger spirit, maddened by drink, was now at its full height. No two or three of them would have been a match for him now. He flew at them with the spring of a wild animal, and doubtless would have done them serious damage but for their arms and superior numbers. They succeeded in felling him to the ground with a sword. His wife screamed with terror, and rushed to her husband's assistance. Poor woman, this was natural, but oh, how fruitless! A second blow from the same hand which had stricken down Hophni now laid his wife senseless by his side. The children ran away in mortal fright. Now what more can you do, insatiate cruelty? What can you do with your victim? You have overdone your inhuman work. You came to take him to prison, but you have disabled him, and he cannot go. Will you drag him like a dead carcass?

Just then four Hebrew men were passing, and

the soldier in command ordered them to take up the bleeding form of the wounded man and take the high road in the direction of the stockades near the river. The woman was left where she fell, but was soon tenderly cared for by her willing but frightened neighbors. The burden of carrying Hophni soon proved too great for the four men, and they were obliged to put him down because of sheer exhaustion. They were cruelly beaten, but this was no more than they expected. A cartman was called and made to haul the limp burden to the stockade, into which he was dumped as so much garbage and left for the night.

Doubly unfortunate man! At best he and all of his brethren are in a deplorable state, but he has fallen into the hands of a worse foe than the Egyptian soldiery. That foe struck his poor wife the first blow. Had he been on his feet and fully at himself no one or two men would have ever dared to lay such a blow on her as did that soldier with his sword. But alas! *he* had bruised her heart worse than the soldier bruised her body. Accursed drink! have you been always wringing sorrow from human hearts, and will you continue it forever?

The next day Hophni was in a sad plight: sick from his debauch, and wounded by his tormentors, and shut up in prison. Here he would be obliged to stay till he should be able for duty again. Let us leave him for the present, for this is not to be the end of this unfortunate affair for his friends. "One sinner destroyeth much good."

## CHAPTER IV.

### TROUBLE COMING.

LET us remember that the seat of government is at Thebes, in southern Egypt; yet much of the time of the royal family was spent at Memphis. The means of communication were easy and comparatively rapid by the river. The walls of the city had already been rebuilt and many of its magnificent temples repaired, and others were in course of construction, besides numerous other public and private works. Thus the great city, which had suffered at the hands of invaders and lain in almost utter neglect for more than a century, was rapidly being restored to its former grandeur.

The city was very conspicuously composed of two portions: one built of crude bricks, and the other, on which was the citadel, of calcareous stone, called "the White Wall." Here were most of the principal buildings—the palace, the royal theater, and the temple of the Sacred Bull. This portion lay next to the range of hills which ran parallel with the river, making the valley quite narrow at many points. Memphis filled this valley at this point back to the hills, and was protected on the south from inundation by dikes, evidences of which still remain.

It is supposed that the "royal prison," to which reference will be made frequently in this story,

was built not far from the river, near the south wall of the city. Here all noted prisoners taken in war, and others who had committed grave offenses against the king or his government, were kept. Whoever was so unfortunate as to go into this place was regarded as going to certain death or imprisonment for life. Not unfrequently they were executed secretly, and no one could tell what became of them. Communication with the outside world was a thing not to be thought of. It was, in the very worst sense, "a living death."

It had now been several weeks since the disturbance at "No. 14," and it was almost forgotten by many, as such things were of frequent occurrence. The king and royal family were spending the time at the palace in Memphis, where they had been for several months. Pleasure and sports are at their highest. A great military display has been a very recent attraction. This is one of the king's weaknesses. He is a great soldier, and is proud of his splendid army. Such a day is generally followed by a night of feasting and revelry, and this one has been no exception to the rule. King Rameses himself, with many of his courtiers, came little short of a *debauch*. At the height of the evening's pleasures, he was hilarious, and, being flushed with wine, commanded that the astrologers be called to entertain the company with discourses upon the present and prophecies of the future glory of the kingdom, and of the greatness of his majesty King Rameses II.

They know well how to secure the greatest favor of a drunken man, though he be a king. Therefore they unstintingly feed his vanity upon his own praises. This is one of the ruling passions of the human mind "when wine inflames," from the vagabond in the gutter to the monarch on his throne. They know that this is the purpose for which they are called, and they do their work vigorously.

"There shall be no end to the glory of the kingdom of Egypt," said one.

"Hitherto there have been no arms able to compete with your majesty's, nor shall there ever be," prophesied another.

"The armies of Egypt have already extended your sovereign dominion over the eastern provinces, and there are still greater conquests awaiting them," spoke still another.

Thus the wise (?) men went on uttering their deep (?) sayings, to the very great pleasure of the king. But the king observed that his wisest and most prominent priest and prophet, Jambres, had so far not uttered a word. He appeared serious and moody, while all except his companion, Jannes, and himself were in high spirits. This was not altogether assumed by them. The reader will remember the gloomy prophecy uttered by them respecting the young child. They more than half believed the prediction themselves, but they saw it had made but little impression upon the minds of their proud and confident king.



They very much desired to bring it in as their part of the prophetic contribution to this occasion, but they knew it would be a very unpopular theme with the king at this hour. But their hatred for the Hebrews outweighed every other consideration. And besides, Jambres had an individual reputation with the king, upon which they thought they could risk a great deal, especially for the sake of bringing down greater calamities and heavier burdens upon their hated enemy.

“Has the wise and discreet prophet, Jambres, no words of wisdom to speak to-night, in honor of the greatest kingdom on the known earth?” demanded the king.

This is his favored moment, and he proceeds to answer the king’s demand with a string of maledictions upon all enemies, and to extol the king in the very highest degree, only to pave the way to his unpleasant work.

“O, King Rameses, live forever! Let all of his enemies be as those who languish now in yonder great prison. Let confusion take possession of their armies and defeat follow their battles. Let the borders of the king’s already great dominions be further enlarged. Let kings bow down before him, and their subjects seek his strong protection and fight under his banner. There is no king like unto thee. But O, great sovereign, suffer an humble servant to speak a word of warning against that which seems very small and ignoble in the king’s sight, but if allowed to grow will become a

mighty evil. I would not set forth an evil omen, only that my great and wise king may be forewarned of his enemies, and hence forearmed against them.’’

At this point a perceptible cloud began to gather upon the brow of the king; but the speaker continued.

“There are none so great and wise as those who keep whatever advantage they may have of their enemies by holding them down to the earth with chains already fastened upon them.’’

Jambres saw that the king was about to speak, for he had half risen to his feet and paused.

“Go on, thou evil wizard!’’ roared the king; “but beware, lest your words be repented too late.’’

But Jambres knew his power too well to attach any alarming importance to this fit of raving. Indeed, the king feared “evil wizards’’ too much to antagonize them to any great extent.

“Will the king be angry with his servant upon whom the spirit of wisdom has fallen, to make him the unwilling instrument to bear evil tidings to my sovereign, the very utterance of which gives the prophet pain? Shall I do less than what is required of these spirits, even to read the dark signs which cast their shadows upon coming events? Shall I be untrue to my sovereign, and fail to show and declare these things, that my great and wise king may take such steps as will prevent an evil when it is yet in his power to do so? For be it

known unto you this day, O king, that a great and evil thing threatens your majesty's crown."

Now the dark lines of anger upon the king's face began to give way, and perceptible fear took control. Jambres knew now that he was completely in his power.

"Will your majesty suffer Jannes, the scribe, to read in your hearing from the record of the prophecies?"

"Read!" commanded the now thoroughly aroused Rameses, while he half suspected what was about to be read.

Whereupon Jannes opened the record and read: "About this time there shall be born to the Hebrews a child, who, if he be reared, will bring the Egyptian dominion low, and shall raise up the Hebrews; and that he shall excel all men in virtue, and shall obtain a glory that shall be remembered through all the ages."

When Jannes had finished the reading he sat down, and Jambres said: "Your majesty doubtless remembers this utterance. This matter demands your immediate attention; for remember the ominous words, 'if he be reared.' It may be that the only opportunity to prevent *that* lies in present action. Then if he be allowed to live, your majesty's crown will be snatched from your worthy brow by these foreigners and slaves."

It needed no further argument. The bloodless face of the king, under the reaction of fear, showed but too plainly that Jambres had triumphed. More

trouble for the Hebrews was about to be determined, and the worst that had ever befallen them. The shrewd Jambres doubtless had his plans already in shape, and the king was now in a pliant mood for him to put them into his thoughts. The diabolical seeds have been planted and will soon spring up.

With an authoritative wave of his hand the king dispersed the banqueters, and himself retired to his private apartments only to be disturbed with horrid dreams of his ruined kingdom and of himself in chains languishing in prison. No earthly king ever yet had to wear a mock-crown of thorns, but there have probably been but few whose crowns did not have a few thorns. Royal pillows are not always soft. "They that wear soft raiment are in kings' houses," said the great Saviour of the world; but under that soft raiment often beats an aching heart.

The king could not sleep. He commanded that Jambres and Jannes be called. His fears were now that he had foolishly neglected to take some action in reference to the evil prophecy when it was first uttered. And did he not see, too, that the Hebrews were increasing rapidly, and if this thing went on they would soon swallow up the kingdom?

"What time is indicated in this prophecy?" he inquired of these wise men when they had come into his presence.

"This is not certainly known," answered Jam-

bres. "Perhaps it may be just a little while past, or it may be a little while in the future. One thing is very certain, and that is, it is to be about this time."

"In such a case what remedy can be used that will most certainly and successfully cut off such a possibility?"

"If your majesty will pardon the seeming dictation, I would suggest that the people are too idle. There is nothing so productive of mutiny and rebellion among slaves as idleness. And furthermore, it is very clear to your majesty's mind that the too rapid growth of the Hebrew population is a constant menace to the kingdom of Egypt. Now, therefore, to remedy the first, let more work be laid upon the able-bodied men, and all gatherings of the people be forbidden. Let a very strict watch be kept upon the principal men of their tribes, as the people look to them for instruction in all matters of interest concerning their movements. To remedy the second, let the king send out a royal edict that all the male children among the Hebrews from two years old and under be put to death. And let this be done by throwing them into the river, lest when the children should be slain by your majesty's soldiers too much time be taken for their embalming and burial, and the people make occasion of it for idleness. This will sufficiently cover the time alluded to in the prophecy, so that both the past and future shall be guarded to prevent the

escape of so dangerous a child as is spoken of in the said prophecy, lest he be born and reared in your majesty's own dominions."

If kings have but one weakness it is sure to be a fear of losing their crowns; and this one is no exception to the rule. Hence this speech had the desired effect, as Jambres knew, or had good reason to believe, it would. There are no extremes of cruelty to which one may not be led when once this fear has been thoroughly aroused. Think of a great and mighty warrior, distinguished for his valor and prowess, trembling lest a little child shall come and take his crown! And yet he but fairly represents hundreds of his crowned fellows.

This wicked and designing astrologer was fully aware of this weakness in Rameses, and played his part skillfully upon the credulity of his sovereign, so as to make him the ready tool for his bloody work. Whether God was using this evil-minded man (Jambres) to accomplish some wise and hidden purpose toward his people or not, we do not know. One thing *is* sure, that he can cause, and has many a time caused, "the wrath of man to praise him."

The king now has his chief scribe summoned to write this cruel order, which will, ere to-morrow's sun shall set, be in the hands of his criers and carriers, to be circulated throughout the kingdom. O ye suffering Hebrews! now are to begin new troubles, compared to which all the years of suffering and oppression have been but mere child's

play. Now opens a tragic scene beside which all tragedies dwindle into insignificance. Now will the ear of Israel's God be greeted with a wail, the equal of which has never been heard before and shall be but once more—"Rachel weeping for her children." Ten thousand mothers brought suddenly to face a sorrow such as only a mother can know in all of its bitterness: the violent death, yea the *murder, of their little babes out of their arms!*

When we read this tragic history, we seldom take the time to think seriously of the awfulness of its reality. One of the purposes of this book is to lead the reader into the sacred privacy of these Hebrew homes, to be put in touch with their sufferings and their faith, that his trust in God may be strengthened. To this end let it be devoted, and may the Holy Spirit direct in its perusal.

## CHAPTER V.

### REIGN OF TERROR.

AND Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river." (Exodus i. 22.)

It would be difficult to describe, or even imagine, the commotion which followed the publication of this edict. For many days, and even weeks, there was great activity among the king's troops. His standing army was heavily drawn upon to furnish soldiers to be distributed throughout the entire country to carry out this order. Thousands of Egyptian taskmasters rejoiced at this new excuse for maltreating the already overworked people. A few refused to recognize the order, and these were promptly removed and their places filled by others who were more dutiful.

The patrol was increased so that they might the more closely watch the movements of the Hebrews about their homes. The laborers were required to go to their tasks earlier in the morning and remain later in the evening. All gatherings of the people for any purpose whatever were forbidden under pain of imprisonment for an indefinite length of time. This was to prevent any organized coöperation in rebellion, should they contemplate rebellion.

What shall we say of the horrible work of the



“people” (doubtless soldiers are here meant) in the destruction of the children? One can scarcely think of anything more revolting to humanity. The scene beggars description, especially for the first few weeks or months of this wicked edict. The proclamation made it not only lawful but also the duty of everyone who might know the whereabouts of one of these children embraced in the edict to bring the fact to the notice of the authorities. Think of a million Egyptians charged with the destruction of the little helpless infants, whose parents were in such abject servitude as to be utterly unable to afford them protection! A nation of mothers weeping over the hopeless doom of their innocent offspring, and their husbands driven to their daily burdensome task, not daring to lift either hand or voice in defense of the babes they loved so tenderly. Leaving his home in the morning, the father had little hope that his darling baby boy would be there on his return. He loved the child naturally, but its constant peril drew him toward it with a hundred-fold more tenderness, if possible, than if its life had not been endangered. Many a strong man wept as he kissed the lips of the sleeping infant in the early morning and started for the scene of his daily toil. And all day long his thoughts dwelt upon the danger that threatened his family, while he wondered if at this very moment they were not tearing the little one from its mother’s embrace.

And yet, dear reader, do you imagine that these

Egyptians had an easy task in finding and destroying these children? If so you have not calculated the length, breadth, height, and depth of a mother's love. Who can conceive of the many little devices she can invent to evade the vigilance of the officers and soldiers? What! a mother be told that men are coming to take her infant to destroy it, and she make no effort to save her child? As well suppose that every law of nature in God's great universe had reversed its order and was bringing forth results hitherto unknown. One would sooner think that for every child destroyed there was an outlay of effort, watchfulness, and sharp management upon the part of the Egyptian soldiers and officers which would be necessary to overmatch these same qualities in the Hebrew mother a thousand-fold intensified by her love for her babe.

How many succeeded in hiding their children from the searching murderers it is impossible to know, but doubtless many were never found at all. Yet the edict was sweeping and merciless, and the search thorough. Many little bodies might be seen almost daily floating in the river. And doubtless many a mother sacrificed her life in a desperate but fruitless effort to rescue her child. She followed her darling to the river with pitiful pleading for its life; when at last she saw the cruel soldier cast it far out into the water, maddened by grief and with a despairing hope of saving it, she plunged recklessly after it, and both perished together. The thought is heart-sickening, but the

reality was worse. Let us not turn in disgust from the revolting picture before we have seen it in all of its horrible aspects; for remember we started out to draw, as nearly as possible, a picture true to life, and one which will be fully justified by the facts in the history of these wretched people. Do not forget that they are human beings, capable of all the pains of body, anguish of spirit, and sorrow of heart that any other human beings were; and that, on the other hand, the conduct of the Egyptians toward them was heartless and cruel in the extreme.

On a hot summer evening soon after the edict was issued, four young men, returning to their homes after the labor of the day was over, walked together along the highway. The sun had gone down behind the western hills, and the dusky gloom was fast settling over the whole land. As might naturally be expected their topic of conversation is about the dreadful "reign of terror" that was now distracting the Hebrew people in addition to the burdens they had been obliged to bear for so long a time in the past. The names of these young men are Joel, Isaac, Naboth, and Reuben. They are special friends, and have been intimately associated together from their childhood. Since arriving at the age when Hebrew boys are put to public labor—which means simply to go to work for Pharaoh—these boys have been most of the time working at the same place, and hence their association has not been broken.

They are all about the same age, Joel being just a little the oldest of the four.

Naboth was the only one of the company who had a near relative embraced in the recent cruel edict. He had a little baby brother whose name was Benjamin, upon whom his thoughts had dwelt much through the day. He felt a strange fear that all was not right at home. "Out of the abundance of the heart" the mouth is apt to speak, and it was so now with this young man.

"I have had very little spirit for anything to-day," he remarked to his companions.

"I should think not," was the sympathetic answer of his friend Joel. "Poor little Benjamin is in constant danger of his life; and oh, to think of his being carried off by the cruel soldiers and drowned in the river! It would kill his mother outright."

"And yet I have a strange fear that perhaps it may have been done this very day," sighed the troubled brother.

"Let us hope not," encouragingly spoke his companions, while a deep feeling of sympathy went out toward their friend Naboth, in view of the bare possibility of such a calamity having befallen the family even then.

They had now reached a point just opposite to a small barrack occupied by a band of soldiers. These barracks were numerous all over the country, as it was necessary to distribute the forces among the Hebrews for the more effectual car-

rying out of the purposes of the edict. The soldiers of this barrack had just come in from their work of the day and were at their evening meal. The guard for the night had not yet been put upon his post of duty; a very unsoldierly omission, to be sure, but it goes to show the very character of the men, judging from their reckless habits. Loud talking, boisterous laughing, and rough jesting ruled the hour. The three young Hebrews, being unobserved in the deepening gloom, stopped for a few moments to listen to the conversation. You will not hesitate to pardon this eavesdropping when you fully understand their great anxiety about the movements of these soldiers.

“Hurrah for a good time to-night, my boys!” cried a gruff voice, which the young man readily recognized as that of “Old Sol,” a noted ruffian soldier who was known and distinguished throughout the whole land for his inhumanity and cruelty. “Be lively now, my lads,” he continued; “for we have had a lucky day in catching little ’uns, and old Jube sent down a big skin. See here!” and he held up the bottle before them, whereupon they all cheered lustily, and the bottle went round.

“How many did our squad find to-day, Cap?” called out one of the crowd.

“We fed the ’gators with six this haul,” answered the old brute in human form; at which horrid speech a demoniacal laugh rang out on the still night air, sufficient to make the blood run chill.

“I guess that one you pitched over the dike to-

day, Beelze, was a little too old,” said “Old Sol,” addressing a burly, brute-looking personage by the name of Beelzebub, a very fitting name for such a business. “But that’s all right,” continued the speaker; “he’ll make a good supper for a big ’gator, and nobody will ever know the difference.”

“Me an’ old Barney took a swing roun’ up the river to-day, back of ‘Camp 30,’ next to the hills, an’ come in through the onion gardens, an’ fust thing anybody knowed we run right up on a lot o’ women, er stan’in’ roun’ in a ring. We knowed somethin’ was up, an’ we dashed in among ’em knocking ’em right and left. An’ sho’ ’nuff they was a fixin’ up a booth of bulrushes an’ leek-stalks, the nicest little place you ever seed, an’ under it they was hidin’ a little ’un wrapped up in skins an’ laid in a basket.”

This speech was delivered by a dark-skinned, low-browed, ignorant, brute-looking fellow, a fit subject and companion of Beelzebub sure enough.

“Well, did you git the little ’un?” asked one of the company.

“Git ’im? Do you think I’m goin’ to miss a prize like that because the mother yells and squalls? Not I!”

“Pass roun’ the old skin again, boys!” bawled out one of the company; and this time they emptied it of its contents and threw it away.

“Say, Sol, tell us about that young ’un you took in late this ev’nin’,” demanded the crowd.

Glad to have an opportunity to brag and gloat

over his wretched work, he replied as he smacked his lips with a relish over both the sour wine and the recollection of his fiendish act: "Ah! that was the most interesting job of all. Did you ever see such fightin' as that little 'un's old mother did? Gosh! I had to knock her down before I could git her grip broke loose. Say, boys, what was it she called his name? Something like Benjamus, or Ben-something; I can't remember the long name. Then she kept a callin' somebody; I thought she said Nabors, or something like that. But, bless you, I knowed they weren't comin' to take no part in that fight!"

"What did you do with the young 'un, Cap? You sent us all off, and took him to yourself. Did you put him in the river?"

This question would have been considered by "Old Sol" as impertinent if the brutish fellow had not been full of wine; but as it was, he seemed to enjoy the challenge to tell what he had done with the child.

"No, I put him away for safe keepin'. I'll need that chap later on."

The young Hebrews had been listening to the conversation without taking notice of anything else that was transpiring about them. Suddenly Isaac and Reuben were startled by the excited voice of Joel exclaiming, "Where is Naboth?" This young man was gone, and had been gone for several minutes past. At the very first utterance of the name "Benjamin" by the soldiers the aw-

ful thought overpowered him that it must be his little brother they were talking about. But when they said the child's mother in her frantic shrieks for help continually called the name that sounded so much like his own, he knew it must be his own dear mother who had been so roughly used to make her give up her darling child, his own sweet little baby brother. He waited for no more. His first impulse was to rush in upon the wretches and try to brain them every one on the spot. But prudence, the better part of valor, did not forsake him in this hour. He knew he could not do this, and if he could it would only call down greater trouble upon them.

Without saying a word to his companions, he darted away like a flash and hurried homeward as fast as he could. His three friends were so intently listening to the dreadful things that these soldiers were saying that they had not observed that he was gone. And it was fortunate for the little child Benjamin and the family of Samuel, the father of the child, that the three young men, Joel, Isaac, and Reuben, lingered long enough to hear the last horrible words of "Old Sol" about "putting him away for safe keeping," and "I'll need that chap," etc. These words proved useful to them in their subsequent movements.

Naboth's strong and nimble legs soon brought him to their humble home, only to find that his worst fears were realized. His father had arrived just a few moments before him, and was adminis-



tering tenderly to the still insensible mother. His sister Rachel's attention was divided between helping her father and trying to console and quiet the frightened, screaming little children. It was heartrending to hear them in their passionate grief continually shrieking out, "They have taken our poor little baby and killed our mother!" Sympathetic reader, this is only one of many such scenes. Thousands of Hebrew homes presented a similar one, and often much worse.

The facts connected with this case are in brief about these: Little Benjamin was four months old. He was a very beautiful child, and remarkably sprightly for his age. His parents had succeeded in hiding him from the soldiers up to this day. In fact, they had succeeded so well that no one outside of the Hebrew people immediately around them had even suspected that there was a child in the house until a short time before. Once or twice some soldiers had even been in the house, but such was the vigilant watchfulness of the mother that she had so far kept the babe out of their way and kept all sign of him out of their sight.

But the tension upon her nerves was very trying, and had begun to tell upon her physical strength. On this particular day she had suffered greatly with nervous headache, and while lying down taking a moment's rest near the close of the day, with her babe upon her arm, she fell asleep. The first intimation she had of the presence of soldiers

was when they awakened her as they stepped upon the threshold of her door. She sprang up with the babe clasped in her arms. But alas! it was too late. Escape was impossible. No earthly power could save him now. She was alone in the house. Not even Rachel or the little children were there at the time. She called loudly to her husband and son for help. It being near the close of the day, she hoped they might be near. But all in vain. She cried; she prayed; she begged, and fought with the fierceness of despair. She clung to the child with the vigor of madness, while the muscular "Old Sol" vainly endeavored to wrench it from her embrace. But at last a heavy blow by his brawny arm smote her to the floor. She knew no more. Rachel came running just in time to see her mother fall and her little brother borne away in the arms of the merciless soldiers.

"Old Sol," being in command of this squad of men, ordered all to return immediately to their barrack. At the same time, mounting his own steed with the babe in his arms, he galloped away in the direction of the mountain. Entering the low timber-growth which skirted the foot of the mountain or hills, he disappeared from view, but whither he was going no one but himself knew. He had just returned from this mysterious excursion when our young men came along and stopped to listen to the conversation of the soldiers.

Naboth, on leaving his companions so suddenly, ran along the highway for only a short distance

and turned into a narrow byway which led more directly to his home. His three friends, discovering that he had left them, at once understood the cause and started on a rapid walk, intending to go immediately to the home of Samuel that they might offer their services for whatever they might be needed.

Instead of turning into the byway which their friend Naboth had taken, for they were not familiar with it, they kept along the highway. It had now grown quite dark, and they could not distinguish objects; but being accustomed to the way, they made good speed, thinking only of the calamity which had probably befallen their friend and his family. Isaac suddenly struck his foot against some soft, bulky object, causing him to fall forward upon his hands and knees, but fortunately without sustaining any serious injury.

“Are you hurt?” asked Reuben, as he hastened to help Isaac to rise.

“No, thanks to a good providence, I did not hurt myself; but I do believe that is a human body or some animal over which I have fallen. Let us see before we go on.”

Just then they heard a deep groan as of some one in great pain, from the direction of the object referred to, which confirmed Isaac's suspicion that it was a human body. Sure enough, there lay a helpless, insensible man. They endeavored to lift him up, but he was limp and helpless. They spoke to him, asking if he was much hurt, but

received no answer. They had no idea who the unfortunate man was, whether friend or foe. For all that they knew it might be one of the soldiers who had fallen from his horse, and left by his unfeeling fellow-soldiers to die alone. If so, he would not help them in a similar condition, and why not leave him to his fate? This was not according to that religion they had been taught to practice toward all men. Besides, they did not believe it was one of the soldiers. But how were they to find out, as they could get no answer from the man, nor could they see him.

“We must do something for him,” said Joel, “or he will die here before morning.”

It was a full quarter of a league to where either of them lived, and there were no means of conveyance except by their own muscular strength, of which they fortunately had a good supply. Joel lifted up the poor suffering man's head, and on examining his pulse, said: “He is not quite dead, but we must get him away from here as quickly as possible. I will sit here on the ground and hold his head on my lap while you both shall go for some other help, a light, and a little water.”

So off they ran, and in a short time returned with plenty of strong help and a little water for the unfortunate sufferer. As the young man Isaac approached with a light he discovered that it was an old man, with his gray locks all stained with blood. His face was begrimed with dust, and showed an ugly cut from which still flowed some

drops of blood. Altogether he was almost beyond recognition. But Isaac thought he could see something familiar about the old man. Holding the light nearer and stooping down to examine him more closely, he started back with a frightened look, exclaiming: "My God! it is my poor old grandfather! O grandfather, who could be so cruel as to treat you in this way?" The young man fell upon his knees by the old man's side and wept, while he stroked the wrinkled, blood-stained face tenderly and affectionately. It is both beautiful and praiseworthy that young men among the Hebrews have great love and respect, and often reverence, for aged men among them; and more especially of their immediate kindred.

Father Ishmael was promptly removed to his home, which was with his son Levi Ishmael, who was of the house of Levi. The household consisted of father, mother, son, two daughters, and the aged sire, Father Ishmael. They had already begun to feel great uneasiness at the old father's not coming home at his accustomed time, and also that Isaac was unusually late. So they were greatly shocked and alarmed when the company arrived with their burden. The old gentleman had left the house in the afternoon in perfect health, intending to walk down toward the river, and return before dark, as he often did. Being one of the priests, it was his custom to visit as many families as he could for the purpose of instructing them in their laws and traditions, as this

was the principal and almost their only method of teaching now, since they were prohibited from having any public gatherings at any time or on any account.

On a close examination they were very apprehensive that the good old man was seriously if not fatally injured. He had by this time recovered semi-consciousness, but had no recollection of the accident, and could tell nothing whatever about it. Evidently he had been violently handled by some one, or had met with some dreadful misfortune.

Two very sad things had now happened to the same community within a few hours, over each of which hung a mystery. The all-absorbing question was, "What did 'Old Sol' do with little Benjamin? and how was Father Ishmael hurt, and by whom?" Will it ever be known, or, like many similar things, remain forever unknown? Time will tell. God is leading his own people, and they have been trusting and following him for more than a century. He has walked before them for all these years, and sometimes he leads them through the fire, but it is far better to follow him through the fire than to avoid the fire and fail to be led by him. The fact that they suffer wrong does not argue that he has forsaken them. If some mothers succeeded in saving their children from this cruel edict—and doubtless many did—while others lost theirs, it is no proof that God loves one mother better than another. If he should make any difference between them in his

tender care and love, the difference would be in favor of the poor crushed one who mourns with empty arms. If there were but one single instance of providential interference in all the history of events among men, it would be sufficient to prove the truth of the theory of special providence. And on the other hand, if there were but one instance in which a calamity fell upon some one who had the same right to expect providential protection that that one had upon whom the calamity did not fall, and it was afterwards developed that God brought good out of the calamity, then the same theory of special providence remains, and is even confirmed. Let not the mother who has reached success through sunshine think she has anything of which to boast over her seemingly less fortunate sister, who has reached the same through shadows, and even through the fire. God is just. We shall see as he sees, "some sweet day."

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MYSTERY DARKENS.

THINGS have been going on in court circles about the same as before the cruel edict was issued. Of course the people in high life know but little of what goes on among the humbler class; and they care equally as little, except in a few isolated cases where the higher may be affected by the lower. Hence very little notice was taken by the Egyptains of the calamities which befell the Hebrews, especially those at the fountain-head where those calamities originated. To lift up and help a fallen creature, or relieve a fellow-man who may be in a worse condition than oneself, is one of the first duties of life, besides being a service both to God and man, and receives very high commendation from the great Father of all mercies. But to oppress, or in any way intentionally make their condition worse, is an offense of no little magnitude.

By the stroke of his pen a millionaire might dry up a flood of tears and make hundreds of his fellow-creatures happy. To neglect to do so is to miss an opportunity of life, if not criminal neglect of his duty. But for miserly greed to take the very bread out of their mouths, or by a stroke of pen or utterance of a word to put them in circum-



stances of oppression and grief and leave them weeping and helpless, cannot fail to excite the indignation of Heaven and call down swift wrath upon the offender.

Pharaoh Rameses, by the publication of a single edict, has drenched Egyptian soil with a flood of mingled tears and blood, all of which did not cost him a moment's sleep or a single pang. The words of the crafty Jambres about the loss of his crown made him toss upon his pillow a whole night, but the shrieks of anguish from a thousand Hebrew homes, though they reach the ear of God, waken not his dead conscience. His foot crushes the necks of his helpless subjects, but he hears not their cry nor heeds their anguish. Indeed, so oblivious is he to all their wretchedness that at times he seems to be but a tool in the hands of some who are really greater enemies to the Hebrews than himself. The artful and crafty Jambres could easily keep the cruel mill grinding by refreshing the king's memory occasionally with reference to the ominous prophecy and charging him to make sure of the safety of his crown by keeping a watchful eye upon the principal men among the Hebrews.

Many of these had already been imprisoned, and some even killed, upon the most groundless pretexts. Those whom bad men *fear* they seek to *destroy*, and they fear none so much as those whom they have wronged. Hence the policy of tyrants to keep the oppressed in circumstances of

helplessness, so that they will always be unable to retaliate.

Amram and Ophron were special objects of suspicion on account of their prominence among their people, and were closely watched. But so attentive were they to their business, and strictly obedient to all regulations, however unpleasant and unjust, that no occasion could be found for accusation against them. Yet when a vigilant enemy is fully determined upon mischief to an unoffending foe he will be sure to find a pretext to carry out his purposes. So the long-sought and much-desired pretext was found at last in this case.

To beat, or temporarily imprison, a Hebrew required no formal charge, or tribunal except the arbitrary will of the taskmasters; but before anyone can be committed to the government prison he must be charged with an offense against the king or government, and receive his majesty's royal sentence. But it was quite an easy matter to do this in almost any case, as the necessary witnesses could be readily had with a small bribe and a little instruction. Many months had now gone by since the country had been put under the edict, which included, besides the destruction of the male children, also the close watching of all prominent men of the Hebrews; and scarcely a day had passed that some one had not been accused and condemned.

It was cause for great uneasiness in the little home of Amram when one night he failed to re-

turn from his daily labor as was his uniform custom to do. Indeed, such was his usual regularity that a failure to appear was very naturally calculated to excite alarm. However, his wife Jochebed, being a woman of more than ordinary good common sense and strength of nerve, not allowing her fears to run away with her good judgment, reasoned hopefully yet tremblingly of the matter. She endeavored, in her mind, to account for the strange absence on various grounds. But she would have been more than human, or less than a true, faithful wife, if she had not felt a degree of uneasiness, if not positive alarm, knowing as she did the exceeding perilous times and dangerous elements surrounding them. Through the long night she waited, watched, and listened in vain for the familiar footfall upon the threshold of their little home. The morning came, but no tidings of the absent one. On inquiring of her next-door neighbor she learned that some of the king's officers were seen to go to the repair shops on the preceding day, and that Amram and Ophron were seen to go away with them. This information only increased her fears. Yet it was possible that they had been sent for to do some repairing at a distant place. This, however, was a bare *possibility* without being even probable, as every place was usually supplied with men for all the necessary work.

Before the day was ended, poor Jochebed had settled down into the uncomfortable conviction

that it was only another one of those secret arrests which had become so common of late, and which left little hope for the future. And of all those who had been thus taken away, so far as she knew, not one had been released or even heard of any more, nor did anyone know what had become of them. Oh, how her heart sank as the dreadful reality dawned upon her! Yet she was of that peculiar type of women who are remarkable for successfully battling with the contrary winds of life's sea, and who, upon setting out on the voyage, have not calculated that it will be all smooth sailing, and therefore expected breakers. Happy the one who determines to make the journey by the *right* way, whether rough or smooth.

Therefore, Jochebed neither fainted nor despaired. She knew full well that the times in which she lived offered a hundred possibilities of disaster and trouble, to one of escaping them, and could not be taken altogether by surprise when they came. She lived by that excellent maxim, "Prefer prosperity and enjoy it, but expect adversity and bear it." There is such a thing as being "troubled, but not in despair; cast down, but not destroyed." "Hope springs eternal in the human breast."

There are many resources from which hope may draw comfort. So that if one be taken, others will remain; and a strong, determined mind is sure to find them. If this woman's husband were taken, her children were left, and to

them she turned the aching side of her wounded heart to be comforted and healed. Should they be taken, there remains the great world of humanity with its exhaustless fields of duty. Should these fail her, God, even her own God, is still saying, "*I will never leave thee.*" Then,

"Faith, hope, and love, best boons to mortals given,"

throw their strong arms around the promise, and cry out, "Though thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee!"

Did this Hebrew wife and mother have reason to expect sorrow? And are we less liable? We think it a great hardship when it falls to our lot, only because we have considered ourselves exempt. Vain thought. It may come to you in its most dreadful form. Why not? Is there a single reason why you should expect exemption which your less fortunate sister may not claim with equal right and consistency? If you escape, happy are you; if you suffer, why not? Friend, do not put away all thought of calamity, for it *may* come; yet do not wear it as a garment of fear, nor carry it as a daily burden. "Let fear watch, for there is danger; but let hope look up and brighten the prudent fear, for a hand divine shall guide the events of our life." Many a life has been crushed by calamity, only for lack of having prudently looked forward to the possibility of such a thing. There is a wise but much abused proverb, "Do not cross rivers before reaching them." No

better advice could be given to one starting out upon life's journey; but woe to him who *cannot* cross *when* he reaches it, for lack of anticipating the crossing! Let not the delusion interfere with the preparation, then. If not needed, it is wise; but if needed, it is wiser.

Many friends came to offer sympathy and words of comfort; but alas! words are easily spoken, especially by those who have no burdens. We should not undervalue such words, since they are the wealth of a sincere heart. But the purest type of sympathy is born in the experience of one who "hath felt the same." True "fellow-feeling" which "makes us wondrous kind" is where two are walking through the fire, and extend to each other a helping hand. Such sympathy as this forgets or lays aside its own grief to comfort another heart which feels the same ache.

Jochebed did this when she sought the aged mother of Ophron who was suffering a bereavement similar to her own. Ophron "was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow."

"Tell me, Jochebed," said the aged matron, "what they have done with my boy."

"I know not, my mother; only there is a vague rumor that he, with my husband, has been carried off to the city under guard. This, you know, means much possible evil, but just what will be done with them no one can tell. But, my mother, we who have so long believed that our God would some day visit and redeem his people, cannot af-

ford to lose faith in him when our loved ones are in peril.”

“Ah, now, Jochebed, thou daughter of Levi, thou speakest the words of truth and wisdom. Our tradition teaches that when our father Jacob thought he had lost Joseph, Benjamin, and Simeon he cried out in great bitterness, ‘If I am bereft of my children I am bereft.’ So say I of my own beloved Ophron. What though my gray hairs be brought down to the grave in sorrow for my first-born and only son; was he not given to me, and shall not the Giver do right with me and the gift? I can offer him up freely upon the altar and service of my faith.”

“Yes, blessed be the God of our father Jacob,” answered Jochebed, “for he caused his servant to triumph by faith in him, in that he received his children back as from the dead, and himself lived to bless their sons ‘leaning upon the top of his staff.’”

“Truth, my child; and God who comforted his servant with cheering news from his children when least he expected it, even those whom he considered lost to him, will doubtless comfort us in a way we know not of, and at a time when we least expect him. But, dear Jochebed, inasmuch as you have your own great trial, and have laid it aside to come and speak cheerful words to me, therefore take my blessing also, and return now to thy children, for their grief, too, is great. Go in peace, and may the blessing of God go with you.”

Thus did this aged handmaid of God and this young Hebrew mother comfort one another *in* their afflictions without being delivered *from* them. The mistake that poor mortals make often is that they reject such comfort because it does not *remove* the affliction. Oh, the satisfaction there would be in letting God *sweeten* the cup which cannot be removed! Then our praises would take the place of our complaints.

These sufferers had the common sympathy of all their sisters, for they had many troubles in common. But there were so few without a personal grievance, and each heart was so full of its own sorrow, that there was but one chance for fellow-help, and that was to lose a part of one's own in helping one's fellow to carry his burden. Happy that one who follows such a method.

Jochebed and the mother of Ophron have a firm hold upon God, and their "faith is well founded;" let us leave them for a little season, for they are "leaning on the Everlasting Arm."

While we have been spending this sad day with these two troubled families, the king has been hearing some important causes in the royal court. During the past few weeks many prisoners of war have been brought to Memphis, among whom are some important characters. Those who held official rank were promptly committed to prison, the rest were put to hard labor on some of the numerous public works under guard of soldiers and the general direction of taskmasters. When these



had all been disposed of, a large number of Hebrew prisoners who had been put under arrest for some offense, real or pretended, against the king or government, were introduced.

When these appeared there appeared also the irrepressible Jambres, the inveterate hater of all Hebrews, but especially those of this class. And it is hardly necessary to inform the reader that the greater number of those arrested since the publication of the memorable edict were arrested at his instance. The prisoners were always brought before his majesty singly, except when two or more were accused of the same offense. The trials were brief and arbitrary; the accusation was stated by some one and witnessed to by another, and usually this ended the matter, all except sentence by the king.

Two men are now brought forward whom we at once recognize as our friends Amram and Ophron. They are naturally strong, robust men, but to-day they look haggard and worn. They are intimate friends, though Amram is about ten years the senior of Ophron. They do not appear embarrassed or confused. The king called for the accusation, and Jambres at once arose and said: "The names of these men are Amram and Ophron, Hebrews of your majesty's service, and the accusation laid against them is that of having wantonly offended the princess Thurmuthis."

This startling announcement was received with ominous expressions of wonder and evident signs

of indignation, which might have broken forth into a mob of violence but for the restraint of the royal presence. None were more astonished at the charge than were the prisoners themselves. Conscious of no intention to do such a thing, they were at a loss to know what could have been said or done by them that could possibly give rise to such a thought in the mind of anyone. The king's brow clouded with evident anger. The accusation was so vague as to be susceptible of almost any sort of dreadful crime.

“Wretches! what have you to say to this charge?” roared the irate Pharaoh. “Speak truly, or your heads shall pay the penalty.”

Nothing daunted, the cool, self-possessed Amram answered: “We cannot remember either word or act upon our part, O king, that could have been construed into so grave and unbecoming conduct as that of offering any offense to your majesty, or to her royal highness, the king's daughter. We are peaceable men, working at the king's business, and have had no time, disposition, or occasion for so foul a deed. But if there be a man in all of your majesty's great kingdom who can show such an act upon the part of your most humble servants, let him come forth and show what it is, and we will not deny what is true.”

Jambres was prepared for this challenge, and said: “There is an officer here, of your majesty's service, who sometimes waits on the retinue of the

princess, and is now ready to bear witness to the charge.”

At this point an officer came forward and placed himself by the side of the prisoners, and of him the king asked: “Do you know these Hebrews, and are the things whereof they are accused true?”

“They are true, my sovereign. As I, together with other fellow-servants, attended the princess on an afternoon excursion, a few leagues from the city, we heard a great noise of voices at a distance. The royal lady was much alarmed, but we promptly took our positions to defend her with life itself if need be, and assured her of perfect safety. When the ruffians had approached near enough to see and understand our determined purpose, they desisted from their evident evil designs and turned aside. I can fully identify these two men as being in the company of the disturbers.”

Here the design of the whole plot dawned upon the prisoners in a moment. It is not necessary to remind the reader of the case referred to. These innocent men are now reaping some more of the bitter fruits of Hophni's debauch, and the end is not yet. O accursed wine! Long hast thou been dragging men to ruin and wrecking innocent lives. Thou hast broken up millions of happy homes. Thou viper, that stingest the hand of him who attempts to help one of thy poor victims! Thou enemy of God and man! Insatiate monster, ever

taking but never satisfied! Are not the wretched victims of seventy centuries enough to satisfy thine awful greed? O sons of men, look on the broken hearts, ruined homes, and dishonored graves of the unnumbered millions of victims of your poor fellow-mortals, and say if you think the monster should be tolerated in the world another year. Oh, let us rise up in the name and strength of our God and rid the earth of man's most dreadful foe! "Men of Israel, help!"

The king now grew more angry than ever. The tide of feeling with the multitude now rose above control. The unfortunate prisoners had not a friend to speak a word for them. The *occasion* of the charge was true, but the principal facts were not true. Yet how could they make it known? Everything seemed to point to their guilt. Would they be allowed to speak for themselves? Yes, but who would believe them?

"Vile wretches!" said the angry monarch, "what do you say to the facts now so clearly made out against you?"

These men were no trembling, cowering culprits who were afraid to speak before their enemies. Conscious of their innocence, they could face and defy their worst persecutors. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion." (Prov. xxviii. 1.) They were not ignorant of their peril. They did not expect any mercy. They knew but too well the relentless hand that held them. Speaking could

not damage their cause, for it was already desperate. And while they could not hope to benefit it by anything they might say, yet they could and would leave a mighty truth burning upon the ears of their captors. Therefore Amram, who was the older, and very ready of speech, made answer to the king in a clear, forceful, intelligent, yet respectful speech, in which he gave the facts in detail respecting the trouble they had with one of their brethren while under the influence of wine, on the day specified in the charge against them.

“And now, O king,” he said, “we stand at this royal bar this day to answer these grave complaints, and doubtless we are already condemned in your mind. But know this, that nothing was farther from our thoughts than to have disturbed the royal lady, the princess. We are willing to suffer whatever punishment may be inflicted upon us, but we implore your royal clemency for our women and children, who cannot subsist without our labor. Moreover, we have ever been true and faithful servants of your majesty, not having willfully transgressed your commands at any time. On the contrary, we have ever counseled our people to be in subjection, quietly serving in hope that in due time our God will hear the cry of his people, which cry this day reaches the very heavens, for their grief is very great.”

“Treason! treason!” shouted Jambres; and the cry was caught up by hundreds of voices.

“Talk not to me of the God of heaven,” said the king. “No power can deliver you out of my hands. I will make your burden so heavy that you will have no time for such plans and thoughts of rebellion. Who is this God to whom you call and are waiting for him to deliver you?”

“He who made all things, and who abideth forever. His word of promise will surely be fulfilled. The heavier the burdens, the greater the cry this will extort from the oppressed. And the sooner this cry reaches the climax of its bitterness, the sooner will the hand of the deliverer take up our cause. God will raise up a deliverer from among our brethren.”

This sounded in the king's ears so much like the prophecy of Jambres that he almost shuddered to hear it. He now stood upon his feet, and lifting his scepter to add emphasis to his vehement words, he said: “Take these men away, and place them in close confinement to await my further commands.”

The excited multitude followed into the street, and so boisterous and clamorous were they that a part of the royal military guard were called into requisition to clear the way and keep back the mass of rushing humanity. When the huge gates closed behind them, they heard the ponderous bolts drop into their sockets, and the doleful clank seemed to pronounce their doom. When left alone in their dismal cell, they bowed down together and commended themselves and their

friends to Him in whom they had trusted, and whom they had served. Their faith is unshaken, for they are "leaning on the Everlasting Arm."

Here the curtain falls for the present. Let it hide from view their saddened homes and heavy hearts. Amram and Ophron are, to all human appearances, hopelessly incarcerated in what they all regard, and have learned to call, "the king's death prison."

## CHAPTER VII.

### RECOVERED.

“They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold. They pluck the fatherless from the breast. They are wet with the showers of the mountains.”—*Job*.

**S**USPENSE is a very trying form of fear. An evil thing can more easily be endured than waited for. The prospect is often worse than the reality. When the mind is obliged to dwell between hope and fear, there is an unrest that is exceedingly painful. When there are two or more equal chances for success or failure, the strain is greater upon the mind than if it were a known fact that the evil would come. Or, if there be but *one* chance for an evil result against a hundred for good, the whole mind is aroused into an agony of fear lest the *one chance* should bring the evil. It is painfully true that such fear “hath torment.”

The mother of little Benjamin came back to consciousness under the vigorous efforts of her husband and Rachel, only to awake to the realization of the awful truth of what had just occurred. At first it seemed like a frightful dream, but only for a moment, then the horrid reality passed anew before her memory. She cried out: “Oh, my baby, my pretty, innocent baby! I did all I



could to save him, but they have torn him away from me at last. Oh, if he had only died a natural death in my arms, so that I could have laid him away in a quiet little grave to rest, it would have been a comfort. It would help to ease the pain of my heart if I could only plant a simple flower to bloom where he sleeps. But oh, cruel fate! he had to be thrown into the river, to become food for the dreadful monsters there. But it is all over with him now; they can harm him no more. Thank God, I shall see him again, for he is now with the angels.”

There was a strange intermingling of the agony of grief and the comfort of knowing that the ordeal was past and the babe was safe. While approaching the ordeal, she had no such comfort. She now wept and mourned, and at the same time rejoiced that the worst was past. Poor mother! how cruel now to tell her the truth as it is: that the babe is not really dead, but still in the hands of her tormentors. We must not. With a crushed and bleeding heart she has surrendered to the situation. Let her rest. Cruel rest! But it is the first she has had for weeks and months, so great has been the tension of suspense. She now thinks her babe is in heaven, when in truth he has been carried to what, if not rescued, would prove to be an earthly hell.

When our three young men, Joel, Isaac, and Reuben, had done what they could for Father Ishmael to make him comfortable, so far as his

injured condition could be made comfortable, they left him in the hands of the family, and went at once to see what service they could render to their friends, the family of Samuel. They did not know just what had occurred, but felt pretty sure that the little babe had been taken and perhaps other injury done to the family. There was a good deal of mystery in what "Old Sol" had said: he had put the child away, and would need him again.

"I do not think he means to kill the child," said Joel; "not that he is too good to do it, but from the indications there must be some other motive which he has in view and which he did not choose to make known to the rest of the soldiers."

"Why, what on earth can it be?" said Isaac.

"I'm sure I do not know, certainly; but I have an idea, somehow, that he does not mean to kill the child at all unless he is forced to do it through fear of detection and recovery of the little one. But its fate would be a thousand fold worse than death if what I fear proves to be the case."

These words raised the anxious curiosity of the other two, and they would doubtless have pressed him to know what he meant but for lack of time; but they had now arrived at the house, and the conversation ended for the present. Naboth met them at the door with a sorrowful welcome and told them the sad story, which was about as they had supposed. Therefore they were not surprised at the gloomy appearance of things generally in

the household. Like many others they expressed great sympathy for the family. But to Joel's mind there was more to be done than merely to express sympathy. From what he had overheard "Old Sol" say, he believed the child was still alive; and if its recovery was to be attempted, there was no time to lose. He at once sought an interview with Samuel, the father of the child, to see if it was at all possible to learn which way the man went. But no one seemed to have observed this. When Joel told Samuel he believed the child was yet alive, and his reasons for it, he was very much astonished, for he had thought of nothing else but that it had been thrown at once into the river. No wonder, then, that he grasped the idea of its possible recovery, and inquired of the young man if he thought it could be done.

"If we can get an idea of the direction taken by 'Old Sol' on leaving the house, we may get on the track of the babe, and we can at least make the effort to find him."

"What you say is reasonable," said Samuel, "and we will make every possible effort to obtain the information you desire. But ah, my young friend, should we even find and recover the babe to-night, he may be taken again to-morrow."

"True; but it is better that he should be in the river than made the future slave of robbers in the mountains."

"You are right! you are right!" exclaimed the

excited father, as the thought of such a dreadful fate entered his mind.

It was now near midnight, and if they were going to undertake anything to-night it must be done quickly. And the probability is that what is *not* done to-night cannot be done at all. So the other three boys, Isaac, Reuben, and Naboth, were now taken into the council, and Joel said to them: “My friends, we are sure, from what ‘Old Sol’ himself said, that the child is still alive somewhere. We are sure also that he cannot be very far away, judging from the time he was taken to the time ‘Old Sol’ got back to the barrack. We are sure he could not have gone far, because it could not have been longer than an hour from the time he left this house till he returned. Now that we do not lose too much time it is important that we find out, if possible, the direction taken by him on leaving this place, for it is evident that he went alone.”

“That can be determined in a few moments,” said Reuben, “for there is a man here who says he saw him go toward the mountain, and that he returned from the same direction.”

“Then,” said Joel, “that being the case, I am more than ever confirmed in my opinion that he has no thought of destroying the child’s life at present. I also have a pretty good idea where he has left it; at least my mind is made up to go to that place first and see. Now we are going to have some difficult and perhaps dangerous work to do. Who is willing to undertake it with me?”

The three young men answered promptly that they were ready to go.

“Now, one more thing before we are ready,” continued Joel. “No one must know even of our intentions except ourselves. This is best whether we succeed or fail. And to keep down all suspicion, Father Samuel must remain with the family, and let all of the neighbors retire to their homes.”

This was readily agreed to by Isaac, Reuben, and Naboth; and, although Samuel was anxious to accompany the young men, his own judgment gave assent to Joel’s plan. Therefore he gave them his hearty blessing, and said: “May the God of our fathers speed the young men, prosper their undertaking, and give them safe return.” Armed with no better weapons than a heavy club each (for the Hebrews were not allowed to keep arms), they set out at once on their delicate and important errand.

Now you at first, doubtless, are inclined to put this down as a hopeless and foolish undertaking. Not so, however, when once you are made acquainted with a few important facts connected with the surroundings. Let us look at the situation as it is. We will leave our young heroes to pursue their way under the leadership of the prudent and far-seeing Joel, who has already matured his plans for action and will push them rapidly and energetically. His conclusions are drawn from facts and reasonable deductions from them, and we can depend upon him for caution.

We have already seen that the valley of the Nile, on both sides of the river for hundreds of miles, is narrow. A few miles north of Memphis it begins to widen until it spreads out to a great width, forming what is known as the Delta. These hilly regions are inhabited only by the most uncultured, and even dangerous, and, in some instances, savage people. Indeed, just a few miles farther south, and back among the rugged mountain passes, live numerous robber bands. These frequently come out under the guise of soldiers and join the king's army for purposes of plunder. Of this class were "Old Sol" and his band. They were employed, fed, and paid by the government, but their real home was in the mountains. This kind of fraud is practiced in almost all armies, as there are always to be found those who carry on a kind of independent warfare in the name of the authorities in power. Sometimes such are not known to the government at all.

But the rougher and the more cruel the class of soldiers employed in this department of the king's service, the better will it serve his purpose in carrying out his bloody edict in the destruction of the children. Such work requires a savage nature and a heart of stone. These men were exceedingly dangerous, both to Hebrew and Egyptian, when once their hate was aroused. They scrupled at nothing; and often sought summary revenge upon those who were so unfortunate as to provoke their displeasure. Our young men are not igno-

rant of this fact, and hence their great caution in keeping their movements secret. If they should succeed, and it should become known that they had dared to offend this heartless old lion of the hills, he would not hesitate to take their lives on the very first occasion that offered.

These boys are, in a measure, familiar with a part of this hill country, for what boy has not explored the hills adjacent to his childhood home? A Hebrew boy is no exception to the rule, and especially one of so daring a nature as our Joel. Though not very safe to do so, yet with a spirit of adventure he had doubtless penetrated far into these regions, if for nothing else, to see what could be found.

They had now gone about a league up the ridge running in a southeasterly direction with which they were perfectly familiar, when they halted for a council.

“Now, my comrades,” began Joel in a very soldier-like way, “just over there about one-third of a league,” pointing in a southerly direction, “is a basin-like swag where three points seem to break off suddenly, forming a deep gorge, in which the trees are taller than on the top of the hills. But the smaller undergrowth is very thick, which gives it the appearance of a very gloomy place. Near the middle of this wilderness-looking spot stands a small house surrounded by an inclosure made of stakes, or pickets. In this house lives an old woman who is a witch, or ‘for-

tune-teller.' There is also a little boy there seemingly about ten years old. I have often heard of them, but never saw them but once. They are very rough-looking specimens of humanity, and I should judge that they would not hesitate to engage in almost any kind of foul deed. Now I believe 'Old Sol' is in some way connected with this place and the people living here. I accidentally saw him come out from there one morning, and ever since that I have thought of him as connected with it. I believe the little babe Benjamin is there this very moment, and these are my reasons for so believing."

"Then, by all means, let us be off!" excitedly exclaimed Naboth, and started off with the impulse as though he would go alone.

"Hold a moment," said Joel. "If we would avoid calamity and failure, we must be exceedingly cautious. There is a large, fierce dog in the yard, and he may be a troublesome foe if not properly managed. We must have a plan of operation, well understood before undertaking this business."

"We can soon dispatch the dog with our clubs," suggested Naboth.

"That may be," answered Joel; "but if we allow the inmates to become alarmed before we make sure that the babe is there, or are ready to rush into the house, they may defeat our purpose by removing him to some other place, so that we should be troubled to find him, if we could do it at all. We must first of all, if possible, make



sure that the babe is there. But if we cannot do this without risking his being removed before we could secure him, then we must effect our entrance to the house as suddenly as may be. This we can do by dividing and approaching the house from four directions at the same time, so as to make sure that no one leaves the house."

These plans having been agreed upon, they proceeded along the high ridge till they stood upon the highest point, overlooking the basin spoken of by Joel. All was dark and quiet down below them. They now began the descent with caution and as noiselessly as possible. When they had approached within a short distance of the house, the outline of which they could just distinguish, they halted for the purpose of dividing and surrounding it. Not a sound or sign of life was anywhere to be heard or seen, and Joel began to fear that, after all, there was no one here, and all his calculations were empty and groundless. He felt quite sure that wherever the child had been left for the night it was only temporary, and that the old robber (for such was "Old Sol" rather than a soldier) would return, perhaps early the next morning, and remove it so far away that they could never recover it at all. So the thought of not finding the child where he had calculated, for a moment made him shudder. But their fears of the place being deserted were soon removed, for just at this moment they distinctly heard a low growl from the alert old watchdog. He had per-

haps scented the enemy, or heard some little noise that awakened his fears. But fortunately no more was heard from him for the moment. The boys now, after agreeing on a suitable signal for a simultaneous attack, separated and surrounded the house. They had not more than reached their several stations when the great dog broke out with a furious barking. Then came to their ears the unmistakable sound of a child's voice, crying. Awakened by the noise of the barking dog, frightened and hungry, the poor little thing was inconsolable. Then came the further sound of voices, and hurrying about in the house, while the dog rushed madly about the yard, first in one direction and then in another, looking for an enemy which he was sure was not far away.

All was now excitement and confusion, both within and without. Then came the signal from the leader, and the four young men rushed forward simultaneously toward the house. They dashed through the bushes so recklessly, making such a great noise, and from so many directions, that the now thoroughly frightened dog took to his heels, and the last they heard of him he was making good his escape through the thick woods. The boys all about the same time sprang over the picket-fence, which was, fortunately, not very high. At this instant a tall, lank-looking figure appeared at the door of the house, and with an angry shriek demanded: "Who dares to come here and disturb me at this time of the night?"

“We have come for the baby, if you please,” said Joel, very coolly.

“There is no baby here!” stormed out the old hag, flourishing an old sword which she held in her hand.

“Old woman, we have no time to parley with you here,” said Naboth, approaching nearer to the figure standing in the doorway; “and besides, I can at this very moment hear the smothered cry of a child in that house. So just stand out of the way, or I shall be obliged to put you aside.”

As he came near, the old creature lifted the weapon to strike; but Naboth quickly knocked it out of her hand with his club, pushed her out of the way, and entered, followed by two of the boys, Isaac and Reuben, while Joel remained outside on guard. By the dim light of the fire they saw a boy sitting on the side of a thin bed of straw. Naboth seized the boy and jerked him off the bed, which he turned up at one end, and there sure enough was the half-suffocated little thing, which had to make several struggles for breath before it fully recovered. It had been thrust under there within the last few minutes to suppress its cries, and would have been dead in a few more moments. The old hag raved, cursed, threatened, and stormed tragically, but the young men, having no further use for her or business there, departed, carrying with them the precious little bundle of humanity.

Naboth hugged the poor, frightened little child

close to his loving brother-heart, and soon quieted its fears and hushed its cries. They must now hurry homeward, for the morning is fast approaching, and there is yet much to be done. They must get back home by the time it is light, and make some disposition of the child. But the perplexing question is, What shall they do with him? It will not do to carry him home, for in all probability "Old Sol" will be on track of him that very day. And yet he must be with his mother soon, for already he is nearly starved for food. No doubt the old woman had tried to feed him, but it is scarcely to be supposed that there was anything about that miserable place suitable for a delicate young child. She might, and doubtless would, have provided something in the next few hours for it to live upon, but it must be remembered that it was put in her charge after or about dark, and without previous notice.

What they intended to do finally with the child will doubtless forever remain a secret, but it is evident they did not intend its destruction immediately. It is more than likely that Joel's supposition that it was "Old Sol's" intention to have it reared for future service to him was true. He would compel the old hag to rear it for him that it might be his slave for life, as evidently he is doing with the boy who is now with her. No doubt he was kidnapped from some Hebrew home in a similar way.

Perhaps you will ask, "Why take them so

young?" Because they may be more thoroughly trained for the robber life they will be expected to follow by bringing them up in such an element, without any knowledge whatever of a better life. If allowed to live a few years under the religious training of a pious Hebrew mother, impressions would be made which would disqualify him for such a life. O, Christian mothers, if "Old Sol," the robber chief, knew that the impress of a godly mother upon the heart and spirit of her *year-old child for good is never destroyed*, how much more ought you to learn it and act accordingly! The opportunity is yours; use it.

The young men decided that it would be best to carry the little one to the home of Levi, the son of Ishmael, Isaac's father, at least for the present. Accordingly, Naboth and Isaac were assigned the duty of conveying it there at once, while Joel and Reuben would go direct to the home of Samuel and inform him of their success, and where the babe had been carried, and let him take his own method of informing the mother.

The gray streaks of daydawn were beginning to appear in the east, and our young adventurers must now hasten to their several homes. They had eaten nothing since noon of the preceding day, which, together with the loss of the entire night of rest, began to tell upon their physical strength. The hour for labor would be upon them very soon, and therefore rest was now out of the question before night again. But their success

amply repaid them for whatever sacrifice it had cost them.

Samuel was anxious to see his wife with her babe before going to his task for the day, but was at a loss to know just how to break the news to her without too great a shock to her already wrecked and shattered nerves. Poor woman! she mourned her dear little babe as dead, and now a sudden transition from grief to joy might unsettle her mental faculties. He at last, however, fell upon a very happy expedient. He told her of dear old Father Ishmael's misfortune, whom they all loved very much, and suggested to her that, in order to divert her mind from her own grief, it would be well to condole and sympathize with others. The nearest way to relief of a sorrowing heart is by the door of a fellow-sufferer.

If she had followed her natural inclination, she would have refused to go, but rather shut herself up with her own burden; but she let the advice of her husband and her own good sense prevail, and went; not, however, without great effort, for she carried a sad and heavy heart. Who would not? When she had, in fact, buried her grief in an overflow of sympathetic words to the bruised and suffering old man, and received his fatherly benedictions upon her own sorrowing spirit, she was better prepared to be led gradually by prudent friends into the *suspicion* that there was a pleasant surprise awaiting her. I shall leave the reader to imagine her joy when the mother of Isaac walked

into the room and laid little Benjamin in her arms. She wept, she laughed, by turns, unable to find words to express her joy.

“Where *did* you find my baby?” she exclaimed over and over again. “O my darling! I thought they had killed you, and I should never see your sweet little face again! Thank God! thank God!”

If any mother who reads this thinks she can imagine the feelings of *this* mother, let her indulge her fullest responsive sympathy, for it cannot be written. They told her that the child had been rescued from the soldiers secretly, and that the utmost secrecy must be preserved for the safety of those who had accomplished it. And, moreover, that in order to shield the babe from a similar calamity to that of yesterday, he must not be taken back to her home, but that, for the present at least, he must be left with these friends, where she could have access to him as often as she desired; the propriety, and even necessity, for all of which she readily saw and consented to.

“Old Sol” would, without doubt, find out some time during the day that the child had been rescued, but by whom he would never know. Only a few special and trusted friends knew of the midnight visit of the young men to the mountain witch’s hut. The old woman could only tell her master *what* was done, but who did it she could never know. Partners in evil are always ready to suspect each other of treachery; hence he was half inclined to believe she had made way with the in-

fant. What a storm he raised in that dismal hut when he returned!

Of course he would search the home of Samuel, and watch with vigilant hatred for some opportunity to do the family some harm by way of revenge. They lived in constant dread of him, for they were at his mercy. The child is kept at the home of Levi, where no young child is suspected of being. The mother, armed now with new courage, applies herself fully to the task of concealing and caring for the babe, made doubly dear to her by its former calamity and present peril. Her faith in God had been strengthened, but alas! like thousands of her sisters her great trials are not all past. She will yet pass through flames still more fierce than any yet experienced. But she does not know it now, although she is armed for whatever may come. She will triumph at last. Fifty years more of bondage and suffering, fifty years more of affliction in Egypt, and little Benjamin will march out of the land of slavery with his brethren. His father and mother will sleep in Egyptian soil, but their children in the wilderness.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### SOME STRANGE THINGS.

**A** BRAHAM went down from Ur of the Chaldees into Palestine, but had scarcely gotten comfortably settled in his new home when an army of Babylonians invaded the country. He was not a great soldier by profession, but he got together his servants and as many of the inhabitants of the land as he could induce to interest themselves in the enterprise, and attacked and drove them back. (Gen. xiv. 13, 14.) Beginning with, and even before, this victory, there gathers a succession of thrilling events at once wonderful and instructive. Here lingers the history of many generations, a history almost prophetic, which will repeat itself in the generations to follow.

Whoever reads, in the twelfth chapter of Genesis, how Abraham fled from the famine in the land of Canaan and went down into Egypt, will be reminded of it again when he reads of Jacob doing the same thing two hundred and fifteen years later. Two and a half centuries after this event, when Moses stood upon the top of Mt. Pisgah to take a view of the promised land, God pointed out to him the identical country, yea, the very route, over which the Babylonians fled, with Abraham in hot

pursuit, and told him it was to be the future home of his people. (Deut. xxxiv. 1.) So God walked before and held his protecting hand over them while nearly five hundred years rolled by, and finally brought them back in safety to their home in the land of Palestine. To trace the history of this greatly afflicted but strangely guided people is but to plunge into the wonderful and the mysterious. What majestic destiny still lies wrapped up in their unrevealed fortunes, we know not. Certain it is that these children of Abraham, children of a promise which God made to them centuries ago, are still marching on under the same unseen hand. When you remember that they are now the oldest historic nation of the whole earth (not excepting China, for although it may be the oldest chronologically, yet, strictly speaking, it is without a history), outliving such mighty nations as the Chaldean, the Assyrian, the Egyptian, the Grecian, and the Roman; when you remember that for thousands of years they have been the chief target for both tongue and pen by the whole civilized world; when you remember that, although comparatively few in numbers, broken into fragments, scattered over the earth, with no national headship, without metropolis or organization, yet to this day preserving their individuality; when you remember that, though they have suffered centuries of bondage and years of captivity, together with their voluntary wanderings to and fro in the world, they have flowed on through history like great gulf

streams of humanity, isolated, and yet circulating in the atmosphere of human customs—you are constrained to say, “Surely God’s hand is with this people.”

What, then, is their relation to the gospel? See their attitude toward it. The promise is to them, and still, as a people, they stand aloof from its benefits. Has the Christian world done its duty in missionary effort to recover and save God’s covenant people? Since the day that the veil of the temple was rent in twain, both Jew and Gentile have a right in the kingdom of mercy. May God hasten the day when the veil, which is still upon the hearts of the great nation of Jews “wheresoever Moses is read,” shall be lifted forever in Jesus Christ our common Lord and Saviour. They have a right, and will some day return and claim it.

We are now engaged in looking into their home life fifteen hundred years before the Christian era. The picture is of real life, similar to what it has been in all ages of the world. From the smallest infant to the strong man and aged sire we can see the hand of God shaping their destiny and fulfilling his wise purposes. Did they know or believe this? Abraham “believed God,” and from that day to this they have been clinging, trusting, hoping through all their changeful destinies. By faith the Hebrew mother hid her babe from Pharaoh’s cruel executioners, and when obliged to do so, she surrendered it to its awful doom by

faith. By faith the Hebrew men stood helplessly by and saw their wives and children maltreated and their most sacred rights trampled ruthlessly under foot. And thus they go on through rolling years, till the years lengthen into centuries, waiting, expecting, hoping until the promise comes. If not fulfilled to-day they look for it to-morrow, and so every day of disappointment only serves to strengthen their faith in the final result, because they know that each day brings them nearer to it.

“Did they grow weary?” you ask. Yes, truly; for “hope deferred maketh the heart sick,” and they gave expression to their weariness with cries for deliverance that reached the very heavens. But weariness is not discouragement, and hence their faith failed not. Did they rebel? No. But sometimes, no doubt, their poor, weak, human forbearance broke over its imperfect barriers, and they were tempted to take summary vengeance upon some of their cruel oppressors, as for instance in the case of Moses when he saw one of his brethren abused. But as a nation they waited for God’s promised deliverance with never a doubt of its coming.

Weeks and months have gone by since the beginning of our story, and of course to many they “drag their weary lengths along,” but others, in spite of toil and constant dread, gathered up what sunbeams were to be found in their paths. Boys and girls, young men and maidens, were full of life, joy, and buoyancy of spirits. Many were

the evening gatherings they had in which pleasure abounded and all care was banished. Why not? Born and reared amid scenes calculated to inure them to peril and hardship till they would be, in a measure, oblivious to it; and unless they should inject their few pleasures into these hours of toil and dread, life must be utterly void of them, which is hardly to be supposed where life was so abundant and vigorous.

So you need not be surprised, after about two months' comparative quiet in the immediate community where the scenes of the last chapter were enacted, to find a little gathering of the young people at the home of Samuel on a bright, moonlight evening for the purpose of spending a few hours in innocent pleasure. Such occasions, however, were necessarily simple in their character. If more than a very few intimate friends were at any time found gathered together, their motive was at once suspected and they were dispersed by the patrol.

Naboth and his sister Rachel invited a few of their special friends to spend the evening with them in honor of the young lady's twentieth birthday, and of course Isaac, his two sisters, and Joel and Reuben composed a part of the company. Nothing has happened for several weeks in that neighborhood to create any unusual fear or apprehension, and this little company easily dismiss all care from their minds for the present and are happy. We should be glad for them, for it is indeed little of such pleasure they have. Therefore

let us leave them to the full enjoyment of it while we shall make a short visit to the home of Levi Ishmael, and his father.

Just at this hour, as you are a special friend to the family, we will let you look in upon happy little Benjamin. His mother has just come in, for she makes several visits during the day. He is a healthy, jolly little fellow. He has grown to be quite an interesting baby-boy of nearly six months of age. Father Ishmael has so far recovered from his injuries as to be able to walk about a little. Samuel has for a long time very much desired to probe the memory of the old man to see if anything could be gleaned therefrom that might afford a clew to the mystery of his injuries.

“You seem very much improved, Father Ishmael,” said Samuel; “and we all rejoice at the prospect of your speedy recovery.”

“Yes, thanks to the great mercy of God, I feel that I have recovered much of my strength, which, at my age, I feared would never come back to me.”

“You have sustained no injury to your limbs or vital parts, I believe?”

“None that are likely to be permanent, I think. On the contrary, I find that not only my physical strength is returning, but my memory also.”

“I am indeed glad to hear you say so,” said Samuel. “Do you recall any of the events of that day on which you were hurt?”

“Nearly all of them, even up to within a short time, as I suppose, of my accident.”

“Then perhaps you could tell us something that might lead to a satisfactory knowledge of how it all happened.”

“I do not know that what I remember is at all connected with the accident, or how long it was before it happened, but from what I have since learned it could not have been very long, and must therefore be connected with it. The last thing I now remember seems to have been very late in the evening, just at a short turn in the road. I saw a small company of soldiers approaching me so rapidly and so near that I did not think I had sufficient time to get out of the way, and I thought I called to them as loud as I could not to run over me. But it seems so much like a dream that I could not say whether it really happened or not. I remembered nothing further. If it was real, they must have run over and crushed me to the earth; but if it was not real, I have not the slightest idea of how I was hurt. I do not accuse them or anyone else of having done it. I am truly grateful to God and my friends for my deliverance.”

When the dear old man had finished this account of what he last remembered, so fully did it harmonize with other facts which Samuel already knew that the case was fairly made out, and he said: “There is no doubt left in my mind now, Father Ishmael, of the cause of your injuries. A company of soldiers had left my house quite late in the day, the same who had taken our little babe. One of them, ‘Old Sol,’ as he is called, fled to the hills

with the child, while the rest of them went immediately in the direction of the barracks. Our young men heard them talking about the affair in such a way as to lead them to suspect that it was really our babe, and as they hurried along the highway they came upon you in an insensible condition. All of which taken together is pretty conclusive evidence that these were the soldiers you saw approaching so suddenly and rapidly, and that they let their horses run over and trample upon you."

"It is quite probable," said the old man, very thoughtfully; "and the wonder is that they did not kill me outright."

"Yes, Father Ishmael; but it is only another instance of the ceaseless care of the God of our father Abraham for his people."

"Ah, Samuel! so true, so true are these words! May we ever trust Him! We know that our deliverance is sure; and may it now be drawing nigh, is our daily prayer. But the glory of God, and the honor of his people, lieth in waiting and trusting. If it be nigh, we are ready; but if in the distant future, we will wait and trust him still."

Thus are two mysteries about cleared up. We are sure that "Old Sol" carried the babe to the old hag who lived in the hills, and we believe he did it for the purpose of having her rear and train him for his profession, namely, that of robbery. Father Ishmael was, without doubt, trampled under the feet of the horses ridden by the comrades of "Old Sol" on their way to their barracks for



the night. It may have been in part an accident, but evidently they did not care to avoid it, nor did they care if they had killed him.

There is another strange and somewhat mysterious thing that is exciting some wonder and no little apprehension in this community, and that is the conduct of "Old Sol." Everyone supposed he would be very angry at finding that the babe had been recovered from his possession, and that he would let no occasion pass unimproved for giving vent to boisterous expressions of his wrath. On the contrary, up to this time, he had manifested no great concern about it, further than to come once or twice to search for the child to satisfy himself that it was not there. Could it be possible that he would pass the matter by without any attempt at revenge? They could not believe him capable of such forbearance. On the contrary, they believed him fully capable of carrying this revenge to its bitterest results, and they feared that this apparent indifference was but a plan to find the best occasion to do the greatest possible harm. His conduct, therefore, to their minds, boded no good to them.

So far they had been successful in hiding the babe both from him and the king's patrol. But still the king's edict and the vengeance of the old robber chief hung over their lives every day like a pall of thick darkness. So much so that, with the bitter experience of the past, "Old Sol" nor anyone else in this world will ever again catch the

mother of little Benjamin off the strictest guard. The very extremest measures of vigilance were adopted when the child was first recovered, and had not for a single moment been relaxed *on any account*.

It may seem a little strange that, under the circumstances, they could succeed at all in hiding the child. But let it be remembered that the Hebrews were a *nation of friends*. Their common sufferings and perils had so cemented their friendship that their efforts for each other's good and safety were perfectly harmonious. Hence the strong probability is that many of their children were successfully hid and preserved alive during this dreadful "reign of terror." This must have been so, judging also from the fact that the tribes grew and the people multiplied, in spite of all the efforts of Pharaoh to prevent it. Oh, what a display of *organized* power to defeat God's purpose in his people, and how signal the failure! He laughs at man's feeble effort to resist his authority.

All goes merrily with the young people in their social gathering to-night. Joy is in every heart; pleasure reigns supreme. Possibly more than one young man declared his love, and more than one maiden's heart grew warm with responsive affection, while the fluttering pulse and burning cheek told but too plainly the secret she would not just yet admit, even to him. The beautiful Rachel leans upon the arm of our manly Joel, than whom there never lived a nobler youth. Heroic, cour-

ageous, and true, he was in every sense worthy the confidence and love of this young woman, who was no less worthy of his trust than he of hers. They promenaded the smooth walks in her own pretty flower garden, then pause before the little gate which opens out upon the broad highway.

“How bright it is to-night!” said Joel; “and how inviting all our surroundings, even to take a longer stroll than this pretty garden will permit.”

His companion made no objection, and they passed out at the gate and walked leisurely along in the direction of the river, almost oblivious to all the world besides the pleasure of each other's company. They had long been friends, but within the past few months something more than mere friendship had sprung up between them, almost unconsciously, but none the less real. But as this is not intended to be a sentimental story, there need not be a long-drawn-out recital of sensational courtship, or “love by moonlight and under the stars.” They were prudent, sensible, and discreet. They were not blind to the fact that they loved, and that it was mutual; neither were they ignorant of the fact that life was not all sentiment.

The time had now come when they should have not only a mutual understanding, but also an agreement upon so important a matter. They were congenial and well adapted to walk life's way together. They had each been given the very best advantages that were to be had in common Hebrew education, and had not failed to improve

them. There was but little help a child could get outside of the immediate household, and much of this consisted of Hebrew laws and traditions. The fathers never failed, and were even required, to instruct their children thoroughly in these things.

When Joel and Rachel returned to the house the company was preparing to break up. They were happy, yes, happier than they will be any more soon. A fiery ordeal awaits them, which, if they now knew, would almost drive them mad to contemplate. Such are the times in which they live that dire calamities, like raging tempests, often sweep over and darken the brightest sky, uprooting the strongest hopes, and cause to wither life's sweetest and most fragrant heart flowers. But we will not anticipate the sorrows of our young hero and heroine, for such they will prove themselves to be. When next you see them they will be in the furnace. "Old Sol" is still alive and at large, with a heart as black with revenge as the darkness of Egypt in the days of its plagues. He owes them spite enough to break a thousand hearts, and he is fully prepared in every respect to do his mean and cruel work. They are largely at his mercy, but, like Job when under satanic affliction, they are also in the hands of that God who is mightier than all the powers of darkness.

Let the reader remember that we are looking at Hebrew life in Egypt, and not in Canaan, and he who reads and believes his Bible will see and be convinced that this picture is not overdrawn.

## CHAPTER IX.

### A FRIEND AT COURT.

“A man that hath friends must show himself friendly.”—  
*Solomon.*

THERE is no truer saying than this: “A friend in need is a friend indeed.” Abraham was called “the friend of God,” and so true was it that God owned it and was his friend forever; nor will he ever suffer one of the “seed of Abraham” who trusts in him to be friendless.

Amram and Ophron had now been confined in the royal prison for almost a month and a half. Nothing unusual had happened to break the painful monotony. One day, on looking out through the narrow window which admitted the only light and air that ever found its way into their dismal abode, they discovered that something unusual was about to take place, judging from the commotion within the prison grounds: officers hurrying to and fro giving commands, and getting everything in the best of order, as if they expected a visit from some extraordinary personage.

“I suspect,” said Amram, “that we are about to receive a visit from some of the royal family; perhaps the king himself.”

“Or, possibly, from his precious friend and prophet, Jambres,” suggested Ophron rather sar-

castically. His dislike for that individual had grown into positive disgust, if not contempt.

“He may be in the company,” said Amram; “but I hardly think there would be such commotion and preparation for anyone less important than the king himself, or some of his immediate family.”

“Why, he seems to be a very important character in the king’s estimation, judging from the influence exerted over him.”

“Ah, brother, that influence is more superstitious fear than honor. It is the most slavish of all fear. Those possessed of it seem to suppose that supreme vengeance is continually on the track of their evil deeds, and seeking opportunity to take summary revenge. The king believed that these prophets, or astrologers, and especially Jambres, possessed the power, if not to call down this wrath at pleasure, at least to be able to foretell its approach. So that he has only to intimate such a thing and the king is at once and completely in his power. His hatred for the Hebrews often leads him to use this influence to their great damage.”

“Do not say ‘often,’ for he uses it on all possible occasions. That whole fabrication of false testimony which resulted in our imprisonment was all his fiendish work.”

“Not altogether. No doubt he got the principal facts of that occasion from some one of the attendants of the king’s daughter, and then gave

them the peculiar coloring to suit the case he wished to make out against us.”

“Do you suppose the princess knows anything of this proceeding?”

“I hardly think she does,” replied Amram, thoughtfully. “And I have been thinking that if we could contrive some way to get the fact to her, we would find in her a friend at court, and she would no doubt interest herself in the case, at least to the extent of setting the king’s mind right as to the facts, for she has a very high appreciation of justice.”

“That is a capital idea!” exclaimed Ophron, somewhat excitedly. “Why have we not thought of that before? She has more than once shown a kindly disposition toward our people when injustice is being done them, and no doubt she would face that old fox with the facts before the king, and I am sure he would believe her statement.”

The thought so thrilled and animated the man that while speaking of it he began rapidly to walk to and fro in their limited apartment. And why should he not? Unjustly charged and hopelessly imprisoned; liable to be executed any day upon the merest pretext, or even the mad caprice of a reckless sovereign—now for the first time a ray of hope, however feeble, came into his mind so vivid, so cheering that for a moment it seemed almost real. Who would not have seized upon it with the eagerness of a starving man for a crumb, or a drowning man after a straw? Amram was

more self-possessed. He saw the excitement of his friend and sought at once to quiet him.

“Yes, the idea is indeed a bright one, but just how to execute it is not so clear. We will employ our thoughts in that direction in the future and watch for an opportunity. But see yonder! they are coming.”

Sure enough, far down at the end of the broad avenue could be seen a body of soldiers in gay uniform and glittering armor just coming in sight through the great iron gate; immediately following them a small body of footmen in scarlet livery. Just behind these came the royal carriage in shining splendor, and on either side a footman. Following the royal vehicle were other footmen and soldiers, as in the van. The carriage was occupied by the king and his daughter, Thermuthis. The princess had never before visited the prison grounds, nor had the king himself but seldom. The lady had heard much of the place, and she wished to visit and understand more about it. She was a great favorite with her father, who, in turn, was never weary of gratifying her wishes. He was the more pleased to do this because she had no *whims* to gratify. She was a woman of very practical turn of mind, very superior natural gifts, and of the highest culture possible in the realm. Among other excellent qualities she had a very high sense of right, and a tender, sympathetic nature, but not to an extent to amount to a whimsical weakness.



She was much pleased with most that she saw about the prison grounds, for there was everywhere prevailing an air of order and neatness. Alas! what a poor opportunity she had of judging! How nice things are always when on *dress parade!* Could she only see the cruelty and death that sometimes reign supreme here, and even now are carefully kept out of sight or temporarily suspended for the occasion, she would doubtless be shocked, yea, even horrified.

“Are all of the prisoners allowed liberty upon the grounds on certain occasions, father?” she asked.

“No, only those whose offense has not been of an aggravating character, and whose labor is needed about the grounds.”

“What about those double-barred cells on the south side with a black flag floating over them?”

“Those are occupied by prisoners of war who are under sentence of death.”

“And is the day of execution fixed for all of them on that side of the prison?”

“No, only the one immediately under the flag. When the flag is raised over the door of a cell it is a sign that the occupant will be executed the third day precisely at the hour corresponding to that at which the flag was raised.”

“I see a red flag over some of the cells; what does that indicate?”

“Those are noted prisoners of war, kept in close confinement.”

“And what will finally be done with them?”

“That is very uncertain. Some may be kept for many years, possibly for life, and others may be put to death.”

Perhaps you may conclude that to hear of such things would be shocking to the finer sensibilities of the young princess. But you must remember that much depends on how one has been educated in such things. Thermuthis was reared in a time of much warfare, and her father was himself a great warrior, so that she had not been taught to look upon these things as wrong. On the contrary, she was proud of her father as a conqueror. Therefore, to see kings whom he had subdued and taken captive chained to his chariot and dragged through the streets, did not violate her sense of propriety. And many other horrible things done to prisoners of war received her approval, because it was not reasonable that she should know any better, being the daughter of this great warrior-king. But toward the oppressed who had not taken up arms against the king she ever felt a kindly sympathy, and was ready to advocate their cause.

“Who are those to our right, in those cells with white fronts?” she asked.

“Those are Hebrews who have been guilty of some offense threatening the safety of our nation, or suspected of complicity with foreign enemies, or of mutiny, or of some act infringing upon the honor of the royal family. Tradition says that there

the celebrated Joseph, the first Hebrew that ever came into Egypt, was imprisoned.”

“Yes, I remember having heard the tradition of his imprisonment, but did not know before that this was thought to be the place. Was it not found out at last to be a false imprisonment, father?”

“I am not so sure as to that; I know he was at last released on account of important service rendered to the king in the interpretation of his dream. He afterwards proved to be of still greater service by reason of his superior wisdom and discretion, and was finally promoted to the responsible place of governor over all the land of Egypt.”

“Father, are these Hebrews who are in Egypt now really dangerous to the kingdom? I thought they were always considered a quiet, peaceable people. Besides, they are kept so busy at their tasks in these days that I should think they would have little time or opportunity for mutiny and rebellion.”

“They are a very remarkable race of people. They seem to have no opportunities for study or improvement, and yet they possess more than ordinary knowledge on almost every subject. More than once public attention has been called to this singular fact, and inasmuch as it is a well-known fact that the state of servitude of menials is most surely perpetuated through their ignorance, the tasks of these people have been increased from time to time that they might be too busy to gain knowledge. Their young men are put to hard la-

bor on the public works early, even while they are yet lads, to prevent this education, and yet they show intelligence even beyond their years.”

“This is indeed very remarkable, and invests their history with more than ordinary interest. But, father, is it altogether right to burden the young for the purpose of intercepting their education?”

“The safety of the kingdom of Egypt demands this, and even more than this. So rapidly is this people increasing, both in wisdom and numbers, that it becomes a source of alarm to the most thoughtful and far-seeing of this great kingdom. Indeed, their rapid growth in numbers is considered so threatening that the expediency of destroying all of the young male children has been resorted to, and is now the prevailing edict of the land.”

“O father!” exclaimed the princess in utter disgust and horror. “How can you suffer this cruelty to helpless, innocent infancy? This is laying a charge and penalty at the wrong door. Right demands that the innocent shall not suffer for the guilty, unless it shall be a voluntary act upon the part of the innocent. Justice will some day cry out on their behalf, and rise up to avenge their innocent blood.”

“Ah, Thermuthis, my child, I tell you these Hebrews will prove to be a dangerous enemy to the house of the Pharaohs some day. Your womanly nature revolts at these prudential measures now,

but you will understand it better when you are older, and somewhat better informed upon these great questions that involve the good and safety of our government. The men are becoming more and more insolent every day, as you very well know; for it was only a few weeks ago that two of the most intelligent of them were committed to prison and are now in one of those cells yonder, for rude and insolent conduct in your presence.”

At this speech of the king, Thermuthis looked greatly surprised, evidently not comprehending his meaning. But she wisely concluded that it would be best to forbear inquiry until they should be alone. The king continued: “These Hebrews are going to be a very dangerous enemy, either to hold or to let go. If sent out, they will become allies of some of Egypt’s strong foes, and thus seek revenge for their alleged wrongs; but if held, it is evident that they are growing and strengthening continually in spite of all precautionary measures to prevent it, and consequently will inevitably become stronger than their masters. And as to this destruction of the young children, it is wise policy instead of cruelty. You know there is a prophecy on record by one of our wisest astrologers to the effect that there shall be born, about this time, a Hebrew child which shall become great, and shall finally deliver his people from bondage.”

“Yes, father, I remember that about one year

ago the astrologer Jambres uttered such a prophecy; and he seems to be so confident of its truth that he is himself alarmed about it. But is it for fear of this that the young male children are being destroyed?"

"This is one of the causes; and to prevent their growth is another."

"But, dear father, if it be true that their numbers are increasing steadily in spite of your most vigorous efforts to prevent it, may we not suppose that there is some unseen power that guides and protects them?"

"My daughter, we worship at the shrine of Isis alone, and do not know this unseen God of the Hebrews."

"But, father, you are a great and powerful king, and yet you can neither prevent nor comprehend this mysterious and rapid growth of the Hebrews. Are they not, in this respect at least, superior to your power? or is there not some hidden power that prospers them independent of you? and if so, is not this secret and unknown power superior to the gods we worship?"

This appeal to reason was so powerful, and the thrust at the impotency of man and all his idols when compared with the great power of God so incisive, that the king, in the absence of a competent answer, was somewhat nettled by it; especially that part which reflected upon him as being inferior to anything either in heaven or earth, a fact of which he was sensible but did not enjoy

being reminded. Therefore his reply was a little more tart than was his wont toward his daughter.

“I think your interest in the Hebrews and their religious belief is just a little more enthusiastic than is either wise or safe.”

“Forgive me, dear father. If the subject is in the least degree unpleasant, we will not pursue it further. But if you will please excuse just one more question, I will ask what you meant by saying that some Hebrew men had recently been imprisoned for rude and insolent conduct toward me. I have no recollection of any such event.”

“It astonishes me to hear you say this, Thermuthis. You surely could not have been aware of your danger on that occasion while passing through a Hebrew village, or else it proves your overconfidence in these people, which makes it all the more dangerous for you. I shall be obliged to prohibit your riding through these quarters, or else increase your guard for your own safety.”

They had by this time again reached the great iron gate at which they had entered nearly an hour before. This conversation between the princess and her father was merely incidental to the occasion. The young enthusiast had learned much more in the little time spent on the prison grounds than most other people would have learned. She asked many questions relative to the prisoners, the management of the prison, and other things not usually thought of by one of her sex and rank. She took great interest in things

that usually interested her father, and hence his more than ordinary interest in having her with him and talking with her. He was very fond of her, and she of him, and her influence over him was wonderful. He seldom became impatient with her, or spoke so sharply as on this occasion. But he was ambitious and vain, and therefore full of conceit, and could not endure any insinuation of weakness or failure, though in this case it was true by his own admission.

They talked very little during the remainder of the ride to the palace. Her thoughts were busy with what she had seen and heard. She was no little perplexed over the incident spoken of by her father with reference to an attack being made upon her attendants, subjecting her to danger and alarm while passing through one of the Hebrew villages. She could recall nothing of the kind to memory, and thought there surely must be some mistake about it. Certainly no such thing could have happened and she remain ignorant of it. She felt that her father's chiding words about her recklessness of danger were not deserved, for she knew that was not her disposition. She resolved to make inquiry of her maids, some of whom always accompanied her, except when she was attended by her father.

Accordingly, on that same afternoon in her private apartments, she had them all assembled, and asked if either of them could recall any occasion on which they had been threatened by highwaymen, or in any way alarmed while passing through



a Hebrew village. At once those two, who had accompanied her on the occasion when she had the talk with the two little Hebrew children, remembered the fright they received by some men whom they supposed to be intoxicated.

“Ah, I remember it well now myself. I am obliged to you for reminding me,” said the princess. Then dismissing her maids she told them that she did not need them any further at present, but desired to be alone.

“Now, I see through the whole matter,” said she to herself. “My father has been deceived by some designing person who seeks revenge upon some one whom he dislikes, and in order to do so, a trifling little nothing has been magnified into a great matter. As a result, some innocent men have been imprisoned and my own character for prudence and discretion has been damaged in the estimation of my father. I shall see him about this matter, both in defense of myself and the cause of right and humanity.”

This she said with an emphasis that would have impressed you that she had great strength of purpose when once her mind was made up to do a thing.

Thus again we see the strange working of that hand of Providence which is ever lifted on behalf of his servants. God has never had a faithful servant in prison that he did not espouse his cause in some way or other. Amram and Ophron needed and longed for “a friend at court,” and were trying to plan for it, but God knew best just when

and how to interfere. Now their desire has come to pass, but without any effort upon their part, or even their knowledge of it. In that lonely prison they are praying, and wondering how they will ever be able to get this desired information to the princess, feeling assured that if they can but effect this they will find a friend in her; and behold! it is done, and they know it not!

God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform.

What if you and I do not know his plans? Our ignorance does not affect him or them. I may be, at this very hour, praying and working for a thing that may already be done or purposed in the Divine mind. If these men had known what was already done they might have ceased to pray for it; but as they did not, their duty was to continue. The beauty of a Christian's trust is that, to him, evil brings good if only it comes from God. They are waiting, God is working. They languish in a dark prison, ignorant of the bright designs fast maturing for them.

His purposes ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.—*Cowper.*

Meanwhile, the king was in no very amiable mood. Poor, proud, ambitious, and yet feeble mortal! Stung with the truth of which the innocent words of his child had reminded him, he begins to cast about for an object of revenge. He

reasoned thus to himself: "I am worried, perplexed, and continually annoyed with these Hebrews. In spite of my efforts to prevent it, they are on the increase, and will become a dangerous foe. Already they are becoming very insolent. I will make an example of some more of them. In three days from this I will have Amram and Ophron executed, and then publish it throughout the entire Hebrew habitation, that others may take warning."

Ah, vain man! What can you do against God? While you are passing sentence, God is preparing to deliver your captives. The conflict is on, the battle rages; who shall win the day? We shall see.

Among the first official acts of the following day upon the part of the king was to sign the death sentences of Amram and Ophron. The black flag was raised over their cell; they saw it, and hope died, *but not their faith in God.*

Evil turns to good in God's hands. Let us learn the difference between having our own way and having faith in God. Things are not always as they appear. Appearances often destroy our expectation and disappoint us, but faith reaches beyond these, and trusts where it cannot see. God's greatest hero is one that trusts him as well in the darkness as in the light. These men now knew, or thought they knew, that not only the worst had been determined against them, but that their end was near. Just at noon the officer stood before the door of the cell in which the condemned men

were confined, and read the king's proclamation, and gave them notice that on the third day from that, and at the same hour of the day, this sentence would be executed.

Of this proceeding upon the part of her father, Thermuthis knew nothing. She knew his temper too well to risk her cause before him till the little unpleasant episode of the previous day had somewhat passed from his mind. Therefore, while her father was signing the death warrants, she was planning to appear before him on their behalf. She said: "The third day from this I shall appear and present my cause."

Ah, child, if you but knew that on the same day that you had fixed to plead their cause the king had fixed to put their case beyond your reach, I think you would hasten your plans.

## CHAPTER X.

### AMRAM'S FAMILY.

“Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.” (Genesis xviii. 17-19.)

AS has been said in a former chapter, and as all who know her would testify, Jochebed was a very superior woman in many respects. Although the wife of Amram, she was also his kinswoman before she became his wife. At that period of the world's history such things were not uncommon, although in the law which was afterwards given to them it was forbidden.

This household was at this time very small, consisting only of the mother and three children. A little baby boy had come to their home since the imprisonment of Amram. When you consider the severe ordeal through which this mother was passing, you will readily agree in the opinion that she was no ordinary woman. Her husband was imprisoned upon a charge of high crime against the government, which would have a tendency to direct public attention to her as in some sense to be suspected of treason also. Now this new object of Egyptian hatred having made his advent

into this home to invite their increased persecution, how could she hope to hold out very long against such fearful odds? What mother does not sympathize with her? Struggling against poverty, with the care of her little Miriam and Aaron, and a newborn infant in her arms, and the sword of the law lifted over the head of that infant, while sentence of death has already been passed upon her husband. She had sympathizing sisters around her, but while they could and did render many little helpful services, they were powerless to deliver her from those threatening evils.

She had heard nothing satisfactory of the fate of her husband. He may have been carried off to some distant part of the kingdom to increase the working force at some weak point, which was frequently done; or he might be dead, so far as she knew or could hear; but she felt sure that whether living or dead, he was or had been true to his people, true to her, and true to his God, even to the end. She had some knowledge of the great government prison in the city, and shuddered to think that in all probability he had been shut up in it; and if so, it meant little less than death itself. But she had no time for repining. These little mouths were to be filled, and these little bodies were to be clothed, and the principal responsibility was upon her. True, the government supplied, or pretended to supply, them, but that was too meager to depend upon. When the husband was at his work it was insufficient for an ordinary

family, and still more so when for any cause he was not at his post.

The Hebrews were, in fact, obliged to live from the government supplies, for all the able-bodied men were at work, either upon the public buildings, in the brickyards, or cultivating the lands to supply the government storehouses or commissaries. No man's time was his own. It was literally true that they "served with rigor," so that there was no time left them in which to provide the simplest support for themselves and families. They went to their work at a very early hour, and continued throughout the day. And when it is remembered that there was seldom any rain, and no winter weather to interfere with the work, you will readily understand that the going out to work and returning were very regular, even a monotonous thing.

There was no Sabbath day, at least for the men. It may have been observed, and doubtless was, by those who were not obliged to labor for the king. What cared he for the Hebrew Sabbath? Do you think he would let a half million of strong men be idle one day out of seven for what he regarded as no more than a religious whim? The son of this king, about eighty years later on, declared publicly, "I know not the Lord," and it is to be presumed that his father did not know him; and if he did not, it is hardly reasonable to suppose that he would recognize the Lord's Sabbath by allowing his Hebrew slaves to observe it. And yet it is a

great mystery of human endurance to think of men laboring “with rigor,” which means no less than great excess of toil, for three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, and keeping it up from year to year during the entire period of manhood. But such were their lives under Pharaoh-Rameses II. No doubt some fell, unable to endure the terrible strain upon their physical strength, but not a sufficient number to deplete their ranks or interfere with their growth.

Jochebed had her hands and her heart both full, and that the hands were full was so much the better for the heart. For two months this dreadful strain had been upon her, but now it was increased a hundred-fold. The time which had heretofore been given to other matters must now be devoted largely to the task of *hiding the babe!* Little Miriam is now her dependence for help, and right nobly does she perform her part. She is “mother’s little woman,” and she can trust her either with her little three-year-old brother Aaron or the baby brother, and feel perfectly safe. And it was well that she could, for it was now a necessity.

Many were the anxious, childish questions that the little boy Aaron asked about his father, but she concealed nothing from him; indeed, it had been the habit of her life to let her children feel that she trusted them fully. She told them all that she knew and feared relative to their father. She also told them all about the danger that threat-



ened the babe. This was wise, for she thereby secured their hearty sympathy and coöperation.

“Will my father come home to see his baby?” he would sometimes ask.

“I hope so, my darling. I am sure, if he is living and free to do so, that nothing ordinary will keep him from coming.”

“Does God know the baby has come to live with us?”

“Yes, dear; God gave, or rather lent him to us. He is God's little baby, as well as ours.”

“The king does not know my little brother is here, does he, mother?”

“No, dear; and I hope he will not know it, for should he or any of his people find it out, they will come and take him away, and throw him into the river.”

As the mother spoke these words she involuntarily looked around, as if she feared that some one might be near who would betray her secret.

“Then God knows more than the king,” reasoned the little philosopher.

“Yes, thanks be to his holy name; and what is better still, the king can do nothing that God does not permit him to do.”

“Then God will not let him take and kill *his* baby, will he, mother?”

The little fellow knew not how deeply his childish questions were probing that mother's heart in search of its faith. How strong is your faith? Can you trust God to take care of *his* child?

“I trust so, my boy; but he has committed it to our care, and we must do what we can to keep it from harm. He will help us, but he expects us to do our best.”

“Do all little children belong to God, mother?”

“Yes, the same as our baby does.”

“Then why does he let the king kill *any* of them?”

“No one can tell this any more than they can explain the apparent difference in all his providences. The wisest people cannot tell this. He may allow them to kill our baby, but that should not cause us to think for a moment that he does not care for him. We are not expected to understand these things, but still God has a reason for all that he does; but we could not understand or appreciate it even if we knew what it was.”

While this answer did not fully enlighten the little fellow, it satisfied him; for, young as he was, he could understand that if God was as great, wise, and good as his mother had always taught him to believe, it was right and proper for him to exercise his own supreme will without explanation to his creatures. The keeping of us in ignorance is no proof that he does not *want* us to know, but only that we do not *need* to know, or could not understand or appreciate it if we knew.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan his work in vain;  
God is his own interpreter,  
And he will make it plain.

The work of destruction was going on among

the male children throughout the land, and there was great distress among the people. But they were learning much by this bitter experience. They found out and invented many ways of concealing their children which they did not know or think of at first. It is said that "necessity is the mother of invention," and surely if there was ever necessity pressing upon a people, it was pressing upon them now. There are few things that necessity will not push out to meet an extremity, especially when such grave issues as those which involve life are at stake.

May not that strange and mysterious expression found in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews have reference to some occasion like this? "They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented." These people resorted to all sorts of disguises imaginable for the purpose of concealment.

Jochebed had thus far been fortunate in not having been visited by either soldiers or officers in search of the babe, which was only about two weeks old. Suspicion had not yet been aroused, but she dare not wait for actual danger to present itself before taking steps for his safety as far as possible. Little Miriam was continually on guard. She was a wise and prudent child for her years, and exceedingly skillful in the ordinary domestic work. With a little instruction from her mother she constructed a very unique and snug hiding place for the little soft bundle of humanity in case

of alarm. And on no account, by day or night, was the front entrance of their dwelling left unbarred for a single moment. No one could enter without giving sufficient notice to get the babe out of the way.

With all of their forethought and precaution they were not absolutely safe, but these measures, together with their constant watchfulness, reduced the danger to the minimum degree. Their chief preparation for safety to the child was their faith in God and prayer to him for help and protection. After using their utmost skill, they leaned on the Omnipotent Arm for their help, for "he is their help and their shield."

So far all went well in their home. But this did not cause them to relax their vigilance. Herein lies a lesson. This in a Christian's life would prevent many and dire calamities. To watch, and wear the armor, is absolute safety to the Christian soldier. Therefore, most of their spiritual calamities come through relaxation of spiritual vigilance. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

One night when the babe was about fifteen days old, just before the ordinary time for them to retire, they plainly heard footsteps approaching by the front way. They had but to listen a moment to be sure that they were not mistaken, for the noise of the walking drew nearer each moment. The ever-alert Miriam needed no words from her mother to quicken her agile movements. In a mo-

ment she had the little one in her arms and was hurrying to the place that she had prepared for his concealment. Quickly but gently she tucked him away in a little pocket closet in the side of the wall, and a gentle shaking, patting movement of the little bundle, accompanied with the tender, low, assuring "hush-sh-sh-sh"—and the little velvety eyelids closed—and the babe was asleep again. Then with an easy touch she closed the little door, and a casual observer would never detect the presence of a door at all.

All of this required but a little time, such was the previous preparation and the skill with which she performed her task. Then came a knock at the front door. The mother's heart was in her mouth, so to speak; and poor little Aaron was trembling with fear. But the gentleness of the knock was somewhat reassuring, for no rough soldier or officer would have thought of being so mild and respectful at the door of the despised Hebrew. All was quiet for a moment, then came another knock, accompanied by a voice saying: "Jochebed, do not be afraid; open the door." The mother threw up her hands with an exclamation of joy, and Miriam flew to the door shouting, "It is father! it is father!" and for joy could scarcely unbar the door. Sure enough there stood Amram, pale and thin from confinement and lack of food and fresh air. Jochebed was almost overcome with surprise and joy, for she would almost as soon have expected to see some one from the

dead. The children jumped into his arms, clung to his neck, kissing him again and again passionately, while tears ran out of their eyes for very joy. He embraced them all lovingly, while his own eyes were blinded with tears of joy and gratitude.

“Why, wife, how pale and weary you look!” he said, as he gazed anxiously into her face. “But the wonder is that you do not look even worse than you do, poor, lonely soul! Yet praised be the God of our fathers for preserving us all alive to see each other’s faces once more!”

And again the grateful and happy father and husband embraced his no less glad and happy family. The little boy was wild with joy, climbing into his father’s arms, sitting upon his lap, putting his little arms around his neck; then jumping down to run and fetch some little possession to show to his father which he thought that he had not seen.

Suddenly remembering the latest arrival in the home since his father went away, he was about to tell it, but, discovering that his father’s attention was at the moment absorbed by something else, he climbed for perhaps the twentieth time into his lap and, standing on his little knees, took his father’s face between his hands, shaking it gently and calling, “Father, father.” Finally, by dint of shaking and calling, he succeeded in getting his attention directed especially to himself.

“What is it my little man wants to tell me?”

“We’s got a little baby, and he’s my little brother. God gived him to us; and the king’s bad mens don’t know he’s here, ’cause we keeps him hid. Didn’t you know it, father? I did.”

These questions and revelations came showering upon him so thick and fast that no time was given for a word of reply till they were ended. Amram’s eyes sought those of his wife, who was in turn watching him to see what effect the sudden news would have upon him. A smile of new pleasure lighted up his countenance, to be quickly followed by a shadow. Joy that another son was born unto his name, but, alas! it brought additional peril to his home. How could they shield him? What a strange mingling of joy and dark forebodings in the hearts of this family to-night! Little Aaron had the joy without the forebodings, but not so with the rest of the household. The shadow shut out much of the sunlight of joy. But there was one window through which light always came, however dark the world was on the outside: the window of hope, opened by an unshaken faith in the promises of God. This window was never closed by any hand except that of *distrust*.

The childish tongue rattled on, pouring out the joy of a glad little heart into ears that were open, but not altogether attentive to the innocent prattle, for the thoughts were busy with the serious feature that had thrust itself before him. The child, seeing that he was not accorded full attention, and not having received any answer, and also observing

the serious shadow upon his father's face, asked in a somewhat disappointed tone: "Are you glad, father?"

"Yes, my darling boy, father *is* glad; but where is this little stranger you speak of? I do not see him about here anywhere."

The child stood before his father with an air of importance, his hands crossed behind his back; and with a very significant wag of his head, he said: "He's hid."

Again Amram's eyes sought the face of his wife, as if he would ask, "What does all this mean?" But the amused twinkle in the telltale eyes assured him that it meant only something innocent. She gave the little boy a significant nod of her head, as if to say, "Go on and tell it," which he understood, and moving up a little closer to his father, he said, in a suppressed but distinct tone: "He's in the closet."

Amram now saw through a part of the mystery. In their alarm at his approach, they hid the child, thinking that perhaps some of their numerous enemies were coming to search for the babe.

"Now is a good time," said Jochebed, "to test the security of our hiding place. Aaron has told you where the babe is, now suppose you try to find the 'closet.'"

He was only too glad of an excuse to try his skill at so delightful a task, for he was all anxiety to see the little stranger. But he was soon con-



vinced that it was not an easy undertaking, for when he had searched in every conceivable place, he was no wiser than when he began. This was very amusing to the children, and they danced about and clapped their hands in innocent glee to see their father fail to find the baby.

“Are you right sure, now, that he is in the house?” said he, pretending to doubt their fairness in the test.

“Quite sure, father,” said Miriam. “You certainly do not suppose we would let our little baby be alone out in the darkness.”

They all enjoyed his failure, and he not less than they; for if he, being familiar with the house, could not find the hiding place of the babe, how should anyone who knew nothing about it? The greatest danger lay in the child's awaking and making a noise. Of this they were aware, but could not provide against it.

“I give it up,” said Amram, to the great amusement of the children.

“Then I'll help you, father,” said Miriam.

She led the way, followed by her father and Aaron. In her own little bedchamber, where once there had been a window, but being of little use had been closed up with ceiling boards, she stopped, pressed upon a little spring which looked like the head of a small iron bolt, and a door fell open. There lay a bundle of goatskins, all that was visible. A feeble movement beneath them indicated that the babe had been wakened by the

noise around it. Miriam lifted him out and laid him in her father's arms. Tears once more filled his eyes, and his once strong frame shook with emotion. His full heart overflowed in words something like those of good old Simeon, fourteen hundred years after this: "May this child be set for the rising again of many in Israel. We know not but that he will be taken from us before the morning light, but we trust that God may raise him up to honor his name and bless his people. Thou knowest, O God, that thy servant has been afraid for his nation of people, lest we should be brought to naught for lack of young men, seeing that the king's command worketh the destruction of all the young male children in the land. So that thy servant betook himself to prayer, entreating the God of our fathers to have mercy upon us, and afford us deliverance from the evils that darken our lives, and bring to naught the hope of our enemies, who would destroy our people. Send safety, I entreat thee, to this child, and to all of our house; and if it please thee to visit at this time thy people Israel, hear now their cry which cometh up before thee continually, and deliver them speedily. Amen."

During this prayer of Amram's, the family stood with bowed and uncovered heads. God was there. With an awful sense of his presence, and a sweet sense of security, they quietly retired for the night. What a memorable night! God stood by his servant that night in his sleep, and

showed his great blessing which he had in reservation for his family and people. In his dreams he saw Abraham come out of Mesopotamia into Canaan. He saw Ishmael and his posterity inhabiting Arabia, and Isaac in the land of Canaan. He saw Jacob, with his household of seventy souls and hundreds of servants, herds, and flocks, come down into Egypt. He followed their fortunes through the centuries of their bondage. He heard Jambres publish the prophecy before Pharaoh regarding the child that should be born, and which had caused the issuing of that dreadful edict for the destruction of all the young male children. He saw, as it were, the finger of God pointing to this babe as the child of that prophecy. He saw the mighty hand of God leading him to great honor, and the favor of God resting upon his house forever. So vivid was all this that he awakened and told the vision to Jochebed his wife.

“Ah, my husband,” she said, “God is good and true, and doubtless means to work out many wonderful things. But we are poor and humble, and can do nothing against the king’s will. If God means to make of us instruments of his power, he at least expects us to act promptly and faithfully our part, as though everything depended upon us without him; and then to trust him implicitly, as though everything depended upon him without us.”

Mothers, ponder these wise words of your He-

brew sister's faith. Work as though God was not expected to help you, and then trust as though you had done nothing.

“Yes, my dear Jochebed,” Amram replied; “this is the secret key to the hidden resources of his power. He can really use no other kind of agent. In all the great movements of the world, according to our tradition, the principal instruments of his power have come out of humble life. We will nourish the babe for him, and await his will.”

## CHAPTER XI.

### A FUNERAL AND KIDNAPPING.

FUNERALS in Egypt in the fifteenth century B.C. were all similar in their general method, but as varied in their character and style as were the conditions and circumstances of the people. So it has ever been.

Our method is to dig a grave, place the body in it, and cover it up, hiding it entirely from view. The only mark by which the place can be pointed out is the little mound and a board at the head and foot of the grave. Soon the board falls down and the mound washes away, and the spot is lost to human view forever. A few of the rich build a vault in which the body is placed at death; some have a marble shaft or slab, but the millions sleep *unnamed and unmarked*.

In the days of which we write (fifteenth century B.C.), when a death occurred it was natural for the friends to think first of embalming the body as it is now for us to think of burying it. It might be costly or cheap as they were able to afford. This process varied as much according to circumstances as burial does with us. But the *poorest* received some such attention, though it might be ever so simple. It is not likely, however, that bodies which were embalmed by the simplest methods

of the poorer class were preserved for any great length of time. Yet it is a fact that in the burying places of the so-called lower class of people many thousands of preserved mummies have been found. This can be accounted for only upon the supposition that they made it one of the principal objects of life *to prepare* for death, not so much with reference to the soul as to the body. It is said that the ancient Egyptians considered death as the chief event of their stay on the earth, and therefore began to prepare for it early, and never ceased till it came. They believed in the future existence of both soul and body; that Osiris would take care of their souls, but that it devolved upon them in a very great degree to take care of the body. Thousands spent more upon their death than upon their life. Oh, that men now were wise to get ready for death! not so much with reference to the body as to the soul.

Near the ancient city of Thebes there is said to be a space five miles square full of sepulchers excavated in the native calcareous rock. In this space millions are laid side by side, and in many instances one above another as much as six tiers deep. Some of this ground was doubtless set apart for the common people. One evidence of this is the absence of costly sculpturing, such as is to be seen among the rich and great. Here also was found the well-preserved bodies of many sacred animals, birds, and reptiles. In 1881 a very important discovery was made five miles east of Thebes. A

gallery was found cut in the cliffs in which there were thirty-nine mummies of royal and priestly persons. There were also a great many mortuary statues relating to these mummies and others that were lost. Those mummy cases bore dates corresponding to the eighteenth dynasty. Among the royal ones was found that of Rameses II., the reigning Pharaoh at the time referred to in this story.

It is not to be supposed that this was the place of their first sepulture, but they were perhaps hidden here by the priests at the time of the invasion of Cambyses, which occurred B.C. 525. They feared him greatly, and hated him no less. They have published many ridiculous stories of his brutality and sacrilegious conduct, much of which was born of their prejudice.

We can hardly suppose that very many of the Hebrew dead, after the time of Joseph, or at most a few generations thereafter, received first-class embalming; that is, the use of first-class material, such as would insure permanent preservation of the body. There is no doubt, however, but that he caused his father's body to be embalmed after the process of the Egyptians, in a first-class manner, for he was fully able to do so. That being the case, there is no doubt of its present evidence if it has not been rudely interfered with. If the mummy of Rameses II., whose body was embalmed and laid away to rest only about three hundred years after Jacob's was found twelve years ago in a perfect state of preservation, why may not that of the

father of the Hebrews be still resting “in the cave of the field of Machpelah,” where his sons buried him at his own request?

Yet there is a still more important sense in which we think of and compare or contrast the two men. Though the body of the Egyptian king be preserved in form, and his name may live in history as one of the greatest conquerors and rulers of the world, yet the souls of the two men have long since stood before the great King of kings. And at the last day each will resume “his own body,” and answer for the “deeds done” therein—the one to be proud of his twelve sons and their generations, and the other to answer for his cruel treatment of them.

We come now to relate a story of death, a feature of man’s experience which thrusts itself upon us to be noticed whether welcome or unwelcome. It comes unexpectedly to the best of families. So it has fallen to the experience of one of the families of this story. Let us not refuse to look at it, for it is often better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting; one has food only for the body, while the other has instruction for the soul.

Unexpectedly, Father Ishmael was taken suddenly and dangerously ill, resulting, as supposed, from the injuries received in the unfortunate disaster of which an account has been heretofore given. The best of care and medical attention seemed to avail nothing. He grew worse contin-



ually, and his friends saw that the end was near. Speaking to his son, Levi Ishmael, he said: "My son, I shall be gathered to my fathers soon. Bury me with my own people. You will not be able to embalm my body, except after a very cheap and common manner, but my hope is in God, that though my dust shall mingle with Egyptian soil, my soul shall rest with God. The generations that shall come after me shall see the land of promise, though many generations intervene before that long-looked-for time shall come. My blessings I give you, my son, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob keep you in perfect peace."

The aged father spoke with animation of the hope of the final deliverance of his people from bondage. And it is true that some who then lived did actually march out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses, but not one of them ever saw the promised land.

Thus passed away an aged Hebrew father. He might have lived a number of years longer but for the unfortunate disaster. A victim of reckless cruelty, he was doubtless robbed of a few years on earth, according to the average duration of human life in that age of the world. The family mourned the loss of the grand old man. No more would they hear his voice; no more would he go in and out before them, teaching both by word and example. If Joseph made mention of the departure out of Egypt when *he* died, how much

more should these who had felt the sting of bondage in its worst form? The living cried unto God for deliverance, and the dying prophesied of the coming event. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Heb. xi. 13.)

Father Ishmael's body was taken in charge by the embalmers at a very cheap rate, for you must know that the Hebrews had few and meager opportunities to provide for such things, and little time even to devote to the burial of their dead. The time required for the embalming was from twenty to seventy days, according to grade of process. Of course, that required for this case was the shortest. This having been accomplished, the usual formal application was made to the proper authorities for permission to go and bury the dead. This certificate of permission was necessary to protect them from molestation by the patrol, as no gathering of the people was allowed for any purpose without this permission. Even then only a few of the immediate family and friends were allowed to attend.

When we witness scenes like this, where sorrow and bereavement are embarrassed by restrictions, orders, and limitations, we see Hebrew bondage in one of its worst features: only a little time given for the last sacred service to the departed, and even that little privilege environed with re-

strictions till the sad pleasure is robbed of its sweetest satisfaction.

The body is accompanied by the family and their friend Samuel, and a few other very near friends and relatives, to the sepulcher previously prepared for its reception. The simple but solemn ceremony is finished, and Father Ishmael rests with his fathers in the great "city of the dead," where sleep millions of the "house of Israel," including the bodies of the "seventy souls which came down into Egypt with Jacob" in the "long ago." Peace be to their ashes! God will make them all live again.

Calamities seldom come singly, but are often like a little stream receiving tributaries, and gathering force and momentum till it becomes a mighty torrent. Or, like the gathering tempest that draws every passing current into its sweeping wings till it becomes a mighty, roaring, rushing tornado, leveling whole landscapes, demolishing great cities, and shaving the forest trees from the mountains like grain before the keen blade of the reaper. So "storms of sorrow fall," and streams of adversity unite their strength and overflow many hearts and homes in their dreadful sweep.

The community, where we have just been following our friends through a season of bereavement, was thrown into great and grievous commotion on the evening of the day of the funeral, by the mysterious disappearance of one who was greatly beloved by all. When Samuel and Na-

both his son returned home from the funeral of Father Ishmael they were greatly shocked to find several neighbors gathered there, and the family in great distress. Their first thought was that little Benjamin had been found and carried off. But they soon learned that this was not the case, but that a greater calamity than death had come to them this time. *Rachel had not been seen for several hours!* She had gone out on the commons, as was her custom, to call up their little flock for the purpose of folding them for the night, and had not returned. It was their custom to let their flock range upon the pasture lands during the day, and to bring them in for safety at night. This duty was usually performed by the female members of the family and the small boys who were not of sufficient age to be put to labor upon the public works. Often had Rachel done this, sometimes accompanied by her younger sister, but on this particular occasion she had gone alone. Could it be possible that she had been belated and had lost her way? No, she was too familiar with all of the fields and hills adjacent to have made such a mistake. A little circumstance had happened since she left the house, which ordinarily would scarcely have been noticed, but now gave additional grounds for fear. A company of soldiers had been seen to pass, going in the same direction that Rachel had gone a short time before, and that ever-to-be-dreaded "Old Sol" was with them. Moreover, they were followed by a close carriage,

drawn by two beautiful black horses. Ordinarily the very natural supposition would have been that it was only some officer of high rank going under escort to inspect some of the public works. But in spite of this natural and reasonable suggestion, the mother of the missing girl could not help fearing that all of this was in some way connected with her strange disappearance.

Since the rescue of the babe, the family had lived in constant dread of the wrath of "Old Sol," and the more the mother thought about his being in company with the passing soldiers, the more her fears increased, until, long before her husband and son came home, she had spread the alarm through the neighborhood. And now, as the hours went by with no tidings from the missing girl, all began to think with the mother that something dreadful had happened to Rachel.

The men were at once organized into searching parties, to go out and explore all of the regions round about. It must be admitted, however, that few, if any, of them had any hope of success; yet for their own satisfaction and that of the family, they would put forth every effort, and leave nothing undone to find her or some satisfactory evidence of what had become of her.

These Hebrew people were brave, strong, and willing enough to undertake almost any task involving hardships or danger, provided the Egyptians were not to be met and antagonized. But they had been so long under iron rule that as a general thing they

accepted tamely and without resistance whatever of oppression, wrong, or cruelty came to their lot. They could face storms, darkness, floods, and even wild beasts, and would willingly do so if duty called. This is abundantly proved from their history both before and after this period: brave and intelligent in peace and war. But for proof of their utter lack of spirit before their oppressors, the Egyptians, read how only a few years later they chided their best and truest friend, Moses, for stirring up the wrath of the Egyptians against them. "And they [the people] met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh; and they said unto them, The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us." (Exodus v. 20, 21.)

This timidity is not to be wondered at when it is remembered that for nearly a half-dozen generations they had known nothing else but to be driven, oppressed, and ill-treated by them, and they keenly felt their inability to contend against them; and furthermore, every attempt to better their condition only resulted in making it worse. If Rachel had been lost in the hills, or carried off as a prisoner by foreigners, they would stop at no daring adventure for her rescue; but from what evidence they could gather, they feared she was in the hands of their cruel masters, and their hearts sank within them.

In vain they traversed the fields and woods far and near and made inquiry for the lost girl. No sign was discovered of her nor word of intelligence heard from her. The whole community is in the deepest sympathy with the agonized parents. Do you conclude that this family are receiving more than their share of trouble? Think of a half million of families subject to similar or even worse trials. Think, too, that thousands of them suffer untold wrongs that this book nor any other can possibly portray. Let the picture be ever so dreadfully painted, the reality can never be told.

Joel was wild with excitement and grief. He drew in his imagination the most dreadful pictures of Rachel's condition. He thought of hundreds of plans to get on the track of her captors, only to abandon them in despair. He had no doubt now of her having been abducted, and carried he knew not where. What would he not give for the privilege of suffering and dying with her? Where should he go, or what could he do? His brain reeled as he thought of his beloved Rachel *in the hands of "Old Sol,"* the robber chief, the blood-thirsty, revengeful wretch of whom he had heard and had a horror all of his life; the terror of his boyhood days, of whom he had often had horrid dreams; he who sought revenge, not only as a matter of retaliation, but for *sweet pleasure!* The brute that owed this Hebrew family a special taste of his power of revenge had no doubt taken this time and method to accomplish it. The thought

drove him almost to madness. He said: "I will be revenged; I will give my life to this end. I will rescue her, if living; and if dead, his blood shall pay for hers."

Thus ran the premature ravings of a mind swaying between hope and despair. Poor fellow! what could he do? And yet he would say: "No time is to be lost. Perhaps at this very moment she is shut up in some dreadful prison, and is calling for help." With this thought, he again rushed out into the darkness, hurrying off in the direction she was said to have taken when she left the house. The cooling night air helped to quiet his maddened brain, and he became more composed. He began to reason: "What am I doing here? This silly raving will never accomplish anything. I am neither a child nor a madman, to act in this way. Nothing can be accomplished without a plan. Let me think a moment. Yes, it was he, the old robber! It is revenge he seeks. Wretch! He knows the kind of a blow to strike that will hurt the most. Wise and subtle as a serpent, and a thousand times meaner. Yes, that is why he had the carriage along. He knew her habit of going out to bring in the flocks at night, and was on the watch. She was seized and thrust into the carriage to suppress her cries. But where have they gone with her? Ah! the hollow darkness echoes, Where? I *must* and *will* answer this question. Heaven help me!"

Young man, you forget yourself. Where are you to get the time to redeem this rash vow. Do



you forget that you are a slave? What will your taskmasters say if you are not in your place to-morrow? What do they care for your broken heart and ruined hopes? Then remember also that you are a son of Abraham, the faithful friend of God, and "the father of the faithful." Are you going to forfeit your trust in him who has promised so much to Abraham and his seed? and are you not of his seed? "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them because they trust in him." The time came, and very soon, when he thought upon, and gave heed to, such questions and considerations as these, and acted wisely and prudently.

No sleep came to the eyes of that sorrowful family that night. They felt that it would have been a sweet pleasure to have buried their Rachel, compared to the fate she had evidently met. But just what that fate was no one could tell. Yet the indications justified the conclusion that she had been kidnapped and carried off, but whither, they knew not. Doubtless "Old Sol" had planned the whole scheme. Having a grudge at the family, he resolved on some kind of terrible revenge. Not being able to find out the whereabouts of the little babe, and not knowing exactly whom to blame for his defeat, he determined to bring a calamity upon the family that would be likely to hurt them worse even than the loss of the child. This, however, would not be tolerated by the

king, and hence he would not be protected in it as if he should destroy the babe. The utmost secrecy must be maintained, and the greatest care taken to conceal his movements and cover up his tracks. To do this he must secure the help and coöperation of some of the king's officials, who are as low and mean as himself, and thereby escape detection. He belonged to a secret band or association, the sole object of which was to carry on what, in our day, would be called a slave trade, only this was confined to a limited circle within the kingdom of Egypt. But like all such iniquitous business, it was carried on solely by men who were destitute of any conscience, who would not hesitate to stoop to any means of getting possession of such human beings as would bring the best prices in the market; hence their usual method was to steal or kidnap them from their homes. Then they were not offered for sale outright, but under a pretext of having these persons to maintain they offered them for "hire" or sale for a given length of time.

It was lawful to sell *for life* foreigners taken in war, but none of the king's subjects could be so disposed of. Men can, however, easily practice a fraud for money; consequently Hebrew girls were sometimes stolen from their homes and sold as foreigners, or captives. But the king had interdicted this custom, so that those engaged in it were obliged to be very careful and secret in their operations. Their victims were so terrorized and

intimidated by threats that they dared not reveal the secret.

Sometimes a purchaser would connive at illegitimate sales because they could get a cheap bargain by so doing. This temptation is the natural outgrowth of such a business, because stolen property can be sold cheaper than that for which has been paid a reasonable valuation, and men have ever been too ready to pocket their consciences in view of a good trade. It is true, therefore, that a thief will sell his stolen property for whatever he can get for it, and, *shame upon humanity, he can always find a purchaser.*

The men who did the work of capturing these girls were of the same class with those who do such work everywhere, and in all ages of the world; low, vulgar, brutal, and willing to work cheap. It was doubtless this class of low fellows who crucified the Saviour, and such work came very natural to them, as they were "in the business." No doubt they agreed to do it for the "spoils," and as much "sour wine" as they wanted to drink. Hence for their pay "they parted his raiment, and for his thirst they offered him a part of their miserable drink."

Now it will not be difficult for the reader to guess the doom of poor Rachel, with this outline of such a brutal custom as existed at that time. Only a few of the best-informed Hebrews knew of the existence of such a custom, or traffic; then it is not surprising that the family of this un-

fortunate girl had not the slightest idea of what purpose her captors had in view. Many were thus taken from their homes, and their relatives and friends never knew what became of them for years, and may be not at all.

This feature of Hebrew home life you would do well to study in the light of the ancient Scriptures, and their history by Josephus.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE FLIGHT AND THE PRISON.

IF the reader will take the trouble to compare the scene of kidnapping, slavery, and speculation, given in the preceding chapter, with what knowledge he may already have of such things in all the history of the world, he will see that human bondage, with its attendant evils and abuses, has been a thing of history running through the very existence of the race. But it is impossible for slavery to exist without the temptation for men to indulge in its abuse by inhuman and fraudulent speculation. You may as well suppose that horses and mules could have a commercial valuation without men dealing in them as a branch of trade. This they do *without reference to the state of suffering to which they may subject the animal*. But who are the *sinner*s when slaves are bought and sold, or rather *stolen* and sold? for this was the wicked cause of the first introduction of slavery into the Southern States of America. Who is it that disregards all suffering brought upon the slave for the sake of money? Evidently the kidnapper and speculator. As a general thing the slave is far better off in the hands of his *owner* than in the hands of thieves and speculators, who feel no further interest in

him than his commercial value extended. And yet these *owners* are the vile wretches who get all the abuse that their critics see fit to heap upon them.

At the time of which we write there were a great many slaves in Egypt, besides the Hebrews. All of the Delta lands were cultivated by slaves; many of them were captives taken in war. There may have been, and doubtless were, many Egyptian laborers, but for the most part the best skilled labor, as well as the severest toil, was performed by the Hebrews. They built the most splendid temple ever known to Egyptian history. They constructed those grand fortresses that have been the wonder of all the ages. They erected those extensive granaries that dotted the agricultural part of the kingdom, which doubtless were modeled after those built by Joseph in the "seven years of plenty."

The figures upon many of their great monuments show these Hebrews at work making bricks, with overseers standing by, and some show them in the act of beating the laborers with rods. Rameses feared them. He foresaw, or thought he foresaw, that if their kindred from Syria should come down to invade his kingdom they might fall in with them and make common cause against him. This gave him the greater uneasiness, because to enter and invade Egypt they would pass through that part of the land inhabited by the Hebrews. Therefore, he fortified his eastern bor-

der, built new and powerful fortresses in Goshen, partly to protect himself against invasion, and partly for the purpose of keeping watch over the Hebrews.

The troops stationed at these points were chiefly Libyans, who were not likely to sympathize with the Hebrews. There has been found in an ancient temple at Karnak an engraving embodying the principal facts in a treaty which Rameses made with the chief of the Khitas of Karnak for the recovery of fugitives who might escape over the border and into their country. He also required the Hebrews along this border to labor in small squads, so that they might be the more easily guarded, all of which is conclusive proof of what has been said—*i. e.*, he feared them. He kept such a vigilant eye upon all of their work and movements that it required a large standing army for this purpose. They watched their enemies by day and by night, both within and without.

A feeling of dislike sprang up in the minds of the Egyptians toward the Hebrews when they first learned their occupation, namely, that of shepherds. "For every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians" (Gen. xlv. 34). This they learned immediately upon the coming of the Hebrews into Egypt, and for four hundred and thirty years it continued unabated, but rather increased. Joseph knew their feeling, and sought to warn his brethren of it that they might escape the odium of such a calling in the eyes of the Egyptians. He

told them to say, when interrogated on the subject, that they were “keepers of cattle.” They did not, however, say as he had instructed them, but confessed that not only they, but their fathers before them, were shepherds.

The Egyptians’ estimate of Hebrew standing being “an abomination” on first acquaintance, it was by no means improved when “there arose another king which knew not Joseph,” and who took away their liberties and reduced them to bondage. This feeling of superiority over the Hebrews grew in the minds of the Egyptians with each succeeding dynasty, and the condition of the former became more and more wretched till, taking their written history as a guide, it would be impossible to exaggerate the unwritten. Tender children, lovely maidens, young men, strong men, fathers, mothers, felt all the weight of the dreadful truth afterwards written of them: “And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor, and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage.” (Ex. i. 13, 14.) The readers of this story are ready to corroborate this statement when they see the bitterness in the home of Samuel, cruel bondage, hard service, which is unremitting both in character and duration. Then this last and worst calamity, added to all the rest of their burdens, comes like a tempest upon their defenseless heads. Rachel, their firstborn, their light and joy, snatched away by a hand worse than death. The tender, loving, trusting, beau-



tiful Rachel, lost to them forever! What great sin has she committed to bring down this dreadful blow upon her young life? Why break the hearts of her loving parents? Why wreck the happiness of the noble young man, Joel? Where is the hand of Providence now? But stop! wait! Do you not see that hand stretched out to help, as it has been in all the past? God has not taken them *out* of the fire, but has walked with them *in* it for more than five generations. And has he lost his skill? Let us follow Rachel, and see.

Sure enough, they were not mistaken in supposing that the soldiers, who were seen passing the home of Samuel on that fatal evening, were in some way connected with the disappearance of the girl. Sure enough, "Old Sol" was with them, and bent on mischief. Sure enough, the surmise of Joel as to the use they intended to make of the carriage was correct. The frightened girl was rudely seized by strong hands, and in spite of her cries for help and struggles to get away, she was forced into the carriage and the doors securely fastened. She fell limp and senseless upon the cushioned seat, where she lay in an unconscious state, how long she knew not. When she recovered consciousness, she was being whirled along at a rapid rate through the darkness, but whither she had not the slightest idea. She secretly thanked God in her heart when she found that she was alone in the carriage. To cry out for help she knew would be useless, for cries would

be heard only by pitiless ears. She could hear the clatter of the horses' hoofs, both in front and rear of the vehicle, which proved that she was closely followed by the cavalry. She realized that escape was impossible, and hence determined to waste no strength at present on the fruitless effort. Now she began to hear other voices and the rattle of many vehicles, and to see many lights all around. She thought of crying out to make her distress known, but just as she was about to do so the carriage came to a sudden stop. She trembled with fear that perhaps those same rough hands were again about to drag her out as roughly as they had thrust her into the carriage. A face, covered with rough beard, appeared at the door, and a gruff voice said threateningly: "Be quiet now, at the peril of your life!" Then the carriage began again to move, but slowly. Now the wheels rumbled as if on the floor of a boat. Now the splash of oars plainly told that they were crossing the river. After a few minutes the carriage begins again to move. On and on, amidst increasing noises and blazing lights. They are in the city of Memphis! On, on they dash through the principal part of the city. Poor prisoner! helpless and doomed; afraid to speak, or scarcely to breathe. Now they come to narrow streets, and where the lights are dim. Again the carriage stops; and this time the door opens, and a grim-featured man stands there. He speaks to her in a suppressed but distinct tone: "Here you are to stop. Take

notice! you are to follow me without resistance or making any noise. If you do so all will be well for the present, but if not you will be bound and gagged. It will be much better for you to do as you are bidden. So now come, follow me.”

These last words were spoken in a tone of *command*. Knowing that resistance would be not only in vain, but the very height of folly, she alighted from the carriage and followed the man through a dimly lighted hall. The building was old and had the appearance of having been once a temple. Inserting a huge key into the lock of a great door, the guide opened it. When they passed through, it closed behind them with a bang. They now stood at the foot of a stairway, which they at once ascended. The poor girl was so exhausted from fright and fatigue that it was with great difficulty she could follow. But she struggled on, fearing either to speak or falter, lest the man should put into execution his angry threat. At the top of this flight of steps they came to another closed door, which the guide unlocked and pushed open. There was no light beyond this door, but the man turned to Rachel, and without speaking waved his hand toward the open door, which meant for her to go in. She stepped upon the threshold, but the black darkness within caused her to hesitate, whereupon the man gave her a push, which sent her headlong into the dark room, and closed the door behind her and departed. She felt as if she would die of fright.

She screamed out at the top of her voice and sank upon the floor in helpless terror.

“O God, pity and help me!” she moaned. Silence and darkness as of death were all about her. She feared to stir; yet with her awful surroundings she could not but feel a sense of relief at the thought that, at least for the present moment, she was rid of her captors. But what would next happen was as dark to her as the room she occupied. She thought of her home, her father and mother, her brother and little sister, and poor little Benjamin, whose life was in danger every hour. She wondered if they missed her, and what they were doing. She thought of Joel, her ideal, and wondered if he was doing anything to rescue her. “Surely he will risk his life if need be,” she thought. But alas! what could he do? He knew not where they had taken her, and if he knew, he was powerless to reach her. Indeed, she did not herself know where she was. True, she knew she had crossed the river and passed through a part of the city, but that was all. For all that she could tell, she might be incarcerated in a prison of loathsome lepers, or a den of thieves and cutthroats. Oh, how dreadful her situation! Thousands of dire imaginings rushed through her mind while alone in this dreadful darkness. She had not attempted to rise from the floor where she had fallen when she first entered the room, or whatever kind of a place it was; but now she thought she heard a noise at the opposite side from which

she had entered. It sounded like some one trying to put a key into a lock. Almost at the same moment that this thought entered her mind she distinctly heard the bolt turn, the door opened, and a light flashed into the room.

What a revelation! She was in the very "sanctum" of an old temple, and almost immediately over her was the great monster-looking idol representing a cow. She found that she had entered by the "secret" door through which the priests always passed when they came in to offer sacrifice. Evidently the temple had not been entered for this purpose in a long time. A more gloomy picture than it presented can scarcely be imagined. Rachel shuddered to think she had been all alone in that dreadful place. All this discovery was made in an instant, for the next moment a woman of very forbidding appearance stood in the doorway with a dim lamp in her hand, peering into the room as if she were looking for some object which she had reason to believe was there, but still had not discovered. She looked like one who had been appointed to perform a task, with a heavy penalty attached in case of failure, and that she was utterly without interest in it further than the penalty drove her. She approached where Rachel sat, and as she did so she expressed her dissatisfaction at being thus disturbed in her sleep.

"What made you'uns so late a comin'? Jes' like I wanted to be stayin' up all night waitin' for you'uns to come."

The ridiculousness of the suggestion was somewhat amusing to Rachel, dreadful as was her state of mind. Just as though she had been a party to the arranging of this visit!

“I’m sure I do not know,” she said. “If I had been going to select a time to visit this old temple I am quite certain I should not have chosen this. But why were you waiting specially for me?”

“I didn’t know nothin’ about *you*, but when they’s ’spectin’ to bring in one like you they tells me to stay right here, and I has to do it if it’s all night.”

“Do they often bring people in here as they brought me?” inquired Rachel, with an increased feeling of alarm; for she now began to see more clearly that her being brought here was a premeditated and preconcerted arrangement, and consequently there must be some dreadful purpose in it which she had not yet discovered.

“Yes, chile, they brings a heap of um here, but they carries um off about as fast as they brings um. Sometimes they has a heap of um here, and sometimes only one or two like it is now. But you jes’ come right along wi’ me, chile, ’cause I ain’t got no time to be stayin’ here talkin’ to you this way.”

With this the awkward old creature started back toward the door by which she had entered, commanding Rachel to follow. She led the way into a kitchen, not very remarkable for its cleanliness,

but still it was the place where food was prepared. She pointed to a dirty-looking mat, which Rachel knew meant for her to sit upon. Then she placed before her a tray containing some coarse food. But the poor girl could not eat. If the place and food had been ever so temptingly clean, the dreadful experience through which she had passed in the last few hours and the gloomy prospect of the future were anything else but appetizing or restful. The alarming words of the old woman, about the constant process of bringing in and carrying out girls like her at this place, were to her mind deeply enigmatical, and boded no good to her.

“Where do they carry girls who are taken out from here?” asked Rachel.

“Chile, how could I know? They never comes back, so I never sees um any more after they goes away from here. But I thinks they sells um, 'cause they threatens to sell me when I don't do to please um.”

“O my God, help me! I'm in the hands of *slave dealers!*” For the first time since she was captured, tears flowed freely. She covered her face with her hands and wept aloud. In bitterness she said: “My father and all of our people are in bondage, and we have known nothing else for centuries past, but we are happy because at home with loved ones. We weep, rejoice, and sympathize with one another and live in the sunshine of each other's love. But oh, to be sold to strangers or foreigners, and possibly carried far away to

some distant country, how dreadful! O God, what shall I do?"

Poor, broken-hearted Rachel. It would be a heart of stone that could resist this sad wail. But there is no hand near that is able to help. The old servant, though much used to such scenes, might have been moved by such sorrow; but being herself helpless, it was useless to think of pity. Besides, it was now past midnight, and she was worn out with fatigue and want of sleep, and was sadly in need of rest. It was evident that the prisoner had been left in her charge for the night, and perhaps longer.

"Come, chile," she said, after waiting a few moments for the storm of weeping to pass; "if you ain't goin' to eat nothin' jes' come along wi' me, 'cause I must git through wi' what I has to do some time to-night."

She conducted Rachel up another flight of steps, which led to a large room, more noted for *room* than for anything that was in it. Scattered about over the bare floor were a number of straw mats, presumably for sleeping: it would be giving them a false dignity to call them beds. On one of these, in a corner of the room, lay some one whom, by the dim light, Rachel took to be a young girl. In this she was not mistaken, as she afterwards found out. Judging from what the old woman had told her, she concluded that it was some one in a similar condition to her own, and therefore her sympathies naturally went out toward her. The young



girl was startled by their entrance, but she too, like Rachel, concluded that it was only another ill-fated creature, who had come to share in the wretchedness that was crushing her own young life.

The old woman pointed to one of these piles of straw, thereby indicating to Rachel that she could sleep there, and then proceeded to make herself comfortable on another. There being no seats in the room, the tired girl was obliged to drop down on this repulsive place, for she was now completely exhausted. But, tired as she was, sleep was out of the question except for only a moment at a time when "tired nature" could no longer bear up under its terrible load, she would fall into a disturbed slumber, from which to be startled by some frightful dream. Thus half sleeping, dreaming, and starting, the remaining dreary hours of the night were worn away little by little. By the gray light of the early morning she took her first inspection of her gloomy abode. No furniture; walls bare and black with age; the accumulated filth of months scattered over the floor, and in one corner a huge pile of rubbish of various kinds. With this revelation came the crushing thought: "I'm a prisoner, and this is my prison! *Comfortless place!*" And yet, for aught she knew, there might be even worse than this in store for her. Wretched child of faithful Abraham! What do you think now of God's care for you? Will you trust him still? Yes, though overwhelmed by

sorrow, and even the shadows of despair are falling thick and dark, yet deep down in her faithful heart she would hope still.

The world has yet, if ever, to give the history of a people who could pass through so many shadows, wait so long and patiently, and still hold on to their faith in God's promises as did the Hebrews. They have ever been and are yet taught to do this from their very infancy. No people ever had stronger promises or stronger trials. They believed the promises and outlived the trials. Rachel was a Hebrew of the *purest* type. Her trials were great, but her faith was greater.

Heavy footsteps were now heard on the rickety old stairway by which they had ascended to this dismal place. Then a heavy knock on the door, accompanied by a gruff voice: "Zilla, Zilla, who's paying you to sleep here all day?"

"The poor old creature jumped up in a fright, and seeing that she had overslept herself, made haste to go down. She locked the door behind her and left the two girls alone. They felt a relief in being thus left to themselves to make each other's acquaintance, for they felt that, being fellow-sufferers, they could confide in each other. Each was anxious to do this. Rachel was the first to speak: "Dear sister, I feel that perhaps like myself you are here as a prisoner, for I am sure you could not come to, much less stay voluntarily in, such a place."

"It is too true, my friend; and I am ashamed to

say that up to the time of your coming in I had seriously contemplated ending my miserable existence by my own hand. But somehow, I cannot tell why, hope seemed to come in with you."

"I hope you will never think of so rash a deed again. But I, too, must confess to a little shame at my thoughts when I found you here. Seeing that you were a sister Hebrew, I felt that we could be companions, *and I was glad!* Yes, *glad* to find you here. Not glad that you were miserable, but that we could be miserable together, and both of us be *less* miserable for our companionship."

"In this we are alike also, but how long this pleasure will last we know not. To stay here is dreadful, but to go elsewhere may be more so. Oh, if they would only let us stay together!" She threw her arms about the neck of Rachel as though she feared that at this moment she might be taken from her.

"Let us hope, and trust in God," said Rachel. "The worst cannot exceed our fears, and if our fears should not be realized, our hopes will bear us up. I think a few hours more will bring one or the other. Let us sit down here and talk as familiar, bosom friends."

It turned out that Hagar—for that was her name—was snatched away from her home in a similar manner to that just described in the case of Rachel. She was a beautiful young girl, perfect in form and features; dark eyes and hair; a musical, ringing, but sweet voice, full of

tenderness; and a gentle, trusting spirit. Indeed, the two were models of beauty and intelligence, and no doubt were considered valuable prizes by their captors.

As before intimated, in this business there were two parties through whose hands the unfortunate captives must pass before reaching a home, good or bad. The *roughs*, whose business it was to steal them from their families, delivered them into some such place as this, and often even worse, and would not suffer them to be removed until they were paid their wages for their dastardly work. The proprietors had to come and examine the "property" before accepting or taking charge of them, and often many days would go by before an agreement could be reached. Then they were secretly removed to other quarters. If they possess such qualities as would recommend them for places in the best families, they were removed to much better quarters and put in charge of suitable "trainers"—women whose business it was to teach them the duties of servants or maids of the higher rank. If they possessed intelligence, beauty, and skill, they were considered very valuable, because they could be placed in the best homes, and of course the purchasers or employers could pay better prices.

The "love of money" was "the root of all" this evil. But, bad as slavery is when abused, yet it was a fortunate day for these unhappy girls who had been forced away from their homes, when

they fell into the hands of kind-hearted employers. And yet, as we have said, the *owner* of slaves is regarded as a monster in sin, while the real culprit, the *thief* and the *trader*, go unwhipped, both by justice and public sentiment. But slavery is, and ever has been, a grievous burden, and happy the people who are rid of it *forever*. Pharaoh found it so, even with the reckless and inhuman cruelty with which he treated it.

Rachel and Hagar remained in this dismal place only until the following night. Hagar was brought here the night before Rachel, and had spent two nights of wretchedness. There was no hesitation upon the part of the proprietors to pay the price demanded for their capture, though unusually large. Then they were transferred to another place, where they were furnished with a comfortable room. Consequently, compared to their situation the night before, they were happy, if indeed it were possible for happiness to come to them under the circumstances. They were soon devoted friends, but alas! they felt as it might be imagined that the "stalled ox" would feel, only being prepared for the slaughter! But God's ways are not as our ways. They are in his hands. Let us leave them thus, for

He in the thickest darkness dwells,  
Performs his work, the cause conceals;  
But though his methods are unknown,  
Judgment and truth support his throne.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE LAST HOPE GONE.

MAN'S extremity is God's opportunity," is a true proverb, but sometimes improperly applied. God never lacks opportunity to do for us whatever we need to have done, so far as his ability or willingness is concerned, but he is often interfered with by our opposition or lack of willing coöperation. But his peculiar opportunity to show his favor to or on behalf of his creature, man, is when man has exhausted his own skill and falls back helpless upon the divine arm. It is not wrong to use all and the very best skill which he has given us; indeed, he expects us to do this, but at the same time to trust him implicitly. This forever bars discouragement, being the perfecting of faith in us.

If what I wish is good,  
And suits the will divine,  
By earth and hell in vain withstood,  
I know it shall be mine.

There is something so remarkable in the Hebrew's tenacity of faith that it forms a prominent part of their sacred history. Often disappointed, and sometimes cast down on account of the delay of the promises, yet they trusted on as the centuries swept by. You will be impressed with this truth by reading the eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

God's word, by a single sentence, often throws radiant lines of stupendous thought upon the map of mental vision, like the boundary lines of a vast continent, and leaves us to explore its beautiful interior by climbing its lofty mountains, navigating its rivers, sailing upon its beautiful lakes, and developing its inexhaustible mines. This will afford employment for the longest lifetime, and still leave infinite entertainment for an endless eternity.

“By faith, Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones.” But after he was “put in a coffin in Egypt,” the history of this great nation for three hundred and forty years is written in a single chapter. Out of this great world of thought, compassed thus by twenty-two verses, might be written a thousand books and still leave the field comparatively untouched. But let us return to our story.

Many weeks have passed since our last interview with Amram and his family—weeks of startling events in the history of the Hebrews. Wonderful things are now happening, which point to such other events as have hitherto existed only in prophecy and the faith of those who believed prophecy and trusted God. These events are now crowding rapidly upon each other, and in less than another century will bring the fulfillment of God's promise to his people. Indeed, he is beginning now to prepare them for their glorious exodus. There are hundreds of children now

born who will assemble at Rameses, eighteen miles northeast from Memphis, the divinely appointed place of rendezvous, preparatory to departure from Egypt; many tender little feet, which have not yet pressed Egyptian soil, by reason of their infancy, that will leave their tracks in the soft bed of the Red Sea to be washed out by its waters as they shall surge together when the hosts of God's people are singing their triumphant song on its eastern shore. Many Egyptian children, now born, will compose a part of the unfortunate, struggling, drowning army of Pharaoh in that sea, while the singing army of Israel shall pause in their song of deliverance to pity their fallen and now helpless foes. Who doubts this? Do not the rapidly growing numbers of the Hebrews, in the very face of the patrolling armies of Pharaoh, utter a prophecy which is well-nigh audible? Do you doubt that God helped thousands of trusting mothers to successfully hide their children, and thereby deliver them out of his cruel hands? No, for the facts forbid the doubt. Amram's body will sleep in an Egyptian tomb, together with his faithful wife, Jochebed, but their illustrious sons will march at the head of the mighty procession between the parted waters of the sea, and their no less consecrated daughter will lead the grand service of song on its banks, while Pharaoh's chariots drag through the mire without wheels. Samuel will be left resting on the banks of the Nile, but little Benjamin will go



out and be lost to human sight in an unmarked grave in the wilderness.

We left our friend Amram and his companion Ophron, in great peril, under sentence of death, waiting for the executioner. But you have since seen Amram under very happy circumstances, and it remains only to say that Ophron shared the good fortunes of his friend. Their release need not be wondered at when it is remembered that they had a "friend at court." The princess was ignorant of their impending fate till the morning of the day on which they were to have been executed. In fact, up to this time, she had been ignorant of who it was that had been imprisoned on her account. She only knew that some one had been unjustly accused and condemned. Therefore, the steps she was about to take were in the interest of simple justice, without reference to rank or person.

Having obtained audience with the king at the very earliest hour possible on the day she had set apart in her mind to appear before him with her cause, she was alarmed to find that sentence of death had already gone out for these very men, and that this was the day for their execution. But she was not to be thrown off her purpose by discouragements. She urged her plea for the condemned men. She told how it all came about, and that there was no evil design upon the part of these men. She admitted the correctness of the accusation as it related to the occasion, but denied

it as to the facts; that the accused were evidently trying to keep a disorderly man from creating greater disturbance, which they succeeded in doing. The only immediate effect of her earnest effort was that the king dispatched a messenger to the prison authorities with an order to suspend the execution of the prisoners till the matter could be further investigated. Thermuthis demanded now that the accused and the accusers be brought once more before the royal court, and in the presence of them all she gave a clear and comprehensive rehearsal of the whole matter, from first to last, and reaffirmed that no violence whatever was offered, but that on the contrary great respect was manifested for her presence.

The king was now thoroughly convinced of the righteousness of her cause, and though it was possible for him to ignore even justice itself, yet for his great love for his daughter he proclaimed the prisoners, Amram and Ophron, entitled to their freedom. Of course Jambres was disappointed, and secretly resolved on revenge. But the gentle, justice-loving princess is once more victorious. In her hands right has triumphed over wrong, and two innocent men go free. But alas! the wily old astrologer, the unrelenting enemy of the Hebrews, is now stung by a new provocation. He has made a signal failure in an attempt to destroy two prominent and good men in the land of Goshen. But the revengeful nature of the man will not allow him to submit quietly to this defeat.

Chafing under the humiliation, and at the same time fearing lest his prophecy regarding the young child be fulfilled in spite of his effort to prevent it, he now sets to work more vigorously than ever to avenge the one and prevent the other. But he saw and felt that his influence over the king had weakened since Thermuthis had occasion to antagonize him. Well may he dread her power, for her eyes are now more thoroughly opened to his vindictive and cruel nature than ever before, and it will not be his last experience with her in the royal court. But his right arm of power with which he never failed to move the king was his old prophecy of the young child. He drew daily upon his inventive skill for some pretext to kindle this fire of persecution more and more. Already it had brought more sorrow to the Hebrews than any other one thing. In close connection with it he kept his majesty alarmed about their rapid increase, and thus pushed forward the work of destruction. He also called to his assistance such of the baser sort as could easily be hired to do service in this bloody work.

His next move was to bring about a more thorough search for the young children. This he accomplished by the testimony of some who said to the king that the all-important edict was continually being evaded by the mothers hiding their children in caves and dens in the earth and about their houses. Much of this was true, but what power on earth could prevent it? It was not

natural for the mothers to bring their children out to the slaughter, and how could he force them to do so? If they were captured it was, doubtless in every instance, at the end of the most vigorous effort possible upon the part of the parents to prevent it.

A new proclamation was now issued, to the effect that all of the king's subjects should promptly inform the authorities, not only if they *knew*, but should they have the least grounds to suspect the whereabouts of such children as came within the edict. And moreover, he enjoined that "should any Hebrew parents disobey him, and venture to hide, or in any way be found trying to spare their male children alive, they and their families should be destroyed."\*

With the publication of this proclamation went out the last hope of many a Hebrew mother, and the execution of it swept whole families from the face of the earth. This is another "turn of the screw," that was continually being tightened with a view to the final crushing out of the Hebrew nation. Is it any wonder that their cries and groans "reach to heaven?" With every increase of their great affliction grows our astonishment at their wonderful powers of endurance. And yet we know it should be no matter of wonder, since the great God of heaven and earth espouses their cause. What can men do against a people "whose God is the Lord?"

There is one thing connected with the bondage

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\* See Josephus, Book II., Chapter 9.

of this wonderful people that should not be overlooked; and that is, that in the darkest hours of their affliction they never forsook God nor abandoned his worship. In all the long years, first of prosperity, and then of affliction in Egypt, they never, as a nation, bowed down to the gods of the Egyptians. Doubtless there were individual exceptions to this, but if so they were comparatively rare. It was only when they were free that they forgot the Lord. It was not until their yoke of bondage was broken and they had left their Egyptian homes that they made the golden calf and imitated the worship of their former oppressors. Ah, misguided Aaron! Why did you not lead the people into idolatry in Egypt? Then you might have gained favor with the Egyptians. Strange you did not think of this. Why forsake God now in the face of so many of his blessings, and when there is no one near to reward you for your idolatry? This illustrates a principle that has been noticeable among men always, namely, afflictions keep us close and true to God, whereas prosperity often encourages us to depart from him. Besides many Scripture reasons for this, there is also this philosophic reason: God is light, and as light is seen best and appreciated most when we are in the darkness, so God is seen to best advantage by us when we are in the darkness of affliction.

For some time the suspicion had rested upon Amram's house that a young child was hidden there. At the same time the family had made it their one

great business to take special care of this threatened and hunted child. It was a cause of constant care and great anxiety to the mother. Although up to this time she had been successful in hiding the little one, yet this had not removed her fears. The anxious question would often arise: "How long can this last? Could she continue this way with such a trying tension upon her nerves daily? The babe was safe to-day, but would he be to-morrow?" Often as she sat looking down into his bright, innocent eyes she could not but think of the possibility of the rough hands of the unfeeling soldiers tearing him from her loving arms, and of the monsters of the Nile feasting upon his tender little body. Then with an involuntary shudder she would take him up in her arms and press him close to her heart. This picture has its counterpart in the experience of many Christian mothers of the present day. The edict of Pharaoh and the crocodiles of the river of Egypt were a terror to the thoughts of the Hebrew mothers, but not more so than the thoughts of all the possible evils that are at this moment waiting for every innocent babe that slumbers in its mother's arms. O mother, there are a thousand possibilities of evil that wait for your darling like the ravenous tiger waits for his prey! There are currents of evil within him which naturally drift him away from you, and there are without fearful temptations waiting at your gate to meet this evil nature and together lead him to ruin.

Are there any grounds for these fears? Come with me to your prisons, and behold their inmates. Look at the staggering, swearing drunkard upon your streets. Look into your places of dissipation. Go to that unhappy home and see a brutal husband and father abuse his wife and beat his poor, helpless little children, and then tell me whose are all these. Only a few years ago they were innocent babes in their mothers' arms! Is wealth, learning, high birth, or all of them together, proof against such dreadful results? Nay; from homes of affluence as well as of poverty, from the ranks of learning as well as of ignorance, come these wretched victims of vice and crime. Can a mother look upon such as this and not shudder for the fate of her boy lest he come to some such end? As she looks at her tender babe, how often does she wonderingly ask, "Can I shield him from such a destiny?" But perils like this will drive the true mother closer to God. The more she realizes her peril and helplessness the more she leans upon him for help. Like faithful Jochebed, she says: "This is God's child as much as he is mine; I will consecrate and train him for God, and trust him to do the rest." But if there is cause for fear, there is also cause for good cheer and hope. If when you looked into the prisons and dens of iniquity you found those who were once in the cradle, you can look also into the churches and among the millions of earth's best people who are trying to make the world better,

and find those who were once little children in a praying, Christian mother's home. Here you will find and be charmed with the lovely possibilities of grace and faithful motherhood bearing its richest fruitage. "Let fear watch, for there are dangers; but let hope rejoice, for there are also possibilities of the highest good."

There has now come a time in the history of Amram's family when the child can no longer be hid. The secret is known. The authorities have found it out, and are determined to destroy the babe. He is doomed. He must now be brought forth, or the whole family will perish. A desperate spirit would suggest a desperate resort. "We will all perish together rather than give up one of our number." But prudence and faith said: "The last human hope is gone, the last possible human effort has been made; and whatever follows after this, *God is responsible for.*" Faith is at its sublimest in such a crisis.

The evening of the very last day that the babe can possibly be kept in their home has now come. To-morrow their house is to be searched, and if the child is found the home is to be destroyed and the family put to death. Now there are three "horns" to this dreadful dilemma: cast the babe into the river themselves, deliver him up to the king's officers, or all perish together. Which shall they choose? To give up *five* lives and gain nothing by it, they had no right to do. To give over the child into the hands of their unfeeling



enemies, they could not bear to think of for a moment. To cast him into the river with their own hands, would be murder; how could they do it?

It is not to be wondered at if the mother has spent the greater part of the day in her private chamber wrestling with God. She needed wisdom and strength now; wisdom to decide, and strength to carry out the decision. The sun is sinking out of sight behind the western hills. She gazes at the great orb of day, with his now subdued and softened rays tinged with gold as he dips his fiery edge below the rim of the horizon. He has run the circuit of the skies with streaming light too bright for mortal eye to look upon; but now, ere he retires for the night, he pauses for a moment at his chamber door to throw over the world his golden mantle of soft, smiling light, true type of love and tenderness, as if to shield it from the heavy curtain of darkness which will soon fall upon it. The heavy heart of Jochebed cried out bitterly: "O God, is yonder sinking sun, which is emblematical of thee, foreshadowing our departing hope? Wilt thou withdraw from us in this dark hour of trouble?" Faith and hope lit up her spirit as the last fading sunbeam kissed her careworn brow, and God whispered through both of them: "I will be with thee in the darkness as in the light."

In the gathering gloom of the evening she saw two men approaching. She quickly recognized them as her husband and his friend Ophron. The latter lingered only a moment at Amram's gate,

while the two engaged in subdued conversation. As he passed on toward his home, he said as a parting word of cheer: "I hope you will have divine direction."

The children, Miriam and Aaron, as usual, are glad to see him, and run to greet and welcome him; but they saw the gloom upon his brow, which he tried in vain to hide. The best of men are but mortal, and are burdened when great calamities threaten.

After their evening meal, as was their custom, they gathered in the family room for religious devotion. These devotions are now more than usually earnest. The father lingers in prayer. He *must* prevail. He *must* have light. For this purpose he, like Jacob, held on to God and would not let go without a blessing. When their worship was ended, he addressed the two older children as follows: "My children, we have spared your young and tender hearts the burden of grief which we have borne for many days, just as long as we can. You may as well be told now that we can no longer keep our little babe here. Some one has reported to the king's officers that he is here, and they are coming to-morrow to search for him; and if found, we will all be killed."

"Father," said Miriam, "is there not some place that we can hide him where they cannot find him?"

"No, my child; there is no hope for us now. He must be cast into the river, and it only remains

for us to decide whether we will do it ourselves or give him over to the soldiers to-morrow.”

“Let us trust God rather than men,” said the mother. “Let us not fall into the hands of men, but rather let us give him into the hands of God; for he is merciful, but men are cruel; he will do right with us and the babe. It seems to be the will of God that we give him up. Let not men come between us and our dear sacrifice.”

“Well and wisely said, my dear Jochebed,” said Amram with enthusiasm. “And who knows but that when he shall look upon our sacrifice, which we have given into his hands as our father Abraham gave up Isaac his son, he may show us a way to deliver him from death as he also delivered our father Isaac.”

One great agony is over, and one great victory is gained in this battle. It is settled. *They will themselves commit him to the river and to God!* But when? This very night, before the rising sun shall bring the fatal day. Sad conclusion, but it is reached and settled. Sad as it is, there are two features of encouragement and comfort in it, namely, the example and triumph of Abraham's faith, and the knowledge that the babe would escape the cruel hands of their enemies. This was comfort to the parents, but where are the heart-broken children to get any consolation? They are too young to appreciate or understand these wonderful things that were so sublime to older minds. Poor little things! they loved their baby

brother very dearly. They could not understand all this, but their father and mother seemed comforted and said it was all right, and therefore they accepted it as the best to be done under the circumstances.

O mothers, have you ever been called upon to give up your babe? Did you sit by the crib or hold him in your arms and see his little life gradually go out? Then you know what this mother felt on that night nearly thirty-five hundred years ago. Did you get your consent to give him up? No. A mother *get her consent* to give up her babe? Never! But she can do a much better and wiser thing: she can yield him up to God's will as being superior to hers; but in doing so she gives herself with it. She goes with the gift—soul, body, will, and all—completely swallowed up in God's will. No mother ever buried a child with such a feeling that did not get nearer to God through the sad providence. God has a purpose in his providences; maybe it is unknown, unannounced, but we are to believe him, trust him. If he takes your babe off to heaven, as the little one leaves your arms take firmer hold upon God, then you and it shall not be separated. Both shall be safe forever. Faith surrenders to God, but holds on to the captor. Let us go now and see Jochebed give her babe to God.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A WAIF.

EXTREME peril has the effect either to quicken or paralyze the energies. Some persons become utterly helpless in sudden alarm or great extremity. They seem to yield at once to what appears to be inevitable fate, with not a thought of the possibility of escape from it or successfully resisting it. Again, there are those who are directly the opposite to this, whose skill and forethought are inspired and put to their very best exercise. Their inventive powers enable them at once to lay hold upon some, and often the best, method of meeting the emergency. They display wonderful coolness and energy when the surroundings are desperate. Of this class, women are largely in the majority; and particularly so if the whole responsibility is upon them. A woman may faint after the peril is past and the nervous tension relaxes, but you may depend upon her to invent something *instantly* to meet a sudden emergency, and often it will prove to be the best that could have been done under the circumstances.

Another peculiarity often shown in sudden emergency is that we seldom do just what we had planned to do should such emergency come. Thousands of Hebrew mothers have been fighting

against their cruel doom for nearly a whole year. Doubtless they planned as to how they would act when the danger should actually break upon them, and it is doubtful if one in fifty ever did just what she had so carefully planned to do. Her plans *for* the emergency were abandoned for better ones *in* the emergency.

It is not surprising that these mothers rebel so persistently against the king's command. Their one great object is to defeat him in his inhuman edict. And no marvel that they should. Heathen mothers have given their infants when they believed that their god required it as an act of worship, but no natural mother will do so for any other reason. Woman's devotion to her religion will cause her to lay any gift within her possession on its altars, even her babe, but she cannot be terrified into parting with it for a less reason.

But let us return to the sad home of our friend Amram. There is but one definite conclusion yet reached by the parents. They had determined to commit their babe to the river, but just how to do such an awful thing they yet knew not. To reach such a determination had cost them the deliberate surrender of their hearts' tenderest love in devotion to the will of God. Not that they understood fully why he required this act, or knew that he even required it at all; but their devotion and faith took such firm hold upon him as their only hope, and believing as they did that they had chosen the *least* evil of all that were offered them, and that

what they were about to do was the inevitable, they fully believed that they would be protected and blessed in it.

This point being settled, they were ready to meet the ordeal bravely. But there was another question confronting them. If he must go, then how? What preparation shall be made for his going? This is a question that will confront every mother sooner or later. Tenderly guarded, screened, hid from all threatening evils, her boy has been safe for all these years. But there comes a time when he can "no longer be hid." He must go forth. But where? how? To school, to play, to business. He *must* go. He will have to fight his way to success, or drift to failure and to ruin. He goes out to be buffeted, and often driven against the world's sharp angles and wounded thereby. He goes to be tempted and tried; to yield or to resist; to stand or to fall. He goes out to face great peril. How shall he go? What preparation has his mother made to start him out on this perilous journey? Is there any thing more that she can do to make it safer for him?

The family is busy with this question concerning the babe. There will be no sleep this night for the anxious parents. They are not debating the possibility of keeping their child. That is settled. But what preparation can be made? The mother thinks of all the baby's little dresses, and wonders which of them will be most suitable *for this last occasion*. She and her husband go through the little

wardrobe. They lay out this and that article, and bedew each with a falling tear. A number of dressed goatskins are selected with which to wrap the tender body. They talk, and plan, and pray, and weep. The mother who has once laid out the little burial wardrobe is prepared for this private scene, too sacred for critical eyes.

The night is passing. What are they waiting for? Are they about to fail in their sad purpose? Will they weaken now in the last moment? Not while that illustrious example of faith of their father Abraham stands before them, and which they started out to imitate; not while Isaac's wonderful deliverance and God's promise to Israel through him are remembered by them.

One, two, three hours of the night are gone, and time makes no halt. On, on go the moments. Ten o'clock; the little boy sleeps, but poor little troubled Miriam cannot sleep. If any little girl reads this let her try to think how she would have felt and acted under similar circumstances. A dear little baby brother, so sweet, innocent, and cunning. And this is his last night at home. He is going to be taken off and killed!

The Egyptians and Hebrews were in the habit of making baskets of the flags, or bulrushes, that grew on the Nile. These baskets were used for various purposes. They were specially useful for the purpose of gathering straw for brickmaking. They were made into various shapes and were of many sizes. Small boats, or canoes, were also



made of these bulrushes. The stem of the plant grew to the length of ten or twelve feet, and was very tough. These, being arranged lengthwise and in proper shape, were crosswoven after the same manner of making the baskets, and then lined with the broad, tough leaves. The vessel was then plastered within and without with the slime, or bituminous mud, from the bed of the river and marshy bogs, which when dry was very firm, and made the craft water-tight. The little boats thus constructed would easily and with safety sustain the weight of two or three persons.

Now what was more natural than for the mother to think of one of these large baskets as a suitable receptacle for the child? It would be of adequate strength and buoyancy to bear up the little body; and as for the slime, or pitch, it would be an easy matter for the husband to go down to the river, which was only a short distance away, and fetch a sufficient quantity to daub and plaster the little improvised boat. Then there would be time enough to dry or harden the pitch by the heat of the fire before morning.

The unique plan was laid before the little council, and readily agreed to and adopted with mournful pleasure. They even experienced relief from the mental and heart strain in the thought that they had a plan that would at least be a temporary protection for the little one. If he must go out from them and into such peril, they have prepared him to *float* on the dangerous tide. Happy

the mother that can send her child out from her home into life's dangers with such an assurance! "She hath done what she could."

Now no time is to be lost. The father hurries off to the river, by a narrow pathway with which he is perfectly familiar, and soon returns with the necessary material, and the work begins.

It is supposed to have taken Noah one hundred and twenty years to construct the great ark for the flood, but it is doubtful if these three busy builders were more than two hours making this little craft "seaworthy." By letting each minute represent a year, these two hours will represent the hundred and twenty years. And surely each minute is as precious to them now as a whole year was to this patriarch of flood renown.

Now the work is finished, the pitch is hardened, and the little craft is ready to receive its precious freight. Soft cushions are made and packed about the infant form. Rugs, furs, and robes of skins are wrapped and tucked about till the tiny voyager is all snug and safe in his miniature ship. Two bright little eyes, so cunning and innocent, look up into the mother's face while her heart is breaking as she bends over him to give the finishing touch to the careful preparations.

At last, when everything is complete, the family gather around the little ark. Aaron is wakened to see his dear baby brother before he goes. They all then kneel down and offer up a prayer for the safety of the little voyager, and

commend him to the special care of a gracious Providence.

Now the first gray streaks of morning shoot up the eastern sky, announcing the near approach of the king of day. What is to be done must be done quickly. If Pharaoh's officers come before they get their task completed, all will be lost. One by one the members of the family, with tears and sobs, kiss the babe good-by. It looks very much like a funeral; indeed, it has many features that are common at a funeral. The faith of this Hebrew mother is a vivid illustration of a Christian mother's faith when the coffin-lid is about to be placed over her poor little dead darling. This scene also illustrates the trust of a faithful Christian mother when she sees her boy about to go out from her home for the first time. As she packs his trunk she weaves her faith into the strong woof of God's promises, driving up the thread with strong prayer till it is formed into an ark mightier than bulrushes, and in which if he will abide he may safely defy the rushing tides of evil. Let young men keep within the ark of their mothers' love, and they are safe.

Jochebed fastens the lid of the little ark with her faith so strong that it is to her as if she saw the hand of God laid protectingly over that tiny bundle of mortality.

It is not very far to the river. The mother gathers up the ark with its precious contents, and bidding Miriam to come with her, they take the near-

est route to the stream. They are too sad for conversation. The mother's heart is too full for speech. The little girl is silently wondering what it all means. She can understand the king's command, and why her parents had concluded to take this step, but it is not to be expected of her that she should see these things in the strong light in which they saw them. Yet she believes that her parents are wise and understand the whole matter, and she fully trusts them and God, and is content to follow instructions and await results.

Fortunately they encounter no officers or soldiers on the way. When they come to the river, they turn toward the city southward. Here they begin to meet many people, both Hebrews and Egyptians, for they are now on the public highway which lay along the east bank of the river. It was one of the most beautiful and popular thoroughfares in all that part of the kingdom. A woman bearing a basket or bundle was no uncommon thing, and therefore not calculated to attract unusual attention. So the mother and daughter go quietly and unmolested on their sorrowful journey.

Just before reaching the royal bath-houses they leave the highway, turning directly toward the water's edge, which is only a short distance away. A few paces along a dim path bring them to the brink of the river. Pausing only a moment to select her way carefully among the flags which stood thick all around, Jochebed steps upon some drift-wood out a little way over the stream and careful-

ly and gently places the ark upon the water among the thick growth of flags. In this position it could float, and was prevented from drifting out into the stream by the surrounding flags.

The agitation given to the water by the action of the current causes the little craft to move in a kind of up-and-down, "rock-a-by-baby" motion, which is favorable to the sound slumbers of the child. The mother stands for a little while, anxiously watching the basket to see how it will "ride the waves." In the midst of so much heart anguish she welcomes every little circumstance that seems to offer her any comfort at all. She sees with pleasure that the boat will safely bear up with its burden, and that so far as the water is concerned there is no immediate danger to the little one.

Before taking final leave, she once more lifts the covering of the basket to look, she fears, for the last time at her beautiful little baby, so innocent, so helpless. How sweetly he sleeps! Must she go and leave him? Who will care for him? What will become of him? Oh, it looks so much like a "leap into the darkness;" and yet it is not, for God is there, and where he is, is light. She can and will trust him still. He has not told her just how he will lead her out of this dark valley, but he knows. She can truly say: "I'd rather follow him in the darkness than to go alone in the light." Once more she breathed a prayer for the safety of the babe, then turning to Miriam she said: "My daughter, hide yourself here in these tall

flags and wait and watch to see what will become of your little brother. I am quite sure something will happen soon, either good or bad, and make haste to bring me word what it is. If the ark shall drift out into the stream, it will doubtless be discovered and brought to shore by some one, either friend or foe. But if it be discovered in this place and the child saved by some kind hand, or cruelly destroyed, bring me word that I may know his fate and not mourn in uncertainty. Be watchful, my trusty little girl, and God may use you for his glory and to do a great service for his chosen people. You have been a good and obedient child, and I can trust you with perfect confidence.”

This tender, confiding speech touched the heart of the faithful little girl, bringing a fresh flow of tears to her eyes. She was not insensible of the responsibility of the charge. Many times had the mother left the babe with her, but never under such circumstances as the present. Of course she would not be negligent, but what could she do but watch? True, and that is all that there is to do. She is not charged with protecting the child. A mightier power than hers is in charge. All has been done that lay in mortal power to do; now “stand still” and see God work.

Miriam secretes herself among the flags, and the mother hastens home again to go into her chamber and plead with God. This is all that is left to be done now. She has relinquished her hold on the child, but tightens it more firmly on God.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE MOTHER'S TRIUMPH.

TANIS, one of the ancient cities of Egypt, was situated in the Delta, about thirty miles from the seacoast. It was the capital of Egypt during a part of the period covered by the reign of the Shepherd Kings. It was selected as one of the favorite residences of Rameses II. In fact, his father, Seti (or Sesostris, as the Greeks have it), himself, and Menephtah, his son, all had a temporary palace at Tanis. These three kings extended their reign over the periods of the nineteenth and twentieth dynasties. Rameses II., as is already known, was the Pharaoh of the destruction of the young children, and Menephtah of the exodus.

It was doubtless at this city that Moses and Aaron met and had their interview, or succession of interviews, with Pharaoh Menephtah. Here they performed before him those miracles spoken of in Exodus vii.\*

The recent discoveries of the English Exploration Society are not only very curious and interesting, but also go to show that Tanis was the temporary residence of at least three kings about this period. While Rameses II. had his seat of gov-

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\*See Isa. xix. 11-25; Ps. lxxviii. 12; with Ezek. xxx. 14.

ernment at Thebes, yet he divided his time largely with Memphis and Tanis.

At this particular time a part of the royal family were at Memphis, and had been for several months. During certain seasons of the year this city seemed wholly given up to feasting and gaiety. The *élite* of the kingdom gathered to spend the season in high glee. Here pleasure, learning, art, and religion were strangely mixed. Here the great Osiris held supreme sway, and was believed to have had one of his judgment thrones from which he dispensed to his thousands of worshipers his favors or curses as best suited his mind.

About a week prior to leaving Memphis for Tanis, where the family would spend a few months before returning to Thebes, Thermuthis sought an interview with the king; not as King of Egypt, but as her father. It was upon a matter strictly of the family, and concerned herself more than anyone else, but she wanted to confer with her father before entering into any arrangement that might in the future involve his interest. She wanted this interview to be without the stiff formalities of court custom, a liberty seldom granted by ancient kings to anyone. But Rameses was not in the habit of denying this much-loved and favored child any reasonable request. Sometimes, as we have already seen, he would even condescend to dismiss all of his attendants save the royal guard, and make her his only attending companion. On this occasion she requested to see him in the



guests' chamber, as it was strictly a matter of business. When they were alone she said: "Father, if I understand your plans correctly, the family will be expected to be in Tanis by the beginning of the festivities there which are to precede the ceremonies of the unveiling of the great statue of yourself which has been recently finished."

"Yes, daughter, I shall precede the family some few days, as there are some important preliminary matters which I must look after. The queen and younger children will follow in a short time, and you at your leisure."

"You are very gracious, and I shall strive to do your will. I supposed you would be off now very soon, and hence my desire for this interview. I should not trouble you with this little domestic matter if it did not somewhat involve a question of propriety which you alone are competent to decide."

"Well, I will hear you."

"I wish to employ one or two additional maids who are skilled in such domestic service as I shall require, and I should like to attend to this before going to Tanis if possible."

"Why, my darling child, you know you are at liberty to have as many maids as you desire and the very best that the kingdom affords. So just please yourself in this matter."

"But, father, I have had my attention called to some Hebrew girls who are very highly recommended, and I am much pleased with them. But

I was not sure that you would be pleased to have me employ them in my service.”

At this the king's face took a very thoughtful expression, while he hesitated to answer. The Hebrews were in his service all over the land, *but not in his house*. Would it be safe to have them there? Finally, he said: “Daughter, I shall interpose no objection if it is your wish to have them, provided that they be kept strictly under your management and not allowed intercommunication with their families or tribes. For, being somewhat intimate with the royal family as they must necessarily be, they could do us great harm in case of any rebellion among the Hebrews.”

This caution upon the part of the king shows us how exceedingly apprehensive he was of trouble from his Hebrew subjects, which was not only a source of anxiety to him, but was a standing excuse for laying heavy burdens upon them.

Having obtained her father's consent, Thermuthis lost no time in putting her plans into execution. The reader has doubtless already anticipated that the maids referred to were Rachel and Hagar. These girls had been kindly treated by those who had them in charge since they left the place of confinement in the old temple. As only gain was the object of their captors, nothing was left undone that would cause them to command the very highest price of the market. They had shrewdly managed to get the king's daughter's attention directed to the girls, knowing that she

would be charmed with their intelligence, beauty, and kindly disposition. They were careful, however, to keep in the background the fact that these girls had been unlawfully kidnapped from their homes. Besides making them liable to punishment, it would also have been offensive to the princess.

The women who had charge of Rachel and Hagar during their term of preparation represented them to the princess as Hebrew girls dependent upon their own labor for their support, and had placed themselves under their guardianship, and therefore they had taken great care to prepare them for such a position as they were asking for. The girls had been kept in total ignorance of what was intended to be done with them. They could not understand the meaning of their kind treatment until they were presented to the princess for examination as to their fitness for her service. Now they begin to see that the favor shown them and the expensive apparel provided for them were that they might make a good appearance, and consequently bring much gain to their captors.

This much of their game was a decided success, for so attractive was the appearance of these young Hebrew girls that when Thermuthis saw them she was at once very favorably impressed with them. But the more she interrogated them the more did she become interested in them. She was convinced of their superior intelligence and

goodness of temper, and therefore did not hesitate to engage them, notwithstanding the great price demanded. They had been charged by their captors, under a severe penalty, not to reveal the manner of having been taken from their homes, and in case of their daring to do so, either now or at any future time, they would be put to death. Thus intimidated, they feared to attempt to escape, or to breathe their awful secret to anyone, either friend or foe.

So now our unfortunate and yet fortunate captive maidens are duly installed as servants in the palace of the great King of Egypt. Like their illustrious predecessor and kinsman, Joseph, they were unfortunate in being rudely taken from their homes and kindred, but fortunate in finding favor with the king's daughter, as he had found favor with her great ancestral father who reigned over Egypt about the beginning of the eighteenth dynasty.

They were glad to escape from their dreaded captors, yet they sighed for their childhood home and the loved ones who sorrowed for them there. But they readily adjusted themselves to their new surroundings, and took their places and went to their duties cheerfully. And they were told plainly that they must not have any communication with anyone outside of their own circle, and that absolute obedience would be expected.

The great occasion at Tanis referred to was the formal celebration of the completion of that magnificent marble or granite statue of Rameses II.,

which he had caused to be erected at a great cost. Now the time for this occasion is drawing near. Already the king and queen are there, together with thousands of their guests and attendants. Only a few days more and a half million of eyes will gaze for the first time on that magnificent piece of art which will stand for centuries and go down through history as one of the great wonders of the art and skill of man. It was a standing figure, crowned with the royal crown of Upper Egypt, and supported in the back by a huge pilafter. The great toe measured eighteen inches across its top. The statue was ninety-eight feet in height from its foot to its crown. Its pedestal being seventeen feet high, made the total height one hundred and fifteen feet. Its weight was said to have been twelve hundred tons. It has long since fallen and been broken into a great many pieces, and recent excavations have revealed many fragments of the wonderful statue.

The royal boat is now anchored at the wharf, and the time for its departure for Tanis has been fixed for noon on the following day. All preparations have been made for the journey, and the royal party will spend just one more night in their beautiful Memphian palace before closing it for the season. By "the royal party" is meant only the king's daughter and her retinue, for as before said the rest of the family have been gone several days.

Now while we wait for the time to start let us record some interesting facts concerning the hab-

its of this remarkable young woman, called in Scripture "Pharaoh's daughter." If we have the right conception of her true character, she deserves not only to live in history as she does, but also to live forever, soul and body, as verily she will. We are justified in believing that it was her habit to take an early morning walk or ride along the banks of the river and to bathe in its sacred waters. Often, doubtless, in company with her maids she would take a ride several miles down the river on the "king's highway," which lay along the east bank, stopping at some one of the numerous and commodious bath houses which the king had established for the accommodation of the royal family. Therefore, it was no unusual thing at the early dawn to see the royal carriage drawn up before the great palace gate. Soon you would see the "first lady of the realm" come out, accompanied by her maids, ready for her usual early outing and bath in the waters of the Nile. Evidently she possessed no small degree of independence both of thought and action. She was gentle, sympathetic, loving, and always kind, but at the same time equally firm and determined when right was threatened by wrong.

As usual, very early on the morning of the day on which they were to leave Memphis the white steeds were at the palace gate. The princess with her maids entered the carriage, and away they dashed, preceded and followed by the usual attendants. They crossed the river and turned

abruptly to the left and went spinning over the smooth road along the river bank. The morning was glorious, and all hearts were full of joy. All nature was animating. Less than an hour's drive, and they were at the splendid summer bathing resort. Nothing more was seen of the princess for another hour after she with her maids entered the bath house.

After this a time was spent in walking along the banks of the river, enjoying the morning breeze and drinking in the fragrance of the lilies that grow at the water's edge. Some extra large ones were seen growing in the water that might be reached easily by walking out on some driftwood. One of the maids in trying to reach them discovered a little basket floating among the flags. It was evident that some careful hand had placed it there. She called the princess's attention to the curious object. She said to the maid: "Go and fetch it to me." The carefully fastened lid was removed, and lo, a little babe! The maids were somewhat startled at such a strange discovery; but the young princess said: "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

Rachel and Hagar understood its meaning better than those who had had neither observation nor experience in this dreadful business. Painfully did Rachel recall to mind the adventure of her little baby brother. She could not interpret fully the present strange circumstance, but she felt sure that it must be an effort upon the part of some He-

brew mother to save the life of her child. Judging from the exclamation of the princess upon seeing the child, we are persuaded that this was also her conclusion of the matter.

They all gathered around the little waif with exclamations of wonder and admiration. "How beautiful!" said one. "How dreadful, to abandon the poor little thing like this!" spoke another. "It is some unnatural mother's attempt to get rid of her child and escape the charge of murder," suggested a third. Thus they dispensed their comments and criticisms with unstinted liberality, but all of them far from the true cause of the strange event.

The removing of the lid of the basket, together with the strange voices about it, caused the child to awaken, and being both hungry and frightened, he began to cry. This was too much for the womanly sympathy of the tender-hearted Thermuthis. "She had compassion on him."

"Poor little baby!" she said; "I will take care of him and have him for my own, seeing he is so exceedingly beautiful."

"But, my lady," answered one of the maids, "what can you do with the child, so young and helpless? He could not possibly live without his mother to nurse and nourish him."

"We will call a nurse from among the Hebrew women," said the princess.

"But, my lady," persisted the maid, "what will your father, the king, say about this business,



seeing that it is his will that these Hebrew children shall be destroyed?"

"Trust me to manage that," answered the brave little woman. She spoke with such emphasis that it had the effect of ending the conversation. She did not know then just how she would manage the case; but her mind was made up, and she would take only a step at a time. *This* one she would take *now*, because she thought it was right, and let the consequences be what they might. And a bold step it was. Daring to intercept the royal edict! This act exhibited her decided character more than all others of her life. Loyalty and love are both set aside for the sake of a conscious sense of right. Brave, noble girl; may your example live to do good among the daughters of men. Devoted to father, king, and country; but devotion to a conscious sense of right is stronger than all.

So intently were they all engaged with the child that they had not noticed the approach of a little girl, who now stood with the group.

"My lady," spoke the strange little maiden, bowing low as she addressed the princess, "shall I go and call a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may take the child and nurse it for you?"

They all turned to look at the girl, wondering where she could have been concealed that they had not discovered her before. The suggestion was inspiring, and Thermuthis caught the thought that perhaps here is the entering wedge to a final solution of the difficulty of taking care of the child.

“Do you know of one such that would be a suitable nurse for this young child?” asked the lady of the strange little girl.

“I do, my lady; and she shall come at once.”

Ah, shrewd, scheming little maid! Long and patiently have you waited, crouched in the bulrushes, hoping, praying for this or some similar opportunity. Now there is a hope that you will be rewarded by seeing your little baby brother once more safe in his mother's arms. She had been a silent witness to the whole proceeding of the finding of the basket, and had listened intently to the conversation. Her quick ear had caught the first intimation of calling a Hebrew nurse for the child, and her little heart fluttered with hope as she thought of running for her mother to take that delightful place. She could no longer restrain her desire to go and offer her services. But what could she do, a poor little timid child, before this great lady, the princess of the kingdom of Egypt?

There is too much at stake to stop for mere timidity. She could, and must try. So summoning all her courage, she emerged from her hiding place, walked bravely up to the company, and stood before the royal presence. What a service she this moment rendered her little brother, her mother, and all Israel, eternity alone will reveal. Let all the weak, timid, and faltering come hither and learn a lesson of courage, and go do what they can. Small hands, small feet, moved by a good will, often accomplish wonders.

“Go,” was the glad sound which fell upon the ears of Miriam as the lady looked interestedly and tenderly down into her little upturned face. “Go,” was the command that thrilled her with pleasure and sent her feet flying with incredible speed homeward with a glad message to mother. She bursts like a little tempest into the room where the silent watchers were awaiting news from the babe with as much anxiety as ever any great general waited for news from a pending battle on which hung the destiny of a nation. Without ceremony or prelude she breaks to them the joyful tidings, urging her mother to hasten lest some other woman should take the coveted place.

They made all possible haste, but alas! delay, however short or unavoidable, is often troublesome and sometimes fatal and cruel. When they came to the place they were made heartsick at finding that some Egyptian women had offered their services as nurse for the child, to one of whom he was about to be delivered. The good sense and discretion of Jochebed prevented her from showing any emotion at the disappointment, although her very heart went out toward the babe, and she longed to take him in her arms.

The babe wept, and “refused the breast of the strange woman.” This was another opportunity for Miriam to be of vital service. Coming close up to the princess—for she was now become very bold by reason of the fear that after all the babe might be given over to a stranger—“My lady,” she

said, "it is all in vain that this woman try to quiet the child, since she is a stranger and not of kin to the babe. According to your command I have brought this Hebrew woman [pointing to her mother] to be nurse for the child. Now, therefore, let us see if he will take to her breast, seeing he refuses nourishment from the breast of the Egyptian woman. Let the babe decide for himself."

"Well and wisely said, little maid," said Thermuthis, who was much impressed with the manner and speech of the little girl; and with her own hands she took the babe from the Egyptian woman and delivered him to the Hebrew woman. It may well be supposed that the Egyptian woman only contemplated evil toward the child, should he be intrusted to her keeping. To the great gratification of all, the babe clung gladly and eagerly to the breast of the Hebrew woman, and was quieted and nourished. So the princess gave commandment: "Take the child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." She did not know that she was delivering him to his own mother. "Now, my good woman," addressing Jochebed, "what is your name, that I may know whom I shall hold responsible for this little charge?"

"My name is Jochebed, the wife of Amram of the tribe of Levi. My husband's place of labor is 'No. 14.'"

"Amram," repeated the lady; "it seems to me that I have heard that name before. Moreover,

there is something strangely familiar to me in this little girl's face and speech. Have I not seen your face before?" she asked, addressing Miriam.

"About a year ago," timidly answered the child, "my little brother and I were at play, and your ladyship passed along the highway, and stopped to ask our names, our father's name and place of residence."

"And you told me your name was Miriam, and that Amram was your father's name," said Thermuthis with evident pleasure and surprise. "And this is your own mother whom you have brought to be nurse for this little child?"

"It is, my lady," said Miriam, feeling almost tempted to add, "and this is my own dear little baby brother," but restrained the impulse, not knowing what effect the revelation might have upon the safety of the babe.

Speaking to Jochebed, the princess continued: "I am glad thus to know you and your family, for I now know just where you live and that what you have told me about yourself is true. With the greatest confidence, therefore, I commit this child to your care, because you speak truly, and will, doubtless, act honestly. I am, as perhaps you already know, Thermuthis, the king's daughter. And now remember, this babe is *mine*, and his name is Moses, for I have this day drawn him out of the water. I shall hold you strictly responsible for his safety. If you prove faithful to the trust, I will give you large wages."

“My lady,” answered Jochebed, “what shall I say to the officers who shall come to take the child away to destroy him, as doubtless they will do according to the king’s command? How shall I protect him from his enemies, seeing they will not believe me though I should tell them he is under your protection?”

“Never fear, my good woman; I will have an eye to this, and take special care that he shall not be interrupted.”

It is enough. The child is safe. Happy mother! This is a step in your triumph, but the victory is not yet complete. It is like receiving the dead back to life again. The joy of the family knew no bounds. Earnest and devout were their thanksgiving at their evening worship. This was once more a happy home. They could again lie down and sleep at night in security. The authoritative words, “*Nurse him for me,*” put a quietus to the raging of all enemies, and wrapped the ensign of the kingdom around the babe. But his enemies are not dead, neither is their wrath abated. They will be heard from again. Their hatred is too deep to be quiet.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE LOST FOUND.

IF the reader supposes that this act of the king's daughter, finding and adopting the little Hebrew waif, created no stir in high ranks, he fails to comprehend the proud spirit of this great nation at this time. Egypt was now in her meridian glory. Her great warrior-king had extended his dominions far and wide, built cities, monuments, temples, and great fortifications all over the realm. He improved the navigation of the Nile and built and equipped the grandest naval fleet that had ever swept the Mediterranean waters. He even extended his conquests into Palestine and captured Salem, the precursor of Jerusalem, the future metropolis of the Jewish nation. And when he had conquered Syria he wooed and married the princess of that nation, of whom was born our heroine, Thermuthis, the "Pharaoh's daughter" of the Scriptures. This Syrio-Egyptian queen became the mother of thirteen sons, all younger than this daughter. The *thirteenth* son succeeded his father, and was the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

Think now of this great king's daughter adopting a little waif as her own, and that, too, a child known to be of the despised Hebrew race! It

is put down as an act of supreme madness, and was so regarded by all Egypt. The scandal spread like fire in stubble. Dispatches would be sent that very day to the king to notify him of the rash act of his petted child. But the princess was equal to this emergency and would be the bearer of her own dispatches, which would reach him as soon as any that could be sent. There were no telegraph or telephone lines, and the most rapid means of communication was by the river, in a light boat, with sail and strong rowers.

The lightest and perhaps the swiftest running craft on the Nile then was the little papyrus shallop, to which reference has been made in a former chapter. But for such a distance as that from Memphis to Tanis a larger and stronger boat was necessary.

The princess and her maids returned from their morning ride, and began rapid preparation for going on board the royal barge which would start promptly at noon. She sent a message to the chief in command of the king's forces at Memphis to guard the house where the young child was and see that no harm came to him or the family. The whole city was stirred by the gossip of the morning, but the ears of the princess were deaf to it all. The common people took great interest in the wonderful story, but the upper class were simply in a rage. The king's prime minister asked an interview with the princess to inquire as to the truth of the report. On being assured that it was true,



he at once prepared to get the news off to the king, feeling it to be his duty to do so.

Thermuthis and all her attendants were now on board and the hour for departure had come. The royal barge "rounded out" from the wharf into the middle of the stream, turned her prow down the river, spread her gay sails to the breeze, and darted away like a thing of life. These royal barges were splendidly equipped, with rudder, cabin, and masts painted of a rich golden color. The sails were fringed with variegated colors till they gleamed in the sunshine like the rainbow, reminding one of Shakespeare's description of the gorgeous barge in which Cleopatra ascended the Cydnus:

The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,  
Burned on the water; the poop was beaten gold;  
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that  
The winds were love-sick with them: the oars were silver;  
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made  
The water, which they beat, to follow faster,  
As amorous of their strokes.

The sun was just sinking behind the hills when the barge anchored at the wharf before the magnificent city of Tanis. The gentle breezes from the sea were abundantly refreshing, and the city was all aglow with light and life. It was crowded almost to suffocation with people from every part of the kingdom and surrounding provinces. Suddenly the living mass on the shore began to part, and a train of royal carriages came up. The princess and her maids were escorted to one, and a score or more of the king's court officers filled the re-

maining ones, and all went dashing away over the smooth bituminous streets to the palace royal.

No time was now to be lost by the business-like, matter-of-fact Thermuthis. Just as soon as she could communicate with the king she sent him a message of greeting, and earnestly begged the privilege of seeing him alone for only a very few minutes. He responded lovingly to her greeting, and said that he was too much occupied with important business to see her before the following morning. This she knew was true, and ordinarily would not have dared to interrupt him further; but now she was not to be put off, even at the risk of arousing his displeasure by her persistency. Therefore, her next message represented that she *must see him at once* concerning matters of the utmost importance.

His knowledge of her good sense and business-like manner had taught him not to ignore her requests altogether, especially when they came with such vehemence as on the present occasion. He therefore sent her a favorable answer, and in a few moments met her in the beautiful and gorgeously furnished guests' chamber.

This meeting was not without its peculiar embarrassment upon the part of the daughter. She was not ignorant of the magnitude of her offense, if her father should look at it in the light of an offense, and she could not very well see how he could view it in any other light. No one knew better than she the relation that existed between

the Egyptians and the Hebrews, and the feeling of hatred existing in the minds of the Egyptians toward the Hebrews. Moreover, the seriousness of the matter increased upon considering that her action had contravened the king's command, which fact she well knew. It could not be considered a light thing to intercept his command and rescue one whom he had condemned to die. This she had deliberately done. Could it fail to arouse his anger?

To read this brief but intensely interesting story as contained in the second chapter of Exodus, and think of it only as though the whole transaction were tamely accepted by the king and his court as if no offense had been committed, would be to forget that these were all human beings and jealous of each other's prerogatives. The great central facts are stated, but the details are left to the common sense of the reader. We can get an idea of the effect they produced by laying the facts down by the side of the same facts, should they occur in our day. The Scriptures are a collection of brief statements of great central truths without their details. And it is well for us that it is so. If it were otherwise, as is stated of the sayings of Christ, "the world could not contain the books."

But our little heroine has undertaken her own defense before the king, and she will be equal to the task. She related the incident of the finding of the babe from beginning to ending without con-

cealing a single fact. As she had anticipated, the king's rage was unbounded. His strong frame shook with agitation. Alternate passions of astonishment, humiliation, and rage rushed through his brain and fired his soul.

By the time Thermuthis had ended the recital of the story of her adventure, her father was pacing the floor with such rapidity that one might have supposed him to be chasing a phantom. This seemed to be necessary to restrain his anger. Stopping suddenly and fixing his piercing eyes, now blazing with wrath, upon the calm-faced girl as she stood before him, he said: "By forgetting the prerogatives of a king, you may force me to forget that I am your father. To what depths of degradation and infamy do you propose to bring the illustrious house of the Pharaohs? Am I to understand that you would bring this little Hebrew outcast into the royal family as your legal heir, so that he shall inherit the throne of Egypt? Then, since this precious waif is to grasp the scepter of our great nation, perhaps you would have me to abdicate *now* in favor of the hopeful little prince."

The king's wrath kindled as he spoke, and when or how it might have ended is hard to conjecture had not the cool-tempered, self-poised Thermuthis interposed. She had raised the storm, and now she must pour oil upon the raging billows and, if possible, calm them to rest. Though her father's speech was the severest he had ever made

to her, she would not answer with hot words; but knowing that "a soft answer turneth away wrath," she said: "My father, be calm but for a moment, and hear me. Your kingdom is a great kingdom, and you are a great king whom none can withstand or successfully resist. Your armies have extended their conquests over Ethiopia, Armenia, Assyria, Mesopotamia, and Syria. Your mighty deeds are known throughout the world. You have neither fear nor dread of any power on earth. Far be it from me to pluck one laurel from your honored brow, or bring shame upon your kingly name. Far be it from my desire to contravene or defy your royal authority. But will so great a king condescend to begrudge a woman the indulgence of her strongest passion, which is to love and care for helpless infancy? O, King Rameses, be not angry with your loving child and only daughter; but indulge her in this weakness, if it be such. I seek not the kingdom, scepter, and crown, either for myself or the child, though my legitimate heir would stand next to yourself. But neither he nor I will ever urge this claim over your own sons, should it not meet your hearty approval. Only let the babe be mine, and the kingdom may be another's."

While the maiden princess thus pleaded her cause, she stood before the king a splendid picture of native grace. Her eyes sparkled with the fire of appealing love, and her very soul leaped into the fervor of her eloquent speech. She knew

that the great weakness of her father was a passionate love of praise, and she aimed to lodge her cause there for present success; but at the same time she was deeply in earnest, and felt that her cause was in the interest of humanity. Nor was she mistaken in her estimate of his kingly pride. She saw that she had touched the chord which vibrated through the chambers of his vanity.

Woman has her weakness, but none can detect sooner than she the weakness of a man. This is the right arm of her power over him, and if she be sufficiently skilled in its use to keep him blinded to the fact that he has a weakness, or that she is playing upon it, she may lead him whithersoever she wills. Hence, a good woman is God's best gift to man, for she will use his weakness to lead him from evil. Happy is such a man; but happier still is he who rises above petty weaknesses and dares to be a man. Even a king may worship at the shrine of his own greatness till all of his true manliness is dwarfed into nothingness. On the other hand, he may become so jealous as to construe every little thing into an act of infringement upon his authority or an attempt to overthrow his kingdom.

Fortunately for some reasons, and unfortunately for others, Rameses II. was in a measure possessed of both these passions. Unfortunately, because unscrupulous tricksters would sometimes play upon one or both of them to carry out some evil design; and fortunately, because sometimes

his fiery spirit could be controlled by an appeal to his pride, as in the present instance. His manner toward his daughter softened rapidly, for two reasons: first, his vanity was fed by her appeal to his greatness; and secondly, his pride in and love for her was heightened by her pathetic and strong appeal to be indulged in her "woman's love."

But softened as he was, yet to yield to such a request was too great a condescension for his proud spirit all at once. By way of compromise, he said: "This is indeed a strange piece of folly that has come suddenly into your mind, and I am sure it will soon have vanished. But in consideration of your *fancied* sincerity, I promise you that if, at the end of five moons, you still hold to the strange notion to have the little Hebrew child for your own, it shall be as you wish. Meanwhile the babe shall be protected from all molestation, on the condition that he remain in the care of the nurse till the expiration of the time just named. I shall dispatch a messenger at once to the prime minister at Memphis to take such steps as are necessary for the safety of the child."

"Most gracious king and indulgent father!" exclaimed the now thoroughly delighted princess. "How shall I ever express my heartfelt gratitude for this great favor? I will see to it that you shall never have occasion to regret this kindness. I hope never to abuse your confidence."

At this moment they were interrupted by the signal of a waiting page at the chamber door.

The king bade him enter. Reverently approaching, he laid an open letter in the king's hand. It was from the chief deputy, requesting the royal presence in the court chamber at once to hear important dispatches which had just arrived from Memphis.

The reader need scarcely be told what these dispatches were. They were from the prime minister relative to the *royal scandal* concerning the little Hebrew babe. The light barge left the wharf at Memphis an hour after the departure of the princess and her company, and had been a little delayed on the way, so that her arrival at Tannis was considerably in advance of the dispatches. Hence, when the king heard them read he was fully prepared for the news. The battle had been fought, the storm was over, his mind was made up, and his promise was out. There was now nothing to do but answer the dispatches with the order which he had promised his daughter he would send to the prime minister concerning the child.

Thus was another victory won for the cause of right, and another step taken by an all-wise and overruling Providence in preparing the way for the final deliverance of his people from bondage. Thus was "the wrath of man" made to praise Him, and to assist in working out the divine purpose. The child is safe; his mother is happy. Let them rest awhile in quiet.

Early on the following day there could be seen thousands of people crowding toward the great



square where stood the "Rameses statue," recently erected. It looked like a huge ghost standing high in the air covered with a shroud. Long before the hour for the ceremonies to begin, a living mass of humanity occupied every available inch of ground for acres around this statue. The royal canopy was spread near the base of the statue, gayly bedecked with every shade and variety of ornamentation. No expense nor labor had been spared to set forth the glory and splendor of the king and kingdom of Egypt on this occasion. To-day there is to be displayed to the public gaze for the first time the largest and most magnificent device in the form of a statue that was ever wrought out by human hands. And, so far as ever yet found, there is only one that has since approximated it in size, and that one was erected by and for the same man afterwards at Thebes. This was chiseled out of solid Syene granite, and is said to have been the "highest statue ever fashioned by Egyptian sculptor." This doubtless is a mistake as to size. It was no larger than the one at Tanis, if as large; but it possessed one superior quality in that it was granite, while this appears to have been only common stone.

But the hour for the ceremonies had come. There was a curious device in the form of a block and windlass arranged for lifting the shroud-like covering from the statue at a given signal, to expose it to view instantly.

See! There is a sudden commotion at the

outer edge of the great throng, and the cry is heard, "Make way for the king!" In a moment the crowd parted, and the royal procession with its gay and glittering pageantry came moving with measured dignity through this living lane toward the canopy prepared for them. The king and queen first ascended the flight of steps to the royal seats, escorted by the chief deputy. Then followed the princess with her two maids, Rachel and Hagar. Next came the younger children of the royal household and took their places just behind the king and queen. Last came the chief officers of court, taking position on the right of the royal party.

When all were ready, and just before the formal ceremonies began, four strong Hebrews ascended the scaffold on which the windlass rested, and which was to be manipulated for raising the covering from the statue. They stood facing the royal canopy, ready for their work at a given signal.

Look! What means that commotion up there under the canopy? Some one has fainted. Who is it? "Water, water!" is the general cry. "Take her to the carriage!" rang out the voice of the princess above the noise. Instantly a number of strong men obeyed, and soon lifted the insensible form of Rachel tenderly down from the platform and placed her in the carriage. The princess ordered Hagar to accompany her and go at once to the palace and summon a physician.

In the confusion no one had observed that one

of the Hebrews who was on the scaffold near the windlass had leaped to the ground and run to the canopy and assisted in lifting the young woman into the carriage. Nor was the fact noticed till quiet was again being restored and the young man was observed ascending the ladder to take his place again beside the windlass. How pale he looked! but he affected unconcern, and effectually concealed his great excitement. What does it all mean? Who is he? and why did this little affair excite him any more than his fellow-Hebrews? True, this was a Hebrew girl, which fact would excite Hebrew sympathy for her; but this does not explain the action and agitation of the young man.

In a few moments all of the confusion had disappeared and the ceremonies went on. The king delivered a great oration, and the people shouted his praises. At a given signal the veil was lifted, and again the multitude shouted. They gazed with wonder and admiration upon the imposing figure before them. The king himself beheld with pride the great shaft of stone which would perpetuate his name and fame for thousands of years. "Long live the king!" rang through the air, and was echoed and reëchoed from a million throats till they grew hoarse with the prolonged effort. The royal family descended from the canopy, entered the carriages, and drove through the stirring mass of humanity, while the thundering shout still resounded, "Long live the king!"

Joel had been transferred from his place of la-

bor at home to the city of Tanis, to assist in the difficult task of raising this great monument to its place upon the pedestal. Thousands of the strongest men that could be found in the kingdom had been collected for that work, and he was of the number. He was also one of the select four who were placed at the windlass to assist in removing the covering from the statue. When Rachel recognized him, being already overcome with fatigue and illness, her nerves gave completely down under the sudden shock of surprise, and she became unconscious. He, seeing and recognizing her, almost flew to her side and helped to bear her to the carriage. All these things took place in the confusion and excitement of the moment without attracting attention or betraying the secret that the lost was found. On that sad night Joel vowed to devote his life to the task till it was done. Found, but not recovered!

## CHAPTER XVII.

### GRIEF AND GRATIFICATION.

MANY months have gone by since Rachel's abduction. The grief of the mother has been great indeed. She would often say in her bitterness of soul: "Hard as it would have been to give up my darling little Benjamin, yet it would have been far better if he had shared the fate of thousands of others and perished in the river. I feel like this last calamity was brought upon us by the rescue of the babe. Yet if he had not been rescued he would have been doomed to a life not only of servitude, but also of wickedness and degradation." Thus continually driven from one desperate conclusion to another, and tossed upon the waves of sorrow, she would usually come back to the only rational conclusion for one who trusted in God, and say: "It is all for the best; we have done all that we could, and can only wait for God's purposes to ripen."

No tidings had ever been received from the lost Rachel. They believed she had been at first carried to the city, but beyond this all was dark. A thousand possible evils had been suggested to the mind of the wretched mother. No grief can equal this. To know that she was dead would be relief; but to think of her as in the hands of heartless men was enough to madden her brain.

It was the pleasure of the wicked "Old Sol" to let the family see him as often as possible, to remind them of his cruel revenge. Knowing that he could, if he would, tell her what she so much longed to know, the mother sometimes felt almost tempted to throw herself at his feet and beg him to pity her grief and tell her whither he had carried her child. But too well did she know that this would only add to his heartless pleasure and deepen her grief, for he was utterly destitute of pity. It is really doubtful whether he knew anything of Rachel, beyond that first night when she disappeared from his sight and entered the old temple-prison. Indeed, he cared little for anything after his spite was gratified and he had been paid for his cruel services.

Hundreds of Hebrew laborers had been called to Tanis to assist in raising the Ramesian statue, among whom, as the reader already knows, was our Joel. But now that the work was finished, they were all to be returned to their respective places of labor. They were principally from the public works near and in Memphis. They had orders to be ready to move on the morning following the day of unveiling the statue. Joel longed for an opportunity to communicate with Rachel, but it was a hopeless wish. He knew no one in the city, and the palace grounds were not accessible to the common people, much less to the Hebrew laborers. He had discovered the fact that she was in some way connected with the palace, and with the

royal family, for he had seen her with them; but even that was a mystery. How she came there, or what place she occupied there, was unknown to him. What strange fortune had delivered her from the wretches into whose hands she at first had fallen? Was she one of the maids of the princess Thermuthis? The first of these questions he knew to be true; the second he had good reason to believe to be true.

It was real torture, however, not to be able to learn about these things more definitely before leaving the city. But what he did know was a great comfort, and he could relieve the dreadful suspense of her parents and friends. They all knew and loved the princess, and would feel that Rachel was safe, at least for the present. Again, he was reasonably sure that she had recognized him, which perhaps in part, he thought, accounted for her sudden illness. But did she know that he saw and recognized her? Oh, if she only knew this, and that he actually assisted her into the carriage! But this he felt was very improbable, in fact impossible, as she was at that moment insensible to anything that was going on about her.

Morning came, and the barges left the wharf early for Memphis. About two hundred laborers were on board. The next day Joel reached his home, after an absence of more than a month. He was well and favorably known in his village, and all were glad to see him; but when it was known that he had seen Rachel, the excitement knew no

bounds. The news flew like the wind. Many came to see him and ask more about her. "Where is she?" "What has she been doing?" "Where has she been?" and the like questions. A few misunderstood the news and thought she had actually come home, and evinced their disappointment at not finding her there. But all rejoiced that she was safe. The joy of her parents cannot be imagined. Joel assured them not only of her safety from the ruffians who stole her away, but that he believed from all he saw that she was one of the maids of honor to the princess Thermuthis. The mention of the name of the young princess gave new interest to the story, for just now the whole land was full of gossip relative to her having found and adopted a Hebrew babe. So Joel's friends had some startling news to tell him as well as he had to tell them. It had been only three days ago that the babe was found by the princess and her maids; "and who knows," suggested some of her family, "but that Rachel was present at the very time?"

"Very likely," said Joel; "for I learned that the princess and her maids arrived in Tanis only the evening before the ceremonies of the unveiling of the great statue."

"That very morning," said Samuel, "is the time she is said to have found the babe. The royal barge left that day at noon for Tanis."

"What did she do with it?" asked Joel.

"It happened that the little daughter of Joche-



bed, the wife of Amram, was near, and was sent to call a nurse from some of the Hebrew women, and she called her mother.”

“Is it not known who the child’s mother is?”

“Not certainly; but among the Hebrews it is believed that Jochebed is its mother, and that she placed it in a basket by the river near the royal bathing houses in the hope that the princess might discover it and have compassion on the babe and spare its life, seeing that she was known to have very tender feelings toward the suffering Hebrews.”

“Noble woman!” exclaimed Joel; “who knows but that in some such way she found and rescued Rachel from her tormentor? How glad we should all be that she is under the protection of such a friend!”

“Indeed, we are rejoiced,” said Samuel; “but why does she not release her and let her come home? If she be so sympathetic, why should she not have compassion upon us and upon Rachel?”

“Perhaps she does not know the history of her cruel abduction, and certainly she does not know us all. How should she know all the Hebrews?”

“Could not Rachel tell her all these things?”

“Perhaps she might, if allowed to do so. I have been told that there are persons who make a business of stealing the most attractive Hebrew girls, and selling them to the wealthy families for servants. If so, then of course such servants are

intimidated by threats till they will not dare tell their true history."

"I see," said Samuel, as the shadows of sorrow, which Joel's good news had partially dispersed, came back to his face, as he thought of the possible maltreatment of his child by the unfeeling ruffians who snatched her from him.

Do you not see the hand of God in all this? He is slowly but surely moving the lines of preparation for the final deliverance of his people. The Hebrews have a strong friend in the house of Pharaoh; and, though she will meet with opposition, she is being made a nucleus of providential events which will culminate in the salvation of his people. God always has a *process*, and they that have faith to work and wait for it will see his glory. His methods sometimes seem to us to be slow, but the two greatest events in the history of our world had each a process, namely, creation and redemption. God in nature, grace, mind, and matter always works out his wise ends by a process which can neither be hurried nor hindered. He who interferes with this process will get injured in the attempt. Moses is born, but it is God's plan that he shall be brought up in the house of Pharaoh that he may be "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and thus become "mighty in words and in deeds." How is this going to be accomplished? God will not be ready for the exodus till this is done. Aaron has been born and is more than three years old, but he must grow up, be-

come skilled in the use of both the Egyptian and Hebrew languages, so that he can plead the cause of his own people in the court of Pharaoh, and their own cause before them.

The father and mother of Joshua were both living at the very time when "Pharaoh's daughter" drew Moses, his illustrious predecessor, "out of the water" and gave him his name from that event, but had no thought that God would call them to play such a part in the world's history as the responsible task of rearing, educating, and training a successor for that great man. Who can tell the ways of Providence? All this time he is proceeding with his own secret methods, and Israel must "by faith" wait, "go forward," or "stand still," as he from time to time shall direct.

This great people have made to themselves a character for *waiting*. Through the centuries of their bondage they never lost heart. But, alas! the very gift that was a virtue then has proved a great evil to them, and still keeps them waiting, waiting, wearily waiting for a Saviour. The very event for which they have been waiting for thousands of years has swept by and been rejected by them. Oh, why will they not have *this* Saviour? Is it because he happens to be *our* Saviour, too? One of their own best and wisest men said with pathetic sorrow: "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." That is to say, when he thought of his brethren and the love he had for

them, he felt like leaving and rejecting Christ, too, rather than be separated from them. But if they persisted in rejecting Christ, he would give them up rather than Christ. In view of which he exultingly declares: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

A new and unexpected temptation now assailed our young friend Joel. His love for Rachel had always been true and ardent, and he had good reason to believe that hers for him was not less ardent. Her loss to him was as if the very light had gone out of his life. But now that he had not only found out where she was, but had really seen her himself, and that her release was uncertain, if ever it came, he could scarcely resist the temptation to break away from his daily duties at any risk and devote himself exclusively to the task of recovering her freedom. Indeed, he more than once seriously thought to disguise himself and seek some way of communicating with Rachel, arrange for an elopement, flee into the land of Midian and hide from his enemies, and spend his life in the hills of the shepherds. But each time the temptation came his better judgment condemned the rash step. For he well knew that should he even escape detection and reach the land of Midian, such refugees were apt to be returned under an arrangement agreed upon by the two rulers. Should this be the case, their condition would be worse than now. Moreover, he

was too prudent to take such a step as might bring any greater calamities upon Rachel than she already had to bear. And as the chances of success in such a hazardous undertaking were largely against him, he prudently and wisely resisted the temptation, accepted the situation, and resolved to do his duty faithfully and await the issue.

The king's family remained about a month at Tanis after the occasion referred to in the preceding chapter. Rachel's indisposition lasted only a few days. She prudently kept her secret safely locked in her own aching bosom, but the shadow that lingered upon her spirit could not be hid. If any observed it, only one was sufficiently interested to inquire the cause. Hagar was her only confidante. They had a common experience of sorrow in many respects, but since the day Rachael saw Joel there was a marked change in her spirits and manner. With childlike helplessness she clung to Hagar's love and companionship, and seemed to lean upon her now for counsel and sympathy, though her senior by more than a year. To her alone she now confided the secret of her love for Joel, and that only since that fatal day. Perhaps she would never have done so but for her friend's anxiety for the great change that had taken place in her manner. Hagar could now better understand what a great shock her nerves had received, and was better prepared to enter into full sympathy with her. But in spite of all her efforts to cheer and comfort her, she seemed fast settling

down in a confirmed state of melancholy. She talked only of her home and friends, and her utter despair of ever being with them again. Yet with all her gloom she never neglected her duties. She was prompt and faithful, always profoundly respectful to the princess and thoughtful of her interest. Thus she won the very highest esteem from that lady. Still there was a burden of heart that no kindness could lift. To be a Hebrew slave she was not ashamed, for this had been the common lot of her people for more than two centuries; but to be a *captive* was a sore trial. Yet, like her little maiden sister six hundred years after, who “waited on Naaman’s wife,” in the land of Syria, she was faithful in her captivity.

Cut off from her home, and lost to her family and friends, she sighed for the love and care of her good mother and the dear scenes of her childhood. Is it any wonder that she was paralyzed with emotion at sight of a familiar face, and especially one who was more than all the world to her? Ah! laugh not at her weakness, but pity her solitude.

All of the king’s household, except the princess Thermuthis, on leaving Tanis went direct to Thebes. The king left Tanis two or three weeks ahead of them, on account of important business at Thebes. Recent developments relative to her little charge make it necessary for the princess to stop at Memphis for a time.

Meanwhile let us look at some of the movements

of Jambres. No man in the kingdom of Egypt has been busier than he, stirring up scandal for thousands of busy tongues. The conduct of the king's daughter in the case of the young child has so alarmed and enraged him that it would be surprising if he should be quiet. Indeed, so fully does he believe that this whole transaction is the beginning of the fulfillment of that prophecy of his that he is not only in a rage himself but has wrought up great excitement over it throughout the whole land. It is the topic of conversation in all circles, among Egyptians and Hebrews, rich and poor, high and low. Many of the Hebrews are as much elated as the Egyptians are alarmed.

Scarcely a month has gone by since the child was rescued, yet there are few in all the kingdom that have not heard of the exciting event. And this is no great wonder, especially among the Hebrews, since there is such widespread excitement over the destruction of the children. Now, that one of the condemned ones should be rescued by a person so notable as the king's daughter is no small thing.

Jambres and Jannes followed the king to Thebes for the purpose of stirring him up also over this matter. What success they will have remains to be seen. One thing is sure, they are armed with strategy and zeal, and are spurred on with hate and fear. They lost no time in seeking audience with the king, and the shrewdness of the men will appear in their methods. Hear them. Jambres speaks: "We do humbly beg the clem-

ency of our great and most wise sovereign. We have come to lay before your majesty some ancient records bearing upon a great matter which is just now agitating the kingdom of Egypt. We know the king will not be indifferent to whatever concerns his government and people.”

“And, pray, what great matter can be agitating the kingdom of Egypt of which the King of Egypt is not already aware?” inquired the king, somewhat sarcastically; for he more than half suspected the “great matter” of which they wanted to speak, and did not wish to hear any more about it.

“Your majesty cannot be ignorant of the conduct of the princess in reference to the young Hebrew child, and what a great scandal it has brought upon the illustrious house of the Pharaohs. We have heard through the prime minister at Memphis that your majesty has approved the conduct of the young princess, and ordered that the child be protected and preserved.”

“And, pray, before what tribunal is the King of Egypt to be arraigned to answer for this grave offense against the will of the wise astrologers, priests, and scribes?” said the king, in a still more sarcastic tone.

In reply to this caustic inquiry, Jambres answered promptly: “Before the tribunal of a Hebrew prince who will soon pluck the crown from your brow and wrest the scepter from your hand. Know, O king, that even now the prophecy of your most unworthy servant is actually being ful-



filled. The child has been born, and is being fostered and protected by your authority, and is likely to be brought up in the king's own household. Your own hand will elevate this Hebrew prince to the throne, and degrade the Egyptians to the place of slaves. Beware, O king! To-day, six hundred thousand able-bodied Hebrew slaves are rejoicing in the prospect of soon having their feet upon the necks of the Egyptians; and all because of this child that the king and his daughter are holding under royal protection. Mark my words, King Rameses, he will prove to be a viper in your bosom."

This was a bold stroke, but the speaker considered the cause vital and the case desperate; and he resolved to sacrifice himself in its defense, and rescue or go down with it. He is in earnest, and certainly thinks his cause a just one. His zeal is to be commended, and is worthy of a better cause. He knew the weak point of the king, and aimed the force of his thrust at it. He had reason also to believe that the princess had strongly fortified against him at this point; but he was not slow to see that his thrust had taken effect upon his victim, and hastened to renew the attack and follow up the partial victory.

"I entreat that your majesty will hear me further concerning this matter. I am jealous of the king's crown and the honor of our great nation. From the ancient records we see that a little more than two hundred years ago there came one Jo-

seph by name, a Hebrew from the East, into Egypt, and married the daughter of a prince in Egypt. To them were born two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. From these two sons sprang two separate tribes of the Hebrews. Therefore, one-sixth of the Hebrew nation are of semi-Egyptian descent. This Joseph was elevated to be governor over Egypt, and was of no mean standing among the people. For a long time these two tribes have aspired to the government of Egypt by reason of the right of inheritance from their father, Joseph. Now, O king, we know that this faction is a very strong one, and their kindred are ready to aid and strengthen them. If they shall find that this Hebrew child has become heir to the throne, there will be an end of service, and instead there will be mutiny and rebellion.”

Each moment, under the influence of these vivid representations, the king's face assumed a more thoughtful and serious expression. He realized the great force of the argument of Jambres, and was almost startled by the new revelations brought before him from the “ancient records,” as Jambres styled them.

We have had sufficient insight heretofore into the king's peculiar characteristics to show us the two prevailing weaknesses by which he could be most easily managed, namely, love of praise, or vanity, and fear for his crown. It is needless to say that at this moment he was in great mental agony on account of the latter. He had promised pro-

tection to the child; and yet he was now so wrought upon by this exhibition of danger to his crown, by this artful reasoner, that he was strongly tempted to recall the promise, though made in good faith, and order the babe to be killed.

“All crowns have *some* thorns,” is a true saying to which all heads that wear them will testify. What will this perplexed king do? Bound to his daughter by a sacred promise, and yet oppressed with an awful sense of fear on account of it. Jambres is as ready to help him out of his perplexity as he was to get him into it, provided that he can thereby carry his point. He came to his rescue with this proposition: “Inasmuch as your majesty is under promise to protect the child, far be it from your most humble servant to cause you to break faith with the princess in this promise. Now, therefore, let the king, for the further safety of the little child and for the peace of the land, send by his servant and have the babe removed into Ethiopia. No harm can come to him there.”

Happy thought! and right eagerly did the king seize upon it as the way out of his trouble. Shame upon a man who lacks manliness! Some men are exceedingly great in some things, and at the same time exceedingly small in others. Pilate yielded to a similar weakness when he might have protected the great Redeemer of the world, of whom this babe was a type.

As stated before, the princess came direct from Tanis to Memphis, and she did not reach the lat-

ter place one day, nor hour, too soon to avert a dire calamity to her cherished hopes and plans. Her father had been made to believe that if this child be allowed to remain and be brought up in sight of the Hebrews, it would be the cause of endless insolence from them; and on the other hand cause endless irritation to the Egyptians, and thus be the cause of much strife and possibly danger to his life. Therefore, "for his safety and the peace of the land," permission had been given to remove him into Ethiopia. The interpretation of all which was simply banishment and ultimate death to the child.

A letter to the princess from her father went on at great length to explain these facts, with an elaborate array of reasons for having given the order for the removal of the babe "to a place of safety" (?). Herod-like, he would save his crown by deceitful professions of devotion, when he meant to destroy. Pilate-like, to silence popular clamor he gives sentence against the innocent.

Never before was the blood of this Egyptian princess so stirred and fired. Stung by the unfaithfulness of her father, and angered by the boldness of her enemies, she was thoroughly aroused to resistance. She at once suspected Jambres of being at the bottom of this treachery. She threw herself right across the king's command, and resolved to thwart the schemes of those who sought the life of the babe.

She loved her father very dearly, and would

not wound or disobey him except when principle had to be sacrificed to do so. She was wounded, angry, and disgusted. She must act, and that very promptly. No time is to be lost now. Ordering the king's hostler to make ready at once a strong carriage and his fleetest team, and summoning ten mounted attendants, she and one of her eldest maids entered the carriage, and the whole company dashed away with the speed of the wind in the direction of the Goshen country. Where she was going, or what she intended to do, she did not deign to inform any human being. "Obey my orders," was her instruction to the attending servants. With such a will as hers fired up to "white heat," we may expect to hear from her again.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE RACE.

THE battle is on. Jambres on one side, the princess on the other, and the king trying to be on both sides, but really on neither. He is only a tool for the contending parties. But, as "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," we will not concede the victory and the prize till the contest is over.

Jambres arrived at Memphis in the night, and on the same barge that brought the letter from the king to Thermuthis, of which mention has been made before. He proceeded without a moment's delay to make preparation to carry out his instructions. By sunrise the next morning he was on the road to Goshen, accompanied by a squadron of soldiers and an Egyptian nurse. In order to avoid coming in contact with the princess, his purpose was to get possession of the babe as soon as possible, and at once proceed by land to Thebes, where he would have ample time to lay further plans more deliberately.

He now, as he thought, had a fine prospect before him. Armed with authority from the king to transfer the child to the interior of Ethiopia, who would dare hinder or interfere with him? His only fear now was that the princess might hear of his movements and give him trouble. But how

could she, since he had at least a few hours the start of her, and possibly much more time than that? Everything now depended upon getting possession of the babe. But as we cannot assist in the race, let us, pending the issue, linger about the humble old Amram homestead, the native place of one of earth's greatest characters.

This child of whom we write had a home-life history very similar to that of every other child. Out of that home life, though its history has never been written, grew much of his future greatness. Therefore, his home, though humble, is of interest to us; not merely for its novelty, but because it brings us face to face with this great man and his wonderful history. If "coming events cast their shadows before," it is equally true that the brilliant character of a great and good man casts its light backward, and clothes "the old house at home" with great interest, though it has long since faded from human sight.

Faith is often encouraged by events happening along its line of vision that are in harmony with it. If Amram and his wife had faith when they "hid the babe three months," the things that had happened since that time had greatly strengthened their faith. Others might wonder at the strange preservation and its attendant circumstances, and call it a strange accident, but to them it was more glorious than strange. It blazed out so vividly in the line along which their eyes of faith were looking that they could not feel mistaken.

Some may say that the finding and adopting of the child was a mad fancy of a foolish girl; but while these servants of God appreciated and loved her for her great kindness in saving the life of their child, yet they saw more of God's hand in it than of hers. They poured out their gratitude to her as the instrument, but they said that God was using this noble-hearted woman without her knowledge to promote his glory and to defeat the wicked purposes of his enemies.

The babe grew astonishingly fast. He was the wonder of all who knew or saw him. He was a beautiful child, and the topic of conversation for thousands of tongues. Yet he was only a little baby—nursing, sitting, sleeping, crawling, crying, and laughing just like every baby that has ever come into this world. There might be millions interested in him, but he lived in a miniature world all his own. He was a little king, with father, mother, sister, and brother for his subjects, court, and kingdom. Beyond these he neither knew nor cared.

This child had two classes of enemies: one from among his own nation of people, and the other from the Egyptians. Proud as were the Hebrews generally of the honor conferred on them by the promotion of this child, there were a few in whom the spirit of envy arose. Why should this child be spared when theirs had to be destroyed? But this class was small. Among the Egyptians "the green-eyed monster," jeal-



ousy, was rife. This was kindled and fanned into such a degree of hatred as to endanger his life at every point. His old enemy, Jambres, was on his track, relentless and cruel as death. He proceeded with great caution, but he had so far found his match, and more, in the wide-awake and determined young princess.

After an hour's drive he arrived at the house of Amram, stopped his carriage at the front, and, accompanied by the Egyptian nurse, approached the door. The little girl, Miriam, met them at the door, not entirely without fear, though quite self-possessed.

“I wish to inquire if this is where Amram lives,” said Jambres.

“It is, sir,” promptly answered the child.

“Are you his daughter?”

“I am, sir.”

“I wish to see your mother, if you please.”

“My mother is not in the house, sir.”

“Then, if you please, we would like to see the little babe of whom we have heard so much. We are told that he is a very wonderful child in many respects; and we have further heard that your mother, Amram's wife, has the wonderful little boy in her charge.”

Now, a great many people had called there on the same errand, and Miriam had heard this same speech often before and thought it was sincere, not dreaming that it was genuine “Herodian deceit.”

“The little child is not in the house, sir, I’m sorry to say, but will be when my mother returns.”

“Then who *is* in the house?” asked Jambres, rather sharply, somewhat impressed that the child was trifling with him.

“Only my little three-year-old brother Aaron and myself, sir.”

“We will come in and see for ourselves,” said the disappointed old scribe, as he pushed the little girl out of the way, and rudely and without further ceremony entered the family sitting room. Sure enough, there sat little Aaron, as dignified and sober as if the whole place had been left in his charge. But the babe was not there. Jambres demanded of Miriam where her mother was, and when she would return. But his rude and discourteous conduct had aroused suspicion in her mind that he was not wanting to see the child out of any good motive, and she refused to answer any further questions concerning him or her mother.

Jochebed had that morning accompanied her husband on his way to his place of labor as far as the dwelling of Ophron’s mother, where she had expected to spend a few hours and return. She had taken the babe along with her, not willing to trust him in the care of the children. This circumstance looks like a fortunate accident; but doubtless it belongs in the same class with millions of unaccountable events that pass for fortuitous happenings, but really belong in the great catalogue of God’s providential events.

Jambres came out of the house satisfied that wherever the nurse was the babe was. But no persuasion nor threatening could get another word of information out of these children. They were fully persuaded that the man's intentions were evil toward the babe, and were glad to see him go away. But now a new danger presented itself to Miriam's mind. Suppose Jambres should ask of those who knew where her mother had gone; they would be sure to tell him, and he would go and take her little brother away from her. The very thought alarmed her; but to her great relief she saw the whole company turn into a road leading in an opposite direction from where her mother had gone.

Miriam scarcely waited for them to go out of sight till she hastily closed up the house, took her little brother, and started by a near way to reach her mother as soon as possible to inform her of what had happened. She had not been long gone from the house when another carriage drove up to the front gate, just where the first had been. This one was also accompanied by a small number of mounted attendants. Two women alighted from the carriage and walked rapidly up the narrow path toward the house. But the door was closed and fastened, and no amount of knocking could arouse anyone.

The reader need scarcely be told that this was the princess Thermuthis and her rescuing company. She was greatly disappointed at not finding

anyone in the house, and what to do next was a perplexing question. On inquiry she learned that a company of soldiers had just left the house, and that none of the family had been seen since. This aroused her suspicion that her enemies had been there before her and possibly carried off the babe. With disappointment and fear she turned back toward the city, but leaving four trusty servants with instructions to guard the house, and if they could get any information of either child or nurse to bring her word immediately.

When the children, Miriam and Aaron, reached their mother they found her in almost as great a state of excitement as they were. She had witnessed the passing carriages and companies without knowing the meaning of it, and was fearful for the safety of the children at home. She had a suspicion that it all had reference somehow to her babe. Therefore, she was afraid to leave him to go to look after the other children, or risk returning with him. Great was her joy when Miriam and her little brother came in sight. And when they told her what had happened at home, she was sure there was some evil in store for the babe.

Scarcely were they through telling the exciting adventure when they saw the last carriage that had passed returning; for they had all passed by there in going. They did not recognize the princess, nor did she see them. Not long after this carriage had left Amram's house, Jambres and his company returned. Finding there the servants

whom the princess had stationed on duty, Jambres ordered them put under arrest at once. To this they offered no resistance, as it would have been altogether useless.

They now broke open the doors and again searched the house in hope of finding some clew to the whereabouts of the young child; but all to no purpose. Thwarted in their design, they also returned to the city, as much disappointed as the other party. Jambres now thought that the king's daughter was in some way connected with his disappointment, though he did not know that she had left the city at all; while she was somewhat fearful that he had removed the babe before she arrived.

What a day of mysterious events! See how God spreads his protecting hand over this family. By an incomprehensible providence he has interested a member of the royal family in behalf of the child, and yet he shows clearly that he is not dependent even upon her for his protection and safety. He works by instrumentality, but is not shut up to special individuals or methods. His methods may sometimes appear commonplace to us, but their results are such as only God could bring about.

It is no wonder that Moses himself, in after years, instructed the people to say to their children, when they should ask about the sacred and significant ordinance of the passover: "By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from

Egypt, from the house of bondage.” Many, doubtless, were the wonderful stories told by those old fathers to their children about their bondage and cruel oppression, not one out of a million of which could possibly have been put into our sacred history of them as a nation. Nor was it necessary that they should be. But the display of God’s wisdom and power was entered upon their statute books. (See Exodus xiii. 3.)

In addition to the disappointment of the princess she was distressed lest she should be defeated in her cherished plans. Her father had been persuaded that it was best to remove the child to a distant land, and her enemy, Jambres, would leave nothing undone to carry out this plan; and for aught she knew he had already gotten possession of him, and was on the way to Ethiopia. If not, he at least had authority from her father, which amounted to the practical withdrawal of his protection. She could not believe her father altogether insincere in what he had done, yet she knew but too well the subtle purpose of Jambres, and that the plan, if carried out, would result in the death of the babe. Though somewhat disappointed, yet she was not discouraged. She resolved to leave nothing untried that might help to defeat them and save the child.

Summoning a trusty servant, she confided to him her secret, or such part of it as might be needful to carry out her orders. She wrote a letter to Amram, putting her seal upon it, and delivered it

to the servant with instructions to give it to *no one* but the man to whom it was addressed. At dawn this servant, attended by a closed carriage and driver, was on the road toward "No. 14," Amram's place of labor. The letter contained an account of her disappointment the day before, and how Jambres was seeking the babe, and that if they had not gotten possession of him, to send him and his nurse to her at once. The servants were also instructed not to suffer anyone to know their business, or stop the carriage on their return.

On the preceding day Jochebed was so strongly impressed with the evil intention of those who first came to their house that she feared to return till she could learn something further about it. Reasoning to herself concerning the matter, she said: "After all, the child is under protection of the king. His prime minister issued a proclamation declaring him an exception to the general edict. But then my husband informs me that the priests, Jambres and Jannes, are very pronounced in their opposition to this order, and they have great influence over the king, and doubtless will use it vigorously. Moreover, kings are sometimes above law, or turn the law into a channel to suit themselves, and are rather 'a law unto themselves.' Then their orders will be subject to their caprices."

Such reflections made her somewhat uneasy for the safety of the child, and she wisely concluded to remain where she was till she could communicate with her husband. She therefore sent Miriam

home to meet him on his return from his work, with instructions to tell him all about the day's events, and why she had not returned. Miriam told all about how the men acted, and how angry they were when they could not find or hear of the babe. She told him also about the second carriage that her mother had seen come in the direction of their home and return, but they did not know who were in it, as she and her little brother had left the house immediately after the first were gone.

Amram was much perplexed over the matter, but, like his wife, feared that some evil was intended toward the child. He therefore advised her to remain away from home and keep the babe out of the way till he could make some further inquiry about the matter. Early the following morning, soon after reaching his place of labor, the servant from the princess came and delivered the letter to him. Its contents were not only a great surprise, but also a relief to his anxiety, for he had unbounded confidence in the sincere and pure intentions of this young woman. Indeed, he had good reason to admire her noble and unselfish spirit and true devotion to the cause of justice, for he knew that to her he and his friend Ophron owed their lives and escape from prison. But up to this time she did not know whom she had relieved, nor did she care, as the principle of right was the same with her, whoever the victim involved might be. She only knew that he worked at "No. 14," and was the husband of Jochebed, her nurse.



Amram gave the servants the necessary instruction as to how and where they could find the woman with the little child, and also gave the letter to them to deliver to Jochebed that she might know that it was all right. Thus before the close of the day the mother and child were safely conveyed to the palace, where she was known only as "nurse." So, as the Scriptures say, "she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son." Practically he was now "her son," but legally he was not. Before this can be, he must be recognized as such by the king. This she will endeavor to accomplish as soon as practicable. The king had promised this at the expiration of "five moons," and the time was but half expired. She now saw that his life would be in constant peril till that step could be taken. She therefore resolved to keep him under her immediate charge from this time on.

Jambres made but one other trip to Goshen in search of the babe, for on that trip he learned that the princess had outwitted him. What she had done with the babe he did not know for a long time. For nearly three months she kept him in the palace without the knowledge of his enemies or but few of his friends. The king had been little about Memphis during that time, being greatly absorbed with his military and governmental affairs. Two of the strongest provinces of the East had rebelled and attempted to throw off the Egyptian yoke; so now his time and attention were required

to look after this, and he chose to go in person to the front and adjust the confusion. He had a sharp conflict with them, and soon succeeded not only in subduing them, but administered a sound castigation by way of reminding them of his superior power.

The recent alarm concerning the little child which the princess had received caused her to change her plan of spending the winter in Thebes—if winter it could be called in this climate—as was her custom. She remained in Memphis, and gave her entire attention to her new charge.

The child grew, both in strength and beauty. His physical development was remarkable. Each day the princess felt her heart drawn toward him more and more. Little did she dream that there was one who loved him more than she could possibly love. She did not know that he slept each day and night in his own mother's arms. It is doubtful if her keen sense of right and justice would have allowed her to lay any further claim to the treasure had she known this. She did not know that anyone cared for him as she did, or had any better right to him.

But Jochebed knew that nothing could more certainly work the destruction of the child than to withdraw the present protection by returning him to her Hebrew home. She was content to let things remain as they were, and be known only as "nurse to the child;" first, because it seemed to be the will of God that it should be so for the present;

and secondly, there was no real need that it should be otherwise, for she had him in her own motherly arms, and her "wages" were ample; so much so that she was enabled to provide for the comfort of her other children, and help her husband in taking care of them in her enforced absence.

The princess kept a vigilant eye upon the babe, and left nothing unprovided for his safety and comfort. She thought, and very reasonably, that the only object this "nurse" had in rendering such faithful service to the child was to secure the "wages." Let it be so. She is pleased and satisfied with the service, and Jochebed is happy in rendering it. What more could be asked? She serves the princess, and in this she serves her child, herself, her God, and her people. Wonderful service, wonderful woman, and blessed of God!

## CHAPTER XIX.

### WORSHIP AND WORSHIPERS.

IT should not be forgotten that Egypt at this time was at the height of her glory. Military power, learning, religion, and internal development were equal if not superior to any in the known world. Her numerous statuary, found in all the principal cities, together with her magnificent buildings and imposing temples, are all witnesses to this. Her mechanical genius would challenge this or any other age of the world to accomplish greater wonders. But of course mechanical art has been reduced to a smaller and more comprehensive compass than the ancients ever possessed. Yet there can be no doubt that the Egyptians, during the reign of Rameses II., possessed a very extensive knowledge of machinery. It was doubtless equal if not superior in power to any the world has ever known, but it was clumsy, slow, and hard to operate. Perhaps that which required the work of a hundred men as many days to accomplish could now, with our modern concentration of power, be accomplished by ten men in ten days.

Their numerous and splendid temples of worship, their untiring devotion to their various forms and ceremonies, together with their high standard for a complete education, abundantly prove their

interest in these things. If we are to judge from the sample that they sent out, and who has come down to us in sacred history, we are fully justified in placing the standard of education in ancient Egypt very high. Moses, if living now with his attainments then, could challenge comparison and not suffer by it. "Learned in *all* the wisdom of the Egyptians." How much that little word "all" includes, his life sufficiently proves. He combined the rare gifts of a military chieftain, judicial director, legislator, and prophet of God, and was competent, accomplished, and even eminent, in all these places.

"The same world of thought that invites us lay open to the earliest thinkers. The same principles of human action repeat themselves in each generation, and nature is unchanged since the very first. Philosophy must move in a circle, and can only combine existing things when it seeks novelty. The ancients have stolen all our best thoughts ages ago, and at best we can only borrow the vamped up systems of the past. New religions and philosophies, like the leaves of succeeding summers, spring from the decay of those that have gone before." \*

By the term "religion," we do not mean the worship of the "true God," which was at that time peculiar to the descendants of Jacob. Doubtless some of the Egyptians embraced the faith of the Hebrews, but only for a short time and with a

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\* Cunningham Geikie.

very unsteady faith. As stated in a former chapter, Amenophis IV., whose mother was of another nation, attempted the reformation of the moral condition of the country by introducing a form of religion similar to, if not identical with, that universally held by the Hebrews, and was most likely taken from their example. This very circumstance perhaps in after years helped to increase the hatred of the Egyptians toward the Hebrews, and caused them to multiply their burdens. Still it may be very reasonably supposed that a few retained a belief in "the one only true God."

While this is true of a few of the Egyptians, it is a sad fact, on the other hand, that as many if not more of the Hebrews became worshipers of the idols of the Egyptians. For this apostasy God threatened to destroy them even before they left the land of bondage. (See Josh. xxiv. 20; Ezek. xx. 8.) Yet, as a nation, they were distinct in their nationality, and doubtless will remain so to the end of time. This is a marvelous fact. It may have been that the Egyptians thought by long and grievous affliction to break their solid unity, and cause them to desert their God and their people, and identify themselves with them in worship and government.

There were thousands of priests and prophets who officiated in the many-formed worship of Egypt, and their power over the people by their incantations and superstitious ceremonies, from the king himself down to the humblest subject,

was wonderful and often ridiculous. They deified almost every form of animal, reptile and insect life known in the land. A writer of some note has said that there was at least one good growing out of this, and that was, it protected these creatures from cruelty; a sin for which not a few in this Christian age will have to answer.

The name "Memphis" signifies "good abode," or "the abode of the good one," which was supposed to have reference to Osiris. The representative idol here at this time was *Ptah*, to which was erected a grand temple of worship. But the most remarkable temple ever built in this city was erected to the sacred bull *Apis*, by Rameses II. This temple was celebrated for many things, and not the least for its colonnades, through which the great processions were conducted.

The Egyptians were noted for being a religious people, but alas how little their religion improved their moral condition! Indeed, their religious habits and customs, and even their worship itself, were more degrading than elevating. It is remarkable that the long residence of God's chosen people among them did not affect them more for good than it did. This can be accounted for only upon the ground that Hebrew influence over the Egyptians was broken and lost for more than two centuries before their exodus. At best it was never very great. This stands as one of those unaccountable mysteries over which neither sacred nor profane history throws any light whatever.

The chief divinity in Egypt was Osiris, whom they styled “king of gods.” He was said to have been murdered by the evil spirit *Typhon*, after which his spirit migrated into the bull Apis. When this bull died, he caused another to be produced by the strange combination of a ray of light from the sun and one from the moon falling at the same time upon a cow; and thereupon she would bring forth this sacred calf. After the death of the bull, and before the finding of this sacred calf, the whole land was in mourning. When by some mysterious providence it was found, he was taken to Heliopolis, the home of the priests, and kept forty days. Then he was with great pomp transported to Memphis, where he had his own temple and courts for exercise at will.

It may be well to remark in this connection that this Heliopolis was our scriptural “On,” where Joseph married his wife, and which was his home during the greater part of his stay in Egypt, and where, doubtless, he received his brethren when they came down into Egypt to buy corn. This was also the place from which the Hebrews in after years started on their journey to the promised land.

The following circumstance does not occur oftener than about every twenty-five years, except in case of some unusual misfortune to the sacred bull; never except upon his death. Now this has happened, another has been found, the forty days have expired, and the day has arrived for the great and solemn ceremonies of transporting him from



Heliopolis to his magnificent temple in Memphis. Heliopolis is situated at the upper edge of the Delta, fifteen miles from Memphis. Therefore, in going by the land route thence to Memphis you pass through many villages of the Hebrews; for, although the great body of this people lived north of that point, yet many of the brick manufactories lay along the east bank of the Nile, extending from a little below Memphis all the way to Tanis, on the same side of the river. A great thoroughfare or boulevard lay along this side of the river, extending many miles in the direction of the seacoast. Along this highway and through this part of the country are laid many of the scenes which are described in this book. Along this highway a vast stream of humanity was pouring to and fro every day. It is one of the king's prepared or elevated ways.

Most of the royal family, including the king himself, together with a half million or more of his subjects, had gathered in and around Heliopolis to take part in the ever-memorable and all-important act of the removal of their chief deity, and to follow him to his city and temple. About three-score and ten years hence a different scene will be witnessed here. Two millions of Hebrews will be gathered at the same spot ready to follow their God, Jehovah, out of the land of bondage. To-day these people are under orders to keep away from the city and the highway, lest they should pollute the occasion with their presence.

But when they shall march out under the leadership of Moses, a pillar of fire will hang over them lest unsanctified hands should molest their going. To-day the deluded throng will dance their silly fantastics before the chariot in which is confined a black bull that would be much happier in his freedom on the range. But when the hosts of Israel shall start from the same place to Canaan, their magnificent procession will be headed by the *Divine Presence*, clothed in the awful folds of a pillar of cloud.

To-day may be seen the sad spectacle of a few of the family of Israel walking in the procession with idolaters. But it has ever been so: men and women clothed in the livery of the Church walking with sinners; going “with the multitude to do evil.”

In the early dawn five hundred priests, with solemn mien and sacred chant, lead the procession out of the city. Next to these come the holy chariot drawn by priests, clothed according to the manner of their order. In this chariot is the sable deity. He is a beautiful animal, jet black, with a single white spot upon his face. Immediately behind the chariot came the mounted soldiery. Just behind them was the royal family, closely followed by the imperial guard. Then came the uncounted thousands of worshipers. For hours the living stream, composed of every class and grade of society, poured through the great gate on the south of the city.

The king's daughter was not there. Not that she did not believe in it, for this had been taught her from infancy. Nor was it that she would be disrespectful to the king, for she loved her father and was proud of her people. Though she was an idolatress, it was only because of her education and training, for there were noble impulses governing her life which needed only the refining love and knowledge of God in her heart to bring forth the best fruit. She was not there, because she feared more treachery toward the object of her heart's adoration—the little babe. Her enemies were on the alert, and must she be less watchful?

For fully three-fourths of the day the moving throng pushed forward, regarding neither dust nor heat. Reaching the suburbs of Memphis in the middle of the afternoon, they were met by a great company of priests and people with trumpets, timbrels, and many other instruments of music—or, rather, of noise. These were accompanied by dancing maids and chanting choirs to welcome their new deity.

The procession from the city, on reaching the head of the approaching procession, turned and preceded them through the streets with great noise and shouting. On reaching the temple, the priests drew the sacred chariot up into the wide colonnade and marched three times around the temple, while the multitude continued to shout and play upon their instruments. The bull was then

led into the temple, while the multitudes crowded to the shrine with a great rush, to be, if possible, the first worshipers after the arrival of the new god. They made costly and elaborate offerings; while the priests, though numerous, were kept busy with prayers and intercessions. This continued from day to day till the anxious thousands all had opportunity to satisfy their eager disposition to worship before this new representative of their great Osiris, and lay their offerings upon his altar. This was a commendable zeal, which doubtless would have accomplished wonders in a better cause. If only the worshipers of God were always fired with such devotion, what might not the influence be?

We have now taken a casual glance at one of the most notable events that could take place among the ancient Egyptians. But the reader cannot form an adequate idea of the importance which they attached to it and the consequent zeal with which they engaged in it. The Egyptians were a worshiping people, and therefore their temples were numerous. All over the kingdom, in every conceivable place where such a thing could be, there were inferior temples.

In descending the river from Thebes to the sea, you may now see evidences of the existence of these temples by scores and even hundreds along its banks. But their magnificence has passed away, as have the babbling millions who once bowed at their shrines. The principal temples contained

many statues, shafts, and columns, with inscriptions and accounts of persons and events from which most if not all of our history of ancient Egypt has been gathered. There was scarcely a temple of any importance in the kingdom in which has not been found some statue, inscription, or other evidence of the reign of Rameses II., who was without doubt the greatest of the house of the Pharaohs.

Now let the reader think of the family of Jacob coming into this country and living for nearly three hundred years right under the shadows of these heathen temples, and generation after generation of their children "seeing and hearing" their own worship derided and frowned upon and often rudely forbidden them, and yet abiding true to that worship. Think how they would contrast their bondage with the prosperity and freedom of those who worship these idols, and for aught we know many times offered promotion and all the good things of the land if they would renounce their religion and become identified with the Egyptians in their worship of idols. And yet they maintained not only their distinct nationality, but also their fidelity to God. This is one of the great wonders of this wonderful people. The only explanation it has may be found in Genesis xv. 1: "I am thy shield." This was God's promise to Abraham, and he kept it faithfully with his children.

True, some were "carried away of these dumb

idols.” The temptation was so great, the wonder is that more of them were not carried off. Yet a pity it is that even one went astray, for there is no apology for wrongdoing, however strong the provocation, when the Abrahamic promise was ringing in their ears: “I am thy shield.” So we, too, may profit by the same, and also lay this warning to heart: “If sinners entice thee, consent thou not.”

Thus closes one of the great days of this ancient city, giving us some insight into the religious habits of the people, and an object lesson to make us more grateful for our Christian age, with its institutions and light. Let the curious facts of history and its strange fascinations be the apology, if any be needed for devoting so large a part of this chapter to the religion of Egypt. How much blame attaches to them for not adopting the worship of the “true God,” when he revealed himself so clearly to them through the people whom they held in bondage, is a question hard to answer. Let us hope that there was some good reason which, if known to us, would at least palliate their offense in our estimation. If there was, God knew and will give them the benefit of it at the last day. They and we shall surely stand before him then, and each one “receive the things according to the deeds done in the body.”

Perhaps the reader has often wondered why our two Hebrew girls, Rachel and Hagar, who, for many months have been in the service of the prin-

cess, did not seek some opportunity to make their escape and return to their homes, or try to communicate with their friends. In the first place, they knew their old enemies too well to attempt such a thing; and in the next place, it will be remembered that they were under two embargoes of silence—one from their cruel and savage captors, and the other from the princess herself, on account of her father's fear of having anyone in the palace who should have any communication with the leading men of the Hebrews. The first was given under a brutal threat in order to conceal their wicked plans and enable them to carry on their nefarious business, which threat the girls knew but too well they would carry into effect. The second was an injunction from one whom they respected too highly to disobey. They had for their model the example of their illustrious ancestor, Joseph, who disdained to run away from those who had bought his services, or fail to render faithful service to them. Indeed, they felt honored in being servants in the same house where this their noble father had won such distinction for himself and his nation. But as God never forsakes those who do not forsake him, an event came to pass which resulted in happiness to all concerned.

One day, not long after the occasion of the removal of the sacred bull to the temple, the princess, as she often did, took her morning drive down the boulevard on the east bank of the river, the same route that she traveled when the babe was found.

This time she had the nurse and babe to accompany her, and also her two Hebrew maids, Rachel and Hagar. The princess and Hagar occupied the rear carriage, and Rachel, Jochebed, and the babe the front one. They had gone several miles from the city and had just turned about and started on their return journey, when a company of drunken roughs, falsely called soldiers, came dashing at full speed down the road, with rattling armor and flying dust, directly in front of the carriages, and yelling like madmen. They were the same who ran over and almost killed old Father Ishmael, this time with "Old Sol" at the head.

The spirited horses attached to the front carriage took fright, and, in spite of the driver, wheeled right about, upset the vehicle, and started off on a mad run, dragging the carriage after them and scattering its inmates. At this moment, before the frightened horses had gotten under headway, a man was seen to rush from the roadside just in time to seize them. No human strength could have stopped them but for the fact that the sudden shock caused one of the horses to stumble and fall. This gave the man such an advantage that he succeeded in stopping them. Meanwhile two more men who happened to be near caught the other two horses and assisted their driver in getting them quieted. The princess, oblivious to everything but the peril of the babe, now jumped from the carriage and ran to the help of those in the overturned vehicle.



Before she could reach them, the young man had gotten them all out from under the broken carriage, but in an almost unrecognizable condition, as they were nearly covered up with dust. Fortunately they had received no injury except a few bruises and scratches, which would soon be forgotten. Poor little frightened baby! he was in a sad plight. Just a little while ago he looked so pretty in his beautiful clothes, but now, all covered with dust and dreadfully torn, they showed how very narrow had been his escape. Still screaming with fright, the little fellow clung to his nurse as though he expected the scene to be repeated every moment. She clasped him to her bosom, and soon succeeded in soothing and quieting his fears.

The princess thanked the young man cordially for the timely aid he had rendered. She did not observe his embarrassment, or if she did, it was but natural that she should attribute it to his modesty. Only an humble Hebrew laborer, he was not accustomed to being thus addressed by a member of the royal family. If she could have read his thoughts, she would have discovered that they did not so much concern her as another one of the company. She had not observed that while her attention was absorbed with the child there had been a recognition and cordial greeting upon the part of the young man and Rachel. Indeed, their joy would have been much more enthusiastic and demonstrative but for the

prudent thought that their relation should be kept a secret, at least from the princess.

The men who rendered such timely aid in this frightful accident were no other than Joel and his two friends, Isaac and Reuben. By some chance or special providence these three young men were near when the mishap occurred. And in at least two important respects it was fortunate that they were. They doubtless saved the company from serious hurt, and possibly averted the death of some one or more of them. Then they identified the perpetrators of the mischief, and could appear as witnesses against them.

The princess further recognized their valuable services in a few well-chosen and cordial words: "I see that you are Hebrew laborers, but cannot forbear to express the gratitude of myself and maids, whom you doubtless recognize as being Hebrews also, for your timely aid. We will be pleased to number you among our good friends in the future. We have been rudely insulted by soldiers of the realm, who should have been our protectors, and but for you some of us would have been crippled or killed. What are your names, and your usual place of labor?"

"Our names are Joel, Isaac, and Reuben; and our place of labor is 'No. 14,' please your royal highness," replied Joel.

"Then you know one Amram, who is the husband of my nurse," said the princess.

"We have the honor and pleasure of know-

ing him and claiming him as one of our good friends.”

“You will do us the further kindness to say to him, should he hear of our accident, that we all escaped without serious injury, and much of it is due to your efficient aid.”

Rachel was happy, not only for the reason that she had met her friends, but that through them her dear mother might know where she was and that she was safe and well. She hoped also that this occasion might in some way lead to her final restoration to home and friends. Hope! What a beautiful dove of consolation! The heart can bear almost any hardship if only it is upheld by hope.

The drivers, with the aid of the young men, succeeded in getting the prostrate horse disentangled from the wreck and on his feet again. The princess and attendants were assisted into the undamaged carriage, in which they were safely conveyed back to the city, alive and happy, but not so presentable as when they started.

The next day, soon after arriving at their place of labor, Joel, Isaac, and Reuben received orders from the prime minister to report at once to him at the court of the palace. They obeyed promptly, but not without some vague wondering as to what the purpose of the summons might be. They felt quite sure it must be something pertaining to the offense of yesterday, but just what it was they could not guess. When they were ushered into

the presence of the officer, he said: "I have sent for three young Hebrew men whose names, I am told, are Joel, Isaac, and Reuben; are you the men?"

"We are, your honor," replied Joel.

"Were you witnesses of an accident that happened on yesterday to the carriage in which some of the king's family were riding?"

"We were, and rendered what service we could to prevent further serious damage."

"Can you say with certainty who the men were that behaved so rudely as to frighten the animals and cause them to upset the carriage?"

"We can give their names with certainty," replied Joel, with some vehemence. Is it any wonder that he felt a secret pleasure in giving this information which might lead to the apprehension and punishment of one who had caused so much trouble and sorrow in his community and not a little to himself? It would only be natural for him to feel so.

The minister's scribe here made a list of names of the band of ruffians under "Old Sol," who had caused the mischief. A messenger was sent to the commander of the king's guard to appear at once in the palace court.

"Take this list of names," said the minister, as he handed the paper to the officer, "and bring these men before me at once."

The officer bowed, took the order, and retired. In a short time a band of fifty select men were in

full gallop for the little barracks, which was the headquarters of "Old Sol's" company.

"Now, young men," said the minister, addressing the three witnesses, "you can retire and enjoy the liberty of the city till the ninth hour, when you will report here again, as I expect to need you to identify the offenders whom I have just now ordered arrested." He then gave to each a "check," which would serve as evidence to all officers and patrols that they were absent from duty by permission, and were to be allowed the liberty of the city upon good behavior.

## CHAPTER XX.

### INGRATITUDE.

THERE has ever hung an unsolved mystery over the divine methods employed to bring about the return of the children of Israel to the land of Canaan. Why should they ever have left it only to groan under the yoke of bondage for centuries, then fight their way back to it, scattering their dead from the Nile to the banks of the Jordan? If they had only succeeded in converting the heathen, among whom they had their residence so long, then we would have said that was a result worthy of the sacrifice. But instead of this, the heathen nation put them in bondage and are seemingly made worse themselves by their presence. They appear to have been hardened and confirmed in their idolatry by looking upon the worship of God.

Though these things be mysterious, and though we may never know *all* the purpose of the long and dreadful process, yet we *do* see some grand and glorious results that have grown out of it. We can see the hand of God in sending Joseph down there that he might become established with authority in the land in good time to save his father's family, as well as the land of Egypt, together with all its tributaries and provinces, from

actual starvation by the dreadful famine. We know, furthermore, that he demonstrated to the whole world for all time to come that as gold can pass through the fire and lose only its dross; and as the diamond may be buried in the mine for centuries and come cut a jewel still, with all of its native brilliancy, so his people could live for four hundred years in the midst of idolatry and maintain their allegiance to him. True, a few of them did go away, but as a people they never faltered through all the years of their dreadful trial. This single fact surpasses all the great wonders in the history of men. On the other hand, there has been a strange perverseness developed and increased in each of the successive kings of Egypt since the days of Joseph, which neither historians nor theologians have attempted to account for. Joseph was first a slave, then a prisoner, and last a governor, honored, respected, and distinguished. Yet when those whom he had bound to him and his family with cords of love and respect disappeared, the spirit of hatred sprang up and continued, and even increased, to the end of the stay of his people in that land. No faithful service that the Hebrews could render, and which they did render, could ever again awaken in the Egyptian mind any appreciation of them whatever. No amount of suffering could ever touch their heart of pity, or cause them to relax their oppression. On the contrary, their very sufferings and groans seemed to provoke them to increase their burdens.

Why was this? Was it because the Hebrews worshiped God, and they their idols? Hardly; for this was exactly the case in the days of Joseph, when he and his family stood in high favor. Gratitude in the human heart is short-lived; otherwise, we would not so soon forget benefits bestowed. Therefore, if Rameses II. and his predecessors could not remember and appreciate more recent favors, how should they be expected to remember one, great as it was, which was bestowed upon their illustrious father by this Hebrew prince, or governor?

We are constrained to wonder sometimes if all knowledge of his faithful service to the house of Pharaoh and the land of Egypt was lost, so that there was neither history nor tradition from which his brethren might plead their cause upon his merit. He came to them a slave, but saved their nation and made them rich, for which his God and his people held him in everlasting remembrance; but those who reaped the benefit forgot him and hated his people.

There is no doubt but that Joseph resided at Heliopolis and spent most of his time there, especially after the settlement of his father in the land of Goshen; and it is certain that here was the place of rendezvous when they were preparing to leave Egypt. In sacred history we often find many successive events of importance occurring at the same place, thus giving to that place great notoriety. For instance, Mt. Horeb was noted



for the scene of the burning bush, the giving of the law, and the desolate retirement of the prophet Elijah. Mt. Moriah, otherwise called Mt. Zion, was the scene of the sacrifice of Isaac, the place where David met and appeased the wrath of the destroying angel, and was also the site of Solomon's temple. So events point out this little Egyptian city and make it attractive in history.

About half way between Heliopolis and Memphis is the scene of the latter part of the preceding chapters. Such heroic and unselfish conduct upon the part of these young men ought to have been remembered with gratitude by the king, as doubtless it was by his daughter. But when one is seeking an opportunity to lay some charge at the door of another rather than recognize any benefit received or acknowledge any obligation, it is not hard for him to find the one or to forget the other.

The treatment these young men received from the king in the face of this service may well be classed as base ingratitude and downright cruelty. But it is scarcely to be wondered at, since persecution of the Hebrews is now at its greatest height. Cruelty is the rule, and kindness the very rare exception, if indeed it ever had an exception outside of the princess herself.

When "Old Sol" and his drunken crew saw that they had committed a mortal offense against the king in causing the disaster to the princess and her maids, they fled to the mountains for

safety. So that when the detachment, which the prime minister sent out for their arrest, came to their quarters they found them deserted and the men nowhere to be found. They learned that they had left in the night, and were last seen going in the direction of the Libyan hills. The soldiers could not learn any further particulars of them.

At this time the king was continually harassed by little disturbances on the eastern border. The three-months' war with his Asiatic provinces, spoken of in a previous chapter, resulted in bringing many foreigners into the country as prisoners of war. Most of these were placed upon the public works as common laborers. They had to be constantly and closely guarded; but in spite of all effort, as might be expected, there were frequent desertions, and sometimes many in a company. This kept the king continually irritated. Being by nature a tyrant, he could endure nothing that looked like rebellion against his authority. Year by year he became more and more suspicious that the Hebrews caused most if not all the disaffection in his kingdom, and hence the continual increase of their burdens. They were the most submissive and quiet of all his subjects, and yet his fear of them was not abated.

He became very angry toward Thermuthis when he knew she had resisted his authority in not allowing the babe to be removed out of Egypt, but he loved her too much to use any violence to overcome her opposition. However, he refused any

association or communication with her for many weeks. He would not see her or the babe. Still she never lost hope nor relaxed her watchful care of the child. She never allowed him to be taken from her immediate care when outside of the private palace grounds. Hence the remarkable preservation of the infant life of that great man, Moses, of sacred history. It is doubtful if there was a living being besides herself that could have thus shielded his young life. Her father was a man of terrible passions and an iron will. His hatred and fear of the Hebrews excited these passions to their fiercest degree. What earthly power could save an object of that wrath? Nothing but his undying devotion to this only daughter.

When the news of the accident with the horses reached him at Thebes, he hastened to Memphis with all speed, full of wrathful intentions toward the offenders. He was angry with the object of his best love for her rebellion against his authority, yet could not afford to give vent to it; but woe be to whatever offended her!

Unfortunately, just before his arrival in the city, the soldiers, who had been sent out in search of the offenders, had returned unsuccessful. Learning of their failure, his wrath knew no bounds. Learning also that they were not native soldiers, but only hirelings from the province of Armenia, he considered the act one of contempt as well as impertinence, a fact which added another ingredient to the cup of his wrath. The men may

have come originally from Armenia, but, as the reader already knows, they were only robbers from the mountains, who cared for neither king nor country, but for spoils only; nor would they hesitate at any act to accomplish their end.

The old enemy, Jambres, now thought it a favorable opportunity to put the king on the track of a pretended excuse for bringing our young men Joel, Reuben, and Isaac into trouble. He was all on fire with the spirit of persecution, especially since he had learned of the favor shown them by the minister through the instruction of the princess. So, seeking an interview with the king, he made out his case as follows.

“Does your majesty know that there were three Hebrews present at the time this mischief was done?” inquired this sly old fox.

“Yes,” replied the king; “but they rendered valuable aid in arresting the frightened horses.”

“That may be true; but did it ever occur to you that it is quite possible that such a demonstration might have been only to cover up their design, and prevent any suspicion of their having helped to concoct the plan? Being enemies, they doubtless sought to form an alliance with these bad men to make of them but tools to carry out their wicked designs. Such soldiers could easily be made instruments, and yet others, more quietly than they, keep out of sight in the mischief, and even appear to be friends.”

There is no telling the amount of wicked mis-

chief that one mind may plan, especially if it be to gratify a secret grudge against another person. As he expected, Jambres found the king an easy prey to his trap. Disappointed and chafed at not finding the real offenders, he was easily "switched" on to the next nearest object.

"Bring the young men to me," he ordered. But at the same time, thinking what a commotion it might stir up if the princess found it out, he added: "Have them brought into the palace court secretly. Take no soldiers, but let only a messenger be sent with my order for them to come at once."

This was a tacit compliment to the orderly and quiet obedience of the Hebrews, as well as an acknowledgment of the power of the princess over him and his respect for her. Hence his care that she should not know of the proceeding, for right well did he know that it would meet with her hearty disapproval and prompt and vigorous opposition. It was only the day before that these young men had been summoned to appear as witnesses against the men who caused the trouble; but when it was ascertained that the men could not be found, they were dismissed and returned to their places of labor. It was natural, therefore, for them to suppose that this message was to recall them to the not altogether unpleasant task of appearing as witnesses against the men who had brought so much trouble upon themselves and their friends. It was not so much a spirit of re-

venge as the agreeable prospect of putting an end to their power to do them further harm.

Imagine their amazement, therefore, on finding themselves in the presence of the king, accused of being accessory to the mischief. They would not have been more astonished at being accused of an attempt to assassinate the king himself. If there was a person in the kingdom for whom they and the whole Hebrew nation had the greatest respect, and even *love*, outside of their own kindred, it was the princess Thermuthis. In vain did they protest their innocence and avow their great reverence for "her highness, the princess."

"Know, O king," said Joel, "that we, your most humble and obedient servants, were returning from the place of our day's labor at the time of the distressing accident, and considered ourselves both fortunate and happy to be in place to render service to the princess and her maids, who were in no little peril of their lives. Furthermore, O king, far be it from us to consort with these low fellows to do harm to the king, seeing that they are also our enemies who have no friendly dealings with the Hebrews."

Argument was all to no purpose now, as the king was not seeking *justice*, but *revenge*; and he did not intend to be cheated out of his purpose this time.

"Hold your insolent tongues, or your heads shall pay for your mischief before another sun!" said the angry monarch. "It is my command that you

be taken to the royal prison, and there kept in close confinement till I shall know more of this matter.”

Poor fellows, they knew but too well that this meant death secretly and perhaps speedily, for “the wrath of a king is as the message of death.” Little did they dream, a few hours ago, of ever being charged with such a crime. Gloomy and sad they entered the prison, feeling that it would be but the vestibule of death. Indeed, to all the outside world, and especially their friends, they were already dead.

When once the wrath of a human mind has expressed itself in some vigorous way, upon some object, either by word or act, there is a degree of relief from its raging fires, and the person becomes more quiet. Now that the king had let loose his wrath, both by word and act, upon these helpless and innocent victims, he is more at ease and is susceptible of a little reason.

It was not thought prudent by the princess to venture an interview with the king, although his manner toward her had become much more agreeable and assuring. She had made him a special study, and therefore had a pretty thorough knowledge of his moods and weaknesses as well as his strong points, for he had the latter as well as the former. But, unfortunately, his weaknesses lay in those things which tend to make a man less a man. Consequently in some things he was a very weak man. But her opportunity came at last, and

she used it well, as the sequel will show. A few days after the incidents just related, she received a kind, loving message from her father, to join him and his chief officers in a feast, in honor of some recent victories which had brought great credit to his armies. This she was by no means slow to accept. Glad to be on good terms with him once more, she was unusually cordial in accepting the invitation. She had enjoyed only a very casual association with him for several months. She therefore welcomed the prospect of the occasion from two considerations, business and pleasure. She was very much like her father in many respects, and was always a loving, dutiful child to him. This may be doubted by some, in view of certain things that have recently happened, and in view of her remarkably strong will; but no one could ever charge her with what we may be pleased to term strong willfulness, except when conscience, justice, mercy, and humanity have called for its exercise. In all such instances willfulness is perfectly compatible with the gentlest and sweetest spirit of a most dutiful child.

The little child Moses is now eight months old. His growth, both in body and mind, has been most remarkable, even phenomenal; and such beauty of form and features has seldom, if ever, been seen in a child before. Up to this time only a few had seen him, but those few were charmed with his beauty. He could now stand upon his feet just a little, and with very slight help



could take a few steps. The princess was truly proud of the little fellow, and took great delight in teaching him to handle objects and to attempt to walk. She had grown more and more fond of him, till now she felt that she could not live without him. She cultivated this fondness and love for the child, not alone on account of his beauty and intelligence, but also from a feeling that was close akin to mother love.

It is yet three days before the time appointed for the feast, and there is much to be done before the princess is ready for it. There are some items of preparation which must necessarily be made, as she intends this to be an event which will vitally affect both herself and the child for life. What she contemplates doing will require a steady nerve, a strong will, and much skill. A battle is to be fought and a victory won or lost; and if lost, her brightest hopes, so long cherished, will all be blighted. Let us now leave her and the maids to make this preparation, while we take a glance at the condition of our three young heroes and their friends.

Their mysterious disappearance was the talk of the community for many days before any information of them could be obtained. Indeed, no satisfactory knowledge could be had at all, nor did their friends expect it. As in the case of Amram and Ophron when they were carried off to prison, they could only learn that these young men had been sent for to go to the city. Beyond this, all

was mere conjecture. There had been many such cases, and the one sad conclusion in each was that they had gone to that fatal prison.

If it had been a new thing, it might have been a great surprise to the neighborhood; but things similar to this were common among these suffering Hebrews. They knew not what to expect, yet day by day they were in constant apprehension of some calamity. Experience had taught them long, long ago to look for calamities in their worst form and without warning. And were they less sensitive to pain and grief because of their frequency and duration? Is it true that we become so inured to sorrow by being often called to pass through it that it loses its acuteness? Ah, no! But as constant exposure to danger may have a tendency to make us less careful of it and heighten our skill to avoid it, and frequent joys will sharpen our desire for more, so the iron wheels of sorrow and suffering go on continually in the same tracks until their ruts are cut deep and ineffaceable. To believe that a heart already burdened does not feel additional burdens, is to believe that a back that is already sore from the lash does not feel its keen strokes. A lifetime of suffering did not make these afflicted Hebrews insensible to their burdens.

We have mentioned only a few cases in just two communities, and have not overdrawn these. What, then, would be the awful tale of woe if we could lift the veil and reveal the hand of cruelty

as it wrought in every Hebrew home during their long years of bondage? No tongue or pen can ever tell.

Joel and Reuben have no parents living, but have hosts of friends who are taking a deep interest in them. Not so with Isaac. His father, mother, and sisters are greatly distressed for him. The suspense was all the more gloomy and troublous for lack of any satisfactory knowledge of him. If they knew, they were powerless to help. But while friends were grieved and anxious, think of the dark forebodings of the young men! Thrust into prison unexpectedly, without the privilege of communicating with their homes, and with no reasonable expectation that they will ever see their kindred again. No friend to plead their cause or help them out of trouble.

Fortunately they were allowed to occupy the same apartment in the prison, which afforded them the pleasure and comfort of each other's society. They endeavored to cheer each other as best they could, and talked together of home, friends, and past pleasures. Being naturally of buoyant spirits, they refused to surrender to despairing thoughts, but endeavored to brighten the future with hope. There was one thought that always brought them some comfort, and that was of the good princess. They often wondered if she knew of their sad fate, but at the same time felt almost sure that she did not.

“I wonder,” said Isaac, “if the prime minister

turned against us at the last, after all the kindness shown to us?"

"On the contrary," answered Joel, "I dare say he knows nothing at all of it. I should sooner suspect some of the priests, and most likely some of the leading ones, as they are generally the leaders in all new persecutions of our people."

"That is just about the secret of this whole matter," said Isaac, as the truth of this priestly officiousness dawned upon him. "And in that event no ordinary proof could change the king's mind; for he believes most, if not all, that they say, and especially against the Hebrews."

"But what could any of them know of this matter?" innocently inquired Reuben.

"*Knowledge* is not always strictly necessary," said Joel, "when they have a special object to accomplish. Their fancy will often do quite as well upon which to make a charge as knowledge, and it at once becomes good authority with the king."

"But why should the priests be more active in persecuting the Hebrews than others?" again inquired Reuben.

"On account of the religion of the Hebrews. Although the Egyptians have always looked upon the Hebrews as inferior to them, yet their first real cause for persecution grew out of jealousy for their idols. This kind of religious persecution consisted only in hatred and personal abuse. Later on there arose a jealousy toward us on ac-

count of our continued prosperity, health, longevity, and rapid increase. Then, under the pretext of fear of us as an enemy, we were reduced to a state of servitude which has gone on increasing in severity to the present day. And still these robed ecclesiastics retain that old jealous hatred. Hence their unrelenting persecution.”

“Do you think,” asked Isaac, “that the princess would sanction our imprisonment if she knew of it?”

“On the contrary, she would stir things up lively about the palace if she knew of it and the cause. It is plain that they have been very careful to keep this thing from her, and she is likely to be kept in the dark about it if possible. But, my brothers, let us be true men, worthy of the name of Hebrews. We worship that God who cannot be influenced by the caprices or prejudices of men, and we are in his hands. He will never forsake his people, though we may be left to languish and even die in prison. Still, this would be no proof that he has abandoned his people to the will of their enemies. Every Hebrew life that is laid upon this altar is but another witness for their faith and patient waiting for the fulfillment of his promise. Again I say, let us be men—true, brave Hebrew men.”

“So we will,” answered the two companions.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE TRIUMPH.

THE Memphian palace was all ablaze with light and crowded with guests, composed of the grandees of the kingdom. The princess was at her best: arrayed in captivating attire, and superbly entertaining with great brilliancy of conversation. The king also was in his most amiable mood, condescendingly gracious to all. For once he seemed to forget war, strife, ambition, and conquest, and to give himself up wholly to the pleasure of the occasion. Never had he been more affectionate toward his daughter. He was proud of her exceedingly brilliant appearance before his friends.

Merrily the hours went by, and right freely did the king and his lords imbibe the sparkling wine. No people ever enjoyed such occasions more than the Egyptians. Hilarity formed a very prominent feature in their lives in all ranks, both high and low. "This was as might be expected in a country where a cloudless sky and elastic air predisposed the people to mirth." Even their religious feasts were occasions of extravagant display and revelry. It is not infrequently the case that idolatrous worship forms the stepping-stone, and even the excuse, for all manner of debauch, wickedness,

and cruelty. However intensely such worshipers believe in the tenets of their religion, and however strictly they adhere to these tenets, yet their standard of morals is invariably low, and they have scarcely any proper appreciation of equity, truth, or justice. This is but another overwhelmingly convincing argument of the infinite superiority of the Christian religion over all other names and forms of religion on the earth, even granting that it, with all the rest, is false. But in view of its truth and genuineness, its effect upon the race is marvelous and gratifying. While there are many who do not measure up to, nor even seem to appreciate, its high standard, yet its standard *is* high, nevertheless, and the counterfeit only proves its genuineness. No historian has ever questioned the intense religious zeal of the Egyptians, yet no one would dare undertake to advocate their purity, or the elevating character of their religion.

There was no religious persecution in Egypt toward any sect or form, except the Hebrews, though there were gods many and forms many. And even their persecution of Hebrews was hid under other excuses. Pharaoh Rameses II. was not enthusiastic for any special worship, though a strong believer in the most popular gods of Egypt, Osiris and Isis. He never persecuted the Hebrews on account of their religion. If ever he lifted his hand against them for their worship of God, no record of the fact was ever made. His great passion for war, conquest, and power so

dominated all other characteristics in him as to make them appear exceedingly small. Even his public spirit for building and the arts, which formed a prominent feature of his character in the early years of his reign, was so lost sight of in the latter years that there was a perceptible decline in the internal improvements of the land. And when age and infirmity came upon him, his old desire for conquest, the one ruling passion of his young life, still burned within him; but alas! his skill and prowess had forsaken him and his enemies prevailed against him, so that at the time of his death a large part of his dominion was in the hands of his foes.

The princess was the “admired of all admirers” in this grand company. She was cultivated, and accomplished in all the learning of Egypt, and was the equal, if not the superior, of any in breadth, depth, and mental activity. Real breadth and depth, which is of the highest value, consists in being so cultivated in heart and mind as to be able to span the chasm that lies between the humble and the exalted, live in both spheres and be at ease and exert a good influence in each. Such was the character of this remarkable woman. To-day she is busy in the humble sphere of caring for and helping the poor and distressed; to-morrow she shines in the brilliant circle of her father’s royal company, the peer of any. Who does not admire such a character?

Her father’s admiration of her on this occasion



was unbounded. It passed even the point of enthusiasm and bordered upon worship. Like Herod, he was full of wine, which helped to fan his devotion to her into almost any sacrifice. But unlike Herod's daughter, Thermuthis did not *dance* for the amusement of her father's drunken lords. Like Herod, this king felt a desire to exhibit his love to his child in some munificent way, and therefore threw open to her his vaults and treasuries which held the wealth and splendor of this great land, and bade her choose that which she liked best. But unlike the foolish child of the Herodian household, this pure-minded girl had neither avarice nor revenge to gratify, and therefore did not ask for either a kingdom or a bloody gift.

The royal company had now reached that stage of the occasion when the king should express his approval of, and pleasure in, the company. Therefore, seated upon his magnificent throne, in the presence of his lords, he made a great oration. At the conclusion of it he surprised all present by the following speech, delivered to the princess: "It is now my pleasure that the royal lady, the princess of the kingdom of Egypt, who has honored us with her presence, whom the king, her royal father, shall now delight to honor, ask of the king whatever is in her heart, and it shall be given her."

Her opportunity had at last come—the golden opportunity for which she had waited and planned.

Will she be equal to the demands of the moment? Cool, self-possessed, and confident, she arose and advanced to the foot of the throne with queenly dignity and grace, and was about to bow the knee in recognition of the royal presence, which movement he hastened to arrest by holding out toward her the golden scepter, in token of his favor. She touched it, stood erect, and said: "O great King of Egypt, live forever! I am exceedingly happy in the honor of being a guest at the feast of the king's lords, which honor I shall wear in my crown of happiness forever. And I count myself doubly happy, O king, that it is the royal pleasure to confer upon me so great a gift in token of his love. I shall ask neither riches nor honor, of both of which my king has an abundance and is willing to give. The gift I shall ask of him far surpasses these, yet I am bold to ask it because I know the king's willingness and ability to give it to me. The gift will continually enrich me, and will not in any wise impoverish my sovereign. I have long possessed it, because it was first given me by my father and king, and yet it is his still to give. He alone can give it, and when given no earthly power can take it away. And now as thy sovereign favor has given me the distinguished privilege of naming whatever I may desire, it is this: *Your continued affection and tender love, both as my sovereign and my father.* Having this, I shall lack for nothing that the kingdom affords. Do not think me weak or foolish in this request, or that I am trifling with

or treating lightly the magnificent offer. For of a truth I do esteem the uninterrupted love of my king and father greater riches than all the kingdoms of the earth.”

Her animated spirit brought all the fire of her high-strung nature into full force, and showed itself in her impressive manner and magnificent bearing. She paused a moment to read the effect of her words as it was being unmistakably written upon his face. At first he seemed to feel that she was trifling with him. But he could see plainly that this was contradicted both by her words and manner. The next moment this thought faded from his mind, and every line of expression upon his face softened in the sunshine and glow of ardent love for his lovely child. He realized the wealth of such love as hers. He said in his heart, “She is no ordinary woman;” and it was true.

He once more extended the golden scepter in token of his favor, which this time she gracefully drew to her lips and kissed. Then the pent-up enthusiasm of the company broke forth in unrestrained demonstration of cheering and clapping of hands. There were only two hearts there that did not ratify the transaction, and fall in love with the lovable princess. These two hearts hated, while others loved. They hated her, not because she was not a true Egyptian—for there were none more true or loyal—but because she was too noble to take advantage of a foe, and too just to permit helplessness to be wronged. And last, and worse

than all, they were jealous of her for the new advantage she was gaining over them in the affections of the king. But her first victory is complete, and she holds the advantage of position on the field for the next battle, which she means to bring on at once. Like a skillful general, she sees and appreciates her advantage, and will use it lest the opportunity should pass.

“Forasmuch as the king is pleased to bestow this, the best and richest of all gifts, I shall acknowledge my sincerest appreciation of it, first by proclaiming myself the wealthiest of the wealthy in that I hold the heart of him who holds the scepter of Egypt; and secondly, by making the king a present here and now in the sight of his lords, priests, and prophets. I shall therefore ask that my father, the king, accept this humble gift at the hands of his only daughter, his firstborn. And moreover, with this gift I offer my heart’s best love, and the renewal of my allegiance to the King of Egypt.”

At this moment, upon giving a signal previously agreed upon, a door to a private apartment opened, and the entire company of maids and ladies of honor entered, all beautifully attired, constituting an array of flashing beauty which may be more easily imagined than described. Following immediately behind these came the Hebrew nurse, Jochebed, with the child Moses in her arms.

The reader already knows of the great natural

beauty of this child; but such had been the care of preparation by the princess for this occasion, and such its effect in heightening his attractiveness, that the scene actually beggars description. To say that the company was astonished beyond measure, is to speak moderately. All waited with breathless silence for the issue of this strange proceeding.

The little child had learned not only to love the princess, but was always delighted to have her take him in her arms. Therefore, upon being brought in, the moment he saw her he reached his hands toward her, jumped and "cooed" with much demonstration of love and delight. She took him in her arms, and held him up before that brilliant company with a feeling of pride she never experienced before. The whole scene in pantomime was like a beautiful picture, with the babe as the central figure. The effect was all that the princess could have desired. Presenting the babe to the king, she said: "See, O king, this beautiful child, who is the joy and idol of my heart. This was a gift to me from our sacred river. I dare not betray the trust, and hence have preserved the gift committed to my hands with care and devotion. See! his form is that of the gods, and their impress is upon him. Inasmuch, therefore, O king, as he is thus, and I have thus received him, I should offend against the spirit of our great Osiris, whom Typhon slew and carried out to the deep sea through the channel of the Nile, should I prove

false to the trust. This spirit of Osiris now lives in Apis, the chief deity of our nation. And shall I, O king, be unmindful of so bright a gift from the sacred river, whose pure waters bathed the bleeding body of Osiris, and purified it from the vile touch of the cruel and heartless Typhon? And now, O my father, inasmuch as I am *thy* child and this babe is a gift to me from the gods, *I* bring him to you that we both may be yours. *This is my gift, O king, and we wait the approval and blessing of a father.*”

The large, bright, and intelligent eyes of the babe were at this moment fixed full upon the king, and a sweet smile made his little face radiant and lovely. The soul of the king went out in tender love for the child, and, scarcely knowing what he did, he arose from his seat and walked toward the child with hands extended, to which the little one responded with outstretched arms. The king took him up, and said: “Welcome to my heart and to my kingdom, thou child and heir of my firstborn and best-loved Thermuthis.”

Then, by way of ratifying and confirming the transaction, placing the babe upon its feet on the floor beside him, he lifted the jeweled crown from his own head and playfully placed it on the head of the child. Innocently the little thing reached up its hand, pulled the crown off, threw it on the floor, and placed his little foot upon it. At this moment Jambres sprang from his place like an infuriated tiger from his lair, drew out a dagger which he

had concealed about his person, and “made a violent attempt to kill the child.”\* The princess was on the lookout for this, and quickly snatched up the babe and ran behind her maids and ladies of honor, who barred the further approach of the enraged man till the princess with the babe could hurry away to her private apartments.

This inveterate enemy had been a silent witness of the whole proceeding, but not without having been observed by the watchful princess. When he saw the object of his hatred about to be installed as heir and prince of the realm, it was more than his jealous soul could bear. But when this child of his evil prophecy offered such indignity to the crown of Egypt as to place his vile little foot upon it, his anger set his loyalty on fire.

Confusion now reigned supreme. The king was so absorbed for the moment that he did not realize the peril of the babe. Had it been other than a priest, and especially one of the chief priests, such a demonstration would have been at the expense of life. But idolaters have a superstitious fear of these men amounting to little less than moral slavery. Knowing this, they often use their power for purely selfish ends. And this abuse of ecclesiastical power is not confined to these ancient idolatrous nations. It is the right arm of power in the Romish Church to-day. It is doubtful if the priest of Apis had any stronger hold upon the superstitious fear of Rameses II., or any

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\* Josephus, Book IX., chapter ix.

other king or subject of Egypt, than a Catholic priest has upon the members of that Church to-day; nor did they use it with greater rigor nor for more unworthy ends. But as distance lends horror as well as “enchantment to the view,” we see such things with greater abhorrence under the shadow of the “dark ages” than we see the *same thing* in our own day and right before our eyes. God never intended that those whom he places in temporary and limited authority in his Church should lord it over his heritage.

The first impulse of the proud and haughty king was to order the royal guard to seize the offender and carry him to prison, but this impulse was short-lived. Turning to the author of the confusion, whose every appearance still indicated excitement and rage, he demanded: “What mean you, Jambres, by this unseemly violence and rudeness, which strongly betokens contempt for both royalty and authority?”

“This child, O king,” he replied, “is the same that I have time and again warned your majesty against. At the very first I put words into your ears concerning this child which, for the safety of the kingdom, should have been heeded. Again and again have I urged that if he be allowed to live our nation will be in great danger from him. But you have turned a deaf ear to it all, and have suffered him to be nourished and brought up in your own house. And now we have witnessed the crowning of this Hebrew waif as the future



King of Egypt. As an evil presage of what your majesty may expect from him, you have just beheld your crown under his feet, where even you and all of your people will soon be if this child lives. And now, O king, I warn you from the oracles of the gods: take this little Hebrew waif out of the way, and deliver your people from their fear of him. The Hebrews have great hope of coming into the government of the kingdom through him, and there is much rejoicing among them throughout the land this day because of his promotion.”

This speech had the effect of putting the king in a very serious mood. He saw the force of these words; but he was now bound by the public and official recognition of the child as heir to the throne, and could not recall it if he would. His love for his daughter, and her powerful appeal, had won a complete victory, which could not be set aside except by the death of the babe. This fact the farseeing Jambres at once took in, and hence his frantic effort to kill Moses.

Much as the king dreaded the wrath of the gods and their priests, this case had now taken definite shape and was unalterable. He therefore resolved to maintain the dignity of his position and assert his authority. Then, making answer to Jambres, he said: “Let there be, at once and forever, an end of this talk about this child and the destruction of the kingdom of Egypt by him. Henceforth I am to hear no more of it. I do not recognize such dan-

ger to my kingdom as you speak of, nor any other danger. Therefore, I do now recall the edict by which the young male children of the Hebrews were cast into the river. But instead thereof let it be a law that the six hundred thousand able-bodied Hebrew workingmen pay tax for the education of Egyptian youths." Addressing the prime minister, he added: "It is my command that the repeal of this edict and the enforcement of the taxation shall be published and go into effect at once."

Thus ended the "reign of terror" so far as the destruction of children was concerned, and it was a cause for great rejoicing throughout all Egypt on the part of the Hebrews. But along with it came a great burden to the already overburdened toiler. This taxing was designed to give greater advantage to Egyptian children, that they might have greater superiority over the Hebrews.

Here also ended, practically, all uncertainty of the relation of the child Moses to the court of Egypt; but it was not the end of persecution from his enemies. Though the safeguards are strengthened around him, and he has all the liberty of the land, as well as its practical benefits, yet those fires of persecution are left to smolder for forty long years, and occasionally to break out in threatening fury, and at last result in his having to flee the country. His royal foster mother saw but too plainly that his enemies were so bent on his final destruction that nothing short of the very best management and unceasing vigilance

would be sufficient to protect him. This task she had already assigned to herself, and to that end she resolved henceforth to devote her life and best energies.

“Now,” she said, “I have conquered, but must keep up the fight in order to hold my victory. My babe is a *prince*, and his right to the throne has been conceded, but his journey to it will be a perilous one. Therefore, I, his foster mother, will be his constant bodyguard. Where I dwell, he shall dwell; and his fate shall be my fate. I will protect him with my life, honor him with my honor, and educate him with my wealth.”

She was now fully aroused to the situation. She was mother, teacher, and guard, at least for the present. But as to his education, the best advantages the kingdom afforded would be his. She resolved to leave Memphis at once, and spend the next four months at Thebes. Jochebed had thus far had opportunity to visit her home and family very frequently. Every few days she would either visit her older children at their home, or the princess would send for them to spend the day with her. But now this delightful privilege would have to be given up.

The princess kindly offered to have Miriam and Aaron accompany her, but their mother thought best to leave them with her husband and relatives for the little while that she would be away, for it had already been determined that her services as nurse could and would be dispensed with

when the child should be a year old, and he is now a little more than eight months old.

Before her attendants were dismissed for the night, she delivered to them the following charge: “To-morrow we go to Thebes. Let everything be in readiness at an early hour. Remember that our movements from this time on are to be kept a profound secret. No one outside of our own immediate circle is to know our plans. There is to be no communication with anyone without my knowledge. If there is one of you who is not in hearty sympathy with me in this matter, she can be excused from my service at once. Furthermore, I warn you all that the safety and education of this child are to be the great objects of my life and of your service. Therefore, if there is the least indication of treachery, or even of indifference, upon the part of any one of my attendants, she may look for punishment in keeping with the injury that may result from such treachery or indifference. But I have confidence in you all, and shall trust you. Let your former faithfulness characterize all of your future conduct, and we will continue to be the best of friends.”

## CHAPTER XXII.

### LIGHT BREAKING.

HERE we are shut up in this great city, with not a familiar face to look upon outside of our own small circle." These words were spoken by Rachel to her companion, Hagar—the first that sounded at all like complaining which had ever escaped her lips. This was the closing of their first day in the great city, and although there were crowds of people to be seen in all directions, yet these girls experienced a feeling of loneliness they had not felt before. The prospect that they would ever have their liberty with their loved ones at home did not now seem to be very flattering. This was the darkest hour they had experienced since they first came into the palace of the princess.

"Yes," responded Hagar; "and what is worse, we are likely to be here for a long time, maybe six months or a year."

"It is the custom of the king's family to return north in the early spring, and I hope that we will not remain here more than four or five months."

"That has been the general rule, but you may be sure the princess will now regulate her movements by whatever may be of interest to the child Moses, and not specially by the seasons, as here-

tofore. By the way, Rachel, has mother Jochebed ever told you why she is so devoted to the child?"

"Yes, she gave me her secret in confidence the day following the accident with the horses, but said she thought it best not to let the princess know of her relation to the babe for awhile."

"What a strange story it is! Do you not think so, Rachel?"

"Indeed, it is not only strange, but also plainly providential. And who knows, dear Hagar, but that God's promise of deliverance to the Hebrews is about to be fulfilled in this child?"

"Yes; when he is made king—for he is now a prince—being a Hebrew himself, he will surely remember his kindred in bondage."

"He will never be King of Egypt if that old priest, Jambres, can prevent it. How dreadfully angry he appeared that night when he tried to kill the babe! But the little thing seems to be a special subject of a special providence. He has already passed through scenes of danger sufficient to make a thrilling story."

"Mother Jochebed says she placed him in the river with her own hands, and prayed to God that he would provide a way to deliver him from the river and all the dreadful dangers that threatened him; and she believes God sent the princess there and put it in her heart to love and care for him. Do you really think he did, dear Rachel?"

"There is no doubt of it, my sister Hagar; and this is not all that mother Jochebed believes about

this case. She expects to go away from the palace and leave the child with the princess, when he is a year old, believing that God is going to use him for some great end yet to be made known.”

“I hope he may live to prove her faith. I am so glad that he will not be killed by the king’s command, for I hear that he has recalled the dreadful edict. And then, too, your own sweet little brother Benjamin, of whom you have told me so often, will be safe. Oh, how glad our people will be!”

This casual reference by Hagar to little Benjamin and the dear folks at home caused tears to flow freely from Rachel’s eyes. She had a dreadful feeling of homesickness, and could not bear any reference to the subject. Hagar saw the mischief she had innocently done, and put her arms about her and kissed the tears away, saying regretfully: “I am *so* sorry that I hurt you. Come, now, we will not talk of these things if it makes you so sad.”

“Never mind my tears, my good Hagar; they seem to be necessary sometimes for the relief of my overburdened heart and gloomy mind. It seems as if my heart would break without them. I’ll be better now.”

The two girls then arose and walked out into the beautiful palace grounds, set apart as private for the king’s family. They lovingly cheered each other as best they could, to meet their trials and disappointments. There is an old saying that

“the darkest hour is just before the dawn,” and we will hope that for these two unfortunate girls this is one of the times. Little did they think that circumstances were conspiring and at work even then that would bring light into the gloom of their lives.

Since the time of their accidental meeting with the three young men, Joel, Isaac, and Reuben, they had hoped that somehow it would be the means of connecting them with their friends at home in some kind of occasional communication. But they had heard nothing at all from them since that day. They were ignorant of the sad calamity that had befallen them. The old adage that “ignorance is bliss” is not true in this case, but it may be truly said that ignorance prevented additional burden.

Time goes on regardless alike of the happiness or misery of mortals. It sees no tears, hears no sighs, knows no conditions, either in palace or prison. It moves neither slower nor faster for joy or grief. There may be conditions of pleasure when we could wish that time might move a little more slowly, and again there are moments of misery that seem to lengthen into hours, when we would cry out, “Haste, haste, ye sluggish minutes, and bring my coveted relief!” But none of these things affect the measured tread of time in its onward march.

The short period in the history and life of the suffering Hebrews which this story covers, may



seem long because of its numerous events; but what is it when compared to the more than three centuries of bondage and toil with their unwritten history? How thrilling would be the ten thousand stories if written! Each man of all the millions who lived, labored, and suffered among them had his individual burden, and it was peculiar to himself and different from all the rest. Some labor in the fields, some in the brickyards, and some languish in prison, but these two girls pine in a palace. *Gilded bondage is bondage still!* Instead of its glitter affording relief, it only mocks their misery.

Our conditions of happiness lie not in our surroundings, except as those surroundings affect the life for good. And it is the same with time and place. All the gold of earth is powerless within itself to buy a single moment of happiness. It may and does exist with or without it. Neither kindness nor cruelty of itself can make or destroy it. It depends upon conditions, and those conditions are peculiar to each individual case. No two human beings can be made perfectly happy under exactly the same circumstances and conditions. Hence the great importance of *going out of our way* to make others happy, for the best way to do this is to discommode ourselves.

This characteristic was very prominent in these two heroines, Rachel and Hagar; not only toward each other, but also toward all others with whom they came in contact. Hence they reaped the

fruits of their self-sacrifice by devotion to duty. Then they were fortunate in their association with Jochebed. Though their time as well as hers was largely taken up with their duties, yet they found her just the type of woman they needed in their trial, and especially in their exile from their own homes and mothers.

But was Jochebed happy? Yes, because she was faithful. She believed and trusted God. She loved and was devoted to her husband and children, and they loved her. Leaning upon these, she had rest, *for this is rest*. Her life, thus far, had been made up of alternate *trial* and *triumph*. But, best of all, her triumphs were always equal to, and sometimes surpassed, her trials. She served God, and he honored her and her family. Her name has come down through the ages, and will be transmitted to the latest generation upon the pages of history. We shall see Moses, that great hero of sacred history, as he stands beside her in the great throng of heaven and owns her as his mother. Then he will turn to his foster mother, the princess of Egypt, and say to the angels and assembled universe: "Here is the woman who stands next to her who gave me birth. She saved my life, gave me my education, position, and power. What I have been to my race I owe, under God, to her and my mother." She was doubtless the only mother he knew for many years. Probably she and his father and mother were dead before his return from his shepherd

life in the mountains of Midian; but no doubt his sister Miriam could point out to him their places of sepulture.

Do you ask why this great and notable man did not speak of his foster mother, the princess of Egypt? With the same propriety you might ask why he did not mention the name of his own mother, as in that tender relation. He wrote of them as an historian, not as a son. He mentions them just as any other historian might have done. He records facts without any reference whatever to *his* relation to the persons embraced in those facts. He was God's servant, to be used according to his will and wisdom. He was God's inspired scribe, to write as the Spirit gave direction. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" and he was one of them. He was not his own; he wrote for God. Did he love them? He could not have been the great and good man that he was and fail in this. Their works praise them; he praised and honored God, and thus honored his parents.

One day, a few months after they had taken up their residence in Thebes for the winter, a letter directed "To her Highness, the Princess Thermuthis," was picked up. It had evidently been purposely dropped on the palace grounds. When she broke the seal and removed the outer envelope, there was another, on which was plainly written a second direction: "To Jochebed, the nurse." This was something new and surprising indeed.

Letter correspondence was rare and expensive, and was therefore for the most part confined to the rich. For a servant to receive a letter was calculated to arouse suspicion. The princess was not forgetful of her father's injunction of caution about her Hebrew servants. They were not to have any inter-correspondence with their people. Now, must she break this seal and learn the contents of this letter, that she might know whether it was a proper correspondence to be allowed? This would be prudent, but would it be exactly right? Could she not trust her servants, and especially this one to whose care she was daily intrusting the dearest object of her love? She resolved to send for Jochebed, inform her of the letter, and exact a promise from her that she would not conceal anything that might be of interest to her, and that she ought to know.

“Jochebed, is your husband sufficiently learned to write you a letter?”

“Indeed, my lady, he is not only learned in the art of writing upon papyrus, but also in the law and traditions of our nation,” replied Jochebed.

“Then he must be considered one of the chief men among your people, is he not?”

“My lady, I cannot assume for my husband so great a distinction, but I am happy to say he is of the house of Levi, whose tribe has long been distinguished among our people. My husband has enjoyed special advantages of instruction from his youth.”

Upon this information the countenance of the lady betrayed evident trouble of mind. Was not this the very class of men against whom her father had cautioned her? "It may be that after all I have done wrong in having these Hebrews in the palace. How do I know but that this man Amram, being a leader among his people, may be using his wife as a secret spy in the king's house, and will take advantage of it to bring evil upon them?" Thus ran the cogitations of her mind, begotten, no doubt, by the evil spirit. It was her first temptation of this kind, and it troubled her. But as she looked into Jochebed's honest face while giving this information, her suspicions gave way. "Surely," she thought, "if there had been any evil intent the woman knew of it, and would not have given this information. She was innocent."

"Could you read a letter if your husband should write you one?" inquired the princess.

"Lady princess, few Hebrew women have enjoyed the advantages that have been mine. I, too, am of the house of Levi, and have been instructed in all of these necessary branches."

"Have you received any communication from him since we left Memphis?"

"None, my lady; and if I had, knowing that such would have been a violation of your ladyship's command, I should have told you all of its contents."

Confidence in her servant being now fully established, she said: "Jochebed, I have here a letter

directed to you. It came to me for you. This also assured me that the person writing it did not intend to conceal it from me. I do not know what it contains, nor who the author is, as I have not broken the seal. I have told you that my father does not allow any intercourse between my servants and the chief men of the Hebrews. It is my duty to see that his wishes are strictly carried out; and to do so in this case, I must know the contents of this letter. I desire, therefore, that you break the seal and read it in my presence, after which you will deliver it to me.”

There was but one thing superior to her loyalty to her father's will, and that was her conscious sense of right and justice. She was ready to sacrifice everything for this, and even face her father's displeasure.

Jochebed was puzzled to understand how anything evil could possibly come of the simple fact of her receiving a letter from her husband; but as she had nothing to conceal from the princess, she agreed to the demand without the least hesitation. Taking the letter, she broke the seal and began its perusal. The princess narrowly scanned her face as she read, to see, if possible, what effect it would produce upon her. Soon she saw unmistakable lines of sorrow, evidently caused by its contents. By the time she had finished reading it, tear-drops were chasing each other down her cheeks, the sight of which touched the sympathetic heart of the princess.

“I hope you do not receive bad news of your husband and children.”

“No, my lady, not of them, but of others in whom your ladyship will also feel an interest. Will you be kind enough to read this humble letter before it is destroyed? I am quite sure that you will sympathize with the unfortunate young men who did yourself and servants a great service and kindness when we were very much in need.”

So saying, she gave the letter into the hands of the princess, who read as follows:

Amram, of the House of Levi, to His Beloved Wife, Jochebed, a Servant in the House of Pharaoh, and in the Service of His Daughter, the Princess Thermuthis, in the Palace at Thebes—Greeting:

You will be glad to know that our children are well and happy. But we long for the day when you can return to us. Yet to be faithful to duty is to be desired above this or any other pleasure. We have just enjoyed a visit from the high priest, Levi Ishmael, son of my father's brother, who succeeded his father and my grandfather in the high priesthood. This Levi Ishmael, who is also your brother, says his father died about twelve months ago. This will be sad news to you. According to the order of the high priesthood, he has succeeded his father in this office. His only son, Isaac, having recently died in prison, according to the best information he can obtain of him, leaves him without male issue. You being his sister, and having a son, this son would come next in the order of the house of Levi to succeed him in the office of high priest at his death. Our son Aaron, therefore, must be educated for this function, that he may succeed his uncle at his death.

With a sad heart he told us how his son Isaac had been falsely imprisoned, when he sickened and died in a short time. He learned of his death through the kindness of one of the prison officers. It was, however, a comfort to know that two of Isaac's young friends were with him in his last hours. They

were, like himself, prisoners; but they knew nothing of what became of his body. The names of his two young friends were Joel and Reuben. He gave us the circumstances of their imprisonment, which are as follows:

About one year ago, indeed on the very day of the burial of your father, Ishmael, a young woman whose name was Rachel, of the family of Samuel, was kidnapped and carried to Memphis and sold as a slave. This young woman by some means—he never knew how—fell into the hands of the princess Thermuthis, and is probably in her service at this time in some capacity.

Three months ago the princess was riding with her maids along the highway, when one "Old Sol" frightened the horses, and they were in great danger of their lives. These three young men were near, rendered timely aid, and rescued the party from peril. Strangely enough, they recognized their young friend Rachel in the company. These young men were afterwards accused of being accessory to the mischief, for which two of them, Joel and Reuben, are now in prison, Isaac having died.

This was the sad, sad story our kinsman told to us, a part of which I already knew.

In conclusion, my dear wife, farewell. May the God of our fathers keep you safe!

When the princess finished reading the letter, there was plainly depicted upon her face the strange combination of the three passions—sorrow, surprise, and anger. She sat for some moments entirely silent, apparently waiting for the conflict to end, to see which of them should predominate. Jochebed stood respectfully waiting the reading of the letter, and for further orders. The princess looked up into her face, and calmly said: "Tell Rachel I wish to see her alone."

With her usual promptness Rachel obeyed the summons, little dreaming what was awaiting her.



“Are your father and mother living?” asked the princess.

“Yes, my lady; they were living when last I heard from them.”

“How did you happen to leave your home?”

Rachel hung her head, evidently confused.

“What reason have you, Rachel, for concealing from me these facts? Did you not know that I am paying annual hire for you to another party as your guardian, and that I was informed that you were an orphan, depending on your labor, and that your guardian claimed the right to your hire? The time has almost expired for which I have employed you, and I should have renewed it for at least another year under the same impression, had I not this day found out the true facts in the case, and how you came to leave your home. Why did you not tell me that you were a captive? and why do you seem to object to letting me know these things, even now?”

Rachel was greatly astonished that the princess had found out these things, and as soon as she could force back her rising tears and sufficiently suppress her emotion, she began at the beginning, and told the whole story of her abduction and imprisonment, and how she happened to fall into her hands, and why she had never told her the story before.

The princess was deeply moved with sympathy toward the poor girl when she heard her relate her story with such artless honesty, and especially

her scrupulous sincerity in all that she had done and suffered for conscience' sake. "Poor girl!" she said; "your reason for keeping your secret was a good one, but you have made a martyr of yourself for *conscience*. Noble virtue! noble girl! You deserve to be rewarded for your faithfulness and devotion. Your fear of violence at the hands of your persecutors was well founded; but I will see that they are kept too busy to think of harming you. And I suspect that your companion, Hagar, is the victim of a similar trick of wickedness; is she not?"

"Yes, my lady. She preceded me to that gloomy prison by one day and night, and at the hands of the same cruel men."

"Do you know of any others in the same condition?"

"We never saw any others, but heard them spoken of by the old woman in whose care we were placed when we were first imprisoned."

"Can you describe the place of your first imprisonment so that officers may be directed to it?"

Rachel here gave a description of the dilapidated old temple, and this finally led to the arrest and imprisonment of not only the principals in the wicked business, but also a great number of their confederates.

The next morning the royal household and servants were no little astonished to learn that the lady princess had suddenly determined to make a visit to Memphis. This was startling news to all,

and none knew her purpose fully; but Jochebed and the Hebrew maids correctly surmised that it had some reference to the business brought to light in the letter. If it had been anyone else in all the kingdom, they might have thought of dissuading her from it; but she was too well known for anyone to think of such an undertaking. No ordinary obstacle could turn her when her mind was as fully made up as in the present instance. So in due time the royal barge was equipped and under way for the city of Memphis, bearing the princess, her maids, and Jochebed with the babe, together with such other attendants as she thought best to call to her service.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE GUILTY PUNISHED.

**W**RETCHES! It is my command that you be executed the third day from this, in the presence of my army now quartered in the city barracks."

These were the terrible words of the stormy Rameses, whose iron will was as relentless as his temper was violent. These words fixed the doom of two men who stood before him condemned. They were taken back to prison to await the day of execution. The black flag again floated over the same cell where the reader has seen its dark folds open to the breeze before; that gloomy, fateful chamber where our friends Amram and Ophron received their death sentence. Now there are two others who wait without hope of reprieve for their hour to come. Like Amram and Ophron, they are under sentence of death for having endangered the life of one or more of the king's household. Let us leave them there and go back just a little in our story.

The "army now quartered in the city barracks," that was mentioned in the sentence of death spoken by the king, means more than we are apt, casually, to suppose. At this time the king was preparing an expedition against Cyprus and Phœ-

nicia. He was therefore collecting a great number of his best soldiers at Memphis. We are reliably informed that he started on this expedition with an enormous army of seven hundred thousand men. It was like him.

But before leaving his throne to go out on this great undertaking, which would necessarily detain him quite a good while from home, he appointed his brother, Danaus, as regent of the kingdom, but charged him not to assume the crown, even temporarily, or interfere with any of his private or family affairs. But he had not been long away till he learned through the high priest that his brother had assumed the royal prerogatives, and taken full control of the king's concubines, together with all other private concerns. This interrupted the expedition, as the king returned immediately to Pelusium and resumed the rule of the kingdom. His brother heard that he was coming back, became alarmed, and fled to Argos. The expedition was afterwards carried forward, but at great expense on account of this temporary delay.

Crowns are things of contention, and they sit so lightly upon the heads of their wearers that they can never be sure of their safety. Upon the slightest pretext, some unexpected claimant, with or without legal right, comes and seizes upon the glittering prize. Alas for our depraved nature! things of less earthly value than a crown often call up this spirit of contention and cause great

strife. "Thou shalt not covet," is a command often broken. This is a great sin; it is idolatry itself. (Colossians iii. 5.)

The number of soldiers belonging to the king's army that are in and about Memphis at this time may be variously estimated at from two to five hundred thousand, all of whom will be required to look upon the execution of the condemned men. Why will the king require this? Who are these condemned men? The last that we knew of this particular cell in the great prison, it was occupied by our two young friends, Joel and Reuben, their companion, Isaac, having died. But *they are not its present occupants.*

Some strange and unexpected things have happened, which have brought to light long hidden deeds of dark crime. The guilty are punished and the innocent go free. In part this was the work of the kind-hearted, justice-loving princess. She was now on her way to the scene of conflict. We saw her leave the capital city, and judged that this was her mission. She had not yet reached Memphis, but a divine providence had already commenced the administration of justice. "Old Sol" and one of his principal associates in crime were captured only a few days ago and were now on trial. And their rudeness to the princess is not the only crime charged against them. They are found guilty of much of which others were accused, so that the innocent shall be acquitted. The king has ordered them to be brought before him, with

his prime minister as their accuser and prosecutor. The proper court for their trial would be before the prime minister, and doubtless it would have been so held but for the peculiarity of the offense and the fact that they were members of the king's army.

The two young Hebrews, Joel and Reuben, were brought from prison to be witnesses and to identify the men. When the officers came to the cell they were at some loss to know, indeed they could not imagine, why they were sent for; but when they saw "Old Sol" as a prisoner they took in the situation at once, and were not a little pleased at the prospect.

There was much interest manifested in this trial by courtiers, priests, soldiers, and officers of every grade. Among the prominent personages present was the high priest, Jambres. He was also the most noted among the prophets, as we have seen in the past.

"Most noble King Rameses," began the prime minister, "I stand here this day to accuse these two soldiers of your majesty's army of neglect of duty, absence from their post when called on for service, and of great rudeness toward the princess and her attendants, insomuch that their lives were in great danger. This latter charge, O king, I will establish by the mouth of these two young Hebrews, of whom your majesty has heard before."

At this moment the high priest abruptly called

out: "I protest, most noble sovereign, in the name of our most sacred laws, both of the gods and of our sovereign kingdom, against the hitherto unheard-of innovation of allowing these slaves and enemies of our nation, as well as despisers of the worship of the gods, to testify against these servants of the king and soldiers of his army. Besides, O king, these Hebrews are under condemnation of the law for the very offense of which these soldiers are accused. In the name of the gods and our great kingdom, again I protest."

There are few men in all Egypt more shrewd in planning or more subtle in argument than this man. The king himself was no match for him in this respect. His argument generally silenced the king or won him for his cause. For once, however, he is matched by the undaunted minister, who proceeded to answer him: "Let me not seem troublesome to the king with much argument, but by your gracious clemency I will speak this once again for law and justice. These men are *not* under condemnation of law or the king, as our chief priest has been pleased to say; in proof of which fact, by your majesty's permission, I will read the record of their committal to prison by your own sovereign order." Here the minister read from the king's official record as follows: "'It is my order that you be committed to prison and kept in close confinement *till I shall know more of this matter.*' So your majesty can see," continued the minister, "that these men are held only for fur-



ther investigation, and may therefore be called as witnesses against the real culprits. Besides this, O king, these young Hebrews were referred to me by her highness, the princess, as having been her protectors against the ill treatment at the hands of these soldiers. She further enjoined that they be treated with kindness as a token of her appreciation of their timely services. Now, therefore, O king, lest I be further tedious in this matter, I will ask your majesty to consider the innocency of these young men, also as based upon the fact that if they had been privy to this mischief they would not have been so ready to render aid, and thus prevent and intercept their own purpose.”

This argument had the desired effect. Indeed, it was *unanswerable*, because *true*. Jambres read his defeat in the countenance of the king even before he uttered a word; therefore, he quietly withdrew in confusion. This fact was noticed by the king, who now turned his attention to Joel and Reuben, and said: “These young men are released from custody, and are competent to testify. Their testimony will be, not against these soldiers as soldiers, but against them as offenders and criminals.”

Then the minister, addressing the young man Joel, said: “Are these prisoners the men whom you saw cause the disaster to the princess and her attendants on the public highway?”

“Yes, your excellency; these are two of the men, and one of them was the leader of the band,”

“ Did they show any disposition to make amends for the mischief they had done?”

“ On the contrary, they appeared entirely heedless of all consequences, as if they had planned the mischief.”

At this moment a page entered and approached the throne with usual and becoming deference, and stood waiting recognition. The king recognized him and commanded him to approach and deliver his message. He placed in the king's hand a dainty missive, which he at once knew to be from the princess. He hastily opened it and read as follows:

To His Majesty, the King:

I know you are no little surprised that I am here, for doubtless you thought me safe with the royal family at Thebes. I have but just arrived, and I have come on very urgent and important business, which requires that myself and two of my maids be admitted at once to the royal court. Though it be an unusual proceeding, I beg that your clemency will grant this request. Trusting that you will, I am, lovingly,

THERMUTHIS.

“ Just like her to appear suddenly, when she is least expected,” thought the king. And he might have added, “ Just like her to go straight to business when there is business to do.” On arriving in the city she had learned what was going on, and it was in the direct line of her errand; so she resolved not to lose a moment. She knew it would be out of the usual order of things, and entirely without precedent, to admit a woman of her rank to such a place at such a time; yet, bent on de-

fending the innocent and punishing the guilty, and inspired with a sense of justice and right, she stopped not to parley with seeming and so-called improprieties. She had been doing unprecedented things almost all her life, and it was because she was governed by a higher principle than mere conventional *propriety*. Her father knew this, and that she would not make such a request without good reason.

So she and her maids, Rachel and Hagar, were at once admitted, and without ceremony. The people wondered; the young men, Joel and Reuben, smiled; but the prisoners grew deathly pale. This was more than they had calculated on. Ah, slow but sure-footed justice has come at last! Look now upon two more of your victims. Here are the innocent girls whom you dragged away from home and friends, not only in cruelty, but in violation of a known command of the king, and sold for gain. And this does not begin to tell the story of your wicked career on this line. No doubt scores of these daughters of Israel have been stolen away from their homes by you and your confederates, and subjected to a life infinitely worse than death.

The princess gracefully recognized the favor of the king, and said: "With gratitude, O king, do I acknowledge this unusual privilege granted to me this day by my most gracious sovereign and father. You know that without good reason I would not have asked so great a favor. I should

not have left the capital city at this season of the year, only that I might appear in the interest of innocence and virtue, to say nothing of justice. So great has been the injustice done that it can never be undone, even by the punishment of the guilty. But such punishment may deter others, and prevent further crime. These two innocent girls are the unhappy victims of heartless cruelty by these prisoners. They were stolen from their homes by them, in violation of your commands, a fact which came to my knowledge only two days ago. In all that my noble father has laid upon the Hebrew men, let all the world honor him in that he has never lifted his hand against the women. But evil men have taken advantage of and ill-treated some of them. I have retained these girls thus long in my service through ignorance, because they were too noble to seek release from service for which I had paid, and too timid and fearful to disregard the brutal threats of their captors. They have remained true to this day, for it was by the merest accident that I came into possession of the facts. Furthermore, I know these young men, Joel and Reuben, to be my friends, in that they did risk their own lives for me and my attendants. Otherwise, we all might have been killed. And I stand here to charge these prisoners with this crime. And now, O king, I am sure there are other confederates of these who are conducting this iniquitous business in this city, in spite of your commands to the contrary. I ask, therefore,

that my good and great sovereign give attention to this violation of the king's law, and that of common humanity."

The effect of the appearance of the princess in this court may have been startling, but the revelations she made were much more so. With a bold, strong hand she uncovered crime, and set justice on the track of the guilty. The king's rage had risen like a tempest. His law had been defied and outraged, and the life of his daughter endangered. Then it was he spoke the dreadful sentence with which this chapter opens: "Wretches! It is my command that you be executed the third day from this, in the presence of my army now quartered in the city barracks." Then turning to Joel and Reuben, he said: "In order to make amends for the great injustice which has been done you, I now command that my prime minister give to each of you a certificate of exemption from labor for a year. And to the father of the young man who died in prison shall be given exemption from labor for life. Now, let these prisoners be taken to the cell previously occupied by these Hebrews, and let the death flag be raised thereon."

Who does not feel sorry for the unfortunate victims, however much they may deserve their fate? But these men were lost to all sense of shame or sorrow. They were silent. With sullen glances of defiance and hate, they left the judgment hall for their gloomy abode, where they would await inevitable doom.

Joel and Reuben went out with lighter hearts than they had had for many months. They hastened to leave the city and turn their steps toward home, which till recently they had not hoped to see again. And even now they could scarcely realize the change, it had been so great. They shuddered to look back, lest the beautiful vision might vanish, and the pleasant dream end. Will some cruel hand snatch the cup of pleasure from their lips just as they are about to quaff its happiness? Let us hope not. Go, and be happy.

Shall we go into detail as to how they reached home in safety; how surprised and happy their kindred and friends were to see them; how the sad home of Levi-Ishmael was made sadder by being reminded of its loss when Joel and Reuben returned; how Samuel's home was made glad by the prospect that Rachel would soon return to them, safe and pure as in the years gone by, and possibly made better by the affliction? No, for it would be impossible to paint the picture with sufficient vividness.

When the princess and her maids left the court hall they retired at once to the private chambers of the palace, because the princess desired to have a private interview with them preparatory to their final separation. She commended them for their faithfulness and unselfish devotion to her service. She even wept as she spoke to them of their separation, and charged them to be ever as true to themselves and to the golden principles of right as

they had been to her. She inquired of their homes, how far they lived from the city, and said she hoped they might see each other again. She furnished each with a complete wardrobe suitable to her station.

The next day the princess had them conveyed to their respective homes. They left the palace with heavy hearts because of their parting with the princess, who had been good and kind to them. Their stay had been pleasant with the other female attendants of the palace, and to part from them was also painful. And not a little of their grief arose from separation from the little babe, whom everybody had learned to love. He was so bright and affectionate and happy—a sun-beam in the circle. But they left also with glad hearts at the prospect of once more seeing home and the dear ones there. They had been absent just a little more than a year, and it seemed to them a much longer time. Hagar had not even heard from home since she was taken away, and if her family and friends had ever heard from her, it was more than she knew. What a surprise it was to see her alive! They had mourned her as dead. Like Rachel's friends, they had traced her to the city, but never knew what became of her after that. What joy was in that household! And when they learned the entire history from her, their gratitude was boundless. So wonderful had been the deliverance that it must have been guided by the hand of God.

We shall have occasion to see Hagar again, and it will be under circumstances of increased happiness—even beyond that of the present. As dreadful and dark as was the life of the Hebrews in bondage, some sunbeams would occasionally struggle out from behind the murky clouds, and brighten their path. And these seasons of happiness were all the brighter by contrast with the gloomy past. A picture is sometimes made more beautiful by a dark background. So, after all, life is worth living, both for what we may make of it and what we may get from it; but its best fruit is that which we make of it, because it is laid up in store for future gathering.

“Old Sol” and his wicked associates came to a bad end, and so they deserved. But all evil-doers are not overtaken by the consequences of their vicious deeds in this life, yet every man’s sins will find him out sooner or later. Judgment may be slow, but destruction will be sure and complete.

The execution of the prisoners was witnessed by thousands of soldiers and citizens. They neither denied nor confessed their guilt, but died sullen and stolid. They were doubtless already possessed of that gloomy spirit which possibly characterizes the lost soul; so unrepenting that their sins not only remain, but they are ready to repeat any or all of them should opportunity offer, either in this world or in the world of spirits. But the dreadful feature of it will be that in this life sin is a carnal gratification, whereas in the other



the inclination and desire will remain without gratification. You who read these pages, take warning! If you do not get rid of your sins before you go hence, they will be yours forever. Remember, this life is your only opportunity. *A sinner dead is a sinner forever!* As sin gave pleasure here, it will give pain there. Fly to Jesus for refuge and safety.

In a short time the princess returned to Thebes with the babe and his nurse. Providence seems to have prepared her work ready for her willing and skillful hands, and finding it, she did it with all her might. Now that it was finished, she had no further occasion to remain at Memphis. She would not keep the object of Jambres's hatred so near as to tempt him again to so desperate an act of violence. Her life was now more than ever bound up in that babe, so that if any calamity should befall him it would take away her greatest incentive. She had fully resolved to make his rearing and education the one object of her life.

This remarkable woman, though an idolatress, evidently had an honest faith that looked beyond the creature to the great Creator, and saw him through this creature-worship. God knew her better than all her contemporaries, better than her own father, better than we, and even better than she knew herself. He was using her with her eyes closed, and perhaps much more effectively than if they had been opened. If she could have

known certainly that at last her father would turn against him, and join in with others of his enemies in seeking to kill him, would she have still clung to him? If she could have foreseen that, when her father became his enemy, she urged him to seize the throne as his by right, when he would turn his back upon her pleadings and give up the kingdom, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God," would she still have nourished him as her son? I verily believe she would. Let no one ever doubt the superior excellence of this woman, and her ample qualification for this great task. God chose her from among all the women of the world to train and educate his servant and hero, Moses, and fit him for his great work of conducting his people out of Egypt into Canaan. He chose Mary to educate Christ, and the princess of Egypt to educate Moses, who was his type.

Yet God so kept his hand upon the heart of his servant, Moses, that when it came to a choice between his foster mother, his own mother, and the crown of Egypt on the one hand, and obedience to God on the other, he forsook all for Him. "By faith he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, *choosing rather* to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### AT HOME.

HOW much may be crowded into a year is best known to those who have been passing through fiery trials during that period. We have seen the family of Amram as they passed this fiery ordeal. Prisons, sentence of death, strange deliverance, the remarkable preservation of the child in the home of the family for three months, his perilous adventure and rescue; the strange interest of one who of all the women in the world would be least expected to be interested in his preservation, because of her connection with the source of the persecution; then the perils and escapes of the child even under royal protection, all taken together, make up a succession of thrilling events both wonderful and startling. But the wonder grows into awe when we see so plainly the guiding hand of the great God in it all. That he should put it into the heart of the best Egyptian woman in the land to come and rescue the babe, and then arrange that his own mother should become his nurse, is more than wonderful; it is thrilling, and yet as true as thrilling. Then to place this affecting story by the side of that remarkable New Testament story of the birth and peril of a little child in exactly a similar way in Judea—his

parents, by the direct instruction of God, fleeing into Egypt, and for aught we know lodging somewhere near the very spot where fifteen hundred years before his great antitype was sheltered from his foes—is a coincidence that will not fail to interest and impress the careful reader. And that the land of Egypt should shelter both of these remarkable children—whose history, though remote in point of time, shows them to be subjects of divine inspiration, and is strongly corroborated by profane history—is a fact not to be lightly passed by. Let skeptics mock and reject the story, but the world is fast hearing and accepting it, and some day will be Christianized and saved by it.

The time set apart by the princess when she proposed to take full charge of the babe had come, and Jochebed returned to her home to the great delight of husband and children. The babe was a year old, and yet it cost her no little self-denial to leave him. But she had long ago made up her mind to that step, and hence was ready for the sacrifice, however keen the pang. God had clearly shown her that this was *his* will, and she had no disposition to change it if she could. If, however, the matter had been left to her choice, without any knowledge of God's will to the contrary, she would have much preferred the full management of the child; and what mother would not, especially since she saw his gifts, beauty, and capacity? He was eminently "a proper child," a fact which she discovered at the very beginning,

but which had grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength. If the world, even the best people in it, had been called upon to decide between letting the mother train her own child as against letting another, and especially a stranger, the universal verdict would have been in favor of the mother. But God does not see as man sees. What, then, would have been done for that indispensable Egyptian education which so eminently fitted him for his future work? How about becoming familiar with all the Egyptian court customs which so exactly qualified him for the delicate and extremely dangerous task of pleading the cause of God and his people before Pharaoh's tribunal? Aaron could do the talking, but Moses must do the planning. God was right, as he is always, and man's judgment wrong.

The Amram household was once more a happy one; happy in each other's love, happy in the faith that the hand of God had guided them thus far and would guide them to the end. "By faith" all this was done. Faith was their key to unlock all these mysteries. Faith was the hinges upon which all of these secret doors swung. They had nothing to do but to wait, work, and trust.

For the next three months there is little else thought or talked of but the preparation that was going forward for the great expedition, spoken of in the last chapter, which was so suddenly interrupted by the treachery of a trusted brother. The naval fleet was strong and well equipped. The

land forces were marshaling at the city of Memphis. Chariots, horsemen, and foot soldiers, all excitedly waiting for the command to start.

So great was the army that, from the time the first order was given to march, it was a full day before the last of the troops had left the city. The king is in his right element now, or at least that in which he delights the most. He accompanied the expedition and was successful, as he nearly always was till old age impaired his faculties and weakened his mind.

About a month after Hagar's return home she received a very unexpected visit from one who was not a total stranger. Reuben had seen her only twice, and that under very peculiar and embarrassing circumstances. He knew not why, but in spite of the fact of their being total strangers before these accidental meetings he found himself very fond of thinking of her. This fondness grew in his heart till it brightened into love; and it was Reuben who made our beautiful Hagar this unexpected visit.

There is not much more to tell, unless we were going to write a romance of love, and then it would have to be very short, for he made but few more visits till he came to claim her as his bride. The storm has been fierce, but again the sun shines bright, and all is hopeful. They have launched their boat of life on a quiet sea; if other storms are to come they reckon not of the coming, and are happy in the present.

Another event is about to take place. Two prominent characters, who have gone through the greater part of this story with us, are now about to unite their destinies, and henceforth fight life's battles together. They have passed through the fire, but they came out better and purer for the burning. Tried by separation, imprisonment, suffering, and almost despair; but at last their paths, so long diverging, have met, and they now look forward with bright hope to a happy future. Indeed, so pleasant is the present that they almost forget the trials of the past and think only of sunshine and joy. These happy beings are the manly Joel and the fair, true, and tried Rachel. The whole community rejoices in the prospect of the auspicious event.

Their trials, however, are not all over, for God still has use for them in the active duties of life; and this is always attended with more or less hardship. He cannot use men and women to the best advantage in this world without putting them in the fire in some way or other. If life with you is all smooth, you may be pretty sure that you are not in God's greatest plans. There are no heroes or heroines without something heroically done or suffered.

Some of the divine plans in the long bondage of this people have already developed. There are many that have never yet come to light, though wrought out before our eyes in some cases. The connection has not been discovered. When "we

shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," and talk with their children about their long and bitter stay in Egypt, we will doubtless wonder that we did not see more of the divine purpose.

Our "Joel" is a real character who has been concealed under this assumed name. He not only lived in Egypt, married a wife, and reared a family, but doubtless lived to see the "exodus" of the people.

The nuptials of Joel and Rachel were duly celebrated after the strictest custom of Hebrew marriage. The form was simple, but the bonds were solemn and scriptural. They recognized all the obligations growing out of this relation, walked according to the tenets of their religious faith, and taught their children the fear of the Lord.

The condition of the Hebrews continued about as we have pictured it, during the rest of the reign of Rameses II.; only, as before said, the dreadful edict which brought the "reign of terror" had been revoked. The people toiled on in their lot, under taskmasters, to the end of their stay in the land.

The child Moses is the wonder of the age, the idol of the princess Thermuthis, the pride of his blood kin, and the center of jealousy upon the part of many prominent characters in the house and court of Pharaoh. So unremitting was Jambres in the persecution of the child that the princess learned, by sad experience, that "eternal vigi-



lance" was the price she had to pay for success in her great undertaking. Yet her success was signal. She began early and persisted in the work of his education till it was complete "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." This doubtless meant literary, ecclesiastical, and military learning. She desired and expected him to succeed her father on the throne of Egypt, and hence all of her efforts in his preparation looked to that end.

Although he went through all the schools of Egypt, and perhaps learned all the forms and ceremonies of Egyptian worship, and was thoroughly instructed in their art of war, which afterwards served him a good purpose in leading the hosts of his people through an enemy's land, yet *one year in his own mother's arms stamped the Hebrew character and Hebrew worship upon him forever.* All the glory of this belongs to God, but let us not forget to honor his noble foster mother for not trying or even desiring to efface it from his young heart.

Jochebed was never denied the liberty of the palace nursery; and when Moses grew into young boyhood he was allowed to spend much time at her humble home, for he loved her tenderly and devotedly, though he knew her only as "nurse." He had long ago learned from the lips of the princess the story of his rescue from the river, for she did not try to conceal from him the fact that he was a Hebrew. Yet she never lost an opportunity to impress upon him that he was *her* child

both by *love* and *law*, and therefore heir to the throne, and would succeed her father at his death. The one leading thought she kept constantly ringing in his ears was, that he was once "*a waif,*" but now "*a prince.*" She did not know who his mother was, nor did anyone in all Egypt know this except the little circle in the Amram family. A few Hebrews, by putting the circumstances together, strongly suspected the truth, but did not know it.

Many and strange stories did the princess tell him concerning his infantile life, but she never tried to prejudice his mind against his brethren, the Hebrews. Some of these Hebrews were dear to her, among them Rachel and Hagar. She never forgot to be grateful to Joel for his timely service on that memorable day.

When the first son of Joel and Rachel was eight days old (they had many daughters older than he), they circumcised him and called his name "Oshea" (Joshua).

Now it will not be difficult for you to locate Joel's real name, for "Joshua, the son of Nun," is a familiar expression of the Scriptures. And while we are telling secrets, we may as well say that the little child "Benjamin" also represents an actual character in this story. His real name is Jephunneh, the father of Caleb, who represented the tribe of Judah in the company of spies sent out by Moses to "search the land of Canaan." (Num. xiii. 6). He was also the companion of

Joshua in bringing back a favorable report of the land. These two left Egypt and entered Canaan together, and were the only ones who did.

Jephunneh was comparatively a young man when Caleb, his son, was born, but Nun (our "Joel") was between fifty and sixty years old when Joshua was born.

When Moses was nearly twenty years old, while on a visit to his "nurse," she revealed to him for the first time her relation to him, in the following manner: "My dear child," for Jochebed was wont to call him by this tender name, "you have known for a long time that your mother is a Hebrew woman, for your princess mother has often told you this. But you do not know who that woman is, nor does your princess mother. I, your nurse, being a Hebrew, and at the same time knowing that you were of Hebrew blood, have endeavored to instruct you in the education of the Hebrews. But there is one branch of Hebrew education in which you have not been instructed—one of the chief things in the education of our children, especially of the males—and that is, your *genealogy*."

"I am aware of that, my dear nurse, and have often thought of it. It is both humiliating and painful to me; and yet I know no remedy for it. I have often wondered if there is no one living who could and would, some day, volunteer to give me information concerning this matter. If I only knew the tribe to which I belong, it would

be a great pleasure to me; but as I cannot hope even to know this, I will claim *your* tribe as mine and be numbered accordingly.”

“But you are ‘numbered’ with the king’s family now, and do not need to have any tribal ‘number.’”

“As an Egyptian I do not; but I am only such in name; in reality I am a Hebrew. However, as to my tribe, I suppose it will ever remain a hidden secret.”

“No, my child,” said Jochebed, “it will not remain a hidden secret, for I have the key to it, and have always had it.”

The puzzled look which that young, intelligent face assumed at hearing these words would have been a study for an artist. He put his great strong arms about Jochebed’s neck and embraced her enthusiastically, only as a glad boy can do, and said with much emotion: “I wonder if you have had that information for all these years, and kept it from me when it would have given me such pleasure. How could you? Do make haste and tell me, and I shall go this very day and be registered. Maybe you know my *real* mother, too,” said he, growing more excited than ever.

“Yes, I know your *real* mother, too; but you must keep cool, sir,” she said, with good-humored authority, “and give me time to explain to you first *why* I have not told you the secret before, and *why* I do so now. Your princess mother is an Egyptian, and she expects *you* to be such in all things. She is a good woman, and has proved it

to you and me abundantly. I would not offend her for anything reasonable. She is looking forward with fond anticipation to the day when you will be king of this great country. If I had told you these things earlier than this, she might have considered it taking some advantage of her in the matter of your instruction, for she had a right to know the nature of all your instruction. If she had known your relation to the Hebrew family, and who it was that sustained that relationship, it might have caused some change in her plans in taking care of you, lest those having charge of you might prove too nearly related to you by blood."

Once more those bright eyes grew large with wonderment. For a moment his face wore a blank expression.

"What *can* you mean?" he exclaimed, as he gazed eagerly into Jochebed's face.

"Do you think your princess mother would care for your knowing these things now?" asked Jochebed.

"Not in the least, for she is anxious to know for herself."

"I am glad she would approve, but I fear she might feel just a little bit jealous if she knew how near to you your own mother has been all these years."

"You do not mean to say that—"

"Yes, my darling child, I mean to say truly that *I am your own mother!* You were born in this house, and we gave you to God at three

months old, by placing you in the little ark, and then by faith committing it to the river, where the princess found you. She loved you, and rescued you from perishing. I have never regretted the step, for God directed it all. You belong to her till God shall direct otherwise. Be true to her, but always trust in God and follow his commands. This young gentleman and this young woman," pointing to Aaron and Miriam, "are your own brother and sister. Their father is your father, and their mother is your mother. We hid you three months because of the cruel edict of the king, but when we could no longer hide you we sought God's direction, and we believe to this day that he *did* direct in all the principal events that have followed. You know the rest. Go now, my child, and be true to the princess, but keep your heart and eyes open to the call and commands of God. He is doubtless using her now, and will use you in the future. Tell her that I, your real mother, will never interpose my claim; for you are hers. Only be kind to your brethren, the Hebrews. *You* belong to the tribe of Levi."

THE MOTHER HAS TRIUMPHED, AND THE WAIF HAS BECOME A PRINCE.





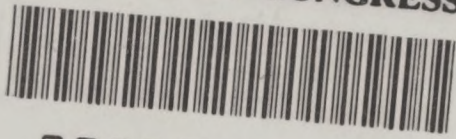








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