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THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE SERIES.



THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE BOOK

OF

JUDGES,

WITH MAPS, NOTES, AND INTRODUCTION.

BY THE

REV. F. MARSHALL, M.A.

(Late Exhibitioner of St. John's College, Cambridge).

*Rector of Mileham, formerly Vice-Principal of the Training College, Carmarthen,
and lately Head Master of Almondbury Grammar School.*

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PALESTINE, TO ILLUSTRATE THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

P R E F A C E .

THE Book of Judges is one of a series of manuals on the books of the Old Testament which are primarily intended for the use of Students preparing for the Local Examinations of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

The Introduction treats fully of the several subjects with which the Student should be acquainted, comprising full Geographical and Biographical Notes, and other important details, which are clearly set forth in the Table of Contents. A continuous narrative of the events recorded in the Book will be found included.

The chief alterations of the Revised Version are pointed out in footnotes, the Student being referred to the Revised Version.

In the Appendix will be found (1) a Commentary upon the most important differences between the Authorized and Revised Versions, the alterations being pointed out and explanations given of the reasons for the changes; (2) an Explanation of words and phrases, thus avoiding constant reference to the text and notes.

The general arrangement of the series will, it is believed, be found helpful to Teachers and Students. Each manual is illustrated with the necessary Maps.

Each volume is complete in itself, requiring from the Student no reference to Atlas, Biblical Dictionary, or other aids.

Works of Reference useful for Students, and referred to in this Work.

Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.
The Holy Bible with notes (Bishop Wordsworth).
The Speaker's Commentary.
The Old Testament Commentary for English Readers (Ellicott).
Israel in Canaan (Dr. Edersheim).
Early History of the Hebrews (Sayce).
Bible Illustrations (Kitto).

The Land and the Book (Thompson).
Sinai and Palestine (Stanley).
Lectures on the Jewish Church (Stanley).
Kiel's Commentary.
Pearson on the Creed (Art ii.).
Undesigned Coincidences (Blunt).
Heroes of Hebrew History (Wilberforce).
History of Israel (Ewald).

Mileham.

F. M.

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TITLE.

The Book of Judges, so called because the main portion of the book relates the history of Israel under the rule of Judges.

Appropriateness of the Title. Though the book does not record the acts of Eli, of Samuel, and of the two sons of Samuel, all of whom acted as civil judges, yet it records the acts of the *extraordinary* Judges as distinct from Moses and Joshua who preceded them, and from Eli and Samuel who succeeded them.

The Books of Samuel treat of the establishment of the rule of Kings and Prophets in Israel, and thus the history of the Judges ends appropriately with the death of Samson. The rule of Eli is coincident with the time of Samson.

SCOPE OF THE BOOK.

A record of the Theocracy in the days of the Judges.
It consists of three great portions, viz. :—

I. Introduction (i. 1—iii. 7), describing the condition of the Israelites after the death of Joshua under two headings :—

- (1) The relations between Israel and the nations of Canaan (Chap. i.).
- (2) The apostasy of Israel (ii.—iii. 7).

II. The Main Portion of the Book (iii. 8—xvi. 31), containing the history of the Judges.

III. An Appendix (xvii.—xxi.), containing

- (1) The history of Micah and the Danite raid on Laish (xvii.—xviii.).
- (2) The civil war with Benjamin (xix.—xxi.).

It is most probable that the main narrative was written first, and then that the preface and appendix were added; the preface as explanatory of the political position and accounting for the strength of the heathen nations and the weakness of Israel; the appendix as illustrative of the religious and moral state of the people.

THE INTRODUCTION gives :

First. A general survey of how the several tribes attempted to gain their respective possessions (for particulars see p. xii.—xiii.),

The **Book of Judges** is placed in the Jewish Canon among a series of books which bear the name of "The Earlier Prophets." These books are Joshua, Judges, the Books of Samuel and the Books of Kings.

The name was given not because their authors were prophets, nor because the narratives are largely connected with the doings of the prophets, but rather because the contents are prophetic.

They do not give the history of the nation as a record of events, as a sketch of its politics, but present the history of Israel from a prophet's point of view. In fact they are the history of the Kingdom of God in Israel. Thus the prophetic character of the Book of Judges consists in its being a record of the Theocracy in the days of the Judges. (See also p. x.)

and how instead of thoroughly driving out the Canaanites they were content to allow them to remain in the land as tributaries. In many cases the heathen nations successfully resisted the invaders and even drove them back (Chap. i).

Secondly. The conduct of Israel is reproved by an angel of the Lord (ii. 1-5).

Thirdly. A description in general terms of the attitude of Israel towards Jehovah and that of Jehovah towards Israel, during the times of the Judges. This period may generally be described as an unvarying round following in exact order.

- 1st. Idolatry of Israel.
- 2nd. Humiliation of the nation through hostile oppression.
- 3rd. Repentance of the people, and the raising up of a deliverer who freed them from the oppression.
- 4th. A period of rest, followed by relapse into idolatry.

THE MAIN PORTION OF THE BOOK (iii. 7—xvi. 31) resumes the history of Israel from the death of Joshua and Eleazar, and concludes with the death of Samson.

This section gives the history of the Judges.

The exploits of six Judges are recorded at length; the remaining Judges are very briefly alluded to.

The usurpation of Abimelech is given at length, as being the first effort in the direction of the establishment of an hereditary monarchy.

THIS MAIN PORTION can be divided into six subsections, viz.:

1. The oppression under Chushan-rishathaim and the deliverance by Othniel (iii. 5-11).
2. The oppression under Eglon, and the deliverance by Ehud (iii. 12-30).
A short mention of the heroic exploit of Shamgar (iii. 31).
3. The oppression under Jabin and the deliverance by Deborah and Barak (iv.—v.).
4. The oppression under the Midianites, and the deliverance by Gideon (viii.).
The usurpation by Abimelech (ix.).
Short notices of the Judges, Tola and Jair (x. 1-5).
5. The oppression under the Ammonites, and the deliverance by Jephthah (x. 6—xii. 7).
Short notices of the Judges, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon (xii. 8-15).
6. The oppression under the Philistines; the exploits of Samson (xiii.—xvi.).

APPENDIX, PART I. The story of Micah's idolatry; the history of Jonathan, grandson of Moses; the conquest of Laish by the Danites (xvii.—xviii.).

The object of this section is to illustrate the decline of religion and the foundation of religious worship at places other than at the tabernacle. Here we obtain an insight into the manner in which *religious unity was abandoned*.

APPENDIX II. The story of the outrage at Gibeah; the civil war against Benjamin; the almost total extermination of that tribe, and the means adopted to save it from extinction (xix.—xxi.).

This section illustrates the moral degeneration of the nation, and the social anarchy.

NOTE.—Both these sections are clearly anterior in time to the main portion of the book, for:—

1. The migration of Dan is accounted for by the obstinate resistance of the Amorites, who forced the tribe of Dan back into the mountains. This migration occurred shortly after the death of Joshua (Josh. xix. 47-48; Judges i. 34). The Levite is Jonathan, the grandson of Moses.
2. The Benjamite war occurred in the lifetime of Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron (xx. 28).

UNITY OF THE BOOK.

The Book is in three parts, viz.: (1) Introduction; (2) History of the Judges; (3) Appendix in two parts (see p. vi.).

But it is the work of one writer or compiler, for:—

1. Without the Introduction the historical narrative contained in the book would be without a foundation, which is absolutely necessary to make it intelligible.
2. The Appendix supplies a supplement of the greatest importance in relation to the development of the tribes of Israel in the times of the Judges, and is most intimately connected with the design and plan of the book.

DATE.

It is impossible to fix the date of composition with absolute certainty.

There are the following indications:—

1. "*And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day*" (i. 21).

This passage would point to a period anterior to the capture of the citadel by David, especially as after this date Jerusalem becomes, as it were, incorporated with Judah, instead of being shared by the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

2. "*In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes*" (xvii. 6) (see also xxi. 25).
"*In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in*" (xviii. 1) (see also xix. 1).

From these passages it would appear that the book was composed at a time when Israel was under monarchical government.

These passages are found only in the Appendix, and would have no bearing upon the date of composition if this Appendix was added by a later hand; but there can be little doubt that the book is the work of a single compiler. (See Unity of the Book).

3. Samson "*called the name thereof En-hakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day*" (xv. 19).

"*Unto this day*" would indicate some period considerably remote from the time of the actual events, and with reference to the exploit would suggest some date much later than the time of Samson.

4. "*And Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land*" (xviii. 30).

If this phrase "*until the day of the captivity*" refers to the Assyrian captivity we must accept one of two theories, viz.:

(i.) That the appendix was the work of a later author; or

(ii.) That the book was composed after the Assyrian captivity.

But "the captivity" referred to is generally supposed to mean the Philistine domination (see Excursus, p. 105).

5. "*And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh*" (xviii. 31).

The tabernacle was at Shiloh in the days of Joshua (Josh. xviii. 1), and was still standing there in the time of Eli and Samuel (1 Sam. i. 3, iii. 21, iv. 3). In the time of Saul it was at Nob (1 Sam. xxi.) and during the reign of David it was at Gibeon (1 Chron. xvi. 39).

It may be that the writer is merely indicating the length of this worship at Dan, but it is probable that he was not aware that the tabernacle had been moved.

6. The Language free from Aramaisms points to an early period of composition.

Conclusion. The Book of Judges was probably written in the early days of the monarchy, but whether in the time of Saul or in the first seven years of the reign of David is uncertain (see Author).

AUTHOR.

I. Samuel (according to the Talmud).

1. He was well acquainted with the circumstances of the times of the Judges, for he mentions the oppressions by Sisera, by the Philistines and by the Moabites, the worship of Baalim and Ashtaroth, and the deeds of Gideon, Barak, and Jephthah (1 Sam. xii. 9-11).

2. The book breathes the same spirit, for the order to exterminate the Amalekites (1 Sam. xv. 3) and the hewing of Agag in pieces (1 Sam. xv. 33) are acts corresponding to the deeds of Ehud, of Jael, and of Gideon.

3. Samuel's objection to kingly government may well have led him to write a full account of the days of Abimelech, descriptive of an abortive attempt to found a monarchy.

4. The passages "*in those days there was no king in Israel, etc.*," may be merely indications of time;

If so, the book may well be the work of Samuel, either by his own hand or by a younger prophet of his own school at his instigation.

In support of this theory we may also adduce:—

1. The almost total silence with respect to Judah.
2. The prominence given to Gibeah and Benjamin, with the story which explains why Benjamin was numerically "*the smallest of the tribes*" (1 Sam. ix. 21).
3. The absence of mention of the priests, and the apparently low condition of the Levites,—“the grandson of Moses being content to serve a shrine of private idolatry for the reward of a few shillings a year” (ELLCOTT).

These particulars agree with the reign of Saul, but are opposed to the time of David under whom the priesthood rose to a high position of dignity.

- II. The only other theory of any probability is that the book was written in David's reign, and was the work of either the prophet Nathan or of the prophet Gad.

This theory strongly advocated in the “Cambridge Bible for Schools” is made to rest upon the following slender foundations:—

1. The story of Micah is connected with a Levite of Bethlehem-judah.
2. The story of the Benjamite war is also connected with a Levite of Bethlehem-judah.
3. The scene of the Book of Ruth is also laid at Bethlehem-judah.
4. David was of Bethlehem, and therefore would be well acquainted with these incidents. Consequently he may have communicated the details to the actual writers.
5. Nathan and Gad composed histories (1 Chron. xxix. 29), and were intimately connected with David (2 Sam. xii. 1, xxiv. 11).

From these slight bases the deduction is drawn that “the Book of Judges was written by one of the above-mentioned prophets, or under their supervision, after David had become undisputed king of Israel” (“C.B.S.,” p. 12).

- III. **Ezra.** Another theory is that the whole of the historical books were revised and collated into their present form by Ezra.

But the Book of Ezra is a continuation of the Books of the Chronicles, not of the Books of the Kings, and the Hebrew of the Book of Judges is mingled with far too few Aramaisms to admit the probability of a late authorship.

THE GOVERNMENT.

The Government established by Joshua in accordance with the commands of Moses was a **Theocracy**.

In this **Theocracy** we find originally

- (1) *The legislative authority* in the hands of the priesthood.
- (2) *The executive power* resting with the Judge.
- (3) *Tribal authority* exercised by the heads of tribes and elders in the several tribes.

In the period of the Judges we may note the entire lapse of authority on the part of the priesthood.

Hence we find the *extraordinary* Judges acting in a twofold capacity:—

1. As military leaders, gaining victories and delivering the people from the oppression of some heathen nations.
2. As administering the laws, *i.e.* as civil magistrates.

And so we find

Some in the dual capacity of leader and magistrate, as Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Jephthah.

Others, as Shamgar and Samson, though called Judges, simply opponents and conquerors of the Philistines.

Others, as Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon, acting as civil magistrates only.

These Judgeships were partial only, *e.g.*

Othniel probably ruled over Judah only.

Ehud only over Benjamin and the plain of Jericho.

Deborah and Barak in the north.

Gideon in the centre of the land round Shechem.

Tola in Mount Ephraim.

Jair in Gilead.

Jephthah in the east of Jordan.

Ibzan in the north.

Elon in the north.

Abdon in Mount Ephraim.

The Judges corresponded to

The *Dekastai* of the Syrians, and

The *Suffetes* of the Carthaginians.

In the Hebrew they are termed *Shophetim* = men who procured justice and right. In the Septuagint they are called *Kritai*, whilst the Vulgate terms the Book of Judges "*Liber Judicum*."

The writer contrasts the "unfaithfulness" of Israel with the "faithfulness" of Jehovah.

The "unfaithfulness" of Israel had a double effect—

1. It led to the decline of the national religion, and brought about national disintegration.
2. It prevented the completion of the possession of Canaan.

The "faithfulness" of Jehovah is shown in the unvarying manner in which when the people repented He raised up a deliverer and freed them from oppression.

National Decline. Tribal Disintegration.

The peculiar system of government by which the elders managed tribal affairs, whilst a leader for the whole nation was chosen on special occasions only, made it certain that want of religious unity must be

followed by want of unity among the tribes. Union amongst the tribes could be maintained only as long as they were united by a common worship and a common religious centre. The theocratic system probably went to pieces soon after the death of Phinehas, and confusion and disorganization followed. After the expedition against Gibeah we read of no further united action on the part of the tribes.

The disintegration becomes more marked as time passes, thus :—

Deborah and Barak.

They were supported by the whole force of Zebulun and Naphtali, whilst the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar and Benjamin sent contingents. (*Six tribes*).

Judah is not mentioned.

Gad, East Manasseh, Reuben, Dan, Asher held aloof.

Gideon.

West Manasseh, Zebulun, Naphtali and Asher took part in the rising.

Ephraim joined later. (*Five tribes*). No others are mentioned.

Jephthah.

Only the tribes East of Jordan joined his standard, though the Ammonites are said to have oppressed Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim.

The Successors of Jephthah governed only in the north.

Samson.

No tribe appears to have supported him, and the exploits recorded of him are those of individual bravery.

Tribal Jealousies are exhibited

- (1) In the abstention of the tribes East of Jordan, Dan and Asher from the rising under Deborah and Barak.
- (2) In the manner in which the men of Ephraim chode with Gideon.
- (3) In the attack of Ephraim on Jephthah and the Gileadites.
- (4) The men of Judah actually handed over Samson bound into the hands of the Philistines.

Spiritual Decline.

The tendency of Israel to take part in the idolatrous worship of the Canaanites is illustrated in the sin of the people at Baal-peor (Num. xxv.).

The Tabernacle was at Shiloh, where was also the ark. The only mention of Shiloh and the ark is in connection with the expedition against Gibeah. This was in the lifetime of Phinehas. After his death there is no mention of the ark, or the high-priest, or the yearly festivals till the time of Eli.

Micah set up an image at Mount Ephraim.

The Danites established a spurious worship at Laish or Dan.

These events indicate the isolated worship of Jehovah in different places as a deity alongside the gods of the Canaanites. Jehovah is no longer the supreme God, and all other gods, false gods. The covenant God now ranks only as one among many deities.

Gideon does indeed throw down the altar of Baal, but after the defeat of the Midianites, he appears to have endeavoured to combine the offices of judge and high priest.

In the time of Abimelech the worship of Baal was thoroughly established at Shechem.

The Ammonite oppression is said to be due to promiscuous idolatry. Not only did Israel worship Baal and Ashtaroah, but also "*the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines.*"

The spiritual decline of the nation is followed by a decline in the spiritual character of the Judges. What a descent from Othniel through Deborah to Gideon, Jephthah and finally Samson, the last of whom fell a slave to his own lusts.

(A short sketch of the history is given that the student may readily follow the story).

THE INTRODUCTION.

The Introduction gives us a brief account of the history of Israel in Canaan immediately after the death of Joshua.

It divides itself naturally into two parts.

I. Descriptive of the action of the tribes in completing the conquest of the land (Chap. I.).

II. Descriptive of the gradual decadence in religion and national unity which led to the oppressions by the different nations (Chap. II., III.).

Part I. The completion of the conquest.

We must remember—

First, What Joshua did.

- (1) He put Israel in possession of Canaan.
- (2) He broke the power of the inhabitants.

Secondly, What Joshua did not do.

- (1) He did not exterminate all the inhabitants.
- (2) He did not put the Israelites in permanent possession of all the cities.

So it was necessary for each tribe to obtain complete possession of the territory specially allotted to it.

Chapter I. describes the acts of various tribes.

1. Judah and Simeon.

The children of Israel enquired of the Lord to ascertain which tribe shall be the first to take possession of the land assigned to them. Judah is named, and this tribe in conjunction with Simeon, advanced against the Canaanites. They met the Canaanites and Perizzites at Bezek, defeated them with the loss of 10,000 men, captured Adoni-bezek, the king of Bezek, and cut off his thumbs and great toes. Then they laid siege to Jerusalem (where Adoni-bezek died), and captured it. They then advanced against

the Canaanites who dwelt in the hill country and the south. *Caleb and Othniel captured Hebron and drove out the Anakim, whilst further south Judah and Simeon captured Zephath or Hormah. In the Shephelah, or lowland, Judah took Gaza, Askelon and Ekron, but were unable to drive out the inhabitants of the valley because of their chariots of iron.

Benjamin were unable to drive out the Jebusites from Jerusalem.

Ephraim captured Beth-el, but did not drive out the inhabitants of Gezer.

The other tribes are mentioned, but merely to denote how they were unable to completely effect the conquest of their respective territories (see p. lxix.).

Part II. The gradual lapse into idolatry.

Chapters II. and III. 1-7, are descriptive of the gradual lapse of Israel into idolatry, and give a picture of the state of the country previous to the commencement of the period of the Judges.

Special injunctions had been laid upon the Israelites

(1) To destroy all traces of idolatry (Deut. xii. 1-2).

(2) Not to make any league with the inhabitants of the land (Deut. vii. 2).

(3) Not to allow intermarriages with the heathen nations (Deut. vii. 3).

From these chapters we learn that all these three injunctions had been disregarded, for

(1) They had not destroyed idol worship (ii. 2), but had forsaken the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth (ii. 13).

(2) They had made the Canaanites tributaries, instead of driving them out, and had allowed them to remain in the land (ii. 2).

(3) They had intermarried with the heathen nations (iii. 6).

So an Angel was sent up from Gilgal to Bochim to tell the Israelites that the Lord would no longer drive out the nations before them, but they should be as thorns in their sides, and their gods should be a snare to them.

We learn that these nations were left for two reasons—

(1) To teach the children of Israel to war (iii. 2).

(2) To prove or test if Israel would keep the commandments of the Lord (iii. 4).

Particular nations are named as being left, viz.

"The five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwell in mount Lebanon" (iii. 3).

Then we have a sketch of the history of the Judges:

The people were delivered over to oppressors for their sins (ii. 14).

But the Lord raised up judges who delivered the people (ii. 16).

Yet such was the wickedness of the people that they would not obey even the judges (ii. 17).

And after the death of a judge they fell into even more grievous sin than before (ii. 19).

* The capture of Hebron and Debir.

The account of these events occurs almost verbatim in Josh. xiv. 13-15, xv. 13-19. It is most probable therefore, seeing that the age of Caleb is given in Joshua as eighty-five years, that these two cities were captured during the life-time of Joshua. Josephus, however, places the events after the death of Joshua.

THE JUDGES AND THE OPPRESSIONS.

THE FIRST PERIOD.

The times of the Judges may be divided into three periods—

1. Othniel to Deborah and Barak.
2. Gideon to Jair.
3. Jephthah to Samson.

Each period is introduced by a particular notice of idolatry, thus:—

First Period. “*The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves*” (iii. 7).

Second Period. “*And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord*” (vi. 1).

Third Period. “*And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim and Ashtoreth, etc.*” (x. 6).

1. **Othniel** (*lion of God*) “*the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother*” (iii. 9) of the **Tribe of Judah.**

either

- (1) The younger brother of Caleb; or
- (2) The nephew of Caleb, being the son of Kenaz, the younger brother of Caleb.

The view generally adopted is that Othniel was the younger brother of Caleb. This view is supported by the description of Caleb as the “*son of Jephunneh, the Kenezite*” (Josh. xiv. 6). This would make Kenaz to be some remote ancestor, and head of the family, who were called Kenezites, or sons of Kenaz. Achsah, the wife of Othniel, would thus be his niece, but such a marriage was not forbidden by the Mosaic Law.

He is famous for two exploits.

- (1) The capture of Kirjath-sephir or Debir (see Achsah, p. xlv.).
- (2) The deliverance of Israel from the oppression* of Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia.

The Oppression.

Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia.

The invasion was from the south, similar to a former incursion from Mesopotamia in the time of Abraham (Gen. xiv.).

District Oppressed. Probably only the south of the land, and the territory of Judah in particular.

Duration. *Eight years*, when the land was delivered by Othniel who defeated Chushan and repelled the invasion.

Period of rest. *Forty years.*

2. **Ehud** the son of Gera, a Benjamite, and left handed.

The Oppression.

Eglon, king of Moab, with the assistance of Ammon and Amalek. Eglon was a very fat man, and appears to have been a chieftain rather than the king of the country.

The District Oppressed.

The plain of Jericho and the territory of Benjamin. Eglon appears to have seized Jericho, then unfortified, and to have made it the basis of his operations. With the fords of Jordan in his possession he would be safe against the Eastern tribes. Benjamin, thinned in numbers after the fall of Gibeah, would be too weak to offer effectual resistance. Thus Eglon placed a Moabite garrison in the land, and compelled Benjamin to pay tribute yearly.

Duration. *Eighteen years.*

The Deliverance.

The assassination of Eglon and the subsequent slaughter of the Moabite garrison was brought about by a deep laid and well conceived plot.

Ehud, a left-handed man, prepared himself by making a two-edged sword or dagger, a cubit or 18 inches long, which he wore concealed in his flowing garments on his right side, and thus appeared to be unarmed. The payment of the annual tribute was made the occasion of the rising. The tribute was presented with the usual Eastern ceremony, and then the deputation was dismissed.

Ehud returned to the palace and sent in a message to the king that he had a secret errand unto him. The king who was in the summer-room ordered his attendants to withdraw, and commanded that Ehud should be admitted, for there was nothing to fear from a man apparently unarmed.

The king was reclining and as it was necessary that the intended blow should be sudden and fatal, so that no alarm should be given Ehud said, "*I have a message from God to thee.*" This stratagem caused the king to rise in reverence, and enabled Ehud to approach near to him, so as to deliver the message in his ears. Then putting his left hand to the dagger Ehud struck the king so forcibly in the abdomen that he drove the dagger so deeply into his body that it came out behind and could not be withdrawn again.

Ehud then closed and locked the door, passed out through the ante-chamber vacated by the attendants, and made his way from the palace. The attendants returning to the ante-chamber found the door locked, and naturally concluded that the king did not wish to be disturbed. After waiting till they were ashamed to wait any longer they at length opened the door with the key and found Eglon lying dead upon the floor.

This long delay enabled Ehud to make good his escape, and to carry out the second part of the plot. Hurrying to Seirath, evidently on the verge of the forest region of the hill country of Ephraim, he blew his trumpet, the preconcerted signal that Eglon was dead. The people rose at the call, and Ehud, placing himself at their head, marched rapidly to the Jordan, and seized the fords, thus cutting off the escape of the Moabites, who, panic-stricken at the death of their chief seem to have fallen an easy prey to the men of Israel. The Moabite garrison were slain to a man, and it is recorded that 10,000 of the nation perished, all lusty men and valiant soldiers.

Period of rest. *Eighty years.*

3. Shamgar, son of Anath (tribe unknown) delivered Israel from the Philistines by slaying six hundred men with an ox-goad.

The district oppressed is not stated but it must have been the South, and either in the tribe of Judah or the tribe of Dan.

That there was an oppression by the Philistines, and that Shamgar was a judge is clear from the expression, "*he also delivered Israel*" (iii. 31).

That his weapon was an ox-goad has been taken to imply that the Philistines had, as they did in the days of Saul, deprived the neighbouring Israelites of all warlike weapons.

"*In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael*" (v. 6). Who is Jael? By some it is supposed that Deborah is speaking of an unknown judge, called Jael, who succeeded Shamgar.

But it is most probable that Jael, the wife of Heber, and the slayer of Sisera is meant. The Kenites are said to have settled in the south of Judah (i. 16), and they may have possibly assisted Shamgar against the Philistines. Subsequently Heber migrated from the south of Judah to the plain of Zaanaim in the north, or it may be that the mention of Jael's name is a copyist's error.

4. Deborah and Barak.

Deborah (*the bee*), a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, who judged Israel under the "*palm tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim*" (iv. 5).

Deborah was the Judge; Barak is the military commander.

For "*prophetess,*" see p. 98.

Barak (*lightning*), the son of Abinoam, a native of Kedesh-Naphtali (character see xxi.).

The Oppression.

Jabin, king of Canaan (see p. xlvi.), with Sisera as captain of his army.

District Oppressed.

The northern tribes of Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali.

The Canaanites with their chariots held complete possession of the plain of Esdraelon, and thus the northern tribes were divided from the southern tribes.

Duration. *Twenty years.*

The Deliverance.

The song of Deborah gives a fairly accurate picture of the oppression and the deliverance.

The state of the land.

- (1) "*The highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways*" (v. 6), i.e. the enemy had possession of the main roads, and the people could not traverse them for fear of violence and plunder. So they stole from place to place by obscure and unfrequented routes.
- (2) "*The villages ceased*" (v. 7). Villages are a mark of a settled country. The country was so unsettled that the rural population withdrew for safety to the nearest walled towns, leaving the villages deserted and abandoning all cultivation.
- (3) "*Then was war in the gates*" (v. 8). The cities were surprised and plundered by hostile incursions, so that there

was not safety even in the cities. As the magistrates sat in the gates for the administration of justice, it is clear that the continual attacks interrupted the ordinary government of the cities. Thus the people did not enjoy the benefits of peaceful life or regular government.

- (4) "*A shield or spear was not found among forty thousand in Israel*" (v. 8). The shield and spear here mean *all offensive and defensive* weapons. The inference is that the Canaanites had disarmed the Israelites, as the Philistines subsequently did in the time of Saul.

The Action of Deborah.

The prophetess saw clearly that if the Canaanites were allowed to continue in possession of the plain of Esdraelôn, and thus separate the northern from the southern tribes, the complete subjugation of the north was only a question of time. The command of the plain by Sisera and his army thus made the situation a national matter; for as long as the Canaanites were thrust like a wedge between the northern and southern tribes, national unity was impossible.

So Deborah made an appeal to the *whole nation*, and called upon Barak to lead the forces.

The Rising.

The appeal was answered by many of the tribes, thus:

From the North Issachar sent a contingent, but Zebulun and Naphtali furnished the bulk of the forces, and bore the brunt of the contest.

From the South came men from Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.

Judah and Simeon are not mentioned; possibly they were pressed so hardily by the Philistines that they could not spare any men to go north.

Neither Asher nor Dan sent any assistance, whilst the *Trans-Jordanic tribes*, though they met to discuss the situation, came to no definite decision.

The army of Barak. Barak, in obedience to the call of Deborah, placed himself at the head of 10,000 men of Naphtali and Zebulun. He was accompanied by Deborah herself. The presence of the prophetess doubtless inspired the small force with enthusiasm, but Barak, through declining to take the leadership unless Deborah went with his forces, was deprived of the full honour of the victory.

Acting under the orders of Deborah, he led his men to Mount Tabor. As Barak was separated from the central tribes by the valley of Esdraelôn, held by the Canaanites, the advance to Tabor was sound strategy. Screened by the wooded heights, his forces might assemble unsuspected by Sisera, whilst the position of the mountain was the most favourable possible for a union of the northern and central tribes.

The movements of Sisera.

Sisera learnt of the gathering of Israel from some Kenites who had pitched their tents near Kedesh-Naphtali, and who had observed the

warriors of the north making their way southward. He assembled his cavalry and chariots, and debouching through the western pass took up a position covering the defiles through which any troops advancing from the south must pass in order to effect a junction with the army of Barak.

The Battle.

In obedience to the command of Deborah, Barak and his men rushed down from Tabor, and fell upon Sisera's army. A great storm driving in the faces of the Canaanite host threw the chariots into confusion. According to Josephus, their bows and slings were rendered useless by the rain, and their heavy armed soldiers, benumbed by the cold, were unable to use their swords. And soon the mountain torrents swelled the streams of the plain, till the Kishon rose in flood, and the alluvial plain became a morass. The chariots and horses became entangled in the swamp. The only direction in which flight could be attempted lay up the western pass through which the Kishon flows. The wild torrent swept away many of the fugitives; the rest inextricably entangled in the morass were cut down to a man, leaving* their corpses to enrich the plain.

The death of Sisera at the hands of Jael, is the last scene in a battle which was decisive as regards northern Canaan. The results were of paramount importance to Israel. The victory of Israel not only destroyed for ever all hope of a revival of Canaanite supremacy in the north, but was the first step towards the formation of a united Israel.

Period of Rest. *Forty years.*

THE SECOND PERIOD.

5. **Gideon**, the youngest son of Joash, of the house of Abeizer, of the tribe of Manasseh, and dwelling at Ophrah.

He is known by the double name of—

Gideon (*the cutter-down*), a name signally appropriate for one who "cut down" or destroyed the Midianites.

Jerubbaal (*Let Baal plead*), a name given in commemoration of his having destroyed the altar of Baal (vi. 32).

When Gideon is first mentioned he was grown up and had sons, of whom Jether was the eldest (viii. 20).

He is addressed by the angel as "a mighty man of valour," so probably had already distinguished himself against the predatory bands of Midian. We know that his brothers had perished in some struggle with the Midianites near Mount Tabor, previous to the deliverance wrought by Gideon.

The Idolatry.

The victory of Barak on the banks of the Kishon had broken for ever the power of the Canaanites and they were now tributary to Manasseh. The Canaanite population chiefly occupied the towns (see Shechem in the time of Abimelech) and the Israelites were

* So we must interpret Ps. lxxxiii. 10, "*Which perished at Endor, and became as dung for the earth.*"

mainly peasant cultivators. The worship of Baal (see p. xliii.) flourished side by side with that of Jehovah, and the covenant God of Israel was now regarded as only one of the deities to be worshipped.

The Oppression.

The tribes of the desert, the Midianites, Amalekites, and the children of the East raided the country year by year, murdering the peasants and carrying off the crops. It was no organized attempt to subdue the country, but an annual raid at the time of harvest.

District Oppressed.

At first it was Gilead that suffered, then the desert robbers crossed the Jordan, devastated the fertile plain of Esdraelon, extending their raids down the maritime plain of the West as far as Gaza. Life and property were so insecure that the people made them dens in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds, for safety for themselves and their goods.

Duration. *Seven years.*

The Deliverance.

First a prophet is sent who reminded Israel of what God had done for them, how he had delivered them from Egypt, and had given possession of Canaan.

The cause of the people's misery was not the lack of power in Jehovah but the national sin of idolatry "*ye have not obeyed my voice.*"

This call to repentance was quickly followed by help.

The call of Gideon.

Gideon was beating out wheat with a stick in the winepress of Joash near the oak at Ophrah.

It was not usual, save for the poorest, to thresh wheat in this manner. Gideon had chosen the method and place for secrecy that his action might not be noticed by the marauding bands of Midian.

Whilst thus engaged an Angel appeared to him and saluted him with the words, "*The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.*"

It is probable from his answer that Gideon was pondering on the miserable state of the country, and thinking of the former deeds of Jehovah, for the stranger had won his confidence, and he pours out his secret thoughts to him. We may note that Gideon

- (1) Acknowledges the past deeds of Jehovah.
- (2) Believes in His present might.
- (3) Confesses that Israel's calamities are due to the withdrawal of His protection.

Gideon had thus a true grasp of the condition of the country and its causes, so the angel intimated that it is the purpose of Jehovah to deliver His people by the hand of Gideon. When Gideon modestly pleaded his unworthiness he received the positive assurance, "*I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man,*" i.e. totally destroy them. Who was this "I"? Gideon asked for a sign, a sign connected with worship and sacrifice.

The sign was granted and the angel touched with his staff the

offerings of flesh and unleavened cakes that Gideon had made to him, so that fire rose out of the rock and consumed them all. Then the Angel vanished out of his sight.

Gideon was now convinced that Jehovah has called him, but a fresh fear filled his mind. Could he live now that he has seen an angel of the Lord face to face; once more he received an answer, "*Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.*" We must not attribute want of faith to Gideon because of the questions he puts. They are questions rather than doubts, and are most natural when we consider the circumstances. Israel was oppressed—Jehovah had forsaken his people—the tribe of Manasseh was comparatively unimportant—the clan of Abiezer was insignificant. That Gideon should be called upon to deliver Israel was very unlikely, and so though Gideon does not doubt the power of Jehovah, he naturally desires to be assured that it is the great I AM who is calling upon him to deliver his country. His questions, and the nature of the sign asked for, are all directed to this one important point. When that is ascertained Gideon is ready to act.

The First Step. Religious Reformation. Destruction of the Altar of Baal.

The same night the Lord appeared to Gideon and bade him destroy the altar of Baal and the grove or Asherah that was by it. The directions were explicit and particular.

He was

- (1) To take two bullocks to assist in pulling down the altar and in removing the materials.
- (2) To pull down the altar and cut down the grove.
- (3) To build an altar to Jehovah on the top of the rock, so as to be visible to all, and on the altar to sacrifice the second bullock.

Gideon accomplished this during the night with the assistance of ten of his father's servants.

On the following morning the men of the city demanded the life of Gideon for this act of supposed sacrilege. The faith of Joash appears to have been roused by the act of his son whom he defended by an unanswerable argument convincing the citizens of the folly of their idolatry. If Baal "*be a god, let him plead for himself.*"

Contrast Gideon's caution in threshing in secret with the ostentatious position of the altar at the top of the rock. The removal of the Baal worship inspired the people; it was the sign that Jehovah was once more acknowledged and that His aid might be expected in the coming conflict.

The Second Act. The rout of the Midianites.

Once more the Midian host crossed the Jordan and encamped in the plain of Jezreel. Though Gideon might well have been eager to avenge the death of his brothers, he made no move on his own initiative. It was when the "*Spirit of the Lord came upon him*" that he gave the signal.

The Assembly.

At the blowing of the trumpet his father's house, the clan of the Abiezrites, joined him as one man.

Then swift messengers were sent through all Manasseh, his own tribe, and they too, hastened to join him.

Thus strengthened Gideon sent messengers along the sea coast to the northern tribes, and Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali joined his standard.

Issachar may have been unable to rise because the Midianites held the main part of their territory.

The Sign.

Gideon now asked for a sign, not in doubt as to God's faithfulness or power, but to be really assured that he was called by Jehovah to the work of deliverance.

The sign was twofold, and chosen by Gideon himself.

First the fleece spread on the threshing floor was saturated with dew whilst the ground around was dry.

But it is the nature of wool to attract and absorb the moisture in the atmosphere. So Gideon asked for the contrary to take place; so

Secondly. The fleece was dry, whilst on the ground there was dew. The symbolical meaning may be:—

Fleece = Israel. Ground = all nations. Dew = the symbol of Divine blessing.

Thus:

- (1) When the ground was dry, Israel was vouchsafed the dew of Divine blessing.
- (2) When Israel was given up to idolatry, Israel (the fleece) was dry, *i.e.* deprived of God's favour, whilst the ground around being wet, taught the lesson that God still poured out His blessing, of which Israel, by its apostasy, was deprived.

The cautious doubts of Gideon were dispelled for ever. We do not read that he ever again asked for a sign.

The Position of the Armies.

Gideon's army is said to have been upon Mount Gilead. This is evidently an error in transcription, and should be read as Mount Gilboa. Correcting this error we have a fairly accurate description of the position of the contending hosts.

On the South, on the crest of Mount Gilboa, at the foot of which was the spring or well of Harod, Gideon had posted his men, 32,000 in number.

To the North, in the plain of Jezreel, lay the camp of Midian (135,000 men), with the hill of Moreh to the north of them.

Elimination of the timorous.

It was the purpose of Jehovah to give unmistakable proof that the deliverance was wrought by His hand, "*lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.*" The deliverance was due to the religious reformation wrought by Gideon, and this fact must be impressed upon the people. So Gideon was commanded to make proclamation that all who were "*fearful and afraid*" should depart home. 22,000 returned, leaving 10,000 with Gideon.

Further Selection of the bravest, self-denying Soldiers.

But the number was still too great, so Jehovah commanded Gideon to make a further test of his men. He was to take them down to the spring and notice how they drank, and separate them thus:

Those who lapped the water like a dog, *i.e.* who took the water from the brook with the hollow of their hand, and lapped it into the mouth as a dog lappeth water, were to go with Gideon.

Those who knelt down to drink were to return home.

This method of selection may seem fanciful, but it gave Gideon the resolute, alert, experienced, self-denying soldiers. The rest of the men were self-indulgent and rash. They took no precaution against surprise, they gave way to the gratification of the needs of the moment. They were not to be relied upon for the task before them. They would not have pressed doggedly on, "*faint yet pursuing*," after the host of the fleeing Midianites.

Only three hundred lapped, yet God declared that with this handful of men Gideon would deliver Israel from the oppression of Midian.

Encouragement given to Gideon. The Dream of the Midianite.

Three hundred were now left, and Gideon prepared for a night surprise, and for pursuit. The retiring soldiers left the valiant band provisions and their war trumpets. This will explain why each man had a pitcher and a trumpet.

But lest any misgiving of the result should affect Gideon, God bade him go down to the Midianite camp and ascertain how matters were in the host of the enemy. Accompanied by his attendant, Phurah, Gideon crept stealthily towards the camp, till he was near enough to hear the conversation of the guards. They heard one of the Midianites tell his dream. The dream was simply this, "*Behold a cake of barley bread tumbled, as rolling from a height into the camp of Midian, and it came to the tent (i.e. the tent of the Midianite chief), and smote it, so that it fell, was overturned, and lay along levelled to the ground.*" And to this his companion replied, "*This is nothing else than the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, the Israelite: God hath given Midian and all the camp into his hand.*"

The Interpretation of the Dream.

The Barley Cake = the Israelites.

The cake was a little flat round cake of barley meal, the most poor and common kind of food, and so symbolical of the impoverished and oppressed state of Israel.

Tumbling = the descent of Gideon and his men from the heights into the plain.

The Tent (the definite article is implied) = the principal tent of the camp, *i.e.* the camp of the general.

The Overturning of the tent = the complete destruction of the host of Midian.

The Effect of the Dream.

- (1) *On the Midianites.* Told from man to man the impression made upon the host must have prepared for the panic which, commencing with the outposts, was so soon to spread through the whole camp.

- (2) *On Gideon.* He was assured of the despondency of his foe, and was convinced that God had certainly given the enemy into his hands. He worshipped and returned to his men, determined to attack without delay.

The Attack.

Gideon divided his men into three bands of one hundred each, each man holding a trumpet in one hand, and in the other a lighted torch concealed in a pitcher. Gideon himself with one hundred men made his way to the furthest end of the camp, having instructed the other companies to await the signal which he would give, and all to act together.

The time selected was after the first sentries had been relieved, and the second posted, so that the camp had settled down for the night.

When all was ready Gideon gave the signal by blowing his trumpet, and then the three hundred men broke their pitchers, blew their trumpets and shouted, "*the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.*" The alarmed Midianites, hearing the trumpets and seeing the blaze of the torches, imagined the camp was surrounded by a host of Israelites whose numbers were unknown. They rushed in panic through the darkness of the night. Each man's sword was turned against his neighbour, many were killed or trampled underfoot, and the panic-stricken host fled in confusion.

The Flight.

The fugitives naturally made for the Jordan, and appear to have separated into two distinct bodies taking a different line of flight.

The first body, under Zebah and Zalmunna, managed to cross the Jordan, and made their way towards the wilderness. This band was pursued by Gideon in person, who was now joined by the tribes of Naphtali, Asher and Manasseh, probably the warriors previously dismissed, who hastened to rejoin on hearing of the flight of Midian.

The second band, under Oreb and Zeeb, fled towards the southern fords of Jordan, and were intercepted by the tribe of Ephraim, summoned by Gideon to occupy the '*waters*' or tributaries of the Jordan and the fords of Jordan itself. The Ephraimites completely destroyed the fleeing host, and captured Oreb and Zeeb, putting them to death, "*Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb.*"

The Altercation with Ephraim.

Ephraim followed the fugitives beyond Jordan, bringing with them the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, whom they reproached on account of their not being called first of the tribes to the war. Gideon appeased their wrath by a tactful and diplomatic reply. The gleaning of Ephraim in the capture and execution of the Midianite leaders, Oreb and Zeeb, was better than the full vintage of the thousands of unknown Midianites slain by the insignificant family of Abi-ezer.

Pursuit after Zebah and Zalmunna.

With dogged pertinacity Gideon held on his course after Zebah and Zalmunna. He may have been determined, if possible, to capture these princes in order to avenge the death of his brothers. "*Faint yet pursuing,*" the indefatigable three hundred crossed Jordan, and

reached Succoth, where they were denied provisions. The people of Penuel in like manner refused to supply food to the weary band. They may have been influenced.

1. By indifference to the cause of Jehovah.
2. By fear of Midianite vengeance. They may have regarded the defeat as only temporary, and have hesitated to comply lest another predatory band should ravage their country.
3. By contempt for the little band of 300, whom they deemed no match for the 15,000 under Zebah and Zalmunna.

But Gideon did not pause in his purpose. He threatened the inhospitable, uncharitable inhabitants of the two places with punishment on his return, and pressed on.

The camp of Zebah and Zalmunna surprised.

The Midianite chiefs fled as far as Kharkor. They seem to have imagined they were safe from pursuit, and to have encamped in security. But Gideon made a detour and fell upon them from the east, a quarter from which attack was least expected. The attack resulted in the defeat and flight of the host, and the capture of Zebah and Zalmunna.

The return of Gideon.

On his way back, Gideon beat the seventy-seven princes of Succoth to death with thorns, and razed the tower of Penuel, slaying the men of the city, who appear to have fought in defence of the place. Having thus fulfilled his threat, he led his captives in triumph to Ophrah, where he put them to death in vengeance for the slaughter of his own brothers at Mount Tabor, during some previous raid of the Midianites.

Signal character of the deliverance.

"How signal the deliverance was, appears from its many memorials: the name of Gideon's altar, of the spring of Harod, of the rock of Oreb, of the wine press of Zeeb; whilst the Prophets and Psalmist allude again and again to details not mentioned in the history" (STANLEY).

Results of Gideon's victory.

The first attempt to establish a monarchy and to make it hereditary in the family of Gideon. "*Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also; for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.*"

Gideon declined the honour, but he reigned in all but regal state, and he fell into the temptation of endeavouring to combine the priestly and the regal power. Out of the spoil of Midian he made a sacred Ephod, and appears to have arrogated to himself high-priestly functions. This led to a false worship of Jehovah, and to Gideon and his house this "*thing became a snare.*" whilst after his death, the children of Israel turned again to Baal-worship and made Baal-berith their god at Shechem.

With regal state and priestly functions, Gideon also adopted polygamy, with unhappy consequences to his house.

Duration of rest. *Forty years.*

6. Abimelech.

Gideon left seventy sons. One of these was Abimelech, not a legitimate son, but one by a "maid-servant," a native of Shechem.

It would appear that many of the old Canaanite inhabitants had remained in Shechem after the conquest of the land, and that the mother of Abimelech was of Canaanite extraction.

The usurpation.

On the death of Gideon, Abimelech determined to seize power for himself.

He appealed—

First. To the tendency for a monarchical form of government. Is it "*better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbabel, which are three-score and ten persons, or that one reign over you?*"

Secondly. To his kinsmen in Shechem, *i.e.* the Canaanite population, "*his mother's brethren.*" "*Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh.*"

His appeal was readily responded to, and his mother's relatives entered into negotiations with the citizens of Shechem. They supplied Abimelech with seventy shekels of silver out of the treasury of the temple of Baal-berith, and with this sum (about half-a-crown a head) Abimelech hired a band of desperate abandoned men and by their aid he seized the seventy sons of Gideon (all but Jotham, the youngest) and slaughtered them upon one stone apparently as a kind of sacrifice.

The rising of the Shechemites against the sons of Gideon would be considered as the contending of Baal against the house of Gideon. The slaughter of the sons of Gideon would be considered a triumph for Baal. Hence the contribution from the treasury of Baal-berith, and the slaughter of Gideon's sons upon one stone after the manner of a sacrifice to Baal.

We may note here the result of Gideon's mistakes.

First, his making of the Ephod had led to false worship of Jehovah, to be followed by setting up of Baal worship. The funds of Baal's temple provided the means by which Abimelech hired his band of assassins.

Secondly, Gideon's polygamy brought about the usual consequences, *viz.* intrigue for power after his death, and apparently an enervated, spiritless set of sons brought up under harem influences.

The Parable of Jotham.

The men of Shechem now gathered together, and in solemn assembly elected Abimelech as king (the first to receive that name) at the sacred stone under the oak at Shechem. But Jotham, the youngest of Gideon's sons, who had escaped the slaughter of his brethren, interrupted the festivities by suddenly appearing on Mount Gerizim. There, guarded from approach by the intervening valley, he uttered the first recorded fable. Across the valley his words would be audible to the crowd below, whilst he himself was safe from attack.

For fable and application, see pp. 38-39.

Having uttered the fable, prophetic of the fate of Shechem and Abimelech, Jotham fled in haste towards the south as far as Beer, out of the reach of Abimelech.

The Rule and Death of Abimelech.

Abimelech ruled rather than reigned for three years. His principal supporters were, as has been seen, the native Shechemites, i.e. the descendants of the Canaanite population, who appear to have formed a kind of *League.

Abimelech for some reason not recorded, resided at Arumah and not Shechem, which was governed by his lieutenant, Zebul. His rule appears to have been feebly exercised, for brigandage was on the increase. The Hivite population seem to have been early disloyal to the king they had elected, and the banditti not only robbed all who made their way over the mountain passes, but laid ambushes for the purpose of capturing Abimelech himself. Though this was reported to Abimelech he appears to have taken no action.

At last the rebellion came to a head, on the occasion of the Vintage Festival. Gaal, a native Hivite, and the leader of a brigand band, entered Shechem, and at the festival in the house of Baal-berith won over the native population. Abimelech had gained their favour because of his mother's relationship with the Canaanites of Shechem. But Gaal reminded them that Abimelech was only half a Canaanite. He was an Israelite really, and the son of Jerubbabel, who threw down the altar of Baal. Why should the Canaanites serve him? Let them serve the native lords descended from Hamor, the founder of Shechem.

Zebul at once informed Abimelech of the critical nature of the position, and the latter acted with promptness and decision. He advanced against the city in four divisions. Gaal, with his senses clouded after the festivities of the preceding evening, was persuaded and deluded by Zebul into imagining the approaching forces were shadows on the hill sides, until it was too late to make effectual provision for meeting Abimelech. He and his forces were defeated, but managed to escape into the city, whence, however, they were expelled by Zebul and his party. This concludes the first act in the drama of the death of Abimelech.

The people of Shechem, having expelled Gaal, appear to have thought they had regained the favour of Abimelech, and thus were lulled into security. But Abimelech was determined upon revenge, and attacked the people whilst engaged in their labours in the field. By means of an ambush he cut off their retreat into the city. He then stormed and destroyed the city and sowed it with salt as symbolical of its abandonment and desolation.

The tower of the Temple of Baal-berith still held out. Abimelech captured it by the device of cutting down wood from the neighbouring

* "The remnant of the original population, with the adherents gained from amongst the conquerors, had elevated Shechem into a kind of metropolitan dignity amongst the neighbouring towns; who thus formed a religious league, of which the Temple was at Shechem, under the name of Baal-berith, or Baal of the League. Beth-Millo, Arumah, Thebez, are named as amongst the dependent cities. The Temple itself was a fortress containing the Sacred Treasury" (STANLEY).

hill of Zalmon. The boughs were laid at the foot of the tower so that when they were lighted the tower caught fire, and "*all the men of the tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand men and women.*"

But the rebellion was not completely stamped out. One other stronghold of the revolt remained—the tower of Thebez. The story of Shechem is repeated. The inhabitants took refuge in the tower, and Abimelech again had resort to the same expedient of firing the building. But whilst directing operations the impetuous general approached near the tower. A woman on the roof seized the opportunity, and hurled upon his head a piece of millstone with such violence as to fracture his skull. Abimelech fell, but in his fall desired a soldier's death, and, like Saul on Mount Gilboa, called upon his armour-bearer to slay him and thus save him from the indignity of meeting his death at the hand of a woman. This circumstance passed into a kind of proverb as a warning against too near an approach to a besieged city (see 2 Sam. xi. 21-23).

Importance of the history of Abimelech.

- (1) It is illustrative of the want of unity among the tribes. Abimelech was able to usurp the government almost in the centre of the land.
- (2) It is the first attempt to set up monarchy.
- (3) It illustrates the punishment that overtakes the wicked through their own sins, and the sacred writer asserts this principle clearly and emphatically.

Abimelech and the men of Shechem were fellow-conspirators in the murder of the sons of Gideon and so—

It was God who "*sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem*" (ix. 23).

It was God who "*rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father in slaying his seventy brethren: and all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads: and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal*" (ix. 56-57).

7. Tola, the son of Puah, and grandson of Dodo, of the tribe of Issachar.

He judged Israel *twenty-three years* at Shamir, in Mount Ephraim, and was buried at Shamir.

Thus he apparently exercised judgeship over the centre of the land.

8. Jair, a man of Gilead.

He judged Israel for *twenty-two years*, and appears to have ruled on the east of Jordan, in the land of Gilead.

It would seem that he was a man of great influence, for his thirty sons appear to have been "*chiefs*" riding on "*ass colts*," and to have governed thirty of the sixty cities comprising the district of Havoth-jair.

Apparently the period of forty-five years (Tola twenty-three years; Jair twenty-two years) after the death of Abimelech was a period of rest. It may be that the usurpation of Abimelech led to renewed repentance on the part of the people.

With Jair the second period of the history of the Judges is concluded.

THE THIRD PERIOD.

The third period includes the contemporaneous rule of Jephthah and his successors in the north and east, and of Samson and Eli in the south and south-west, which may be summarized as follows:—

<i>North and East.</i>		<i>South and West.</i>	
Ammonite oppression.	18 years.	Philistine oppression.	40 years.
Jephthah.	6 years.	“ Samson began to deliver Israel ” during 20 years (xiii. 5).	20 years.
Ibzan.	7 years.	Twenty years later Samuel defeated the Philistines at Ebenezer and completed the deliverance (1 Sam. vii.)	20 years.
Elon.	10 years.		
Abdon.	8 years.		
	49 years.		40 years.

9. **Jephthah**, of whom we have the following particulars:—

1. He was a Gileadite, *i.e.*, of the inhabitants of Gilead.
2. He was the son of Gilead, which appears to have been a family name in the tribe of Manasseh.
3. He was, like Ishmael and Abimelech, of inferior birth.
4. The sons of Gilead drove him out of the house of their father that he might not share the paternal inheritance, just as Abraham sent away Ishmael and the sons of Keturah that they might not inherit with Isaac (Gen. xxi. 10., xxv. 6).
5. He appealed to the elders of Gilead for redress, but in vain.
6. He took refuge in the land of Tob, a district in the north-east of Perseæ, and gathered about him a band of freebooters, who “ *went out with him,* ” *i.e.* on predatory expeditions.
7. He had gained reputation as a brave warrior and skilful leader, “ *he was a mighty man of valour.* ”
8. He had one daughter, his only child.

The Apostasy and Idolatry of Israel.

The double oppression by the Ammonites and by the Philistines was the result of the lapse of the people into idolatry. No less than seven heathen deities are mentioned as being worshipped by the Israelites (x. 6), viz :

1. Baalim
2. Ashtaroth
3. The Gods of Syria ; not named.
4. The Gods of Zidon ; probably the Zidonian Astarte.
5. The Gods of Moab ; Chemosh (1 Kings xi. 33).
6. The Gods of Ammon ; Milcom or Molech (1 Kings xi. 33).
7. The Gods of the Philistines ; Dagon (Judges xvi. 23).

When Israel cried for deliverance we find *seven* nations out of whose hands Jehovah had delivered his people (x. 11, 12) viz:—

1. The Egyptians—at the Exodus.
2. The Amorites—the defeat of Sihon.
3. The Ammonites—who were joined with Eglon, king of Moab.
4. The Philistines—through Shamgar.
5. The Zidonians—the defeat of the northern Canaanites by Barak.
6. The Amalekites—at Rephidim, and again in the deliverance by Gideon.
7. The Moabites (for which read Midianites)—routed by Gideon.

The order fairly comprises the great deliverances in order from the Exodus to the time of Jephthah.

The Oppression.

The Ammonites (see p. lix.).

Duration.

Eighteen years.

District oppressed.

The tribes on the eastern side of Jordan.

The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan, probably at the lower fords, and made raids into Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim.

The Deliverance.

The people humbled themselves, entreated the Lord, and put away the strange gods. Having thus repented, they ventured to go to meet the Ammonites, for the first time in the eighteen years of the oppression.

The gathering place was Mizpeh of Gilead, known later as Ramoth-Gilead, the Key of Gilead, commanding the only easy road from the Jordan.

Choice of a Leader.

Committed to the struggle with Ammon, the Gileadites resolved to look round for a leader, and their choice fell upon Jephthah, whose reputation as a general marked him out as most fitted for the command.

The genuine repentance of Gilead is shown by two acts.

1. They acknowledged and repented of their sin of idolatry.
2. They acknowledged and repented of the injustice that had been done to Jephthah.

And so the agreement that Jephthah should be their captain was solemnly ratified before Jehovah.

This contest with Ammon is remarkable for the record of the diplomatic proceedings ere war was actually entered upon.

Two Embassies were sent by Jephthah, the first to make complaint against the invasion, and the second to disprove the claim of the Ammonites to the land they had invaded. From the negotiations we obtain a clear insight into the land claimed and the details of the dispute.

The district in dispute.

The land east of Jordan bounded by the Arnon on the south and the Jabbok on the north.

The claim of Ammon.

That this district belonged to them, and was taken from them by the Israelites on the journey from Egypt to Canaan. The Ammonites demanded the restoration of this district.

It was a claim with some shadow of justice, for the territory had once been in the possession of Moab and Ammon, but had been conquered by the Amorites.

The reply of Jephthah.

A well-argued and clearly-stated justification of Israel's claim to the land. Jephthah states:—

1. That at the time of their journey to Canaan, Israel did not attack Moab, Edom nor Ammon. They asked permission to go through the lands of these nations, and when refused permission, they journeyed round them.
2. That the territory now claimed by the Ammonites was then in the possession of Sihon king of the Amorites.
3. That Israel asked permission of Sihon to pass through into Canaan. Sihon not only refused, but gathered his forces and attacked Israel by whom he was defeated and slain at Jahaz.
4. That Israel had then taken possession of the country, and their claim of conquest was not disputed by Balak, king of Moab, who acquiesced in their occupation.
5. That Israel had held undisputed possession of the land for some 300 years. If this fact did not entitle them to hold the land, it would be difficult to establish any valid claim to any territory.
6. That the land had been given Israel by their God, Jehovah, who had dispossessed the Amorites. Israel would retain what Jehovah had given them. Let the Amorites possess what Chemosh, their God, might give them. If the war be a question between Jehovah and Chemosh, Israel would fight in reliance upon the power and assistance of Jehovah.

The defeat of Ammon.

With such a spirit of faith and in reliance upon God, it is not to be wondered at that we are told that "*the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah,*" and that he marched with confidence against Ammon, and routed them with great slaughter. "*Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.*"

Jephthah's Vow.

Before going to battle Jephthah made a solemn vow to the Lord: "*If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.*" (xi. 30, 31).

Such was the vow, and we know that it was kept. The Ammonites were totally defeated, but on Jephthah's return the first to meet him was his daughter, his only child, who greeted him with music and dances in honour of his victory.

The agony of Jephthah is painted in touching words, but neither father nor daughter shrank from the obligation. The daughter pleaded for a respite of two months to bewail her maidenhood with her companions upon the mountains, and then returned to her father, "who did with her according to his vow which he had made." And ever after it because the custom of the maidens of Israel to * "praise" the daughter of Jephthah yearly for four days.

Such is the story, and we are met by one of the most difficult questions in Bible narrative.

Did Jephthah offer his daughter as a human sacrifice? (see p. xli.).

Contest with Ephraim.

The victory of Jephthah over Ammon so exalted the eastern tribes that Ephraim felt it necessary to assert its supremacy. This jealousy on the part of Ephraim had been already exhibited in the time of Gideon, when the tactful reply of that judge averted open conflict.

On the present occasion Ephraim took Jephthah to task for not having summoned the tribe to war against Ammon.

Jephthah's reply was a complete justification of his action. He had called upon Ephraim, and aid was refused. Now, after the danger was passed, Ephraim claimed to be offended. Possibly that tribe had refused co-operation because the Gileadites had appointed Jephthah as commander without consulting them. They now added the insult of taunting the Gileadites as being runaways or fugitives from Ephraim. The result was a civil war in which Ephraim invaded Gilead and suffered severe defeat. They endeavoured to escape over Jordan, but the Gileadites had seized the fords, and detecting the fugitives by the test of asking them to say 'Shibboleth,' which they pronounced as 'Sibboleth,' slew 42,000 of them.

Rest and Judgeship, six years.

10. **Ibzan** of Bethlehem in Zebulun.

He judged in the north for *seven years*.

He had thirty sons, and thirty daughters.

The daughters "he sent away," *i.e.*, gave them in marriage, and in their places brought home thirty women from abroad, as wives for his sons.

He was buried at Bethlehem in Zebulun.

11. **Elon** of the tribe of Zebulun.

He judged Israel *ten years*, and was buried at Aijalon in Zebulun.

12. **Abdon**, son of Hillel of Pirathon, situated in the tribe of Ephraim the district known as the Mount of the Amalekites.

He had forty sons, and thirty grandsons, who rode upon seventy asses, which was a sign of distinguished rank in those times when the Israelites had no horses.

13. **Samson**. The only Judge of whom full details are given, including his birth and manner of his death.

Three periods in Samson's life.

First period. Samson true to the Nazarite vow. 'Occasion' was found against the dominant Philistines. The Spirit of the Lord was with

* **Praise**, such is the literal translation of the original. The maidens did not bewail her fate, but praised her sacrifice and self-devotion.

Samson in his contests with the Philistines. Samson triumphed on each occasion.

After his exploit at Lehi in the slaughter of the Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, it is said that Samson judged Israel *twenty years*, i.e. Samson gained his authority as judge by this victory.

Second period. Samson now used his gift of strength bestowed upon him for the deliverance of Israel in his self-indulgence.

1. He went down to Gaza, not against the Philistines, not under the Spirit of the Lord, but to gratify his own self-indulgence. He used his strength to extricate himself from a difficulty into which he had been brought by his own folly.
2. He again gave way to self-indulgence in his passion for Delilah, and having already ceased to be a Nazarite at heart, lost the outward sign of his vow.

Thus he was deserted by Jehovah and fell an easy prey to his enemies the Philistines.

Third period. Repentance, and restoration. He died, but by his death dealt a greater blow to the Philistines than by all the achievements of his life.

Of this judge we may briefly notice.

1. **His Birth** (see Chapter xiii.).

2. **His Nazarite vow**, viz. :

- (a) Not to eat anything that cometh of the vine.
- (b) Not to drink wine, nor strong drink.
- (c) Not to eat any unclean thing.
- (d) Not to cut his hair.

3. **His strength**, which lay in the observance of the Nazarite vow.

4. **His weakness**, which consisted in yielding to carnal lust.

5. **His exploits.**

- (a) His marriage.
- (b) The slaying of the lion.
- (c) The slaughter of thirty Philistines at Askelon to pay his wager.
- (d) The burning of the crops of the Philistines.
- (e) His feat of strength in snapping the cords with which the men of Judah bound him when they delivered him to the Philistines.
- (f) The slaughter of 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass.
- (g) The carrying away of the gates of Gaza.
- (h) His infatuation for Delilah, and his subsequent capture by the Philistines.
- (i) His death, when he destroyed more Philistines, by the fall of the temple of Dagon, than he had slain in his life.

We may note also several phases in his career and character.

(1) His love of humour—throughout he turns the laugh upon the stupid Philistines.

- (a) The riddle propounded at the marriage feast.

- (b) The grim humour with which he pays the wager by the slaughter of thirty Philistines at Askelon.
 - (c) The ingenious method by which he destroyed the crops of the Philistines.
 - (d) His punning allusion to the jawbone and the mass of slain Philistines (see note p. 60).
 - (e) His escape from Gaza. The carrying away of the gates was evidently regarded by him as a huge joke.
- (2) His exploits and troubles are all connected with women.
- (a) His marriage with the Philistine woman of Timnath, bringing in its train—
 - (1) The slaughter of the thirty Philistines at Askelon.
 - (2) The destruction of the crops of the Philistines.
 - (3) The slaughter of 1,000 Philistines at Lehi.
 - (b) The woman of Gaza, leading to the carrying off of the gates of Gaza.
 - (c) Delilah, bringing about the fall and death of Samson.
 - (3) **He began to deliver Israel.**

This was in accordance with the prophecy of the angel, "*And he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines*" (xiii. 5).

The deliverance was not completed till the defeat of the Philistines by Samuel at Eben-ezer (1 Samuel vii. 14).

District oppressed.

The South, especially the territory of Dan, Judah and Simeon.

The oppressors.

The Philistines (see p. lxi.).

Duration of oppression.

Forty years.

Samson's Judgeship. *Twenty years*, i.e. the first twenty years of the Philistines' oppression.

THE APPENDIX.

In point of time the two episodes mentioned in the Appendix are anterior to the main section of the Book of Judges, and are illustrative of the state of the country.

1. **The story of Micah** illustrates how the people had abandoned the worship of Jehovah at Shiloh, and how in centres a spurious worship of Jehovah had begun. **Decline of True Religion and Abandonment of Religious Unity** (for story see chaps. xvii., xviii.).
2. **The story of the Levite** illustrates the moral degradation of the people, the anarchy, and want of authority in the government. **Social and Moral Decline and Abandonment of National Unity** (for story see chaps. xix., xx., xxi.).

These two stories are placed at the end of the book so as not to interrupt the thread of the connected narrative.

They are narrated as illustrations of the two great evils which were at work during the age of the judges, viz.

1. **Spiritual evils** in the abandonment of the national worship instituted at Shiloh.

2. **Moral and social evils** resulting from intercourse with the Canaanites, which led the people to copy the abominations of those races.

These evils are accentuated by two great causes.

1. **The decline of the high-priesthood**, and the consequent lack of religious instruction.

There is only one mention of either the ark or the high priest throughout the book, viz. in the expedition against the Benjamites (xx. 28).

2. **The lack of a single ruler governing the whole nation.** "*In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes*" (xvii. 6, xviii. 1, xix. 1, xxi. 25).

The expedition against Benjamin is not only illustrative of the method of government, but contains incidents which clearly place this event in the lifetime of the elders that outlived Joshua.

As we have seen (p. ix.), the civil authority was vested in the elders of the tribes. On occasions of great importance a general assembly was held and counsel asked of God. The leader, whether a tribe or an individual, was chosen at such an assembly.

All these details are recorded in the story of the expedition against Benjamin.

All Israel was quickly gathered together. Never again in the time of the Judges was there an instance of such unity in tribal action. The organization instituted by Moses in the wilderness and continued by Joshua was evidently still in existence.

The High Priest asked counsel of God.

There are other indications of time.

1. Phinehas was the High Priest.
2. The people "wept and sat there before the Lord and fasted, and offered burnt offerings and peace-offerings" (xx. 26).
So idolatry was not yet common among the nation.
3. There was no thought of providing heathen wives for the remnant of Benjamin.

So intermarriage with heathen nations had not yet become general.

All these details point to a time not long after the death of Joshua, and certainly in the lifetime of those elders who outlived him, for it is distinctly stated that the people served the Lord "*all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel*" (ii. 7).

The Book of Ruth.

This Book may to some extent be considered an appendix to the Book of Judges giving a picture of the peaceful rural life of the people.

Elimelech is generally considered to have taken refuge in Moab during the period of the Midianite incursions in the time of Gideon, which devastated the land to such an extent that the want of the necessaries of life may well be described as "a famine in the land."

Josephus lays the history of Ruth in the days of Eli.

The object of the Book of Ruth.

1. To present a supplement by way of contrast to the Book of Judges.
2. To show the true spirit of Israel.
3. To exhibit the mysterious connection between Israel and the Gentiles.
4. To trace the genealogy of David (EDERSHEIM).



OPPRESSIONS BY

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| MOAB under Eglon | deliverer Ehud. |
| CANAANITES under Jabin | deliverers Deborah and Barak. |
| AMMONITES | deliverer Jephthah. |
| PHILISTINES | deliverer Samson. |

TABLE OF JUDGES, OPPRESSIONS, ETC.

OPPRESSOR.	DISTRICT OPPRESSED.	PERIOD OF OPPRESSION.	DELIVERER OR JUDGE.	PERIOD OF REST.	DELIVERANCE: HOW EFFECTED.
CRUSHAN-RISHATHAIM, King of Mesopotamia	An invasion from the South.	8 years ..	Othniel (Tribe of Judah)	40 years	
EGLON, King of Moab..	Plain of Jericho, Territory of Benjamin.	18 years ..	Ehud (Tribe of Benjamin)	80 years	By the assassination of Eglon and the massacre of the Moabite garrison (10,000 men).
PHILISTINES	An invasion only .. ..	.. ..	Shamgar .. ..	.. ..	600 Philistines slain with an ox-goad.
JABIN, King of Hazor..	The North	20 years ..	Deborah and Barak (Tribe of Naphtali)	40 years	The slaughter of the Canaanitish army on the banks of the Kishon. The death of Sisera.
MIDIANITES AND AMALEKITES.	Plain of Jezreel and southwards down Maritime Plain to Gaza	7 years ..	Gideon (Tribe of Manasseh)	40 years	Rout and slaughter of the host of the Midianites. Death of Oreb and Zeeb; also of Zebah and Zalmunna.
The Usurpation of Abimelech, in the centre round Shechem, lasting Three Years.					
AMMONITES	Country East of Jordan.	18 years ..	Tola (Tribe of Issachar)	23 years	A Civil Judge only.
			Jair (a Gileadite) ..	22 years	A Civil Judge.
			Jephthah (a Gileadite)	6 years	Complete defeat of Ammonites.
			Ibzan (Tribe of Zebulon)	7 years	A Civil Judge.
			Elou (Tribe of Zebulon)	10 years	A Civil Judge.
PHILISTINES	South (Judah, Simeon Dan).	40 years ..	Abdon (Tribe of Ephraim)	8 years	A Civil Judge.
			Samson (Tribe of Dan)	20 years	Began to deliver Israel. Deliverance completed by the defeat of Philistines at Ebenezer in the time of Samuel.



OPPRESSION BY MIDIAN. (Coloured Red).

THE CHARACTERS OF THE JUDGES

NOTES ON MORAL DIFFICULTIES.

Ehud. We may note that Scripture is silent on the deed of Ehud in the assassination of Eglon. This silence is the severest condemnation. No moral difficulty need be imagined here.

The Judges were *representative men*;—representative of their time. They acted according to the moral ideas of their period, and it would be as absurd to imagine them as far advanced in civilization and humanity as the European nations of to-day, as it would be to imagine them in possession of the full knowledge of revealed religion possessed by the Apostles under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

In civilization, in humanity, and in religious knowledge they were representative men of their age.

Character of Barak.

1. **A man of great faith.** This is certain, for he is mentioned by St. Paul as an example of faith (see Heb. xi. 32, and Appendix, p. 104), and his name is also mentioned by Samuel as one of the great heroes of the Judges (1 Sam. xii. 11, and Appendix, p. 104).

2. **An able general, shown in:—**

(a) The fact that his fame must have reached Deborah at Mount Ephraim.

(b) His admirable preparation of his forces.

(c) His generalship in the battle.

(d) His persistent pursuit of Sisera. The capture or death of the Canaanitish general meant the breaking of the power of Jabin.

3. **Cautious and even hesitating.** This is the defect in his character. As an able general he would calculate the odds against him. How could the comparatively small number of Israel, all footmen, hope to compete with the host of Sisera, comprising horsemen and chariots of iron? In case of defeat, the Northern tribes, cut off by the Canaanites from the centre of the land, must have been annihilated.

His caution leads him to require the presence of Deborah with his army for the purpose of assurance that God had really called him to deliver Israel, and in order to inspire the army with enthusiasm.

4. **Prompt in action.** As his name (*“*lightning*”*) signifies, Barak was swift to execute when decisive action was needed.

He was prompt in obedience to the call of Deborah.

He led his army into the plain in immediate obedience to her command. He struck swiftly and energetically on the confused mass of Canaanites. He was untiring and relentless in the pursuit of Sisera in his flight.

His caution and lack of confidence in himself may be compared to the hesitancy of Moses to meet Pharaoh when bidden to do so by Jehovah from the burning bush at Sinai.

* The name ‘Barak’; ‘Barca’—*lightning*, appears in the Barca family of Carthage, of whom Hamilcar and Hannibal were the most illustrious.

And as Moses then lost part of the honour of delivering Israel, Aaron being his spokesman, so Barak, by his slowness to believe, lost the complete honour of the victory. Sisera was to fall by the hand of a woman.

The Conduct of Jael.

As we read the narrative we conclude that she was guilty of—

1. **Lying**, in inviting Sisera to her tent for the purpose of securing possession of his person, intending either his death or to hand him over to Barak.
2. **Breach of the Laws of Hospitality.** The Eastern custom is that a man's life is safe even with his deadly foe should he partake of food under the roof of the latter—safe, that is, as long as he remains there.
3. **Assassination**, in driving the tent peg into the temples of Sisera.

Granting that at first Jael may have been sincere in her invitation to Sisera and have meant to have sheltered him, yet in her change of purpose she broke the custom of hospitality, and committed murder.

Why should Deborah pronounce Jael blessed?—"Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, etc." (v. 24).

Deborah is contrasting the conduct of Jael with the supineness and cowardice of the inhabitants of Meroz, and praising the heroism of Jael, just as in modern times we can admire the heroic conduct of Charlotte Corday in the assassination of Marat, whilst we have nothing but condemnation for the morality of the act. The sacred historian represents the deed as in accordance with the spirit of the times. We must believe that whilst Deborah was inspired by the Spirit of the Lord to deliver Israel, still her sense of morality must be gauged by the age in which she lived and not by the Christian standard of more enlightened times.

The Character of Gideon. Gideon is distinguished for:—

1. **Faith**, as evidenced by St. Paul quoting his name as an example of faith (Heb. xi. 32).
2. **Caution.** This caution makes it almost appear as if Gideon were wanting in faith; thus:—
 - (a) He requires proof that God is present with him whilst His messenger is actually speaking to him.
 - (b) When called upon to lead Israel against the Midianites he asks for a sign.

But these acts are not the acts of a faithless man, but rather those of a cautious person. All through Gideon does not doubt the power of Jehovah. In the interview with the angel he recognizes the might of Israel's God, acknowledges what He had done for Israel, and confesses that the miserable condition of the people is due to withdrawal of His protection.

All that Gideon desires is to be assured that God has really called upon him, and that He will be with him.

Once convinced of this there is no hesitancy; thus—

- (1) He obeys the call to destroy the altar of Baal.
- (2) He dismisses his army at God's command.
- (3) He advances without hesitation with only 300 men to attack the vast host of Midian.

3. **Prudence**, displayed in the examination of the camp of Midian, the stratagem, the night surprise, the organized pursuit.
4. **Tact and Discretion**, evidenced in his tactful reply to the Ephraimites (viii. 1-10).
5. **Moderation and lack of Personal Ambition**, evidenced by his refusal of the monarchy when offered him by the grateful people.
6. **Decision**, particularly in—
 - (a) The destruction of the altar of Baal.
 - (b) The attack on Midian.
 - (c) The recall of the tribes to the pursuit.
 - (d) The pursuit.

The two great faults of which he was guilty were :—

1. **Regal State and Polygamy**. The usurpation of Abimelech was a severe punishment on the house of Gideon for these faults.
2. **The making of an Ephod, and the assumption of the Priestly Office**. His motives may have been—
 - (1) To distinguish Ophrah, the spot where God had appeared to him, as a holy place.
 - (2) To teach the people that their homage and offerings should be made, not to himself, but to God.
 - (3) To curb the power of Ephraim, and to keep the national religion under his own control. His relations with Ephraim may have caused Gideon to be reluctant to go to Shiloh. Thus his motives may have been partly political, like Jeroboam when he set up the worship of the golden calves.
 - (4) The decadence of the priestly influence may have had much weight with Gideon, and he may have desired to give a new impetus to the national worship, as marking the visibility of Jehovah's rule over Israel.

We may note that as Gideon's deliverance of Israel was twofold, viz. (1) **Spiritual**, *i.e.* deliverance from Baal worship; (2) **Temporal**, *i.e.* freedom from the Midianite oppression, so his temptation was twofold, viz. (1) **Temporal**, *i.e.* the temptation to accept the kingly office, which he successfully resists; (2) **Spiritual**, to which he succumbs. Instead of restoring the tabernacle worship, he yields to the temptation of endeavouring to make Ophrah the centre of worship, and to take into his own strong hands the sacerdotal office. Why should he deliver it up to the feeble grasp of a priesthood which had proved itself incapable of such a trust?

The Punishment.

Gideon's sin brings about its own punishment, which falls upon his own family.

The people went a whoring after the Ephod, and the thing became a snare unto Gideon and his house (viii. 27).

After the death of Gideon, "the worship of Baal becomes again common, and especially that of the 'Covenant-Baal' (Baal-berith). Gideon had made a spurious ephod, the people now chose a false 'covenant god,' and, having first forsaken the Covenant-Jehovah,

they next turned in ingratitude from their earthly deliverer. Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerrub-baal" (EDERSHEIM). The house of Gideon (with the exception of Jotham) perished in the usurpation by Abimelech.

Jephthah. Contrast with Gideon.

Gideon—cautious, humble, diplomatic and suave in his reply to Ephraim.	Jephthah—daring, ambitious, outspoken and plain in his answer to Ephraim.
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Did Jephthah offer up his Daughter as a Human Sacrifice?

Arguments for are—

1. That Jephthah contemplated a human sacrifice as a burnt-offering to the Lord.
2. That his agony on meeting his daughter is exaggerated if the vow did not include a human sacrifice.
3. That he did with his daughter according to his vow.
4. That human sacrifices were usual in *Moab and Ammon, the nations bordering on Jephthah's native country.
5. That Jephthah in his wild life as a freebooter was well acquainted with the practices of the heathen nations, and hoped by the vow of a human sacrifice to Jehovah to propitiate the God of Israel as the Ammonites would on their part endeavour to win the favour of Molech by some such sacrifice.
6. That the Israelites had offered human sacrifices before entering Palestine (Ez. xx. 26).

Arguments against.

It must be admitted that Jephthah must have contemplated being met by some human being.

But that he intended a human sacrifice on the altar of Jehovah is improbable for—

1. Such sacrifices were prohibited under pain of death as an abomination (Lev. xviii. 21).
2. Such vow is inconsistent with Jephthah's character for
 - (a) He was well versed in the law.
 - (b) He was neither rash nor impetuous, as evidenced by his treating with the King of Ammon (xii. 27).
 - (c) The vow was deliberate, before he set out against Ammon, and not uttered in the confusion of battle.
 - (d) Jephthah was a true worshipper of Jehovah.

*Balak contemplated human sacrifice (Micah vi. 7).

The king of Moab sacrificed his son in the war against Jehoshaphat (2 Kings iii. 27). Molech, the god of Ammon, is always described as the deity to which human sacrifices were offered.

That Jephthah's daughter was devoted as a nun is described by Dean Stanley "as contrary to the plain teaching of the text, contrary to the highest authorities of the Church, contrary to all the usages of the Old Dispensation." "If the words 'shall surely be the Lord's' had stood alone Jephthah's vow might have been understood like Hannah's; but these which follow preclude any other meaning than that Jephthah contemplated a human sacrifice."

3. It is impossible that such a vow could have been looked upon with favour by Jehovah so that victory and deliverance followed.
4. Burnt-offerings, according to the Mosaic law, were to be exclusively *males* (Lev. i. 3).
5. If the maiden were doomed to death why should she spend the last two months of life on the mountains and not with her father?
6. She bewailed her "maidenhood," *i.e.* not that she was to die young, but that she was to die unmarried.
7. It is not said that Jephthah sacrificed her, but that he "*did with her according to his vow,*" and that "*she knew no man;*" the latter sentence being meaningless if she were put to death.
8. St. Paul instances Jephthah as an example of faith (Heb. xi. 32). Could Jephthah have found a place in the scroll of heroes had he been guilty of offering a human sacrifice?

"For his only child to live unmarried and thus to blot out the name of Jephthah from Israel was a heavy blow to Jephthah, coming as it did in the hour of his greatest glory and prosperity. The greatest and happiest man in Israel became in a moment the poorest and the most stricken" (EDERSHEIM).

The Lessons of Samson's life.

Samson's name is specially mentioned by St. Paul (Heb. xi. 32), as an example of faith.

Yet it is difficult to conceive how one whose exploits consisted in mere wild and irregular feats of strength, and who was so weak in yielding to carnal lusts, can be selected for such high praise.

The lessons to be drawn from Samson's life lie in his being a Nazarite; as such he presents a typical picture of Israel and of every human being.

Samson.	Israel.	Man.
1. A Nazarite, whose strength lay in the observance of the Nazarite vow.	1. The Covenant Nation whose strength lay in keeping the law.	1. The Baptised Christian whose strength lies in keeping his baptismal covenant.
2. Supernatural deeds, accomplished, not in his own strength, but as a Nazarite in the strength of God.	2. The marvellous victories of Israel accomplished by the aid of Jehovah.	2. " <i>I can do all things,</i> " says St. Paul, " <i>through Christ which strengtheneth me</i> " (Phil. iv. 13).
3. Yielding to the seductions of Delilah, Samson lost his Nazarite strength.	3. Israel giving way to idolatry (always described as spiritual unfaithfulness), fell as a nation.	3. Spiritual life is destroyed if the Christian yields to his enemies, "the world, the flesh and the devil."
4. With repentance Samson recovered his strength.	4. With repentance and the abandonment of idolatry, Israel regained the favour of Jehovah.	4. " <i>Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out</i> " (Acts iii 19).

Samson.

5. Samson, as a consequence of forsaking the Nazarite vow, is blinded by the Philistines.

Israel.

5. So Israel having committed the national sin of abandoning their covenant with God become blinded, "The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not" (St. John i. 5).

Man.

5. Spiritual blindness of heart is often alluded to in the New Testament, e.g. :—
 "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. iv. 4).

The true secret of Samson's strength lay in his observance of the Nazarite vow. His strength "lay not in his uncut hair, but in this that Jehovah was with him. But Jehovah was with him only so long as he kept his Nazarite vow."

Samson himself unconsciously gives us the true explanation of his strength. "If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me and I shall become weak, and be like any other man" (xvi. 17). He speaks of "my strength," whereas his strength lay in his obedience to his vow, and was from Jehovah, for when the Philistines came upon him it is recorded, "He wist not that the Lord was departed from him" (xvi. 20).

GODS OF THE HEATHEN.

Baal. The word *Baal* signifies "lord," "owner of the land"; and we find the word *Baalim* used to denote the many gods of the Canaanites (ii. 11).

But when Baal is mentioned in conjunction with Ashtoreth we must understand the Phœnician *Baal*, variously represented as the Sun, or the planet Jupiter.

Baal was the supreme male deity of the Phœnicians, and represented the active originative power in nature.

Ashtoreth. The supreme female deity of the Phœnicians representing the receptive and productive power in nature. Ashtoreth has been identified with the moon. Her worship was connected with the Asberah and was of a licentious and impure character.

Asherah (rendered grove in A.V.) was the name of the image or symbol of Ashtoreth.

Chemosh, the sun or fire-god, was also the war-god of the Moabites. Hence the taunt of Jephthah as regards the land of the Moabites (xi. 24).

Molech or Milcom, the God of Ammon, was a fire-god to whom human sacrifices were offered. His statue is said to have been of brass with the hands and arms so arranged that the victim slid from them into the fire.

Dagon (*Dag* = fish), the principal male deity of the Philistines. His chief temple was at Gaza. The idol seems to have been a human body with the tail of a fish.

The fish-like form was an emblem of fruitfulness and one often adopted as a representation of their gods by nations bordering on the sea coast.

Another Philistine god, Baalzebub, god of Ekron, is mentioned in 2 Kings i. 2-16.

The gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon (x. 6) are Phœnician deities.

ANGELS.

Angels. Appearances of Angels recorded in Judges.

1. The Angel who came up from Gilgal to Bochim to rebuke the people (ii. 1-5).
2. The Angel who appeared to Gideon whilst threshing, to call him to deliver Israel from the Midianites (vi. 9-24).
3. The Angel who announced the birth of Samson, to Manoah and his wife (xiii. 2-24).

Other Births announced by Angels are:—

Isaac (Gen. xviii. 1-15).

John the Baptist (St. Luke i. 11-17).

Jesus Christ (St. Luke i. 33-35).

HEBREW POETRY.

Though there is a certain amount of rhythm, the chief characteristic of Hebrew poetry is its parallelism.

Parallelism is defined as "being the correspondence of one verse or line with another," and may be divided into the following classes.

1. **Synonymous**, where the lines "correspond to each other by expressing the same sense in different but equivalent terms."

*"Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord,
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;
Because they came not to the help of the Lord,
To the help of the Lord against the mighty"* (v. 23).

2. **Antithetic**, where the lines "correspond with each other by an opposition of terms and sentiments."

"So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord:

But let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might" (v. 31).

3. **Synthetic, constructive, or corroborative**, where the correspondence lies in a similar form of construction, or in an extension or expansion of the first idea.

*"For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,
For that the people willingly offered themselves"* (v. 2, R.V.).

The first line expresses the promptness of the leaders.

The second line expresses the willingness and readiness of the people.

4. **Inverted**, where the 1st line corresponds with the 4th, and the 2nd with the 3rd; or where the 1st corresponds with the 3rd, and the 2nd with the 4th (JEBB).

*"The kings came and fought,
Then fought the kings of Canaan.
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo;
They took no gain of money"* (v. 19).

1st line corresponds with the 3rd, the 2nd line corresponds with the 4th (see Bible Dictionary).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Abdon. (See p. xxxi).

Abiezer, eldest son of Gilead who was the grandson of Manasseh (Josh. xvii. 2), though he is represented in 1 Chron. vii. 18 as being the son of Hammelech, the sister of Gilead. Joash, the father of Gideon, is termed the Abi-ezrite, as being of the house of Abiezer. The Abi-ezrites seem to have been a leading family in the tribe of Manasseh settled on the west of Jordan.

Abimelech. (See pp. xxv.-xxvii.).

On the usurpation of Abimelech, Sayce remarks:—"The usurpation of Abimelech was the revolt of the older Canaanitish population against their Israelitish masters. It marked the successful rising of the native element. Ophrah had to make way for Shechem and 'the men of Hamor' take the place of the children of Jacob. Yet the deliverance from the Midianites wrought by Gideon had achieved as much for the Canaanitish part of the population as for the Israelites themselves. The murder of his sons and the destruction of his family was a poor requital for all he had done for them. Jotham was justified in prophesying that their own god Baal-bereth would avenge the broken 'covenant,' and that Abimelech and his Shechemite conspirators would fall by one another's hand."

Achsah, daughter of Caleb, who promised her hand in marriage to whoever should assault and capture Kirjath-sephir (Debir). Othniel stormed the town and won the prize.

Debir was situated in a barren and dry position, so as Achsah was proceeding to her home at Debir as the wife of Othniel, she tried to persuade her husband to ask "*of her father a field.*" It would appear that Othniel could not be prevailed upon to make the request, so Achsah determined herself to ask her father. She jumped off her ass, and Caleb, astonished at such an unusual proceeding, put the query, "What wouldest thou?" She then put forward a request for springs of water, as otherwise the possession of Debir was no great boon to her. Caleb granted to her the upper and lower springs of a rivulet flowing in a valley near to the city.

Adoni-bezek (*Lord of Bezek*), King of Bezek, a town situated in the lot of Judah. It is conjectured that he was the son and successor of Adoni-zedec, the leader of the Canaanitish confederation against Gibeon (Josh. x. 1).

He had subdued seventy minor kings, whom he had treated with great cruelty, having cut off their thumbs and great toes, a mutilation that rendered them incapable of bearing arms, and having made them a sport and derision by flinging food to them on the ground as they were gathered under his table. The tribes of Judah and Simeon went up against the Canaanites and Perizzites and defeated them at Bezek, slaying 10,000. Adoni-bezek fled, but was captured, and it is recorded that the Israelites cut off his thumbs and great toes, thus inflicting upon

him the same punishment that he had meted out to the kings he had captured. He was then taken to Jerusalem where he died (i. 4-8).

The episode is noteworthy as being indicative of the internecine wars among the Canaanites, which appear to have diminished their strength, and thus weakened their power to resist the Israelite invasion.

Ahiman. Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai, the three sons of Anak, giving their names to three families of giants who inhabited Hebron and the surrounding district.

The Anakims of Hebron were destroyed and the city captured by the tribe of Judah. Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai are said to have been slain, but by this we must understand the descendants of these persons to be meant (i. 10-15).

Balak, King of Moab, who endeavoured to bribe Balak to curse Israel. (See Num. xxii.-xxiv.)

His name is mentioned by Jephthah in his reply to the claim of the Ammonites to possess the land of Sihon on the east of Jordan.

Jephthah's argument is, that, if Balak at the time of Moses did not claim the land occupied by Sihon, it is too late, now that three hundred years have passed, for the Ammonites to put forward any claim to that territory.

Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and often designated as "*the Kenezite*" (Josh. xiv. 6-14; Numb. xxxii. 12). His younger brother Othniel is described as "*the son of Kenaz*" (Josh. xv. 17). It is generally supposed that Caleb was a foreigner by birth, and a proselyte admitted into the tribe of Judah.

This view is borne out by the intimation that Joshua gave Caleb "*a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the Lord*" (Josh. xv. 13), and by the curious explanation that Hebron became his inheritance "*because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel*" (Josh. xiv. 14).

Notices.

- (1) In the mission of the twelve spies sent by Moses, Caleb was the representative of the tribe of Judah (Num. xiii. 6).
- (2) On the return of the spies it was Caleb who calmed the people and said, "*Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it*" (Num. xiii. 30).
- (3) Again on the murmuring of the people Caleb with Joshua described the fear of the inhabitants of Canaan, and urged confidence in God. Whereupon the people attempted to stone them (Num. xiv. 6-10).
- (4) Only Caleb and Joshua of the adults who came out of Egypt were permitted to enter the promised land (Num. xiv. 28-32).
- (5) On the conquest of the land he claimed Hebron as his inheritance, pleading the promise of Moses (Josh. xiv. 6-13).
- (6) When his claim was allowed he drove the Anakim out of Hebron and took possession of the city (Josh. xv. 13-15; Judges i. 20).
- (7) He offered his daughter Achsah in marriage to whoever should take Kirjath-sepher (Debir) (Josh. xv. 16; Judges i. 12).

- (8) Othniel, his younger brother, captured the city and won the hand of Achsah (Josh. xv. 17; Judges i. 13).
- (9) He granted the request of Achsah and gave her "*the upper springs and nether springs*" in addition to the city of Debir (Josh. xv. 18-19; Judges i. 14-15).

Chushan-rishathaim, King of Mesopotamia, who invaded Palestine soon after the death of Joshua.

At this time Babylon was powerless and the Empire of Assyria was not consolidated till about the reign of Jehu.

Chushan-rishathaim was the head of a powerful monarchy in the district of Mesopotamia and following the example of Chedorlaomer and his allies (Gen. xxxvi.) invaded Palestine from the south. He oppressed the land for eight years, but was defeated and repelled by Othniel.

Deborah (see p. xvi.).

Delilah, a woman of the Philistines beloved by Samson, who dwelt in the valley of Sorek. For the story of how she was bribed by the "lords of Philistines" to entice Samson to reveal the secret of his strength see chapter xvi.

It may be argued that Delilah was not a Philistine, for—

- (1) Samson would hardly have been inclined to trust one of the Philistines.
- (2) Would it have been necessary for the Philistine lords to have promised so large a sum of money to a Philistine woman?

Dodo, a man of Issachar, ancestor of Tola the Judge (x. 1.).

Eglon, king or rather chieftain of Moab. He gathered a band of Moabites, stout lusty soldiers, and with the assistance of some Amalekites and Ammonites seized the fords of Jordan, made himself master of Jericho, and compelled the inhabitants of the district to pay tribute.

The oppression lasted eighteen years, when Israel was delivered by Ehud. (For the deliverance and assassination of Eglon, see p. xv.).

Ehud (see p. xiv.).

Elon (see p. xxxi.).

Gaal, son of Ebed, the leader of the Shechemites in their revolt against Abimelech (Judges ix.). He appears to have been a leader of banditti. For account of the revolt see Abimelech, p. xxvi.

Gideon (see p. xviii.).

Gilead. The Gilead mentioned in Judges xi. 1 is the father of Jephthah.

We must not take the name to be the name of the country, thus mythically personifying *the land* as the father of Jephthah.

Nor is it the name of Gilead the son of Machir and grandson of Manasseh.

It is really the proper name of the father of Jephthah.

Hamor referred to by Gaal as "*the father of Shechem*" (ix. 21).

The allusion is evidently to the descent of the Shechemites from Hamor mentioned in Genesis, and indicates that a considerable number of the native Canaanites had been allowed to remain in Shechem.

On his return from Padan-aram, Jacob bought a piece of land from

Hamor for a hundred pieces of money (Gen. xxxiii. 19). Hamor was subsequently slain with his son Shechem, through the treachery of Simon and Levi (Gen. xxxiv. 26).

Heber the Kenite (see p. lxi.), and husband of Jael. He had pitched his tent in Zaanaïm, near Kedesh-Naphtali. There was friendship between Heber and Jabin, king of Hazor, and Heber appears to have given Sisera notice of the gathering of the northern tribes under Barak (iv. 11-12).

Hobab, mentioned as "*the father in law of Moses*" (iv. 11). It is, however, more probable that he was the son of Jethro or Raguel, who was the father-in-law of Moses, "*Hobab the son of Raguel, the Midianite Moses' father in law*" (Num. xx. 29).

Hobab appears to have yielded to the request of Moses and to have accompanied the Israelites as a guide in the wilderness well-known to him, but strange to the Israelites.

The Kenites, his descendants, entered Canaan with the Israelites, and were eventually merged in the tribe of Judah (see p. lxi.).

Ibzan (see p. xxxi.).

Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, who had pitched his tent in the plain of Zaanaïm, near Kedesh-Naphtali.

In his flight from the rout at Kishon, Sisera arrived at the tent of Heber, and as there was friendly relationship between Heber and Jabin, the fugitive warrior was received by Jael. She invited him to take shelter in her tent, and covered him with a rug or mantle that he might rest in his exhausted condition. On his asking for water to drink as he was thirsty, she handed him milk from her bottle and covered him up again.

In order thoroughly to ensure his safety Sisera entreated her to stand in the door of the tent and turn anyone away who might come to her to seek for one of the fugitives. When Sisera, thoroughly exhausted, had fallen into a deep sleep, Jael took a tent-pin and went with a hammer in her hand to the sleeping warrior and drove the pin violently through his temples so that it penetrated into the ground. When Barak, who was in pursuit of Sisera, arrived at Jael's tent, she went to meet him, to show him the deed she had performed. Thus was the prophecy of Deborah to Barak fulfilled, that "*the journey thou takest shall not be to thine honour; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman*" (for the moral difficulty, see p. xxxix.).

Jabin, King of Canaan. His capital was at Hazor, not far to the north of Lake Merom. This city was taken and destroyed by Joshua (Josh. xi. 1-14) about 150 years before the oppression. The rebuilding of the city and the restoration of the Canaanitish kingdom give indications of the partial nature of the occupation by the Israelites, for in the space of 150 years we find a great Canaanitish confederacy of which Jabin was at the head, able to oppress the northern tribes, and very nearly successful in destroying their nationality and independence.

Jabin seems to have been the hereditary name of the kings of Hazor as Abimelech of Gerar, Hadad of Syria, or the official title of the monarch as Pharaoh in Egypt, Cæsar in Rome.

The military organization of the Canaanites was very formidable, the host being commanded by a famous general Sisera, who had under his command 900 chariots of iron, and had established his headquarters at Harosheth.

(For particulars of oppression and defeat of Sisera, see pp. xvi.-xviii.).

Jair (see p. xxvii.).

Jephthah (see p. xxviii.).

Jephunneh, the father of Caleb. Probably a foreigner by birth, belonging to an Edomite tribe called Kenezites, from Kenaz their founder, for he is described as Jephunneh the Kenezite.

Jerubbaal, the name given to Gideon when his father Joash defended him from the anger of the Abi-ezrites, because he had thrown down the altar of Baal. The name means "Let Baal plead," and the argument of the father is "why should the people avenge the desecration of the altar of Baal. If Baal be a God surely he can avenge himself?" This reasoning saved the life of Gideon, who from that time received the surname of Jerubbaal.

Jether, the eldest son of Gideon. When Gideon had ascertained that the Midianite princes, Zebah and Zalmunna, whom he had captured, had been the leaders of the Midianites who had slain his brothers at Tabor he commanded his first-born, Jether, to perform the office of avenger of blood and to slay them, for the purpose of adding the disgrace of falling by the hand of a boy, for Jether was but a youth. On the Jeth exhibiting disinclination Gideon answered the appeal of the princes by slaying them himself.

Joash, the father of Gideon, and a wealthy man of the family of the Abi-ezrites, of the tribe of Manasseh. He appears to have been the chief man of Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites. He is mentioned as defending his son Gideon when the people of the city would have put him to death, because he had thrown down the altar of Baal. Gideon's act of faith had inspired the father with courage, so he took the part of his son with the ingenious argument that if Baal were really God there was no necessity for men to vindicate his honour, since he might be expected himself to avenge the desecration of his altar.

Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon, who escaped from the massacre of his brethren by Abimelech. From the top of mount Gerizim he uttered the fable of the trees and the bramble to the men of Shechem, and then fled to Beer to escape the vengeance of Abimelech (ix. 7-15).

Kenaz. Othniel is said to be the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother (i. 13). It is generally regarded that Othniel was Caleb's younger brother, and that "son of Kenaz" is equivalent to "the Kenizite," thus making Kenaz to be some remote ancestor and head of the family, who were called Kenezites or sons of Kenaz.

Lapidoth. Deborah is said to have been the wife of Lapidoth (iv. 4.) (see Deborah).

Machir, the eldest son of Manasseh. His children were brought to Joseph before his death (Gen. 1. 23). At the time of the conquest the

descendants of Machir had become very numerous, so the family was very powerful. Gilead was assigned by Moses to Machir (Deut. iii. 15). So great was the power of this great family that the name of Machir occasionally supersedes that of Manasseh. The half tribe of Manasseh on the east of Jordan seem to have been pure warriors and not shepherds. The strength of this portion of the tribe compared with the families who settled in Canaan proper is shown in the account of the coronation of David at Hebron. Then, "while the Western Manasseh sent 18,000 and Ephraim itself but 20,800, the Eastern Manasseh, with Gad and Reuben, mustered to the number of 120,000, thoroughly armed."

Notice in Judges.

The name is mentioned in the song of Deborah, "*Out of Machir came down governors*" (v. 14).

Manoah, the father of Samson; a Danite, native of the town of Zorah (see chap. xiii.).

We hear of him once again in connexion with the marriage of Samson to the Philistine maiden of Timnath. Manoah and his wife endeavoured to dissuade Samson from the marriage, but to no effect (xiv. 2, 3). They accompanied Samson to Timnath both on the preliminary visit (verses 5, 6) and to the marriage feast itself (verses 9, 10).

Micah (see Chaps. xvii., xviii. and p. xxiii.).

Oreb. Oreb (*raven*) and Zeeb (*wolf*) were two princes or chieftains of the Midianite host, which invaded Israel, and was routed by Gideon. They were of inferior rank to Zebah and Zalmunna. They were intercepted at the fords of Jordan by the men of Ephraim, who responded to the call of Gideon and cut off the retreat of the fleeing host. The Ephraimites slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb (places taking their names from the capture and execution of the two princes) and brought their heads to Gideon.

Othniel (see p. xiv.).

Phinehas, son of Eleazar, and grandson of Aaron.

He is remarkable for zeal and energy displayed on two occasions.

- (1) At Abel-shittim, where, by executing summary justice on an offender following the licentious idolatry of the Midianites, he appeased the wrath of God and stayed the plague which was destroying the nation (Numb. xxv. 1-8). For this deed he was rewarded by a special promise from Jehovah that the priesthood should remain in his family for ever (Num. xxv. 10-13). He headed the priests that accompanied the expedition by which the Midianites were destroyed (Num. xxxi. 6).
- (2) He headed the deputation sent from Shiloh to remonstrate with the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh against the altar which they were reported to have built near Jordan (Joshua xxii. 13).

He succeeded his father Eleazar as high priest.

In the partition of the country he received an allotment as his own—a hill in Mount Ephraim—called after his name. Here Eleazar was buried.

Notice in Judges.

When the Israelites gathered to punish the tribe of Benjamin for the outrage at Gibeah they enquired of the Lord through Phinehas, acting as high priest (xx. 27-28).

Phurah, the servant (probably armour-bearer) of Gideon. He accompanied Gideon in the midnight visit to the camp of Midian (vii. 10-11).

Samson (see p. xxxi.).

Shangar (see p. xvi.).

Sheshai (see Ahiman, p. xvi.).

Sihon, king of the Amorites. He occupied the country to the west of Jordan, lying between the Jabbok and the Arnon. The southern portion had previously been in the possession of the Moabites, whom Sihon had attacked and driven south of the Arnon. Heshbon was his capital (Numb. xxi. 26-29). The Israelites, in their approach to the Promised Land, turned aside from Moab, and thus their route lay through the territory of Sihon. They asked for permission to pass through the land, pledging themselves to do no damage. Sihon haughtily refused them transit, gathered his army and attacked Israel at Jahaz. He and his host were destroyed, and the district between the Jabbok and the Arnon became the possession of the Israelites. This territory was afterwards divided between the tribes of Gad and Reuben.

The victories over Sihon and Og are often referred to in Jewish history (see Num. xxxii. 33; Deut. i. 4, iii. 3, iv. 47, xxxi. 4; Josh. ii. 10, ix. 10, xiii. 12-30; Neh. ix. 22), and were celebrated in songs of triumph, the victories always being ascribed to the assistance of Jehovah.

"Who smote great nations and slew mighty kings; Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan" (Ps. cxxxiv. 10-11).

"And slew famous kings; for his mercy endureth for ever: Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever: and Og, the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever" (Ps. cxxxvi. 18-20).

The victories of the Israelites over Sihon and Og are mentioned by Rahab as having struck terror and dismay into the hearts of the inhabitants of Jericho and the nations of Canaan.

Sisera, captain of the host of Jabin, king of Hazor. He had his headquarters at Harosheth, which appears to have been the arsenal for his 900 chariots of iron.

On learning of the rising of the northern tribes under Deborah and Barak, he gathered his forces to crush the revolt. He skilfully disposed of his troops from Taanach to Megiddo, commanding the passes by which the southern tribes must march to join their brethren of the north, whilst at the same time Barak must advance into the plain (of Jezreel) to attack the Canaanites. In the plain Sisera with his chariots would have a great advantage over the footmen of Israel.

(For the battle of Kishon, and the death of Sisera, see pp. xviii. and xlviii.).

Talmi (see Ahiman, p. xlvi.).

Tola (see p. xxvii.).

Zalmunna. Zebah and Zalmunna (always coupled together) were the two kings of Midian, who appear to have commanded the great host of the Midianites who raided Palestine in the time of Gideon. Oreb and



PALESTINE, PHYSICAL.

Zeeb, inferior chiefs, and the greater part of the invading horde were slain by the Ephraimites at the central fords of the Jordan, but the two kings appear to have made their escape by a passage further to the north, and thence through Gilead to Kharkor. Here, whilst resting in fancied security with 15,000 men, the remnant of their forces, they were surprised and captured by Gideon. Gideon led his captives past Penuel and Succoth, across the Jordan to Ophrah. Here judicial enquiry elicited the fact that they had slain the brothers of Gideon at Tabor. This sealed their doom, and to add disgrace Gideon called upon his eldest son, Jether, a mere youth, to act as avenger of blood and slay the two kings. The lad hesitated to obey the command, and the Midianite chieftains appealed to Gideon not to add the indignity of death by the hand of a boy, but to slay them himself. Gideon complied with the request and "*arose and slew them.*"

Zebah (see Zalmunna, p. li.).

Zebul, chief man of the city of Shechem in the time of the contest between Abimelech and the Canaanite natives of Shechem. He was favourable to Abimelech.

He is mentioned as performing four acts:

1. Giving warning to Abimelech of the revolt of the Shechemites under Gaal.
2. Endeavouring to lull the suspicions of Gaal, and affecting that the approaching troops of Abimelech were but the shadow of the mountain. His object was to prevent Gaal making preparations for resistance by closing the gates.
3. Goading Gaal into meeting Abimelech and his men outside the city.
4. Expelling Gaal and his men from Shechem after their defeat.

Zeeb (see Oreb, p. l.).

THE LAND.

Extent. About 140 miles in length, forty in average breadth, and in area about the size of Wales.

Boundaries. The land of Canaan proper, *i.e.* the territory west of the Jordan, is hemmed in on all sides.

West. By the Mediterranean Sea.

East. By the gorge of the Jordan.

North. By the ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Libanus, and the ravine of the Leontes.

South. By the deserts to the north of the Sinaitic Peninsula.

And even if we include the Trans-Jordanic territory, we find a similar barrier to the east in the shape of the Arabian desert.

A glance at the map (p. lii.) shows a peculiar system of strips running almost parallel to each other from north to south. Thus working eastward from the Mediterranean we notice—

1. A maritime plain.
2. A tract of lowland country.
3. A central tract of hill country.
4. A deep river valley. (The valley of the Jordan.)
5. A further mountain range to the east. (The mountains of Gilead.)

1. **The Maritime Plain** is broadest in the south, and narrows towards the north, till it is suddenly interrupted by the ridge of Carmel which strikes out from the central mass in a north-easterly direction, rises considerably above the general level, and terminates in a bold promontory at the very edge of the Mediterranean.

On the northern side of Carmel the plain stretches right across the country from the Mediterranean to the valley of the Jordan, forming the famous plain of *Esdraelon or Jezreel, the battleground of Palestine.

Further north, the plain resumes its course along the sea coast till again interrupted by a mountain range extending to the sea.

2. **The Lowlands.** Bordering the central hills is a belt of lowland deep below the level of the hills which rise abruptly, forming a formidable barrier. This tract divides the central hills from the maritime plain. The only means of communication from the lowlands to the highlands is up the beds of the torrents which discharge the rainfall of the hill country. The lower half of the lowlands south of Mount Carmel is the Plain of the Philistines or *the Shephelah*. The upper half is the Plain of Sharon, famous for its fertility.
3. **The Central Range** or the Highland. This is a mass of limestone forming what may be considered one range. In the north it is crossed by the plain of Esdraelon. In the south it sinks gradually into the *Negeb*, the dry land. The southern portion was known as the hill country of Judah, the central as Mount Ephraim and the portion north of the plain of Esdraelon as Mount Naphtali. The average elevation above sea level is about 2,500 feet.
4. **The Valley of the Jordan** (see also Jordan). An extraordinary depression considerably below the sea level, lying between the central range and the mountains of Gilead (the eastern range), and consisting of two parts, viz. the Upper Jordan from Mount Hermon to the Sea of Galilee, the Lower Jordan from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea.
5. **The Eastern Range** or the Mountains of Gilead, stretching from Mount Hermon to the south of the Dead Sea.

The Negeb—the south country. A tract of hill country, situated below Hebron, and lying between the hills of Judah and the desert. Being near the desert and removed from the drainage of the mountains this district was drier and less productive than the north. (The name "*Negeb*" signifies dry land.)

"Almost sudden was the transition to the upland wilderness, the 'Negeb, or south country, a series of rolling hills, clad with scanty herbage here and there, especially on their northern faces" (TRISTRAM).

The Wilderness of Judaea in Judges represents the portion of the Arabah within the territory of Judah. It is bounded by the hill country on the west, and by the Dead Sea on the east.

*"It has been pointed out that the situation of the plain of Esdraelon may be compared with the plain of Stirling, situated in a similar manner at the entrance to the Highlands of Scotland. As the plain of Esdraelon was the battleground of Palestine, so almost all the great battles of Scottish history were decided in the plain of Stirling" (STANLEY).

THE JORDAN.

The Jordan or "the descender," so called from its rapid fall.

Source. In the range of Anti-Libanus.

Course. As a stream into the Lake of Merom, then as a river of rapid course into the Sea of Galilee, whence it issues as a torrent rushing down a narrow bed to the Dead Sea.

Tributaries. The only streams that can be designated tributaries are both on the eastern side, viz. the Yarmuk, four miles below the Sea of Galilee, and the Jabbok, about midway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. All other feeders are merely mountain torrents, mostly dry in the summer.

The distinctive features of the Jordan are:—

1. *Its rapid descent.* It falls more than 3,000 feet in 200 miles, and in one portion of its course the fall is about 600 feet in nine miles. Between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea there are no less than twenty-seven rapids.
2. *Its windings.* "In a space of sixty miles in length and four to five miles in breadth, the Jordan traverses at least 200 miles" —(*Bible Dictionary*).
3. *Its banks.* It has three banks: one the actual bed of the river when it is low; the second a bank enclosing the river when it overflows on the melting of the snows of Hermon in the spring, at other times it is a soft bank of deposited mud; the third a mass of jungle.
4. *Its valley.* This consists of two parts, the Upper Jordan north of the Sea of Galilee, a district of meadow land, and the Lower Jordan between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Here it is a deep sunken valley or trench known to the Hebrews as the *Arabah*, to the Arabs as the *Ghor*. The extreme southern limit is about ten miles south of the Dead Sea. For the greater portion of its length it is about five miles wide, being more confined on the east than on the west. Somewhat to the north of Jericho the valley opens out on the western side to a width of twelve miles, forming the famous plain of Jericho.

The configuration of the land explains why certain portions of it were unconquered (see p. lxix.), and also many of the oppressions, thus:

The oppression of Chushan-rishathaim was an invasion from the Euphrates valley.

The oppression of Eglon, king of Moab, was a seizure of the fertile plain of Jericho.

The oppression of Jabin, king of Hazor, was a revival of Canaanite power in the north, rendered possible by the plain of Esdraelon being favourable for the employment of cavalry and chariots.

The Midianite oppression was an invasion by nomad Arabs crossing the Jordan and plundering the fertile lowlands.

The Philistines holding the Maritime plain and the Shephelah repeatedly thrust back the Israelites into the mountain ranges.



THE NATIONS OF CANAAN.

Importance of the Configuration and Position of the Land.

The position of Palestine was admirably adapted for the Divine purpose.

1. Its isolation preserved the nation distinct for several centuries.
2. Its position on the borders of the Mediterranean opened the land to Western nations as soon as progress in maritime navigation rendered the Mediterranean the highway of the sea between east and west.

Thus Israel isolated, preserved the knowledge of the true God, whilst Israel in communication with Grecian and Roman civilization, distributed that knowledge in future ages.

The Configuration of the Land explains much of the after destiny of Israel. The road by which the great ancient Eastern empires Assyria and Egypt could attack each other lay up through the maritime plain of Palestine and onward through the plain of Lebanon to the Euphrates. An Egyptian or Assyrian army marching along this plain would have the abrupt mountain ranges of Judah and Ephraim on its flank. On this western side the steep declivities and the rugged ascents up the torrent ravines rendered attack most difficult, and at the same time the advancing army could not venture to leave the formidable hill men of Judah on their flank as a menace to their communications. Thus it was that it was essential for Egypt or Assyria to become masters of Judah ere venturing to pass further north or south respectively.

How far the extreme difficulty of the western passes affected the military aspect of invasion of Judah can be gathered from the following facts in history.

1. Nebuzar-adan led the captive Jews northward from Jerusalem by way of Jericho.
2. Pompey attacked Jerusalem from Damascus by way of Jericho.
3. Vespasian led his troops from the plain of Loharon eastwards and advanced against Jerusalem through Jericho.

On the other hand, Beth-horon on the western side is the scene of two great Jewish victories over invading armies.

THE SEVEN NATIONS OF PALESTINE.

The Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites.

The Canaanites, or the descendants of Canaan, son of Ham.

The name is used in two senses, meaning

1. The people generally who inhabited the whole of the land of Canaan.
2. Certain tribes who occupied portions only of the country.

The word is used in the second sense in the enumeration of the nations.

Thus **Canaanites** (= Lowlanders) dwelt in the lowlands or plains, and occupied distinct districts.

- (a) The lowlands lying between the shores of the Mediterranean and the hills of Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim.
- (b) The plain of Esdraelon, and extending along the sea coast as far north as Tyre and Zidon.
- (c) The plain of the Jordan on the west side.

The Hittites descended from Cheth or Heth, the second son of Canaan.

The Hittites were a numerous and wide spread tribe, for the Canaanites are generally described as Hittites (Josh. i. 4).

We find Hittites

- (1) At Hebron in the time of Abraham.
- (2) At Hebron in the time of Joshua and the Judges.
- (3) Upon the mountains of Palestine (Numb. xiii. 29).
- (4) On the north-east of Canaan on the borders of Syria in the time of Solomon (1 Kings x. 29).

It is probable that the man who betrayed Beth-el to the men of Ephraim betook himself to the Hittites near Syria (i. 25).

[The Hittites are first mentioned in connection with Abraham, who bought the cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite. At that time they were settled round Hebron, but do not appear to have been sufficiently important to be numbered among the nations of Canaan.]

Two persons of this nation are subsequently mentioned as belonging to the body-guard of David, viz.:

Ahimelech the Hittite, invited by David to go with him secretly to the camp of Saul at night (1 Sam. xxvi. 6).

Uriah, the Hittite, the husband of Bath-sheba.

The Hivites. The main body of this people were located "*under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh*" (Josh. xi. 3).

At the time of Jacob's return to Canaan Shechem was in the possession of the Hivites, Hamor the Hivite being the "*prince of the country*" (Gen. xxxiv. 2).

The inhabitants of the four cities of the Gibeonites, viz. Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth and Kirjath-jearim, were Hivites.

The Hivite is given as the sixth son of Canaan (Gen. x. 17).

The Perizzites. The name probably means rustics, dwellers in open-walled villages.

There were two sections of the Perizzites—

1. Dwellers in the south subdued by Judah at the time when that tribe advanced against Adoni-bezek, king of the Canaanites of Bezek (i. 4-5).
2. Dwellers along with the Rephaims or giants in "*the forest country*" on the western slope of Mount Carmel (Josh. xvii. 15-18).

The Girgashites. The character and situation of this nation is uncertain.

The Girgashite is given as the fifth son of Canaan (Gen. x. 16).

"They are supposed to have been a section of the Hivites, as their name is not found in nine out of ten places in which the nations or

families of Canaan are mentioned, while in the tenth they are mentioned and the Hivites omitted."

"They are supposed to have settled east of the Lake of Gennesareth"
—(MACLEAR).

The Amorites = the Mountaineers. The Amorite is given as the fourth son of Canaan (Gen. x. 16).

They are contrasted with the Canaanites (the Lowlanders).

Thus the Canaanites and the Amorites formed the two great sections of the inhabitants of Canaan.

The Amorites occupied the barren heights west of the Dead Sea.

At the time of the conquest of the Land they had crossed the Jordan, for we find Sihon in possession of the country lying between the Arnon and the Jabbok.

Sihon was vanquished and his land occupied by the Israelites under Moses.

The Amorites on the west of Jordan were dispossessed of their land by Joshua in his southern campaign.

The Jebusites. The Jebusite is given as the third son of Canaan in Gen. x. 15.

They were a mountain tribe, occupying Jerusalem.

In the conquest their king was executed by Joshua at Makedah after the battle of Beth-horon (Josh. x. 23).

The city was sacked and burnt by Judah (i. 21), but the citadel was not captured till the reign of David (2 Sam. v. 6), who then made Jerusalem the capital of his kingdom.

The only subsequent notice is the purchase of the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite by David (2 Sam. xxiv. 23).

[The twelve spies sent by Moses brought back the following report concerning the nations of Canaan:

"The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan" (Num. xiii. 29).

"And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak" (Num. xiii. 33).]

OTHER NATIONS AND TRIBES mentioned in Judges.

Ammonites, descendants of Ben-Ammi, the son of the younger daughter of Lot (Gen. xix. 38). Moab was the son of the elder daughter. In Scripture history these two nations are always closely connected. The territory of Moab is clearly defined, but the territory of Ammon is not ascertainable. We may infer from this that the descendants of Lot were divided into two portions, the Moabites representing the settled and civilized section, whilst the Ammonites formed the Bedouin or predatory portion of the nation.

Their god was Molech or Milcom, "*the abomination of the children of Ammon.*" Molech was a fire-god to whom the Israelites sacrificed their children in the valley of Hinnom.

The Ammonites are distinguished for their cunning, cruelty, and their hatred of Israel.

The chief events in their history are :

1. The Ammonite or Moabite was precluded from joining the congregation of Israel to the tenth generation. The reasons given for this ban of exclusion are :
 - (a) Because they refused assistance to the Israelites on their approach to Canaan.
 - (b) Because they had hired Balaam to curse Israel (Deut. xxiii. 3, 4).

These reasons are recapitulated in Neh. xiii. 1.

Evidently their share in the hiring of Balaam was the chief cause of the hatred in which the Ammonites were held by the Israelites. Their conduct was the less excusable, because as regards the children of Ammon, the Israelites had been enjoined "*distress them not, nor meddle with them*" (Deut. ii. 19).

2. Their defeat and slaughter by Jephthah (xi.).
3. Saul rescued the men of Jabesh Gilead from Nahash, King of Ammon, and completely defeated the Ammonites (1 Sam. xi.).
4. Their war with David in consequence of the insults offered to his ambassadors by Hanun, King of Ammon. This is the principal war in David's reign, and is famous for the siege and capture of Rabbah and the death of Uriah (2 Sam. x.-xii.).
5. War with Jehoshaphat, when they suffered so signal a defeat that three days were occupied in collecting the spoil (2 Chron. xx. 25).
6. Jotham prevailed against them, and made them pay tribute (2 Chron. xxvii. 5).
7. Later we find them occupying the cities of Gad (on the east side of Jordan), from which the Israelites had been removed by Tiglath-Pileser (Jer. xlix. 1-6).

In the days of Nehemiah we may note :

1. That they were still the bitter enemies of Israel, and, led by Tobiah the Ammonite, constantly opposed Nehemiah.
2. That the passage from Deuteronomy xxiii. 3-6 was read in which it was "written that the Ammonite and Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever."

The Anakim, a race of giants descended from Arba. They dwelt in the south part of Canaan, particularly near Hebron, which was anciently termed Kirjath-arba (= the city of Arba, the progenitor of the race).

They are styled "sons of Anak" (Num. xiii. 33), but it is clear that Anak is the name of the race and not of an individual.

Their immense size and warlike appearance struck the spies with terror in the time of Moses (Num. xiii. 28), but they were dispossessed by Joshua and utterly driven from the land, save a small remnant that took refuge in the Philistine towns of Gaza, Gath and Ashdod (Josh. xi. 22).

Caleb captured Hebron, and is said to have driven out from it the three sons of Anak, Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai (by which we must understand the three tribes or families of the Anakim bearing those names) (Josh. xv. 13-14. Judges i. 10).

This mention of the conquest of the Anakim is inserted for two reasons:—

1. To show that this race of giants regarded as so formidable was driven out before Israel in fulfilment of God's promise to give them the land.
2. To record the reward of Caleb's faith, who obtained the land he had spied out, and which Moses specially promised to him.

Ishmaelites, a name given to the Midianites (viii. 24). The Midianites were not descended from Ishmael, being the descendants of Midian, the son of Abraham by Keturah his second wife. But it appears that the name Ishmaelites is often applied to any of the descendants of Abraham except those descended from Isaac.

Kenites, a branch of the family of Midian. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses was a Kenite. The relationship of Moses to Jethro established a firm friendship between Israel and the Kenites.

They appear to have accompanied the Israelites in their wanderings (Num. xxiv. 21). Fond of nomadic life the Kenites did not settle in towns, for we find them leaving the plains of Jericho for "the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad" (i. 16), one of their chiefs, or sheiks, Heber, went north, and we find that he "had pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaïm which is by Kedesh" (iv. 11). His wife, Jael, the slayer of Sisera (see Jael).

Rechab, the founder of the family or sect of the Rechabites, is said to have been of the Kenites (1 Chron. ii. 55).

Midianites, the descendants of Midian, a son of Abraham by his second wife Keturah. They were a nomadic tribe occupying the desert north of the peninsula of Arabia.

Notices.

When Moses fled from Egypt he took refuge in the land of Midian, and married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, priest of Midian (Ex. ii. 15-21).

Later, the Midianites appear to have been tributary to the Amorites. They joined with Balak, and the princes of Moab in soliciting the aid of Balaam to curse Israel (Num. xxii. 4-7).

At Bethpeor, the Midianites, following the advice of Balaam, enticed Israel to take part in the abominable rites connected with their idol worship. The Israelites were punished through a plague. Phinehas stayed the plague by his fiery zeal for the honour of Jehovah, and then led an expedition against the offending Midianites, who were almost exterminated (Num. xxv., xxxi. 1-12).

In the times of the Judges, the Midianites allied with the Amalekites, made yearly incursions into Canaan. The Israelites were freed by Gideon from these marauding hordes (Judges vi. vii. viii.) (see Gideon).

Philistines. A nation said to have come from Caphtor, "the Philistines from Caphtor" (Amos ix. 7). "The Caphtorims which came forth out of Caphtor," are said to have destroyed the Avims (Deut. ii. 23). Modern research identifies Caphtor with the island of Crete. Egyptian monuments tell us that they were pirates from the islands

and coasts of the Greek seas, who took part in the invasion of Egypt, in the reign of Rameses III., and finally settled in the Shephelah, and the southern part of Palestine.

They thus held the gateway of the great road from Egypt to the Euphrates valley, and gave their name to the route, which is described as "*the way of the Philistines.*"

The strength and importance of this nation is further indicated by the fact that they gave their name to the land of Canaan. Palestine = the land of the Philistines. They are first mentioned in connection with Abraham and Isaac, both of whom had dealings with Abimelech king of Gerar (Gen. xx., xxi. 34, Gen. xxvi.).

Their chief towns were Gaza, Gath, Ekron, Ashkelon and Ashdod, the chiefs of which were known as the five lords of the Philistines.

The plain occupied by them was extremely fertile, and admirably adapted for the development of their military power, for the plain permitted the use of chariots, whilst the occasional elevations which rise out of it offered secure sites for towns and strongholds.

Their country had formerly been occupied by the Canaanites, and accordingly Philistia was assigned to Judah, it being specially recorded that it was "*counted to the Canaanite*" (Josh. xiii. 3). No portion, however, of it was conquered in the lifetime of Joshua. The Anakim, when driven out of Hebron and the surrounding country, are said to have betaken themselves to Gaza, Gath and Ashdod, and to have become incorporated into the Philistine nation.

The latter part of the Book of Judges, the first Book of Samuel, and a great part of the Second Book of Samuel, are almost entirely taken up with the struggle between the Israelites and the Philistines for supremacy, and it was not till the time of Solomon that the whole of Philistia was included in the kingdom. The division of the kingdom in the reign of Rehoboam provided the Philistines with the opportunity of regaining a part of their independence.

Amalekites. A nomadic tribe, occupying the peninsula of Sinai and the wilderness between the south of Palestine and Egypt.

Notices :

They attacked the Israelites at Rephidim, in the wilderness of Sinai, shortly after the Exodus from Egypt, and were totally defeated by Joshua (Ex. xvii.). Their object seems to have been to obtain the spring of water miraculously supplied to the Israelites.

Israel long remembered this attack and its object, and many years after Saul was commanded by Samuel to smite Amalek, as a punishment for their assault on Israel (1 Sam. xv. 3).

In Judges we find them :—

1. In league with the Moabites, who, under Eglon, oppressed Israel (iii. 13).
2. In league with the Midianites when they overran the plain of Esdraelon, and were defeated by Gideon (vi. 3, vii. 12).

The only other mentions of the Amalekites are :—

1. Their defeat and slaughter by Saul (1 Sam. xv.).
2. Their destruction by David (1 Sam. xxvii. 8-9, 1 Sam. xxx.).

Maonites mentioned as having oppressed Israel (x. 12).

The Septuagint reads 'Midian,' and so most commentators agree that the text should read 'Midianites,' as alluding to the oppression in the time of Gideon.

If *Maonites* be the true reading, the allusion must be to some tribe of the "children of the East," who formed part of the invading horde.

Uzzah defeated the Philistines, the Arabians and the Mehunims, *i.e.* the people of Meon (2 Chron. xxvi. 7).

There is a Maon, a town in the wilderness of Judah, but this cannot be meant.

Children of the East, a term denoting the Arab tribes of the desert to the East of the Dead Sea. Certain of these Arabs joined with the Midianites and the Amalekites in their raids into the land of the Israelites.

Job is described as being "*the greatest of the men of the East*" (Job i. 3).

THE TERRITORIES OF THE TWELVE TRIBES.

I. THE TRIBES EAST OF JORDAN.

The district was circumscribed by

Jordan, on the west.

The Lebanon range and Syria, on the north.

The Ammonites, on the east.

The Moabites, on the south.

1. Reuben.

This tribe received the south or plain country, and its territory extended from the Arnon on the south to Heshbon on the north.

Principal cities : Heshbon, Aroer, Bezer (a city of refuge).

Reuben took no part in the chief struggles of the nation.

Its defection in the campaign against Sisera is bitterly commented upon in the song of Deborah (v. 15-16).

2. Gad.

The central tribe beyond the Jordan, extending from Heshbon northwards towards the Sea of Galilee as far as the Yarmuk which flows into the Jordan four miles to the south of the lake.

The eastern boundary is clearly defined as "unto Aroer that faces Rabbah," *i.e.* to the source of the Jabbok.

Principal cities : Mahanaim, Ramoth-Gilead (a city of refuge and the key of Gilead), Jabesh-Gilead. Other notable places are Succoth and Penuel.

Gad would be included in the denunciation of Deborah "*Gilead abode beyond Jordan*" (v. 17).



CANAAN AMONG THE TRIBES.

3. **Manasseh.** The Manassites on the east of Jordan are described as the descendants of Machir. Under the leadership of Jair they won the northern part of the Trans-Jordanic territory.

Boundaries.

The Yarmuk, on the south.
Hermon, on the north.
The Jordan, on the west.
The desert of Arabia, in the east.

The district comprised the kingdom of Og, including Bashan and Argob.

Principal cities : **Edrei**, the capital of Og, **Ashtaroth**, **Golan** (a city of refuge).

Manasseh would be included in the denunciation of Deborah "*Gilead abode beyond Jordan*" (v. 17).

The Manassites (and probably the Gadites) followed Jephthah against Ammon.

The Ephraimites appear to have taunted the Gileadites as being fugitives or deserters from Ephraim (xii. 4). Jephthah and the Gileadites inflicted a severe defeat upon Ephraim when that tribe attacked them in assertion of its supremacy (xii.).

Jair, a Gileadite, was one of the Judges (x. 3).

II. THE TRIBES WEST OF JORDAN. **Canaan Proper.**

4. **Judah.**

Boundaries.

South. From the Dead Sea, as far south as Kadesh-barnea, and the Wady-el Arish, or the "River of Egypt."

East. The Dead Sea.

West. The Mediterranean.

North. The boundary is difficult to follow. Judah was separated from Ephraim by the tribes of Benjamin (east) and Dan (west).

Judah consisted of four distinct portions differing in character.

- (1) **The Negeb** or the South, the dry land, lying between the central mountains and the desert.

Principal places : **Kadesh-barnea**, **Beer-sheba**, **Ziklag**.

- (2) **The Shephelah**, or the Lowland, the strip of country between the central hills, and the sandy shore of the Mediterranean.

Principal places : **Eshtaol**, **Jarmuth**, **Adullam**, **Socoh**, **Azekah**, **Lachish**, **Eglon**, **Makkedah**, **Libnah**, **Keilah**, and the five towns of the Philistines.

- (3) The hill country, the central district.

Principal places : **Hebron** (a city of refuge), **Debir**, **Giloh**, **Maon**, **Carmel**, **Ziph**, **Bethlehem**, **Beth-zur**.

- (4) **The wilderness of Judæa**, the desolate region between the mountains and the Dead Sea. *Principal place*, **En-gedi**.

The tribe of Simeon was located in the territory of Judah.

Notices in Judges.

Judah and Simeon are the first tribes to go up against the heathen nations to conquer the territory allotted to them.

They defeated Adoni-bezek, captured Jerusalem, and defeated the Canaanites at Zephath or Hormah. Caleb captured Hebron and drove out the Anakim. Though taking possession of Gaza, Askelon and Ekron, Judah did not obtain full possession of the Lowland (i. 1-21).

Othniel, the first Judge, was of the tribe of Judah.

Judah is mentioned as suffering from the Ammonite oppression (x.9).

The men of Judah took Samson at the rock Etam and delivered him bound to the Philistines (xv. 9-11).

The slight notice of this tribe in Judges is remarkable. They are not even called upon by Deborah to join in the national rising against Jabin. Possibly at this period Judah was engaged in repelling that particular invasion by the Philistines from which the country was relieved by Shamgar.

5 **Joseph** (as including Ephraim, and the half tribe of Manasseh).

Boundaries.

South. The southern boundary runs roughly from Jericho, below Beth-el, through Beth-horon-lower, to Gezer and then on to the Mediterranean at Joppa. The tribes of Dan (west) and Benjamin (east) lay to the south of Ephraim, separating that tribe from the tribe of Judah.

North. We get the northern boundary by following the Carmel range southward and eastward to the Jordan. The tribe of Issachar lay to the north.

West. The **Mediterranean.**

East. The **Jordan.**

These boundaries include the two tribes Ephraim and Manasseh; Manasseh lay to the north and Ephraim to the south. The line separating Ephraim from Manasseh cannot be clearly defined.

Principal cities: (Ephraim), Gezer, Shiloh, Gilgal (not near Jordan); (Manasseh), Shechem (a city of refuge), Samaria, Tirzah, Dothan.

Bethshan, Ibleam, Endor, Dor, Megiddo (these five cities are in the tribes of Asher and Issachar).

Notices in Judges.

Ephraim.

1. The capture of Bethel (i. 22-26).
2. They assisted Dan against the Amorites (i. 35).
3. A detachment from Ephraim came to the aid of Deborah and Barak (v. 14).
4. In the defeat of the Midianites by Gideon the men of Ephraim seized the waters of Jordan, captured and slew Oreb and Zeeb, and subsequently chided sharply with Gideon because he had not called them first to the fight (vii. 24--viii. 3).
5. Ephraim suffered from the oppression of the Ammonites (x. 9).

6. The men of Ephraim found fault with Jephthah, because he had not acknowledged their headship when he advanced against Ammon. In the conflict that ensued from the altercation the Ephraimites were worsted, and being cut off at the fords of the Jordan lost 42,000 men (xii. 1-6).
7. Abdon, the judge, was a Pirathonite of the tribe of Ephraim. On the supremacy claimed by Ephraim (see p. 33).

Manasseh.

1. A detachment joined Deborah and Barak against Jabin (v. 14).
 2. The Manassites formed the chief portion of Gideon's forces (vi. 35).
6. **Benjamin.** This tribe occupied a small slip of territory at a high range above the sea level, important, not for its size, but for the number of the notable cities within its boundaries.

Boundaries.

- North.* The tribe of Ephraim.
West. The tribe of Dan.
South. The tribe of Judah.
East. The Jordan.

Principal cities: Jerusalem, Jericho, Gilgal, Gibeon, Anathoth, Gibeah, Ramah, Kirjath-jearim, Mizpeh.

Notices in Judges.

1. The outrage at Gibeah, and the subsequent expedition of the united tribes of Israel against Benjamin (Chaps. xix., xx., xxi.).
 2. Ehud, who delivered the south from the Moabites, was of the tribe of Benjamin (iii. 15).
 3. Benjamin sent a detachment to the army of Deborah and Barak (v. 14).
 4. Benjamin suffered from the Ammonite invasion (x. 9).
7. **Dan.** To Dan fell not only the last, but the smallest portion assigned to any tribe.

Boundaries.

- North.* Ephraim.
East. Ephraim and Benjamin.
South. Judah.
West. The Mediterranean from Joppa in the north to Ekron in the south, a distance of about fourteen miles.

Thus on three sides Dan was protected by the powerful tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin and Judah. The land between the hill country and the sea was exceedingly fertile—the cornfield and garden of Palestine. Such a valuable possession was not given up readily by the original inhabitants, and accordingly we find that the Amorites “*forced the children of Dan into the mountain*” (i. 34.) *i.e.* forced them from the rich cornfields back to the slopes and ridges of the hill country. Later the tribe had to contend with the Philistines. Thus the Danites, though struggling long and bravely to win the whole of their inheritance, became confined in limits too narrow for the population. This fact will explain the expedition to the

north when 600 Danites seized on the town of Laish (xviii.), and gave it the name of Dan. The town under the name of Dan remained famous long after the name of the tribe fell out of Jewish history.

Notices in Judges.

1. The Amorites forced Dan into the mountains (i. 34).
 2. The tribe fell under the reproach of Deborah for not joining in the national rising against Jabin (v. 17).
 3. A portion of the tribe hard pressed by the Amorites emigrated to the north, seizing the town of Laish (see chapter xviii.).
 4. Samson was of the tribe of Dan.
8. **Simeon.** No distinct portion was allotted to this tribe. It would appear that the portion assigned to Judah was larger than it could conveniently occupy or defend, and that Judah assigned some of its towns to Simeon in order to obtain the assistance of that tribe in the defence of its southern border.

Notice in Judges.

Simeon joined with Judah in being the first of the tribes to go up and occupy the territory assigned to them (see Judah).

9. **Zebulun** occupied a district extending from the Sea of Galilee on the east to the Mediterranean on the west, bounded by the tribe of Issachar on the south and by the tribe of Naphtali on the north.

Notices in Judges.

1. Zebulun joined with Naphtali in following Barak against Sisera, and with that tribe bore the brunt of the battle (iv. 10., v. 18).
 2. A force from Zebulun responded to the call of Gideon (vi. 35).
 3. Ibzan, the judge, was of Bethlehem in Zebulun (xii. 8).
 4. Elon, the judge, was of the tribe of Zebulun (xii. 11).
10. **Issachar.** The territory stretched from the Jordan to Carmel, and lay between the tribes of Zebulun (north) and Manasseh (south), and included the famous plain of Esdraelon.

Within the territory of Issachar are many famous places mentioned in Bible history, e.g. **Jezreel, Shunem, Mount Gilboa, Bethshan, Megiddo, Taanach, Endor**, though certain of these were assigned to Manasseh (see Manasseh).

Notices in Judges.

1. The princes of Issachar joined Deborah and Barak (v. 15), but the tribe appears to have taken no part in giving assistance to Gideon.
 2. Tola, the judge, was of the tribe of Issachar (x. 1).
11. **Asher** appears to have had assigned to it a strip of rich maritime territory stretching as far north as Zidon, but Zidon was never occupied. Its southern boundary was Zebulun, whilst Naphtali lay to the east.

Principal towns: Achsah, Tyre, Zidon.

Notices in Judges.

1. Asher falls under the censure of Deborah for not joining in the national rising against Jabin (v. 17).
2. The tribe of Asher responded to the call of Gideon (vi. 35).

12. **Naphtali.**

Boundaries.

- North.* The valley of the Leontes.
South. The tribe of Zebulun.
East. The Jordan, and the Sea of Galilee.
West. The tribe of Asher.

Notices in Judges.

1. Barak was of the tribe of Naphtali.
2. Naphtali joined with Zebulun in following Barak against Sisera, and with that tribe bore the brunt of the battle (iv. 10, v. 18).
3. Naphtali responded to the call of Gideon (vi. 35).

**UNCONQUERED OR UNOCCUPIED TERRITORY IN THE
DIFFERENT TRIBES.**

1. **In Judah and Benjamin,**

The Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem.
 The inhabitants of the valley, *i.e.*, of the lowland.
 The five lords of the Philistines.

2. **In Ephraim,**

The Canaanites of Gezer.

3. **In Manasseh,**

The inhabitants of Beth-shan, Ibleam, Dor, Megiddo and Taanach, towns in Issachar, but assigned to Manasseh.

4. **In Zebulun,**

Certain of the Canaanites.

5. **In Asher,**

The inhabitants of Accho, Zidon, Achzib and other towns.

6. **In Naphtali,**

The inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and Bethanab.

7. **In Dan,**

The Danites never obtained complete possession of the valley. The Amorites forced them "*into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley*" (i. 34).

We thus see that Israel obtained complete possession of the central highland and that with the exception of Jebus or Jerusalem (an exceptionally strong fortress), the unconquered portions lay either in the lowlands or the plains.

The footmen of Israel would act at an advantage in the hill country, but in the level tracts the Canaanites with cavalry and war-chariots would meet the invaders on more favourable terms.

These nations were left to prove Israel, that is, to test or try their faith.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Abel-Cheramim, the plain of the vineyards. (The R.V. gives the proper name), a spot mentioned as one of the limits of Jephthah's pursuit of the Ammonites (xi. 33). It is identified as being six miles beyond Rabbah.

Abel-meholah (*the dancing meadow*), in the north of the Jordan valley, about four miles south of Beth-shean.

It was the native place of the prophet Elijah (1 Kings xix. 16-19).

The routed Midianites fled from the men of Gideon by the way of Abel-meholah (vii. 22).

Accho. The modern Acre. It fell to the lot of Asher, but this tribe was never able to gain possession of it from the original inhabitants (i. 31).

Achsib, a town of the Canaanites in the territory of Asher; one of the places not captured by that tribe (i. 31). Identified as Eodippa some ten miles north of Acre.

Ahlab, a town of the Canaanites, in the territory of Asher; one of the places not conquered by that tribe (i. 31). Probably the same as Giscalā, a town in the hill country north-west of the Sea of Galilee.

Ajalon, "*the valley of the Gazelles*." A valley running south-west from the lower Beth-horon into the great western plain of Philistia. The town was on the frontier of Philistia. During the pursuit of the Canaanites in the battle of Beth-horon Joshua commanded the sun to stand still upon Gibeon, and the moon upon the Valley of Ajalon. (See Josh. x. 12-14).

The town was in the territory of Dan, and assigned to the Levites (Josh. xxi. 24). The Danites were not able to drive the Amorites out of Ajalon (v. 34).

Notices.

- (1) Saul and Jonathan defeated the Philistines and pursued them from Michmash to Ajalon, much upon the same route as the battle of Beth-horon (1 Sam. xiv. 31).
- (2) Rehoboam fortified Ajalon against attacks from the south (2 Chron. xi. 10).
- (3) In the reign of Abaz we find the Philistines in Ajalon (2 Chron. xxviii. 18).

Elon the judge was buried at Aijalon, a different place to the above, and situated in the tribe of Zebulun (xii. 12).

Aphik or **Aphék**, a city in the extreme north of Asher, from which the Canaanites were not expelled (i. 31). Identified with Aphca, now *Afka*, famous for its temple of Venus.

Arad, about twenty miles to the south of Hebron. The wilderness of Judah lay to the south of Arad (i. 16).

Akrabbim. The ascent of (*the scorpion pass*). A pass between the south end of the Dead Sea and Zin. It marked the south boundary of Judah and the north boundary of the Amorites (i. 36).

Arnon, a river flowing from the east into the Dead Sea, forming the southern boundary of the tribe of Reuben, and dividing that territory from Moab.

Aroer, a city on the Arnon and in the territory of Sihon. It was assigned to Reuben. It was situated partly on the Arnon, and partly on an island in the river. Later it fell into the possession of Moab (xi. 26).

Arumah, a place evidently near Shechem, where Abimelech resided, and which he seems to have made the royal residence (ix. 41).

Ashdod (Azotus, Acts viii. 40) was one of the five chief Philistine cities, Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath. It was situated midway between Gaza and Joppa, about three miles from the Mediterranean, and thirty miles from the southern frontier of Palestine. It owed its importance to the fact that it commanded the caravan route to Egypt. It was never subdued by the Israelites, and even in the time of Nehemiah retained its distinctiveness of race and religion (Neh. xiii. 23-24).

The ark, when captured by the Philistines in the judgeship of Eli, was brought first to Ashdod and set in the house of Dagon (1 Sam. v. 1-7).

It was besieged and captured by Tartan, the general of the Assyrians, in the reign of Hezekiah (Is. xx. 1).

Philip the Evangelist preached at Azotus (Ashdod) (Acts viii. 40).

Askelon. One of the five cities of the Philistines, next in importance to Gaza. Samson went down from Timnath to Askelon and slew thirty of the Philistines to obtain the changes of garment wherewith to pay the wager he had lost to those who had solved his riddle (xiv. 19).

David would not proclaim the deaths of Saul and Jonathan lest there should be rejoicing in Askelon (2 Sam. i. 20).

Askelon played an important part in the struggles of the Crusades.

Baal-tamar (place of the palm tree). A place near Gibeah of Benjamin, mentioned as the place where the Israelites assembled to attack the Benjamites at Gibeah (xx. 33).

The palm tree of Deborah (iv. 5) was situated near, and may possibly be alluded to in the name.

Beer (*well*). The place where Jotham, the son of Gideon, took refuge from Abimelech (ix. 21). Its position cannot be located.

Beth-anath, a walled city in the tribe of Naphtali, from which the Canaanites were not expelled (i. 33).

Beth-barah. When Gideon had dispersed the Midianites the men of Ephraim seized "*the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan*" and intercepted the Midianites before they could reach the Jordan (vii. 24).

"The waters" are the brooks which flow from the eastern side of the mountains of Ephraim into Jordan. Beth-barah was probably the chief ford.

As Beth-abara, where John the Baptist baptized, is said to "*be beyond Jordan*" (St. John i. 28), it is possible that this place is identical with Beth-barah.

Beth-el (*Beth*, house; *El*, God) = the house of God. Its ancient name was Luz. It was situated on the extreme south of Ephraim, and so just on the border of the kingdom of Israel.

In Joshua we find the king of Bethel assisting the king of Ai against Israel (Josh. viii. 17). The king of Bethel is also mentioned in the list of kings slain by Joshua (Josh. xii. 16).

The capture of Bethel by the tribe of Ephraim is recounted in i. 22-26.

The strong position of Bethel on the frontier of Ephraim, and commanding the great high road from Hebron to Shechem, rendered its possession of the highest importance to Ephraim.

Bethlehem (of Judah) (*house of bread*), situated about five miles south of Jerusalem. Its ancient name was Ephrath or Ephratah. It is often called Bethlehem-judah to distinguish it from Bethlehem in Zebulun. It was the birth-place of our Lord (St. Luke ii. 4).

Notices in the Old Testament.

- (1) The Levite who became the first priest of the Danites came from Bethlehem (xvii. 7).
- (2) It is the scene of the history of Ruth (Ruth i. 1).
- (3) The birthplace of David (1 Sam. xvii. 12).
- (4) Samuel anointed David at Bethlehem (1 Sam. xvi. 13).
- (5) The birthplace of Joab, Abishai and Asahel (2 Sam. ii. 32).
- (6) 123 of the children of Bethlehem returned from captivity (Ezra ii. 21).

Bethlehem (of Judah) is notable in the Book of Judges for:—

- (1) The Levite who became a priest in the household of Micah, and who afterwards accompanied the Danites to Laish, came from Bethlehem (xvii. 7).

- (2) The wife of the Levite (chap. xix.) came from Bethlehem.

The circumstances related in the Book of Ruth are also connected with Bethlehem.

(On the importance of these three events in deciding the authorship of the Book of Judges, see p. ix.)

Bethlehem (of Zebulun). In the tribe of Zebulun, about six miles from Nazareth.

Ibzan, the judge, was a native of this Bethlehem, and was buried there (xii. 8-10).

Beth-rehob. In the north of Palestine, and a petty kingdom of Syria. The Ammonites "*hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob*," and other mercenaries to assist them against David (2 Sam. x. 6).

The city of Laish or Dan lay in the valley near Beth-rehob (xviii. 28).

It has been identified with the modern Hunim, a fortress which commands the above-mentioned plain.

Bethshean or Beth-shan, a city of Manasseh. After the defeat of Saul at Gilboa, the Philistines hung the corpses of Saul and his sons from the walls of Beth-shan (1 Sam. xxxi. 10-12).

Notice in Judges.

Manasseh was unable to drive the Canaanites out of Beth-shean and the neighbouring towns (i. 27).

Beth-shemesh (*House of the Sun*), a city in Naphtali, mentioned along with Beth-anah, as a place whence the tribe of Naphtali could not take from the Canaanites (i. 33). Situation unknown.

It must not be mistaken for the well-known Beth-shemesh in the tribe of Judah.

Beth-shittah (*house of the acacias*), mentioned as one of the places to which the Midianites fled in their rout by Gideon (vii. 22). It must have been near the fords of the Jordan in the north.

Bezek, a place in the tribe of Judah, not far from Jerusalem, inhabited by Canaanites and Perizzites. It was the residence of Adoni-bezek (i. 4-5). (See Adoni-bezek).

There is another Bezek where Saul assembled his forces before advancing to the relief of Jabesh-Gilead (I Sam. xi. 8).

Bochim (*the weepers*). Not far from Gilgal, and on the west of Jordan (ii. 1-5).

Here the Angel of the Lord appeared to the Israelites, denounced their infidelity to the covenant, because they had made leagues with the Canaanites and had not destroyed the idol worship. The Angel announced that these Canaanites would be a thorn in their sides, and that their gods would be a snare to them. Thus the subsequent oppressions and miseries were foretold.

Canon, some spot in Gilead on the east of Jordan. The place in which Jair the judge was buried (x. 5).

Dan (the city), not the tribe of that name, but a town in the extreme north of Palestine. Its original name was Laish, and the story of its capture by the Danites is told in Judges xviii.—xix. After the capture the Danites gave the town the name of their own tribe (see also Josh. xix. 47-48).

“From Dan to Beer-sheba” was the common expression for the Promised Land.

Jeroboam set up one of the golden calves at Dan, partly because it was at the northern extremity of his kingdom, and partly because at the time of its capture a kind of religious worship had been established by the Danites, who took with them a young Levite from the house of Micah in Mount Ephraim, with the ephod, the teraphim, the graven image and the molten image which Micah had made. Thus Dan was always regarded as a place of particular sanctity.

Dan was taken by Ben-hadad from Baasha (1 Kings xv. 20).

Debir (ancient name Kirjath-sopher = “*the town of the book*”), situated near Hebron, and probably, from its name, a seat of learning among the Canaanites. It would appear to have been recovered by the Canaanites, for Othniel, the nephew of Caleb, won his daughter Achsah for wife by the capture of the city (see Achsah, p. xlv.). It was one of the towns assigned to the Levites.

Dor, an ancient city of the Canaanites in the tribe of Manasseh, on the sea coast south of Carmel.

The King of Dor joined Jabin, King of Hazor, against Joshua (Josh. xi. 2).

It was one of Solomon's commissariat districts, being well adapted for this purpose from its proximity to the plain of Sharon (1 Kings iv. 11).

Notice in Judges.

One of the towns from which the tribe of Manasseh could not expel the Canaanites (i. 27).

Ekron, the most northerly of the five cities of the Philistines. It was assigned to Judah, forming one of the landmarks on the northern border (Josh. xv. 45-46). It seems to have been afterwards given to Dan (Josh. xix. 43).

It was one of the cities which received the Ark when captured by the Philistines (1 Sam. v. 10).

Ahaziah, King of Israel, sent to enquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether he should recover from the injuries sustained by falling through a lattice in his upper chamber (2 Kings i. 2).

En-hakkore. (*The spring of him that called.*) The spring that burst out of the rock, when Samson called upon God in his thirst after he had slain a thousand of the Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass.

The water did not gush from the jaw-bone, but from a hollow place or mortar-like cavity in the rock (see R.V. and comment p. 91).

Eshtaol. A place in the Shephelah, or lowland of Judah, and allotted to the tribe of Dan. Samson passed his boyhood and youth in this district (xiii. 25), and was buried there (xvi. 31).

Etam. (The rock Etam). The place of refuge of Samson after his slaughter of the Philistines for burning his wife and her relations.

It was a cliff or lofty rock, situated in the tribe of Judah, near Zorah and Eshtaol, near Etam, and probably at the foot of the cliff were Lehi and En-hakkore.

When the Philistines sent an expedition to seize Samson, the men of Judah were ready to deliver up Samson in order to save themselves from the consequences of his deed. Samson consented to be bound with cords by his countrymen and to be handed over to the Philistines.

Gaash, Timnath-heres, the city given to Joshua, was situated in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.

Gaza, or **Azzah**, one of the five chief cities of the Philistines, and the last town in the south-west of Palestine on the frontier of Egypt. It occupied a position of great strength. Joshua was not able to subdue it, and though the tribe of Judah once obtained possession of it, they did not hold it for long. During the times of Samuel, Saul, and David it was in the hands of the Philistines, and appears to have been their capital. Solomon gained possession of it, and it is said that his territory extended from "*Tiphseh even to Azzah*" (1 Kings iv. 24).

It was the scene of one of Samson's exploits, viz. : the carrying away of the gates of Gaza (see xvi. 1-3).

Gerizim. A mountain to the south of the valley of Shechem being faced by Mount Ebal on the opposite or northern side of the valley.

The district was holy and sanctified to the Israelites because

1. Here Abraham erected his first altar in Canaan (Gen. xii. 6-7).
2. Jacob settled here after his return from Padan-aram, and bought the parcel of the field from Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money (Gen. xxxiii. 19).

The mountain itself is memorable as—

- (1) Being the place where the six tribes stood who responded "Amen" to the blessings as the Law was read by the priests, standing with the Ark in the valley (Josh. viii. 30-35).
- (2) Being the place whence Jotham uttered his parable to the men of Shechem after the slaughter of the sons of Gideon by Abimelech (ix. 7-21).

All travellers bear testimony to the acoustic properties of the valley, and tell us that a voice on Gerizim can be heard distinctly on Ebal.

Subsequent history.

When Nehemiah expelled Manasseh, the grandson of Eliashib, the High Priest, from Jerusalem, for marrying the daughter of Sanballat, Manasseh took refuge with the Samaritans, and obtained permission from Darius Nothus to build a Temple on Mount Gerizim. The Samaritans claimed for this Temple precedence before the Temple at Jerusalem, on the ground that Gerizim was the proper place for sacrifice, because Joshua had built his first altar there.

Gezer, an important city in the south, commanding the approach from Egypt. Though assigned to the Kohathites as a city of refuge (Josh. xxi. 21), it remained in possession of the Canaanites at the conquest of the land (Josh. xvi. 10). It was captured by Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who destroyed the city, put to death the Canaanites who dwelt there, and gave it to his daughter as a marriage portion when she became the wife of Solomon (2 Kings ix. 16). Pharaoh may have taken the city before the marriage of his daughter (as the city was inhabited by Canaanites he could do this without being at war with Solomon), or he may have undertaken the expedition at the request of Solomon.

Solomon fortified the city as a protection on the south.

Gibeah (*hill-town*), a name given to many places in Palestine.

The Gibeah of Judges is Gibeah of Benjamin, or Gibeah of Saul. It was situated four miles north of Jerusalem to the right of the road leading from Hebron to Shechem.

Notices.

- (1) It was the scene of the tragedy of the Levite and his concubine (xix., xx.).
- (2) The Benjamites successfully defended Gibeah against the attack of the united tribes, but were at last defeated by stratagem and the town was taken (xxi.).
- (3) It appears to have been the native place and home of Saul, the first king of Israel (1 Sam. x. 26).

- (4) Saul was at Gibeah when the messengers came from Jabesh-Gilead to entreat for help against Nahash the Ammonite (1 Sam. xi. 4).
- (5) Jonathan sallied from Gibeah and smote the garrison of the Philistines at Michmash (1 Sam. xiii. 2-4).
- (6) Jonathan passed over from Gibeah to Michmash and defeated the Philistines (1 Sam. xiv. 4-16).

Gidom, a place between Gibeah and Rock Rimmon, and very near the latter. Israel pursued the Benjamites as far as Gidom, slaying 2,000 of the fugitives.

Gilead, a mountainous district on the east of Jordan, bounded on the north by Bashan, and on the south by Moab and Ammon. Mahanaim, Jabesh Gilead, and Ramoth Gilead were the chief towns.

A "*Mount Gilead*" is mentioned (vii. 3) as being the place whence 22,000 of Gideon's men went home. But Gideon's army assembled on the west of Jordan, so three explanations have been given of this name—

1. That it is an error for "*Gilboa*."
2. That there may have been a Mount Gilead in western Manasseh.
3. That, as Gilead was the son of Abiezer, the name may have been applied generally to the tribe of Manasseh, and so the phrase "let him depart from Mount Gilead" means "let him leave the encampment of Manasseh on the hill above the Midianite camp."

Gilgal, situated on a hillock or rising ground in the plains of Jericho, about five miles from the Jordan, and two miles from Jericho.

It was the site of the first camp of the Israelites after the crossing of the Jordan. The twelve stones which had been taken from the bed of the river were set up at Gilgal.

The word means "*the Rolling*," and thus kept in remembrance the "*rolling away the reproach of Egypt*" (Josh. v. 9).

Joshua fortified "*the camp*" and made it the basis of his military operations against the Canaanites, and a place of safety where the ark, the women and children, etc., could be left.

At Gilgal—

- (1) The rite of circumcision took place after the crossing of Jordan (Josh. v. 2-9).
- (2) The Passover was celebrated (Josh. v. 10-12).
- (3) The treaty was made with the Gibeonites who came to the "camp at Gilgal" (Josh. x. 6).
- (4) From Gilgal Joshua hastened to the rescue of the Gibeonites when they were attacked by the southern kings (Josh. x. 7).
- (5) Joshua returned to Gilgal after the conquest of the south of Canaan (Josh. x. 43).
- (6) Caleb claimed Hebron as his inheritance before Joshua at Gilgal (Josh. xiv. 6).
- (7) After the conquest of the land the tabernacle was moved from Gilgal to Shiloh (Josh. xviii. 1).
- (8) The men of Judah came to meet David at Gilgal on his return to Jerusalem after the death of Absalom (2 Sam. xix. 15).

There is another Gilgal mentioned in the time of the kings.

- (1) It was one of the three towns, Beth-el, Gilgal and Mizpah, which Samuel visited in turn as judge of the people (1 Sam. vii. 16).
- (2) Samuel and Saul sacrificed several times at Gilgal, apparently on solemn occasions and at assemblies of the people (1 Sam. x. 8, xi. 14, xv. 12).
- (3) It appears to have been the site of a school of the prophets in the days of Elisha (2 Kings ii. 1).

Notices in Judges.

- (1) The angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim (ii. 1) (Bochim).
- (2) Ehud turned back from the quarries by Gilgal to assassinate Eglon (iii. 19).

Hamath, an important city of Upper Syria, in the valley of the Orontes, which it commanded. This valley was the main entrance to Palestine from the north, and was the way traversed by the armies of Assyria and Babylon when they invaded the country.

Hence "*the entering in of Hamath*" signifies the valley between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, which may well be termed the gateway into Palestine from the north.

Solomon's kingdom extended from the "*entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt*" (1 Kings viii. 65), a phrase which signifies the whole of Palestine.

Solomon built store cities at Hamath (2 Chron. viii. 4).

Harod. The well of (Harod = *trembling*). The spring by which Gideon and his army encamped on the morning of the day before the night attack on the Midianites. Here the trial of the warriors by their method of drinking apparently took place. The well evidently takes its name from the withdrawal of the 22,000 who feared to take part in the battle. Stanley identifies it with *Ain Talud*, a stony spring forming a large pool at the foot of Gilboa.

Harosheth. Haroshoth of the Gentiles or the nations; so called from the mixed races that inhabited it.

It was the headquarters of Sisera the captain of the host of Jabin king of Hazor (iv. 2).

The Israelites pursued the routed host as far as Harosheth (iv. 16).

Though the site has not been identified, Harosheth would appear to have been some fortress commanding the western exit of the plain of Esdraelon, and to have been the arsenal for Sisera's chariots (see p. 106).

Havoth-Jair, or the towns of Jair. Sixty villages in the district of Argob, taken by Jair, the son of Manasseh, and called after his name (Num. xxxii. 41, Deut. iii. 14).

Jair, the Gileadite, one of the Judges, is said to have had thirty sons who had thirty cities called Havoth-jair in the land of Gilead (x. 4).

As "*Havoth*" means villages "*Havoth-jair*" means the villages of Jair. Thus it is impossible to decide whether the cities mentioned in Judges are identical with those previously described or not.

Hazor, an important city in the tribe of Naphtali, situated between Ramah and Kedesh, on high ground overlooking the waters of Merom.

Notices.

- (1) Joshua defeated Jabin, king of Hazor, and the northern confederacy of kings, and burnt the city (Josh. xi. 1).
- (2) Later it was the capital of another Jabin, whose host under Sisera was defeated by Deborah and Barak (iv. 2).
- (3) It was fortified by Solomon as commanding the great line of invasion from the north (1 Kings ix. 15).
- (4) It was captured by Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings xv. 29).

Hebron, a city of Judah, twenty-nine miles south of Jerusalem, and twenty miles north of Beer-sheba. The ancient name was Kirjath-Arba, the city of Arba, so called from Arba, the father of Anak.

Notices.

- (1) Abraham pitched his tent "in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron" (Gen. xiii. 18).
- (2) Sarah died at Hebron, and there was the cave of Machpelah, which Abraham purchased as a burial-place from Ephron the Hittite (Gen. xxiii.).
- (3) In the division of the land, Hebron fell to the lot of Caleb (Josh. xv. 13). (See Caleb, p. xlvi.).
- (4) It was the capital of David on the death of Saul. There he reigned seven years and six months (2 Sam. v. 5).
- (5) It was the scene of the murder of Abner by Joab (2 Sam. iii. 27).
- (6) Here Absalom commenced his rebellion against his father David, going to Hebron under pretence of fulfilling a vow he had made whilst dwelling at Geshur (2 Sam. xv. 7-12).

Heres Mount (*mountain of the sun*) situated in Ajalon, and one of the places whence the Danites could not expel the Amorites (i. 35). It is supposed to be the site of Ir-shemesh (*city of the sun*), one of the cities allotted to the tribe of Dan (Josh. xix. 41).

Helbah, a town in Asher, from which the Canaanites were not expelled (i. 31).

Hermon, the mountain at the southern end of Anti-Lebanus, forming the culminating point of the range. It was a great landmark for the Israelites, denoting their northern boundary almost as strongly as their western boundary was defined by the Mediterranean Sea, for "in whatever part of Palestine the Israelite turned his eye northward, Hermon was there terminating the view."

Heshbon, the capital of Sihon, king of the Amorites. It was situated on the boundary line between the tribes of Reuben and Gad.

Hormah (or Zephath, i. 17), a city in the south of Palestine, captured by Joshua (Josh. xii. 14). It is chiefly memorable as the scene of the defeat of the Israelites by the Canaanites and the Amalekites, when, after the return of the spies, the Israelites in their presumption advanced to conquer the land contrary to the express disapproval of Moses (Num. xiv. 45).

Judah and Simeon captured Hormah or Zephath and destroyed the Canaanite inhabitants of the city (i. 17).

Ibleam, a city of Manasseh, but situated in the territory of either Issachar or Asher. A Levitical city.

Jehu pursued Ahaziah, King of Judah, and wounded him "at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo and died there" (2 Kings ix. 27).

The tribe of Manasseh was not able to gain possession of Ibleam (i. 27).

Jabbok, a stream falling into the Jordan on the east, about midway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. It was the boundary between the kingdoms of Sihon and Og. It was after crossing the Jabbok from north to south that, on his return to Canaan, Jacob met Esau (Gen. xxxii. 22).

Jabesh-Gilead, one of the chief cities of Gilead beyond the Jordan.

Notices.

- (1) In the campaign of Israel against Benjamin, the remnant of Benjamin were supplied with wives by the sack of Jabesh-gilead (xxi. 8-24).
- (2) Jabesh-gilead was the scene of Saul's first military exploit. He relieved Jabesh-gilead from the attack of Nahash, the Ammonite (1 Sam. xi. 1-15).
- (3) When the Philistines hung the bodies of Saul and his sons on the walls of Beth-shan, the men of Jabesh-gilead, in gratitude for their deliverance from Nahash, came by night and took down the bodies, conveyed them to Jabesh-gilead, and buried them there, after first burning them (1 Sam. xxxi. 11-13).

Jahaza or **Jahaz**, in the tribe of Reuben, the scene of the decisive overthrow of Sihon, king of the Amorites (Numb. xxi. 23).

Jebus, the ancient name of Jerusalem.

Notices in Judges.

- (1) Judah captured Jerusalem (i. 8), but did not gain possession of the citadel (i. 21).
- (2) The Levite on his return from Bethlehem-judah refused to enter Jebus to pass the night there because it was the city of the Jebusites, and not a city of the children of Israel. He pressed on as far as Gibeah (xix. 10-15).

The citadel was not taken till the reign of David (2 Sam. v. 6-9).

Jericho, situate in the plain of the Jordan, exactly over the place where the Israelites under Joshua passed over that river.

After the capture of the city, Joshua laid it under the following curse:—"Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it" (Josh. vi. 26).

The city was rebuilt in the time of Ahab by Hiel the Bethelite, of whom it is said that "he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub.

according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun" (1 Kings xvi. 34).

Hiel may have built the city, following the example of Omri and Ahab, who were great builders, and induced by the position, which, as commanding the fords of the Jordan, was admirably adapted for commerce.

Jericho soon rose to importance, for here we find a school of the prophets (2 Kings ii. 5).

Elijah and Elisha crossed the Jordan opposite Jericho by Elijah striking the waters with his mantle; and, after the ascension of Elijah, Elisha returned in the same manner (2 Kings ii. 8-14).

Elisha healed the spring of waters at Jericho by casting salt in (2 Kings ii. 19-22).

Zedekiah was captured by the Chaldeans in the plains of Jericho whilst endeavouring to escape from Jerusalem (2 Kings xxv. 5).

Jericho is frequently mentioned in the Gospels.

Notice in Judges.

Jericho was occupied by Eglon, king of Moab, when he oppressed Israel. It would appear that he made Jericho his headquarters, and that he was assassinated by Ehud in that city.

Jezebel, a city on an eminence rising out of the plain of Jezreel, commanding a view of Jordan on the east, and Carmel on the west. It also gave its name to the plain, so that the plain of Jezreel is only another name for the plain of Esdraelon.

Its strong and commanding position caused it to be chosen by Ahab as his chief residence. After his death Jezreel sank into insignificance.

It is the scene of many notable incidents in Kings.

- (1) Elijah ran from Carmel before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel (1 Kings xviii. 46).
- (2) At Jezreel Ahab had a palace, where he built for himself an ivory house (1 Kings xxii. 89).
- (3) In Jezreel was the vineyard of Naboth (1 Kings xxi. 1).
- (4) At Jezreel Jehu slew Jehoram, and here also Jezebel met her death (2 Kings ix. 14-37).

The plain of Jezreel was the highway into Palestine from west and north, and the traditional battle-field of the country (see Megiddo).

Notices in Judges.

- (1) The battle between Barak and the army of Sisera took place in the valley of Jezreel at the western end (iv.).
- (2) The Midianites and Amalekites encamped in the valley of Jezreel and there they fled in panic before Gideon and his three hundred men (vi. 33).

Jogbehah, a city on the east of Jordan, built and fortified by the tribe of Gad (Num. xxxii. 15). It was on the route of the flanking march by which Gideon surprised the Midianite princes, Zebah and Zalmunna, in their halt at Kharkor (viii. 10-11).

Kadesh-barnea, in the wilderness to the south of Judæa, and the farthest point which the Israelites reached in their direct road to Canaan.

- (1) Here Miriam died (Num. xx. 1).
- (2) From Kadesh-barnea the twelve spies were despatched to view the land (Num. xiii. 17-19).
- (3) At Kadesh the people murmured when the spies returned (Num. xiv. 1-5).
- (4) At Kadesh the decree imposing forty years' wandering in the wilderness was issued (Num. xiv. 29-33).

Kedesh-Naphtali, a fortified city of the tribe of Naphtali allotted to the Levites and appointed as a city of refuge in the north.

Notices.

- (1) Barak was of Kedesh-Naphtali (iv. 6).
- (2) Here Barak and Deborah assembled the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali previous to attacking Sisera and the host of Jabin, and marched thence with 10,000 men to Tabor (iv. 10).
- (3) Captured by Tiglath-pileser in the reign of Pekah (2 Kings xv. 29).

Kharkor, a place on the east of Jordan, about a day's march from Succoth. Zebah and Zalmunna halted in their flight at Kharkor in apparent security. Gideon appears to have made a flank march and fallen upon them unexpectedly from the east, and not from the west, the quarter whence they would expect him. The Midianites were again routed and their two princes captured (viii. 10-11).

Kitron, a town in Zebulun, mentioned as remaining in the possession of the Canaanites (i. 30).

Kishon, a river draining the plain of Esdraelon. The basin is enclosed by Mount Carmel and the Samaria range on the south, by Gilboa and Tabor on the east, and by the mountains of Galilee on the north. The river flows in a north-westerly direction, emptying itself into the Mediterranean in the bay of Akka. Till it receives the streams from Carmel it is a mere torrent, but is subject to sudden and dangerous overflow after rain or the melting of the snow on Tabor in early spring. On such occasions the country, especially near Megiddo, becomes a veritable quagmire and almost impassable. Under such circumstances the chariots of Sisera would be hopelessly entangled in the morass.

An incident similar to the defeat of Sisera occurred at the battle of Mount Tabor, April, 1799, when the Kishon overflowed, and many of the Turkish army were drowned.

The river Kishon is the scene of two notable incidents in Israelite history.

- (1) The defeat of Sisera and the destruction of his army. "*The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon*" (v. 21).
- (2) The slaughter of the prophets of Baal by Elijah after the memorable appeal to the people on Carmel. "*Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slew them there*" (1 Kings xviii. 40).

Kirjath-arba (see Hebron).

Kirjath-arim, or Kirjath-jearim (*the city of the woods*). A town of Judah about nine miles to the north-west of Jerusalem, lying on the border of Judah and Benjamin. It was a Gibeonite city (Josh. ix. 17).

When the ark was restored by the Philistines it came to Beth-shemesh. The men of Beth-shemesh were smitten for the sin of looking into the ark, so they entreated the men of Kirjath-jearim to come and fetch it. The ark rested at Kirjath-jearim for twenty years during the reign of Saul and was brought thence by David (2 Sam. vi. 3).

Notice in Judges.

The 600 Danites on their march against Laish encamped at Kirjath-jearim, and called the place Mahaneb-Dan (*the camp of Dan*) (xviii. 12).

Kirjath-sepher (see Debir).

Laish (see Dan).

Lebonah, a spot to the north of Shiloh, on or near the road from Bethel to Shechem. It is mentioned in connection with the feast at which the Benjamites carried off the maidens. It is named evidently with the intention of marking the situation of Shiloh (xxi. 19).

Lehi, in Judah, probably on the borders of Dan, near the rock Etam. It was the scene of Samson's exploit when he slew a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass. Samson gave the name Ramath-Lehi (= *the jaw-bone height*), to the scene of the exploit (xv. 17).

Mahaneb-Dan, the camp of Dan, said in xiii. 25, to be between Zorah and Eshtaol, and in xviii. 12, to be near Kirjath-jearim. All that can be definitely ascertained is that it was some encampment of the Danites when pressed back by the Philistines from the plain into the hill country.

Megiddo, an important position on the southern extremity of the plain of Esdraelon, commanding a pass from the north into the hill country. It was the scene of important battles in the history of the Israelites.

Notices.

- (1) It was captured by Joshua in his northern campaign (Josh. xii. 21).
- (2) It was near the scene of the defeat of Sisera (v. 19).
- (3) It was the scene of the death of Ahaziah, King of Judah, in the revolt of Jehu against Jehoram. "*He fled to Megiddo and died there*" (2 Kings ix. 27).
- (4) Josiah fought against Pharaoh, King of Egypt, at Megiddo, where he met his death (2 Kings xxiii. 29).

Notices in Judges.

- (1) The tribe of Manasseh was unable to expel the Canaanites from Megiddo (i. 27).
- (2) The army of Sisera was encamped near "*Taanach and the waters of Megiddo*" (v. 19).

The waters of Megiddo are the brooks, of which there are several, which run between Taanach and Megiddo into the Kishon.

Meonenim, a place in the neighbourhood of Shechem, denoting the route by which one of the companies of Abimelech approached Shechem. It should be rendered, "the oak or terebinth of the soothsayers," not as "the plain of Meonenim."

Meroz, mentioned only in the Song of Deborah and Barak (v. 22). It is cursed because its inhabitants took no part in the fight against Sisera. It may have been possible for the inhabitants to cut off the retreat of the Canaanite army. It would appear that, after the battle, the city was destroyed and its inhabitants slain by the victorious Israelites. The site has not been identified, but it must have been near the scene of the battle.

Mesopotamia. The district between the two rivers, Euphrates and Tigris. Nahor, the brother of Abraham settled in Mesopotamia after leaving Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. xxiv. 10).

Abraham sent his servant to Mesopotamia to the home of Bethuel and Laban to fetch a wife (Rebekah) for Isaac (Gen. xxiv. 38).

Jacob went to his uncle Laban in Mesopotamia to escape the vengeance of Esau (Gen. xxviii. 5).

At the time of the Judges Mesopotamia was the seat of a powerful monarchy of which Chushan-rishaim was king (iii. 10).

Later this district was the seat first of the Assyrian and then of the Babylonian empire.

Millo. The name means a rampart. Hence Millo is unquestionably the name of the castle or citadel of Shechem, and "*the house of Millo*," signifies the garrison of fort Millo (ix. 6).

Minnith, a place on the east of Jordan. Jephthah pursued and slaughtered the Ammonites as far as Minnith (xi. 33).

Mizpah or Mizpeh (*watch tower*). There are many places of this name in Palestine. The tribes beyond Jordan assembled at Mizpeh in Gilead to meet the Ammonites (x. 17). This is probably the Mizpeh where Laban and Jacob made their covenant (Gen. xxxi. 49).

(2) The Israelites assembled at Mizpeh to discuss the outrage at Gibeah and to decide upon their action (xx. 1).

This Mizpeh was in Benjamin on the frontier of Ephraim and about four or five miles from Gibeah. The situation was most suitable for the gathering. Beth-el was about ten miles distant, and the ark was brought to that place so that they might enquire of the Lord (xx. 18 and 27).

Moreh, the Hill of. The eminence at the foot of which lay the Midianite camp previous to the attack of Gideon.

It must have been in the valley of Jezreel on the north side of the valley, and to the north of Gideon's army (vii. 1).

It has been identified with the "Little Hermon" of modern travellers, which encloses the plain two or three miles north of Gilboa, which shuts it in on the south (S.C.).

Mount of the Amalekites. A mountainous district in Ephraim, in which was situated Pirathon, the birth-place and burial-place of Abdon, the Judge (xiii. 15).

It may have gained the name—

- (1) From some early settlement of the Amalekites.
- (2) From some circumstance connected with either :—
 - (a) The oppression of Moab and Amalek under Eglon.
 - (b) The raids of Midian and Amalek in the time of Gideon.
- (3) From being the scene of some signal victory over Amalek, as the rock Oreb, and the winepress of Zeeb, took their names from the Midianite chieftains.

The fact that some spot in Mount Ephraim was known as the Mount of the Amalekites, explains the allusion in the song of Deborah, "*Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek*" (v. 14), *i.e.* of Ephraim came those who occupied the mount of the Amalekites in Mount Ephraim.

Nahalol or Nahallal, a city in Zebulun from which they did not expel the Canaanite inhabitants (i. 30).

It was a Levitical city assigned to the Merarites (Josh. xxi. 35).

Nobah, in the territory of Manassch, on the east of Jordan. Originally the name was Kenath, but it was captured by Nohab and named after the conqueror (Num. xxxii. 42). It is mentioned along with Jogbehah, as marking the route of the flanking march by which Gideon surprised the Midianite princes, Zebah and Zalmunna, in their halt at Kharkor (viii. 10-11).

Negeb or south country (see p. liv.).

Ophrah, the native place of Gideon, probably a village belonging to Joash. It is styled "Ophrah of the Abiezrites" to distinguish it from Ophrah in Benjamin. It was situated in the tribe of Western Manasseh, near the northern boundary of Ephraim, and not far from Shechem.

Notices in Judges.

- (1) The angel of the Lord visited Gideon as he was threshing wheat, and called him to deliver Israel (vi. 11-24).
- (2) At Ophrah Gideon pulled down the altar of Baal (vi. 23-32).
- (3) After his victory over the Midianites Gideon resided at Ophrah (ix. 5).
- (4) Here he placed the ephod which he made (viii. 27).
- (5) Gideon was buried at Ophrah (viii. 32).

Penuel or Peniel = (the face of God), a place between Succoth and the Jabbok. Jacob gave the name Peniel to the place after he had wrestled with God, because he "had seen God face to face" (Gen. xxxii. 30).

During Gideon's pursuit of the Midianites on the east of Jordan the men of Penuel refused to give him bread for his faint and weary troops.

Gideon pressed on and threatened to break down the tower of the city on his return. After the rout of the host of Zebah and Zalmunna and the capture of these princes, Gideon returned and fulfilled his threat by beating down the tower of Penuel and slaying the men of the city (viii. 8-17).

Pirathon, "*in the land of Ephraim in the mount of the Amalekites.*" Abdon the judge was the son of Hillel a Pirathonite, and was buried in Pirathon (xii. 15).

Ramah, in Benjamin. The Levite endeavoured to reach either Gibeah or Ramah in preference to staying for the night at Jebus or Jerusalem.

It was a frontier fortress about 5 or 6 miles from Jerusalem and commanding the high road from the north to Jerusalem.

It was the residence of Samuel (1 Sam. vii. 17).

Baasha endeavoured to fortify Ramah against Asa. Asa bought the assistance of Benhadad, king of Syria, who invaded the north of Israel and compelled Baasha to abandon his purpose. Asa fortified Geba and Mizpeh with the material left by Baasha.

The march of the King of Assyria described by Isaiah indicates the position of Ramah and other towns exactly. "*At Michmash he hath laid up his carriages: They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid*" (Is. x. 28-29).

Thus Michmash is on the north side of the ravine, Geba on the south, and Ramah still further to the south.

Notices in Judges.

- (1) Deborah judged Israel "*under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim*" (iv. 5).
- (2) The Levite on his way to Mount Ephraim purposed to reach either Gibeah or Ramah in preference to staying at Jebus for the night (xix. 13).

Rehob, a Levitical city in the tribe of Asher, out of which they did not expel the Canaanites (i. 31).

Rock Rimmon, an inaccessible cliff in which six hundred Benjamites took refuge after the capture of Gibeah. It is in "*the wilderness*," i.e. the wild country in the east of Benjamin lying between the central highland and the Jordan valley.

Seirath (*woody* district), some spot in the hill country of Ephraim, and from its name evidently a woody mountainous district.

Ehud fled to Seirath after the murder of Eglon (iii. 25-27).

Shaalbim, mentioned as one of the towns in the tribe of Dan from which the Amorites were not driven (i. 35).

Shamir, a town in mount Ephraim, the residence and burial-place of Tola the Judge (x. 1, 2).

Shechem, modern Nablous, is in the tribe of Ephraim, lying in the valley between Ebal and Gerizim.

It was a place of importance and sanctity.

Notices.

- (1) It was the first resting-place of Abraham when he migrated from Haran, "*and Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain (or oak) of Moreh*" (Gen. xii. 6).
- (2) Jacob, on his return from Padan-aram, bought "a parcel of a field" for an hundred pieces of money, from the children of Hamor, the father of Shechem (Gen. xxxiii. 19, Josh. xxiv. 32. St. John iv. 5).

- (3) The outrage on Dinah, Jacob's daughter, and the massacre of the Shechemites by Simeon and Levi are recounted in Gen. xxxiv. 6-31.
- (4) In the distribution of the land Shechem fell to the lot of Ephraim. It was assigned to the Levites, and became a city of refuge (Josh. xxi. 20-21).
- (5) Joshua assembled the people at Shechem in order to deliver his counsels to them (Josh. xxiv. 1-25).
- (6) The history of Abimelech and his dealings with Shechem are recorded in Judges ix.

The sanctity of Shechem and the veneration in which it was held are indicated thus:—

- (1) The oak or terebinth at Shechem was the first resting-place of Abraham (Gen. xii. 6).
- (2) The oak was still in existence at Shechem on Jacob's return from Padan-aram (Gen. xxxv. 4).
- (3) It was the scene of the renewed promulgation of the Law—the blessings were pronounced from Gerizim, and the curses from Ebal (viii. 30-35).
- (4) The Shechemites made Abimelech king by "*the plain of the pillar (i.e. the oak of the monument) that was in Shechem*" (ix. 6).

Shechem was thus important in many ways. It was in the centre of Ephraim, and the capital of that great tribe. It was a place of peculiar sanctity and veneration from its ancient history, and the many sacred events with which it was connected. Hence it was at *Shechem* that all Israel were assembled to make Rehoboam king (1 Kings xii. 1).

The selection of Shechem as the place of meeting was significant. It could only have one meaning: the tribes had assembled to make Rehoboam king, but only on condition of full concessions to their tribal claims.

For the history of Shechem in Judges, see Abimelech (p. xxv.).

Shiloh, a town of Ephraim, situated in a central position in Palestine, and in consequence chosen by Joshua as the resting-place of the ark and the tabernacle.

It was situated "*on the north side of Beth-el, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem and on the south of Lebonah*" (xxi. 19).

It has been suggested that this passage was added at a time when Shiloh was deserted and its site almost forgotten.

The chief points of interest in its history are—

- (1) During the conquest of the land the ark and the tabernacle were at Gilgal. They were then placed at Shiloh (Josh. xviii. 1).
- (2) At Shiloh the land was distributed among the tribes (Josh. xviii.—xx.).
- (3) The Benjamites were saved from destruction as a tribe by being permitted to carry off the "daughters of Shiloh" as wives at a religious feast held there (xxi. 19-24).

- (4) In the days of Eli the ark was carried from Shiloh into battle against the Philistines, by whom it was captured. Though the ark was sent back by the Philistines, it was never taken back to Shiloh.
- (5) The Tabernacle was subsequently removed from Shiloh, being found at Nob in the reign of Saul (1 Sam. xxii. 19), and at Gibeon in the reign of Solomon (1 Chron. xvi. 39).

From that time Shiloh sank into insignificance. Jeroboam chose Beth-el in preference to Shiloh when he decided to set up the golden calves.

- (6) Ahijah the prophet appears to have resided at Shiloh, for the wife of Jeroboam "*went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah,*" when she visited the prophet to enquire "*what should become*" of her sick child. Ahijah foretold the destruction of the house of Jeroboam (1 Kings xiv. 1-16).

Sorek, a valley notable as being the residence of Delilah, who entrapped Samson. It appears to have been near his native place, and to have been in the possession of the Philistines.

Succoth, a town on the east of Jordan, lying between Penuel and the river. It was assigned to the tribe of Gad.

Notices.

- (1) On his return from Padan-aram Jacob halted at Succoth where "*he built him an house, and made booths for his cattle : therefore the name of the place is called Succoth*" (Gen. xxxiii. 17).
- (2) Gideon, in his pursuit of the Midianites, crossed the Jordan and came first to Succoth and then to Penuel. The people of Succoth refused to supply Gideon's men with food, probably fearing the vengeance of the Midianites should Gideon be unsuccessful. On his return Gideon punished the chief men of Succoth for their refusal (viii. 4-17).
- (3) Succoth is named as the spot where the metal work for the Temple of Solomon was cast. "*The king cast them in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan*" (1 Kings vii. 46).

Taanach, a famous town in the plain of Esdraelon, in the tribe of Manasseh, generally mentioned in connection with Megiddo. "*Taanach by the waters of Megiddo*" (v. 19). It was near the scene of the defeat of Sisera.

Tabbath, only mentioned in describing the course of the flight of the Midianite host when routed by Gideon, "*the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath*" (vii. 22).

Tabor, a mountain in the north-east of the plain of Esdraelon, rising abruptly from the plain. The place mentioned in Joshua is not the mountain but a town of the same name.

- (1) Barak assembled his forces at Mount Tabor (iv. 6-15).
- (2) Zebah and Zalmunna, princes of Midian, slew the brothers of Gideon at Tabor (viii. 18).

Thebez, identified with Tubas, thirteen miles north of Shechem. The inhabitants of Thebez appear to have sided with Gaal in his revolt against Abimelech (p. xxv.).

The place is memorable for the death of Abimelech in the siege of the tower (see Abimelech).

Timnath. The modern Timneh, in the tribe of Dan. Samson took his wife from Timnath. It is the scene of the marriage feast and of the riddle. In the neighbourhood of Timnath, Samson slew the lion and set fire to the crops of the Philistines.

Timnath-heres or **Timnah-serah**, the inheritance or portion of Joshua, situated in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. There Joshua was buried (Judges ii. 9).

Tob. Jephthah, when banished from the home of his father, Gilead, took refuge in the land of Tob. It was evidently in the land of Syria for Syrians of Ish-tob (*men of Tob*) assisted the Ammonites against David (2 Sam. x. 5-8).

Zaanaim, a plain near Kedesh-Naphtali, where Heber the Kenite had pitched his tent. It was the scene of the death of Sisera (iv. 11-24).

Zalmon, Mount, a hill near Shechem, evidently wooded. Abimelech and his men went up to Mount Zalmon, and each cut down a bough. They placed the wood thus gathered against the hold of the house of the god Baal-berith and set fire to it. All those who had taken refuge in the tower perished in the conflagration (ix. 48-49). Dean Stanley supposes it to be the same as Mount Ebal.

Zephath, a place in the Jordan valley, mentioned in connection with the flight of the Midianites from Gideon (vii. 22).

Zererath, probably the same as Zaredath, Zaredah, or Zarthan. Zaredah was the birth-place of Jeroboam.

The brass work for Solomon's Temple was cast at Zaredath or Zarthan (1 Kings vii. 46).

The name occurs in the passage of the Jordan as denoting the position of the city Adam (Josh. iii. 16).

It is situated in the Jordan valley, and is mentioned in Judges as marking the line of flight of the Midianites when routed by Gideon (vii. 22).

Zidon, or **Sidon**, an ancient and wealthy city of Phœnicia, on the Mediterranean, about 20 miles north of Tyre. In early times it is clear that Zidon was the more important of the two cities, for the reason why Laish was not succoured when attacked by the Danites is given as because "*it was far from Zidon*" (xviii. 28). Had Tyre been of any importance at that time, help could have been sent more readily from that city, seeing that it is much nearer to Laish. The importance of Zidon in the time of Joshua and the Judges is confirmed by the fact that the Phœnicians or northern Canaanites are often described as Zidonians.

Zidon was in the tribe of Asher, but the Canaanites were expelled from the city (i. 31).

Zorah, a town of Dan. The residence of Manoah, and the native place of Samson (xiii. 2).

CHRONOLOGY.

It is impossible to determine the chronology of the Book of Judges with any accuracy. The numbers found in the book itself are:—

1. Oppression by Chushan-rishathaim (iii. 8)*	.. ..	8 years
Deliverance by Othniel and rest (iii. 11)	.. ..	40 "
2. Oppression by Moab (iii. 14) .. ..	.. ..	18 "
Deliverance by Ehud and rest (iii. 30) .. ..	.. ..	80 "
3. Oppression by the Canaanites under Jabin (iv. 3)	.. ..	20 "
Deliverance by Deborah and Parak and rest (v. 31)	.. ..	40 "
4. Oppression by Midian (vi. 1) .. ..	.. ..	7 "
Deliverance by Gideon and rest (viii. 28)	.. ..	40 "
The reign of Abimelech (ix. 22) .. ..	.. ..	3 "
Tola's judgeship (x. 2) .. ..	.. ..	23 "
Jair's judgeship (x. 3) .. ..	.. ..	22 "

301 years

5. Oppression by Ammon (x. 8) .. ..	.. ..	18 years
Deliverance by Jephthah and rest (xii. 7)	.. ..	6 "
Ibzan's judgeship .. ..	.. ..	7 "
Elon's judgeship .. ..	.. ..	10 "
Abdon's judgeship .. ..	.. ..	8 "
6. Oppression by the Philistines (xiii. 1) .. ..	.. ..	40 "
Samson's judgeship (xvi. 31) .. ..	.. ..	(20) "

390 years

Additional notes of time are:—

(a) The wanderings in the wilderness .. ..	.. ..	40 years
(b) Estimated period of Joshua .. ..	.. ..	20 "

450 years

(c) Eli's judgeship .. ..	.. ..	40 years
(d) Samuel and Saul .. ..	.. ..	40 "
(e) Reign of David .. ..	.. ..	40 "
(f) Reign of Saul till building of the Temple .. ..	.. ..	3 "

573 years

We have the following notices of specified periods:—

1. Jephthah states "*That Israel dwelt. . . in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon three hundred years*" (xi. 26).

Referring to the table above, it will be seen that from the invasion by Chushan-rishathaim to the death of Jair is given as 301 years. To this number must be added (a) the duration of the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, (b) and probably the duration of the Ammonite oppression, viz. 18 years.

Therefore Jephthah was justified in stating that the land along the banks of the Arnon had been in possession of Israel for at least 300 years.

2. St. Paul states "*He gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years*" (xiii. 20).

Again referring to the above table it will be seen that including 40 years for the wanderings in the wilderness, and 20 years for Joshua's rule, we get from the Exodus to the end of Samson's judgeship (Samson is the last of the judges) a period of 450 years.

But the generally recognized text gives as a rendering of St. Paul's speech the following translation. "He gave them their land for an inheritance for about four hundred and fifty years, and after these things he gave them judges."

If we follow this translation we must calculate the 450 years as stated by St. Paul as extending from the date of the promise to Abraham to the conquest under Joshua.

3. The notice of the date of the building of the Temple. "*And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign . . . that he began to build the house of the Lord*" (1 Kings vi. 1).

The date usually fixed for the Exodus, B.C. 1491, and the date of the accession of Solomon (confirmed by Egyptian monuments), as 1015, give a period of 476 years, and render it most probable that the length of time named in Kings is very nearly approximate to the actual duration of the period.

There are three great difficulties in assigning positive dates to the events of Judges.

1. The uncertainty of the period between the completion of the conquest and the death of Joshua.
2. The figures given for the periods of rest as 40 and 80 years must be round numbers; by some commentators these periods are regarded as one or two generations.
3. The probability that in the latter days of the Judges there was an overlapping, i.e. that Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon, in the north, were contemporaries of Samson, Eli and Samuel, in the south.

CHRONOLOGY ACCORDING TO KIEL.

Principal Events	Duration.	Date B.C.
From Exodus to entrance into Canaan.	40	1492—1452
Conquest of Canaan by Joshua.	7	1452—1445
From Division of the land to invasion by Chushan-rishathaim	10	1445—1435
Death of Joshua	—	about 1442
Wars with the Canaanites	—	1442
War of the nation against Benjamin	—	1436
Oppression by Chushan-rishathaim	8	1435—1427
Deliverance by Othniel and rest	40	1427—1387
Oppression by the Moabites	18	1387—1369
Deliverance by Ehud and rest	80	1369—1289
Shamgar defeats the Philistines	—	—
Oppression by the Canaanites under Jabin	20	1289—1269
Deliverance by Deborah and Barak and rest	40	1269—1229
Oppression by the Midianites	7	1229—1222
Deliverance by Gideon and rest	40	1222—1182
Reign of Abimelech	3	1182—1179
Tola's judgeship	23	1179—1156
Jair's judgeship	22	1154—1134
Eli, high priest and judge	—	1154—1114

Oppression.

(a) *In the East.*(b) *In the West.*

(a) <i>In the East.</i>			(b) <i>In the West.</i>		
Duration.	Date B.C.		Duration.	Date B.C.	
Ammon ..	18	1184—1116	Philistines..	40	1134—1094
Jephthah judge	6	1116—1110	Capture of the	—	about 1114
Ibzan judge ..	7	1110—1103	Ark ..	—	1116—1096
Elon judge ..	10	1103—1093	Samson judge	—	—
Abdon judge ..	8	1093—1085	Samuel a s	—	—
			prophet ..	—	1114
			Defeat of the	—	—
			Philistines	—	1094
			Samuel judge	19	1094—1075
			Saul king ..	20	1075—1055
			David king at	—	—
			Hebron ..	7	1055—1048
			David king at	—	—
			Jerusalem	33	1048—1015
			Solomon to build-	—	—
			ing of Temple	3	1015—1012

480

The above is the most successful attempt to account for the period between the Exodus and the Building of the Temple as lasting 480 years. But the period assigned by Kiel to Joshua (10 years) is generally considered to be insufficient.

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THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

INTRODUCTION.

The Continuation of the Conquest of Canaan.

The Expedition of Judah and Simeon.

1. ¹Now after the ²death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel ³asked the LORD, saying, ⁴Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? ² And the LORD ⁵said, Judah ⁶shall go up: behold, I have delivered the ⁷land into his hand. ³ And Judah said unto ⁸Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him. ⁴ And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the ⁹Canaanites and the ¹⁰Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in ¹¹Bezek ten thousand men. ⁵ And they ¹²found ¹³Adonibezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. ⁶ But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him and ¹⁴caught him, and cut off his ¹⁵thumbs and his great ¹⁶toes. ⁷ And Adonibezek said, ¹⁷Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, ¹⁸gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so ¹⁹God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died. ⁸ Now the children of Judah ²⁰had fought against Jerusalem, and ²¹had taken it, and ²²smitten ²¹it with the ²²edge of the sword, and set the city on fire. ⁹ And ²³afterward the children

a see R. V. and comment, p. 84.

¹And,—denoting a connection with the Book of Joshua, and a continuous narrative.

²See Intro., p. xiii., note.

³By the Urim and Thummim.

⁴Which tribe shall go up first to take possession of the land allotted to it?

⁵By the Urim and Thummim.

⁶From Gilgal in the plain to the hill country of Judah.

⁷*i.e.* the portion that fell to the lot of Judah.

⁸For the lot of Simeon was in the lot of Judah. Simeon and Judah were sons of Leah. To help me to win the territory assigned to me.

⁹Intro., p. lvii.

¹⁰Intro., p. lviii.

¹¹Intro., p. lxxiii.

¹²Took by surprise.

¹³Lord of Bezek (Intro., p. xiv.).

¹⁴Took him prisoner.

¹⁵Thumb, to prevent the use of sword or bow.

¹⁶Toe, to render quick movement impossible.

¹⁷The civil wars amongst the Canaanites had clearly weakened their power of resistance to the invading Israelites.

¹⁸Food was flung to them as to a dog.

¹⁹A just retribution for his own cruelty.

²⁰Fought, took, smote.

²¹The city only, not the citadel of the Jebusites.

²²Denoting the slaughter of the inhabitants.

²³*i.e.* when Jerusalem had been captured.

of Judah ²⁴went down to fight against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the ^b²⁵mountain, and in the ²⁶south and in the ²⁷valley.

^b see B.V. and comment, p. 84.

The Capture of Hebron and Debir.

10 And ¹Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in ²Hebron: (now the name of Hebron before was ³Kirjath-arba:) and they slew ⁴Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi. 11 And from thence ⁵he went against the inhabitants of ⁶Debir; and the name of Debir before was ⁷Kirjath-sepher: 12 And Caleb said, ⁸He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give ⁹Achsah my daughter to wife. 13 And ¹⁰Othniel the son of ¹¹Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him ¹²Achsah his daughter to wife. 14 And it came to pass, ¹³when she came to him, that ¹⁴she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, ¹⁵What wilt thou? 15 And she said unto him, Give me a ¹⁶blessing: for *athou hast given me a* ¹⁷south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the ¹⁸upper springs and the ¹⁹nether springs.

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 84.

¹⁶ A present.

¹⁷ Dry and barren, being situated in the Negeb.

¹⁸ Near Debir there is a valley with many springs, some in the upper and some in the lower part of the valley. ¹⁹ nether = lower.

The Settlement of the Kenites.

16 And the ¹children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law, went up out of the ²city of palm trees with the children of Judah into ³the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of ⁴Arad; and ⁵they went and dwelt among the people.

²⁴ Descended from the high land.

²⁵ Hill country of Judah.

²⁶ The Negeb or south country.

²⁷ The lowland plain.

¹ Under the leadership of Caleb (Josh. xiv., xv.). An expedition undertaken in the lifetime of Joshua.

² Intro., p. lxxviii.

³ The city of Arba.

⁴ The three sons of Anak from whom the great families of the Anakim took their names.

⁵ Caleb.

⁶ Intro., p. lxxiii.

⁷ City of the book.

⁸ Debir was an important town, and from the offer of Caleb must have occupied a strong position.

⁹ So Saul promised Merab, his daughter, to David as wife.

¹⁰ Intro., p. xiv.

¹¹ Intro., p. xlix.

¹² Intro., p. xiv.

¹³ As she left her home to accompany Othniel to Debir.

¹⁴ Achsah appears to have urged Othniel to make the request. On his refusal she determined to make the appeal herself to her father.

The field, *i.e.* a well-known field, in which were the springs of water she desired.

¹⁵ What to thee, *i.e.* what is the matter?

¹ Intro., p. lxi.

² Jericho.

³ Intro., p. liv.

⁴ Intro., p. lxx.

⁵ The Kenites had joined themselves to Judah and now settle in the territory of that tribe.

Continuation of the Expedition of Judah and Simeon.

17 And ¹Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited ²Zephath, and ³utterly destroyed it. And the name of the city was ⁴called Hormah. 18 Also Judah took ⁵Gaza with the ^a*coast* thereof, and ⁶Askelon with the ^a*coast* thereof, and ⁷Ekron with the ^a*coast* thereof. 19 And the ⁹LORD was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the ^b¹⁰*mountain*; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had ¹¹chariots of iron. 20 And they gave Hebron ¹²unto Caleb, as Moses said: and he expelled thence the ¹³three sons of Anak. 21 And the ¹⁴children of Benjamin did not drive out the ¹⁵Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the ¹⁶Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem ¹⁷unto this day.

a see R.V. and comment, p. 84. *b* see R.V. and comment, p. 84.

¹⁶ Intro, p. lix.

¹⁷ An indication that the narrative was written before the capture of Jerusalem by David.

The Capture of Bethel.

22 And the house of Joseph, they also went up against Beth-el: and the LORD was with them. 23 And the ¹house of Joseph sent to ^a*descry* ²Beth-el. (Now the name of the city before was Luz.) 24 And the ³spies saw a man come forth out of the city, and they said unto him, Shew us, we pray thee, the ⁴entrance into the city, and ⁵we will shew thee mercy. 25 And when he shewed them the entrance into the city, ⁶they smote the city with the edge of the sword;

a see R.V. and comment, p. 84.

¹ Judah now assists Simeon to win the south.

² Intro., p. lxxviii.

³ Devoted it (as in the case of Jericho).

⁴ The scene of the defeat of the Israelites in the first invasion of the land (Num. xiv. 45), and in consequence vowed to destruction (Int., p. lxxviii.).

⁵ Intro., p. lxxiv.

⁶ Intro., p. lxxi.

⁷ Intro., p. lxxiv.

Three of the five Philistine cities.

⁸ Border.

⁹ Because the expedition was undertaken in obedience to Divine command.

¹⁰ Hill district.

¹¹ Wooden chariots strengthened with iron. These chariots were formidable to the Israelite infantry. Cowed by the chariots the faith of Judah failed them.

¹² See Joshua xiv. 12-15.

¹³ See v. 10.

¹⁴ Jerusalem was partly in Benjamin, partly in Judah.

¹⁵ The Jebusites kept possession of the citadel.

An instance of Israel not capturing the hill country.

i.e. the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh watched it closely by surrounding it with pickets.

² Intro., p. lxxii.

³ Watchers.

⁴ The way to the gate, or the undefended spot, or it may have been a secret entrance known to few.

⁵ They bribed him by the promise of sparing his life.

⁶ Slaughtered the inhabitants.

but they ⁷let go the man and all his family. ²⁶ And the man went into the land of the ⁸Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz : which is the name thereof unto this day.

⁷ Kept their promise and spared his life.

⁸ Intro., p. lviii. To the north of Palestine extending from Syria on the west to the Euphrates on the east.

The Apathy of Israel in not Completely Subduing the Heathen Nations.

²⁷ Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of ¹Beth-shean and ²her towns, nor ³Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of ⁴Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of ⁵Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of ⁶Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites ⁷would dwell in that land. ²⁸ And it came to pass, when Israel ⁸was strong, that they put the Canaanites to ^atribute, and did not utterly drive them out. ²⁹ Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in ¹⁰Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them. ³⁰ Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol: but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became ^btributaries. ³¹ Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of ¹²Accho, nor the inhabitants of ¹³Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of ¹⁴Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: ³² But the Asherites ¹⁵dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out. ³³ Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of

¹ Intro., p. lxxii.

² *Lit.* 'daughters,' i.e. dependent cities of which the greater town was the centre and regarded as the metropolis.

³ Intro., p. lxxxvii.

⁴ Intro., p. lxxxix.

⁵ Intro., p. lxxxix.

⁶ Intro., p. lxxxii.

A chain of fortresses from Bethshean on the Jordan to Dor on the Mediterranean defending the passes into Northern Palestine.

These are cities of Manasseh in the tribe of Issachar.

⁷ i.e. persistently occupied the district, refusing to surrender.

Would = will to.

⁸ i.e. and able to subdue the enemy; they did not do so, but adopted what appeared to be the more remunerative policy, and enslaved them instead of destroying them. They paid dearly in the future for their negligence and short-sighted policy.

⁹ Task work. Forbidden by the law (Ex. xxiii. 31-33; Deut. vii. 1-6). This act of disobedience had fatal consequences.

¹⁰ Intro., p. lxxv. Captured by Pharaoh and given as a wedding present to his daughter, the Queen of Solomon (1 Kings ix. 16).

¹¹ Subject to task work.

¹² Intro., p. lxx.

¹³ Intro., p. lxxxviii.

¹⁴ Intro., p. lxx.

a see R.V. and comment, p. 85. *b* see R.V. and comment, p. 85.

— We may remark the imperfect conquest of the north. All the important wns, particularly the great sea-ports, were never in the possession of Israel.

¹⁵ Thus the Canaanites did not dwell among Asher, but Asher among the Canaanites. A significant proof of the incomplete nature of the conquest.

¹⁶Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath: but ¹⁷he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became ¹⁸*tributaries* unto them. ³⁴ And the ¹⁹Amorites ²⁰forced the children of Dan into the ²¹mountain; for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: ³⁵ But the Amorites ²²would dwell in mount Heres in ²³Aijalon, and in ²⁴Shaalbim: yet the ²⁵hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became *tributaries*. ³⁶ And the ²⁶coast of the Amorites was from the ²⁷going up to ²⁸Akrabbim, from ²⁹the rock, and ³⁰upward.

c see R.V. and comment, p. 85. *d* see R.V. and comment, p. 84.

²¹ Petra, the capital of Idumæa.

²⁹ *i.e.* northward.

¹⁶ Intro., p. lxxiii.

¹⁷ See note *v.* 32.

¹⁸ Subject to task work.

¹⁹ Intro., p. lix.

²⁰ Crushed or squeezed.

²¹ Hill country.

Dan, though apparently (*v.* 17) at one time gaining the sea-coast, was forced back into the hill country. Here their footmen held their own against the Amorites, but the rich plain at the foot of the hills was held by the Amorites. In the plain the chariots gave the native races the superiority. Hence the migration (see Chap. xviii.).

²² Willed to dwell (see *v.* 27).

²³ Intro., p. lxx.

²⁴ Intro., p. lxxxv.

²⁵ Ephraim came to the assistance of Dan.

²⁶ Border.

²⁷ Ascent.

²⁹ Intro., p. lxx.

An Angel Rebukes the Idolatry of the People.

2. And ¹an angel of the LORD came up from ²Gilgal to ³Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swear unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my ⁴covenant with you. ² And ye shall make no ⁵league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? ³ Wherefore I also said, ⁶I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as ⁷thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a ⁸snare unto you. ⁴ And it came to pass, ⁹when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children

¹ *Lit.* the angel.

² Intro., p. lxxvi.

³ Weepers, taking its name from the incident in *v.* 4.

⁴ The promise to give the Israelites possession of the land on condition that they suppress idolatry (Ex. xxxiv. 10).

⁵ *Lit.* covenant.

Jehovah had laid two special injunctions upon Israel.

(1) To make no covenant with the nations of Canaan (Deut. vii. 2).

(2) To destroy their altars (Deut. vii. 5).

⁶ God withdraws from the covenant.

⁷ Vexers, adversaries.

⁸ Traps, leading them into sin, and thus causing them to incur the displeasure of Jehovah.

⁹ The message of the

Angel affects the Israelites deeply. They show sorrow for sin (weeping), and signs of repentance (sacrifice).

of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. 5 And they called the name of that place ¹⁰Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.

¹⁰Weepers,—probably, but not necessarily, near Shiloh (see Intro., p. lxxiii).

The Condition of the People under Joshua. The Death of Joshua.

6 And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. 7 And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the ¹great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. 8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the ²servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. 9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in ³Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill ⁴Gaash. 10 And also all that generation ⁵were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which ⁶knew not the LORD, nor yet ⁷the works which he had done for Israel.

This section is intended:

(1) To connect the Book of Judges with the Book of Joshua.

(2) To contrast the faithfulness of Israel in the time of Joshua with their idolatry in the period immediately succeeding.

The influence of these elders was sufficiently strong to keep the people free from open idolatry.

i.e. The passage of Jordan.

The fall of Jericho.

The capture of Ai.

The battles of Beth-horon and Merom.

² See note, p. 99.

³ Timnath-serah (Josh. xxv. 30). Intro., p. lxxxviii.

⁴ Intro., p. lxxiv.

⁵ A common phrase for "died and were buried."

⁶ By actual experience of His power.

⁷ The miracles by which He had given them possession of the land.

ISRAEL UNDER THE JUDGES.

The Idolatry of Israel after the Death of Joshua.

11 And the children of Israel did ¹evil in the sight of the LORD, and served ²Baalim: 12 And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the ^a ³people that were round about them, and ⁴bowed themselves unto them, and

a see R.V. and comment, p. 85.

¹ *Lit.* the evil, i.e. the forbidden sins, which brought upon them the predicted punishment.

² Plural of Baal. Here includes all heathen deities = false gods.

³ Nations.

⁴ i.e. in idolatrous worship = prostrated themselves.

⁵provoked the LORD to anger. 13 And they forsook the LORD, and served ⁶Baal and ⁷Ashtaroth. 14 And the anger of the LORD was ⁸hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and ⁹he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could ¹⁰not any longer stand before their enemies. 15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD ¹¹had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed. 16 Nevertheless the LORD raised up ¹²judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. 17 And yet they ¹³would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a ¹⁴whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way, which their ¹⁵fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so. 18 And when the LORD raised them up judges, then ¹⁶the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. 19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ¹⁷ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. 20 And the anger of the LORD was ¹⁸hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people

⁶ Not only because of the idolatry, but also because of the abominable rites connected with it.

⁶ Intro., p. xliii.

⁷ Intro., p. xliii. The plural of Ashtoreth or Astarte, the female deity. Here = false goddesses.

⁸ Kindled.

⁹ God abandons His people and delivers them to their enemies. This act is described as "selling them." Restoration is described by the word "redeem," i.e. to buy them back.

¹⁰ Israel without Divine assistance is unable to resist the attacks of the heathen nations.

¹¹ See Deut. xxviii.

¹² Champions, deliverers.

¹³ They were not only disobedient to the judge, but after his death relapsed into idolatry once more.

¹⁴ Idolatry is always regarded as spiritual unfaithfulness to the covenant. In addition the word literally describes the abominable rites of Baal and Ashtaroth.

¹⁵ i.e. those who lived in the time of Joshua.

¹⁶ The deliverance of Israel is always described as being brought about by the help of Jehovah.

¹⁷ *Lit.* "They let nothing fall of their deeds."

This section is a summary of the Book of Judges.

The course of events is a regular round of:

- (1) Idolatry.
- (2) Oppression by a heathen nation.
- (3) Repentance.
- (4) Deliverance, to be again followed by idolatry.

¹⁸ Kindled.

hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice: 21 I also ¹⁹will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: 22 That ²⁰through them I may ²¹prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it or not. 23 Therefore the LORD ²²left those nations, without driving them out ²³hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

The Effect of the Heathen Nations upon Israel.

3. Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as ¹many of Israel as had not known ²all the wars of Canaan; 2 Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof: 3 Namely, ³five lords of the Philistines, and all the ⁴Canaanites, and the ⁵Sidonians, and the ⁶Hivites that dwelt in mount ⁷Lebanon, from mount ⁸Baal-hermon unto the entering in of ⁹Hamath. 4 And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. 5 And the children of Israel dwelt ¹⁰among the ¹¹Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: 6 And they ¹²took their daughters to be their

¹⁹ The apostasy of Israel prevented the fulfilment of God's promise.

²⁰ By means of.

²¹ Test, try.

²² The nations were not driven out all at once because of God's purpose. They were left in order to test if Israel's faith was sufficient to keep them from being seduced into idolatry.

²³ Quickly and completely, not necessarily hurriedly

Nations left for two purposes.

(1) To test or try the faith of Israel.

(2) To train them to war.

¹ Clearly a generation living after the days of Joshua.

² i.e. of the wars of the Conquest.

³ The five lords, i.e. of Gaza, Ashdod, Askelon, Gath and Ekron.

The nations left:

(1) Philistines.

(2) Canaanites and Sidonians.

(3) Hivites.

⁴ Intro., p. lxi.

⁵ Intro., p. lvii.

⁶ Intro., p. lxxxviii.

⁷ Intro., p. lviii.

⁸ Intro., p. liii.

⁹ Intro., p. lxxviii.

¹⁰ Intro., p. lxxvii. The northern limit of the land of Canaan.

¹¹ Did not drive them out, but dwelt among them.

¹² For these nations see Intro., p. lvii.

The Gergashites are omitted.

¹² Israel failed to stand the test, for:

(1) They dwelt among the heathen nations.

(2) They intermarried with them.

(3) They adopted the idolatry of the heathen.

(4) They abandoned the worship of Jehovah.

(5) They served Baalim and Ashtaroth.

wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. 7 And the children of Israel did ¹³evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the ¹⁴*groves*.

^a see R. V. and comment, p. 85.

¹³ The evil, *i.e.* what they had been warned against.

¹⁴ The Asheroth (Intro. p. xliii.), the wooden images of the goddess.

Oppression of Chushan-rishathaim. Deliverance by Othniel.

8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was ¹hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of ²Chushan-rishathaim king of ³Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years. 9 And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a ⁴*deliverer* to the children of Israel, who ⁵*delivered* them, even ⁶Othniel the son of ⁷Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim. 11 And the ⁸land had rest ⁹forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

^a see R. V. and comment, p. 85.

¹ Kindled.

² Intro., p. xlvii.

³ Intro., p. lxxiii.

The invasion was directed against the south of Canaan, and probably only the tribe of Judah was affected by it.

⁴ A saviour (see Acts xiii. 23).

⁵ Saved.

⁶ Intro., p. xiv.

⁷ Intro., p. xlix.

⁸ *i.e.* The district overrun by Chushan.

⁹ Not an exact number of years, but a round number = a generation.

Oppression by Moab. Deliverance by Ehud.

12 And the children of Israel did ¹evil again in the sight of the Lord: and ²the LORD strengthened ³Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, ⁴because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. 13 And he gathered unto him the children of ⁵Ammon and ⁶Amalek, and ⁷went and smote Israel, and possessed the ⁸city of palm trees.

¹ The evil.

² So the oppression was of Divine working.

³ Intro., p. xlvii.

⁴ A punishment to Israel.

⁵ Intro., p. lix.

⁶ Intro., p. lxii.

⁷ The alliance of Moab with them would strengthen Eglon's power (see *v.* 1).

⁸ Jericho, then an unfortified town.

14 So the ⁹children of Israel ¹⁰served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. 15 But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a ¹¹deliverer, ¹²Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man ¹³left-handed: and ¹⁴by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab. 16 But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his ¹⁵raiment upon his right thigh. 17 And he brought the ¹⁶present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man. 18 And when he had made an end to offer ¹⁷the present, he sent away the ¹⁸people that bare the present. 19 But he himself turned again from the ¹⁹quarries that were ²⁰by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, ²¹Keep silence. And all that stood by him, went out from him. 20 And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a ²²summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, ²³I have a message from God unto thee. ²⁴And he arose out of his seat. 21 And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and ²⁵thrust it into his belly: 22 And ²⁶the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and ^a ²⁷the dirt came out. 23 Then Ehud went forth through the ²⁸porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon ²⁹him and

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 85.

⁹ Ante-chamber.

²⁰ i.e. Egion.

⁹ Those near Jericho, probably the tribe of Benjamin only.

¹⁰ Became tributaries to Moab.

¹¹ Saviour.

¹² Intro. p. xiv.

¹³ *Lit.* "shut of his right hand," not having full use of the hand.

¹⁴ A premeditated plot.

Ehud prepares a dagger, places it under his long robe on the right side and so is not suspected of being armed. He makes the occasion of the bringing of the tribute an opportunity for a private interview with the king.

The trumpet call was the signal of success, and the warning to his fellow conspirators to seize the fords of the Jordan.

¹⁵ Flowing garments.

¹⁶ Tribute, which being in kind would require many bearers.

¹⁷ Tribute.

¹⁸ The porters who bore the tribute, or the officials accompanying Ehud.

¹⁹ Graven images.

²⁰ The Gilgal near Jericho (Intro. p. lxxvi).

²¹ Hush. At this signal the attendants of the king quitted the room. Standing is the attitude of Eastern courtiers.

²² *Lit.* "A cool upper storey," i.e. a room with latticed windows on the flat roof of the house where the king sat alone.

²³ i.e. a private message, to be whispered in the king's ear.

²⁴ In reverence, to receive the divine message.

²⁵ Struck a sudden and violent blow.

²⁶ So vigorous was the blow that both blade and handle were driven so far into the body that Ehud could not withdraw his weapon, and now was unarmed.

²⁷ The point of the dagger came out behind.

³⁰locked them. 24 When ³¹he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour were locked, they said, ³²Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber. 25 And ³³they tarried till they ³⁴were ashamed: and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; therefore they took a ³⁵key, and opened them: and, behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth. 26 And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond ³⁶the quarries, and escaped unto ³⁷Seirath. 27 And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the ^b ³⁸mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the ^b ³⁹mount and ⁴⁰he before them. 28 And he said unto them, ⁴¹Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took ⁴²the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over. 29 And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, ⁴³all lusty, and ⁴⁴all men of valour; and there escaped not a man. 30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And ⁴⁵the land had rest ⁴⁶four-score years.

b see R. V. and comment, p. 85.

The Deliverance by Shamgar.

31 And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ¹ox goad: and he also ²delivered Israel.

such a weapon indicates the oppression. The Israelites had been disarmed by the Philistines, so Shamgar was without a sword.

²Saved.

³⁰ See note p. 97.

³¹ Ehud passed unconcernedly through the midst of the attendants.

³² = desires privacy.

³³ The attendants of the king.

³⁴ = perplexed at the lengthened retirement of the king.

³⁵ *lit.* "the opener" (see note, p. 97).

³⁶ Graven images, *i.e.* objects of idolatrous worship. This spot seems to have marked the division between Moabites and Israelites.

³⁷ = the forest, *i.e.* the forest bordering on the cultivated plain near Gilead.

³⁸ Hill country.

³⁹ Hill country.

⁴⁰ *i.e.* as their leader.

⁴¹ Notice the rapidity of Ehud's movements. Evidently the revolt had been well planned.

⁴² *i.e.* the fords near Jericho; thus intercepting the Moabites in their flight and cutting them off from succour.

⁴³ Stout, robust.

⁴⁴ The veteran soldiers of Moab.

⁴⁵ The part oppressed by Moab.

⁴⁶ *i.e.* two generations.

¹ Used by the ploughman to urge on the oxen. A pole eight or ten feet long with a point at one end and a kind of scraper at the other to clean the ploughshare. The use of

The Oppression of Jabin King of Hazor.

4. And the children of Israel again did ¹evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead. ²And the LORD sold them into the hand of ³Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in ⁴Hazor; the captain whose host was ⁵Sisera, which dwelt in ⁶Harosheth of the ⁷Gentiles. ³And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred ⁷chariots of iron; and ⁸twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

¹ The evil, &c. they had once more lapsed into idolatry. This is the great effort of the original inhabitants to regain possession of the land.

² Intro., p. xlviii. Possibly an hereditary official title, as the Pharaohs of Egypt.

³ Intro., p. lxxviii.

⁴ Intro., p. li.

⁵ Intro., p. lxxxvii.

⁶ Nations.

The oppression seems to have been over the northern part of the land.

⁷ see p. 95. Of wood bound with iron. These mili-

tary chariots enabled the Canaanites to regain possession of the northern plain.

⁸ Half a generation.

The Deliverance by Deborah and Barak.

4 And ¹Deborah, a ²prophetess, the wife of ³Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. ⁵And she dwelt under the ⁴palm tree of Deborah between ⁵Ramah and ⁶Beth-el in ^amount ⁷Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. ⁶And she sent and called ⁸Barak the son of Abinoam out of ⁹Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward ¹⁰mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of ¹¹Naphtali and of the children of ¹¹Zebulun? ⁷And I will draw unto thee to the ¹²river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand. ⁸And Barak said unto her, ¹³If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. ⁹And she said, I will surely go with thee: not-

¹ Intro., p. xvi.

² = an inspired woman, not a member of the prophetic order.

³ Intro., p. xlix.

⁴ Under which she sat to give judgment, and which was therefore called after her name.

⁵ Intro., p. lxxxv.

⁶ Intro., p. lxxii.

⁷ Where she would be secure.

⁸ Intro., p. liv.

⁹ Intro., p. xvi.

¹⁰ Intro., p. lxxxii.

¹¹ Intro., p. lxxxvii. By its position it commanded the plain of Esdraelon.

¹² The tribes who had suffered most severely from the oppression of Jabin.

¹³ Intro., p. lxxxi. The river was to play an important part in the subsequent battle. So Sisera is drawn into the position by the providence of Jehovah.

¹⁴ The presence of Deborah would inspire the host under Barak.

Note the weakness of Barak's faith. He is punished by losing the honour of capturing or slaying Sisera.

a see R. V. and comment, p. 86.

withstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for ¹⁴thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the ¹⁵hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰ And Barak called ¹⁶Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men ¹⁷at his feet: and Deborah went up with him. ¹¹ Now ¹⁸Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of ¹⁹Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had ²⁰severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent ^bunto the ²¹plain of ²²Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh. ¹² And ²³they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. ¹³ And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, ²⁴from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon. ¹⁴ And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? ²⁵So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. ¹⁵ And the LORD ²⁶discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera ²⁷lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet. ¹⁶ But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the hosts, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; ²⁸and there was not a man left.

^b see R.V. and comment, p. 86.

²⁸ The Canaanites unable to win their way back to Harosheth through the pass were slaughtered to a man.

¹⁴ Thy pre-eminence.

¹⁵ Jael vs. 17-21.

¹⁶ From Chap. v. 14 it would seem there were detachments from Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.

¹⁷ 'Following him,' or it may mean 'on foot.' A meagre force of 10,000 footmen to meet the great host of cavalry and chariots forming the army of Sisera.

¹⁸ Intro., p. xiviii.

¹⁹ Intro., p. xlviii.

²⁰ The main body of the Kenites had settled in the tribe of Judah (i. 16).

²¹ Better "the oak in Zaanaim."

²² Intro., p. lxxxviii.

²³ The Kenites.

Shewed—reported to.

²⁴ Sisera issued from the fortress of Harosheth, which commanded the western passes, and advanced into the plain.

The movement was intended to bring about a battle in the plain, where his chariots and horsemen could act with advantage. But his manœuvre brought about disaster for the swelling of Kishon rendered the plain a bog which hampered the chariots.

For description of the battle see Kishon, p. lxxxix.

²⁵ Barak strikes the blow at the signal of Deborah and at the right moment descends from the mountain into the plain abandoning the advantages of his position on Mount Tabor, and venturing to meet the Canaanites in the plain. The bursting of the storm made the movement a success.

²⁶ Broke the army up in a panic.

²⁷ Jumped down from the chariot which may have stuck in the morass, departing from the line of flight of the great mass of the fugitives. The host fled westwards, Sisera made his way north-east.

The Death of Sisera.

17 Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to ¹the tent of ²Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for ³there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. 18 And Jael ⁴went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, ⁵Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; ⁶fear not. And when he had ⁷turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with ^a ⁸mantle. 19 And he said unto her, ⁹Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am ¹⁰thirsty. And she opened ¹¹a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. 20 Again he said unto her, ¹²Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man does come and enquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? ¹³that thou shalt say, No. 21 Then Jael Heber's wife took ^b ¹⁴nail of the tent, and took ¹⁵an hammer in her hand, and ¹⁶went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and ¹⁷fastened it into the ground: *for he was* ¹⁸fast asleep and weary. So he died. 22 And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man ¹⁹whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera ²⁰lay dead, and the ^b ²¹nail was in his temples. 23 So ²¹God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. 24 And the hand of the children of Israel

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 86. ^b see R.V. and comment, p. 86. ^c see R.V. and comment, p. 86.

¹⁹ *i.e.* to complete his triumph by the capture or death of the enemy's general.

²⁰ And so the honour of capturing or slaying the Canaanite general was denied to Barak.

²¹ The victory is due to Divine assistance.

¹ The Kenites still lived the life of nomads.

² Intro, p. xlviii.

³ So Sisera naturally expected to find rest and protection.

⁴ Already planning her deed of treachery. She had probably heard of the defeat of the Canaanites.

⁵ Without this invitation Sisera would not enter into the tent of a woman.

⁶ And thus covers her intended treachery.

⁷ The weary fugitive flings himself down as soon as he enters the tent.

⁸ The tent rug.

⁹ Sisera had fled for three days, and would be in a miserable plight.

¹⁰ If he partook of refreshment he would feel he was under the protection of the laws of Eastern hospitality.

¹¹ The bottle, *i.e.* of leather or skin.

¹² Sisera anxious for his safety sets Jael to watch.

¹³ Such an answer is consistent with Oriental duplicity.

Such a reply would ensure Sisera's safety, for the woman's tent would not be entered by a stranger without the woman's permission (see Rahab's answer to the messengers of the king of Jericho, Josh. ii. 4).

¹⁴ One of the tent pegs.

¹⁵ The hammer used to drive the tent pegs into the ground. It was a large wooden mallet.

¹⁶ So as not to disturb him.

¹⁷ The tent pin went through right into the ground.

¹⁸ In a sound sleep. He was weary after his long flight.

Jael committed murder and also violated the laws of hospitality.

^{d32}prospered and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

d see R. V. and comment, p. 68.

²²Lit. "the hand of Israel went on, going on, and being hard," i.e. they followed this victory with further success. The Canaanites were completely subdued.

Instances of women as prophetesses or inspired women are:

1. **Miriam.** "*Miriam the prophetess*" led the women of Israel in a song and dance of triumph after the overthrow of the Egyptians in the Red Sea (Ex. xv. 20-21).
2. **Deborah** the prophetess, who judged Israel, and inspired Barak to march against Sisera (Judges iv.).
3. **Huldah** the prophetess, who in the reign of Josiah was consulted by Hilkiah the priest and others (2 Kings xxii. 14). Her advice led to the religious reformation carried out by Josiah.
4. **Noadiah**, a prophetess in the time of Nehemiah. She joined with Sanballat and Tobiah in their attempt to intimidate Nehemiah (Neh. vi. 14).
5. **Anna**, the prophetess, who, when our Lord was presented in the Temple by his parents, spake of Jesus "to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (St. Luke ii. 38-39).
6. **The four daughters of Philip the Evangelist** "*which did prophesy*" on the occasion of St. Paul's visit to the house of Philip at Cæsarea when the Apostle was on his way to Jerusalem at the conclusion of his last missionary journey (Acts xxi. 8-9).

The Song of Deborah and Barak.

5. Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

2 Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel.
When the people willingly offered themselves.

3 Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;
I, even I, will sing unto the LORD.

I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.

4 LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir,
When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped,
The clouds also dropped water.

The Song is a good example of Hebrew poetry. Hebrew poetry is not metrical but rhythmical. The clauses balance both in rhythm and thought. This balance of the clauses is technically termed 'parallelism.' (See p. xliiv.)

PART I. Prelude (2-3).

2. For the leading of the leaders of Israel.
For the free dedication of the people.
Praise ye Jehovah.

3. Hear, O ye kings; hearken, O ye princes.

I to Jehovah, even I, will sing,

I will sound the harp to Jehovah, the God of Israel.

1. The Exodus (Israel's Redemption) (4-5).

4. Jehovah, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,
When thou marchest out of the field of Edom,

The earth trembled; the heavens also dropped,

Yea, the clouds dropped water.

- 5 The mountains *melted from before the Lord.*
Even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel.
- 6 In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath.
In the days of Jael, the highways were *unoccupied.*
And the travellers walked through byways.
- 7 The *inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased* in Israel,
Until that I Deborah arose,
That I arose a mother in Israel.
- 8 They chose new gods;
Then was war in the gates:
Was there a shield or spear seen,
Among forty thousand in Israel?
- 9 My heart is toward the governors of Israel,
That offered themselves willingly among the people.
Bless ye the Lord.
- 10 *Speak, ye that ride on white asses,*
Ye that sit *in judgment,* and walk by the way.
- 11 *They that are delivered from the noise of archers* in the places of drawing water,
There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD,
5. The mountains *quaked before the face of Jehovah,*
This Sinai before the face of Jehovah, the God of Israel.
2. Israel before the Rising (6-7).
6. In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael the highways were *deserted,*
And the travellers walked through byways.
7. *There ceased to be rulers in Israel; ceased to be,*

Until that I Deborah arose

That I arose a mother in Israel.
3. The change effected by Deborah (8-11).
8. They chose new gods;
Then was war in the gates:

Was there a spear or shield seen

Among forty thousand in Israel?
9. My heart is toward the governors of Israel,
Who freely dedicated themselves among the people.

Praise ye Jehovah.
10. Ye that ride on white asses.

Ye that sit *on rich carpets,*
And ye that walk by the way,
Think of it.
11. *Far from the noise of the archers* in the places of drawing water.

There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of Jehovah.
The righteous acts of his government in Israel:

ANALYSIS OF THE SONG OF DEBORAH.

PART I. A PRELUDE.

1. **The theme of the song.** Praise to Jehovah for the ready devotion shown by leaders and the people.
2. **A description of the power of Jehovah** manifested to His people in the wilderness.
3. **The miserable state of Israel** shewn in:
 - (1) The dangerous state of the high roads, unsafe for travellers.
 - (2) The cessation of all magisterial jurisdiction (for the towns were held by the Canaanites) caused by Israel's idolatry, which had enabled the Canaanites to seize the towns and disarm the population.
4. **Repetition of the theme** (see 1). All classes, the rulers (who ride on white asses), the wealthy (reclining on rich carpets), and the poor walking on foot, are called to join in rehearsing the mighty acts of Jehovah.

PART II. THE RISING AND THE VICTORY.

1. **Introduction** describing the inspiration of Deborah and Barak.
2. **The muster of the Loyal Tribes.** Though only a remnant assembled, yet Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh, Zebulun and Issachar, responded to the call of Barak, the chieftain of Naphtali.
3. **The wavering tribes contrasted with Zebulun and Naphtali.**
 - (a) Reuben and the Eastern tribes spent the time in discussing what policy should be adopted. To them the safety of their flocks was more important than the unity of Israel, and so "Gilead abode beyond Jordan," and took no part in the rising for national unity.
 - (b) Dan was more bent upon obtaining possession of the sea-coast.
 - (c) Asher stayed by the sea-coast, probably because of the danger; for in making their way from west to east they would have to pass Canaanite fortresses.

But Zebulun and Naphtali did not hesitate to risk the dangers of battle and joined Barak on the heights of Tabor.
4. **The Battle and the Victory,** gained by the aid of Jehovah. There is a description of:
 - (a) The gathering of the Canaanites at Megiddo.
 - (b) The storm, and the flooding of the river Kishon.
 - (c) The confusion of the Canaanitish host entangled in the morass.

PART III. THE ISSUES OF THE VICTORY.

- (a) The curse of Meroz.
 - (b) The death of Sisera.
 - (c) The disappointment of the mother of Sisera, watching in vain for the return of her son in triumph bringing with him captives and spoil.
 - (d) **Epilogue,** including—

An invocation that a similar fate might befall all the enemies of God. A blessing on faithful worshippers of Jehovah.
- V. 1. Following the Septuagint the best rendering is: "*For the leading of the leaders in Israel, for the free dedication of the people*" (i.e. in their readiness to follow their leaders). R.V. correctly translates "**For that the leaders took the lead in Israel.**"
 - V. 2. **Give ear** = attend, hearken, consider.
 - V. 3. **I will sing praise,** better "*I will sound the harp.*" The original conveys the idea of instrumental accompaniment. The R.V. fails to bring out this idea.
 - V. 5. **The mountains melted.** *Lit.* "flowed down" (as in R.V.). Another translation is 'quaked,' which better expresses the trembling of Sinai.
 - V. 6. **The highways were unoccupied,** i.e. were deserted. *Lit.* kept holiday; i.e. ceased to be travelled upon. So many authorities (including R.V.) translate 'ceased.' The dangerous state of the country compelled travellers to leave the highroads and to travel on bypaths.

- Even *the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his villages* in Israel:
Then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates.
- 12 Awake, awake, Deborah:
 Awake, awake, utter a song:
 Arise, Barak, and *lead thy captivity captive*, thou son of Abinoam.
- 13 *Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people:*
The Lord made me have dominion over the mighty.
- 14 Out of Ephraim *was there a root of them against Amalek:*
 After thee, Benjamin, among thy *people;*
 Out of Machir came down governors,
 And out of Zebulun they that handle the *pen of the writer.*
- 15 And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah;
 Even Issachar, *and also Barak;*
He was sent on foot into the valley.
For the divisions of Reuben.
 There were great *thoughts of heart.*
- 16 Why *abodest* thou among the sheepfolds,
 To hear the *bleatings of the flocks?*
For the divisions of Reuben.
- Then to the gates went down the people of Jehovah.*
- PART II. **The Rising** (12-22).
 1. **Prelude** (12).
12. Awake, awake, Deborah:
 Awake, awake, utter a song:
- Arise, Barak, and *lead captive thy captives*,
 Thou son of Abinoam.
2. **The Gathering of the Faithful**
 (13-15).
13. *Then came down a remnant of the nobles of the people,*
- Jehovah came down for me against the mighty.*
14. Out of Ephraim came those whose root is in Amalek;
- After thee, Benjamin, among thy nations;
- Out of Machir came down governors,
- And out of Zebulun they that handle the staff of the marshal.
15. And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah;
- And Issachar as well as Barak,
- Rushed down at his feet into the valley.*
3. **Censure of the Malingerers**
 (16-17).
16. *By the streams of Reuben*
 There were great *resolves of heart.*
- Why *stayest* thou among the sheepfolds,
 To hear the *piping to the flocks?*
- By the streams of Reuben*

- V. 7. **The inhabitants of the villages.** Following the Septuagint modern critics (including R.V.) translate '*rulers*,' i.e. the magistrates ceased, that is, there was no administration of justice.
- V. 8. **They = Israel.** With the result that the Canaanites stormed their cities (*wear in the gates*), and so completely subjugated the people that no one dared to display himself armed. The army of Barak must have been fairly well equipped, so the passage does not mean that the Israelites were altogether without arms, but that their degradation was such that it was necessary to conceal all weapons.
- V. 10. **Ye that sit in judgment.** The original cannot mean 'judgment.' Some covering is meant and so the passage is variously rendered '*saddle cloths*,' '*rich divans*' or (as Dean Stanley and the R.V.) '*rich carpets*.' Deborah is evidently alluding to three classes of people, and calling upon them to praise Jehovah.
- (1) The nobles and wealthy riding in state and safety along the highways.
 - (2) Those sitting at ease in luxurious palaces on the divans covered with rich bright carpets.
 - (3) Those travelling on foot along the highroads once more open to them.
- V. 11. The A.V. conveys the meaning that formerly it was not safe to go to the wells to draw water for fear of being shot at by the archers of the enemy. But the literal meaning (which R.V. follows) is "*from or out of the noise*," indicating the contrast between the former tumult of battle and the quiet, peaceful scene of maidens going out to draw water.
- V. 11. **Inhabitants** should be '*government or rule*,' see note v. 7.
- V. 13. **Lead thy captivity captive.** Better "*lead captive thy captives*," i.e. lead in triumphal procession the captive Canaanites and their captured cattle.
- V. 13. Ewald renders "*Then descended a remnant of the nobles of the people*." The R.V. is nearly the same. "*Then came down a remnant of the nobles and the people*." Deborah thus states that only a portion of the nation joined in the rising against Sisera. At least six tribes, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Dan, Judah, Simeon, took no part in the national movement.
- V. 14. Translate as with R.V. "*Out of Ephraim came down they whose root is in Amalek*," i.e. those of the tribe of Ephraim who had gained firm possession of territory once occupied by the Amalekites. A portion of the hill country of Ephraim was known as "*the mount of the Amalekites*" (xii. 15).
- V. 14. **Machir**, son of Manasseh. The name is generally used as descriptive of Eastern Manasseh, but here clearly the Western Manasseh is intended. All the Eastern tribes seem to have kept aloof from the war.
- V. 14. **The pen of the writer.** Correctly as in R.V. "*the marshal's staff*." The word translated 'pen' means "*staff of office*"; the word translated 'writer' means 'scribe' when applied to a civil officer, but in a military sense denotes the officer who kept the muster roll.
- V. 15. **Was sent on foot.** Better as with R.V. and most commentators, "*Rushed down at his feet into the valley*," i.e. the tribes followed Barak in an impetuous rush down the hill-side into the valley.
- V. 15. **For the divisions of Reuben** should be, "*By the streams (R.V. has correctly *watercourses*) of Reuben, there were great resolves (so R.V. and Eidersheim) of heart*," i.e. the tribe of Reuben formed great resolutions to help their brethren, but finally decided to stay at home and did nothing.
- V. 16. **The bleatings of the flocks** should be "*pipings for*," or "*pipings to*," an allusion to the shepherd's pipe with which he called the flock together or played whilst watching it.
- V. 16. **Searchings of heart** = discussion of plans, passing resolutions, but no definite action.
- V. 17. **Seashore** = the harbours on the sea-coast, correctly rendered in the R.V. as "*the haven of the sea*."
- V. 17. **And abode in his breaches.** Breaches = the creeks, bays, and river mouths of the coast. The R.V. '*creeks*' is a good rendering.

- There were great searchings of heart.
- 17 Gilead abode beyond Jordan :
And why did Dan remain in ships ?
Asher *continued on the sea shore,*
And abode *in his breaches.*
- 18 Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death.
In the *high places* of the field.
- 19 The kings came and fought.
Then fought the kings of Canaan.
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo ;
They took no gain of money.
- 20 They fought from heaven.
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
- 21 The river of Kishon swept them away.
That ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.
- 22 *Then were the horsehoofs broken.*
By the means of the pransings, the pransings of their mighty ones.
- 23 Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD,
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof ;
- There were great resolves of heart.
17. Gilead abode beyond Jordan :
And Dan, why did he remain in ships ?
Asher *sat still by the havens of the sea,*
And abode *by his creeks.*
4. **The Battle and the Victory**
(18-22).
18. Zebulun, a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death,
And Naphtali on the *heights* of the field.
19. The kings came and fought.
Then fought the kings of Canaan,
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo ;
They took no gain of money.
20. They fought from heaven ;
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
21. The river Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, march on in strength.
22. *Then stamped the hoofs of the horses.*
With the pransings, the pransings of their mighty ones.
- PART III. **The Results of Victory**
(23-30).
1. **The faithfulness of Meroz** (23).
23. Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord.
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof ;

- V. 19. **Gain of money.** *Lit.* spoil of silver.
- V. 21. **That ancient river.** **Ancient** = renowned, probably from the numerous battles which had been fought in the neighbourhood. Edersheim renders "*river of encounters.*"
- V. 22. **Then were the horsehoofs broken,** better "*Then stamped the hoofs of the horses,*" descriptive of the efforts of the chariot horses to get clear of the morass.
- V. 23. **Meroz** (see Intro., p. lxxxiii.), evidently situated in a position enabling its inhabitants to cut off the retreat of the fleeing host. Probably the city was razed and the inhabitants put to death after the battle in the same manner as Gideon destroyed Succoth and Penuel (viii. 16-17).
- V. 24. **Above women in the tent,** *i.e.* those who like herself lived a nomadic life in tents.
- V. 25. **Butter,** better '*curdle milk,*' the special delicacy in an Arab tent.
- V. 25. **Lordly dish,** *lit. dish of the nobles,* *i.e.* a special cup or vessel used on state occasions. This show of hospitality and mark of respect would lull the suspicions of Sisera.
- V. 26. **Struck off his head.** R.V. '*smote through,*' does not quite convey the graphic description of the event. Jael '*shattered*' his head, shivering it to pieces. The A.V. gives a wrong impression, Jael did not strike off Sisera's head. She '*hammered*' him, shattering his head, cleaving and piercing his temples so forcibly that the tent pin was driven into the ground. "We almost seem to hear the three strokes of the hammer by which her bloody work was done." (EDERSHEIM.)
- V. 27. **He bowed.** The word describes the convulsive contraction of the lower limbs in the death agony.
- He falls, he lies.** Descriptive perhaps of rolling off the couch on which he lay.
- There he lay dead,** *i.e.* motionless. He gave one convulsive start and then lay motionless in death.
- V. 29. Translate, "*Are they not finding and dividing the spoil?*" *i.e.* have they not come upon so rich a spoil that it is taking them a long time to divide it amongst the chiefs? The R.V. "*Have they not found, etc.*" does not agree in tense with the rendering adopted by most commentators.
- V. 30. **Of divers colours,** *lit.* of dyed garments; and again "*dyed garments of embroidery.*" "**Meet for the necks of them that take the spoil.**" The A.V. regards 'spoil' as equivalent to the spoiler. The literal translation is "*on the necks of the spoil.*" The R.V. follows this. We must suppose that with each captive maiden the warrior would receive one dyed garment and two embroidered kerchiefs for the neck of each captive.

Note.—Why are not Judah and Simeon mentioned? From the mention of Jael in conjunction with Shamgar (v. 6), it has been conjectured that the northern oppression was simultaneous with the attack of the Philistines on the south from which Judah was freed by the prowess of Shamgar. If so, the two southern tribes would be so much occupied in repelling the danger from the south as to be unable to give assistance to their brethren in the north.

- Because they came not to the help of the LORD,
To the help of the LORD
against the mighty.
- 24 Blessed above women shall Jael,
The wife of Heber the Kenite be,
Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.
- 25 He asked water, and she gave him milk;
She brought forth butter in a lordly dish.
- 26 She put her hand to the nail,
And her right hand to the workmen's hammer.
And with the hammer she smote Sisera, *she smote off his head.*
When she had pierced and stricken through his temples.
- 27 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down;
At her feet he bowed, he fell;
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.
- 28 The mother of Sisera looked out at a window,
And cried through the lattice,
Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?
- 29 *Her wise ladies* answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself.
- Because they came not to the help of the Lord,
The help of the Lord against the mighty.
2. Jael, the Avenger. Death of Sisera (24-27).
24. Blessed among women be Jael,
The wife of Heber the Kenite,
Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.
25. He asked water, and she gave him milk;
She brought him butter in a lordly dish.
26. She put her hand to the nail,
And her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
And with the hammer she smote Sisera, *shivered his head*;
And pierced and struck through his temples.
27. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay;
At her feet he bowed, he fell:
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.
2. The disappointment of Sisera's mother (28-30).
28. Through the window looked forth and cried,
The mother of Sisera through the lattice,
Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?
29. *The wise ones of her ladies* answered her,
Yea, she returned answer to herself.

- 30 *Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; To every man a damsel or two?*
 To Sisera a *prey* of divers colours,
 A prey of divers colours of *needlework*,
 Of divers colours of *needlework* on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?
- 31 So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD:
 But let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.
 And the land had rest forty years.

20. *Are they not finding, are they not dividing the spoil?*

A damsel, two damsels to every man;

To Sisera a *spoil* of divers colours,

A *spoil* of divers colours of *embroidery*,

Of divers colours of *embroidery* on both sides for the necks
 Of the spoil?

PART IV. The Epilogue (31).

31. So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord:

But let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength.

A generation.

The Oppression of Midian.

6. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. 2 And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. 3 And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; 4 And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. 5 For they came up with their cattle and

¹ See ii. 11 note.

² Intro., p. lxi.

³ Not a permanent occupation but repeated raids.

At harvest time they swept down upon the land, carrying off all they could, and destroying what they could not take away.

⁴ Such was the terror caused by these invasions that during the raids the Israelites took refuge in dens, caves and other hiding places.

⁵ *i.e.* the harvest for the year.

⁶ Intro., p. lxii.

⁷ Intro., p. lxiii. Arabs of the Eastern desert.

⁸ *i.e.* yearly, for seven years.

⁹ Not for battle, but for the purpose of raiding.

¹⁰ Produce.

¹¹ They descended into the fertile valley of the maritime plain as far as Gaza.

¹² "Nothing to support life," or it may mean "any living creature."

their tents, and they came as ^a ¹³grass-hoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land ¹⁴to destroy it. 6 And ¹⁵Israel ^bwas greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 85. ^b see R.V. and comment, p. 87.

¹³Locusts, descriptive of their numbers and also of the wide devastation wrought by the raiders.

¹⁴*i.e.* for the express purpose of carrying off the produce.

¹⁵Their harvest was carried off, and they found difficulty in securing enough grain for seed.

The Message of a Prophet.

7 And it came to pass, when the children of Israel ¹cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, 8 That the LORD sent a ²prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, ³Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the ⁴house of bondage; 9 And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave ⁵them out from before you, and gave you their land; 10 And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the ⁶Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

¹Confession of sin results in deliverance.

²An inspired man, not necessarily a foreteller of the future. He alludes to the past only.

Nameless, as the prophet who encouraged Ahab (1 Kings xx. 13-35), and the prophet who anointed Jehu (2 King ix. 1-4).

³Here recounts God's deliverances and promises.

(1) Deliverance from Egypt.

(2) Conquest of the land.

(3) Promise of complete subjugation of the heathen.

Idolatry had brought about the withdrawal of Divine aid.

National sin had led to national calamity.

⁴Descriptive of the slavery in Egypt.

⁵Inhabitants of Canaan generally.

⁶Joshua had warned them against the gods of the Amorites (Josh. xxiv. 15).

The Call of Gideon.

11 And there came ¹an angel of the LORD, and sat under ²an oak which was in ³Ophrah, that pertained unto ⁴Joash the ⁵Abi-ezrite: and his son Gideon ^athreshed wheat by the ⁶winepress, to hide

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 87.

¹The angel, *i.e.* of the covenant.

²The oak, *i.e.* a well-known tree.

³Intro., p. lxxxiv., near Shechem.

⁴Intro., p. xlix.

⁵Intro., p. xiv. Abiezer was a family of the tribe of Manasseh.

⁶An unusual place (see note, p. 101). Gideon desired to conceal his action from the Midianites.

it from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, ⁷thou mighty man of valour. 13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh ⁸my LORD, ⁹if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. 14 And the LORD ¹⁰looked upon him, and said, Go in ¹¹this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? 15 And he said unto him, ¹²Oh my LORD, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family ^b ¹³is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. 16 And the LORD said unto him, ¹⁴Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites ¹⁵as one man. 17 And he said unto him, If now I have found ¹⁶grace in thy sight, then ¹⁷shew me a sign ^c ¹⁸that thou talkest with me. 18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my ¹⁹present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again. 19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and ²⁰unleavened cakes of an ²¹ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out to him under the oak, and ²²presented it. 20 And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay

^b see R.V. and comment, p. 87. ^c see R.V. and comment, p. 87.

⁷ Gideon may well have distinguished himself in previous actions. The Midianites seem to have known of his prowess (vii. 14); or, the words may be prophetic of what would come to pass.

⁸ A title of courtesy, not an address to an angel.

⁹ A reproachful reply, but an open confession of his thoughts.

Gideon does not question the power of Jehovah, is not ignorant of past wonders, and believes that Israel's misfortunes are due to the withdrawal of Divine aid.

He has only to learn that with the repentance of Israel the aid of Jehovah will return.

¹⁰ *Lit.* "turned towards him," a token of favour.

¹¹ *i.e.* now conferred upon thee.

¹² *Lit.* "Oh Lord." Gideon recognizes the presence of Jehovah.

Compare the humility of Moses (Ex. iii. 10-14).

¹³ The poorest, the meanest.

¹⁴ The same answer as given to Moses (Ex. iii. 12).

¹⁵ *i.e.* with a sudden blow completely destroying the vast host.

¹⁶ Favour.

¹⁷ Give me a distinct proof that the message is really from God. It needed these signs to give Gideon the self-confidence required to lead Israel against Midian.

¹⁸ *Lit.* "Who thou art that talkest with me."

¹⁹ Meat-offering, sacrifice.

²⁰ As being prepared more quickly.

²¹ Three *seah* = a bushel (see p. 86).

²² Offered.

them upon ²³this rock, and ²⁴pour out the broth. And he did so. ²¹ Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the ²⁵staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up ²⁶fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. ²² And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O LORD God! for ²⁷because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face. ²³ And the LORD said unto him, ²⁸Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. ²⁴ Then Gideon built an ²⁹altar there unto the LORD, and called it ³⁰Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is ³¹yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

²³ Using it as an altar.

²⁴ As a libation.

²⁵ The traveller's staff—the angel appeared in the guise of a traveller.

²⁶ Fire from heaven.

(1) At the dedication of Solomon's Temple.

(2) Consumed the sacrifice of Elijah on Carmel (1 Kings xviii. 24).

(3) Destroyed the captains and their fifties at the word of Elijah.

²⁷ It was the common idea of the time that man could not look upon God and live.

²⁸ Gideon receives Divine assurance of safety.

²⁹ Possibly more as a memorial than for sacrifice.

³⁰ Jehovah is peace, *i.e.* peacefully disposed, with reference to the words of peace in v. 33.

³¹ Still.

Gideon throws down the Altar of Baal.

²⁵ And it came to pass the same ¹night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, ²even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of ³Baal that thy father hath, and cut down ⁴the grove that is by it: ²⁶ And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of ⁵this ⁶rock in ⁷the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with ⁸the wood of ⁹the grove which thou shalt cut down. ²⁷ Then Gideon took ⁸ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he

¹ *see* R.V. and comment, p. 87. ⁶ *see* R.V. and comment, p. 87.

⁸ Denotes—

(1) Gideon's position, *i.e.* wealthy and independent.

(2) His household free from idolatry.

¹ *i.e.* of the day when the angel appeared to Gideon.

² *And*—for a bullock of seven years cannot well be termed 'young.' Two bullocks seem intended. Explanation usually given is that two bullocks were used in breaking down the altar, and that the second was sacrificed.

³ The Baal worshipped by Gideon's father.

⁴ The Asherah, *i.e.* image of Asheroth (Intro., p. xlv.).

⁵ Heb. "this fortress," *i.e.* the citadel of Ophrah.

⁶ In orderly manner, *i.e.* building an altar and offering sacrifice in the manner prescribed by the Law.

⁷ *i.e.* he split the wooden Asherah up for firewood.

feared ⁹his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night. 28 And when the ¹⁰men of the city arose ¹¹early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and ^athe grove was ¹²cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. 29 And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, ¹³Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. 30 Then the men of the city said unto Joash, ¹⁴Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he ¹⁵hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down ^athe grove that was by it. 31 And Joash ¹⁶said unto all that stood against him, ¹⁷Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: ¹⁸if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. 32 Therefore on that day ¹⁹he called him ²⁰Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.

⁹The house of his father, *i.e.* the Abiezrites, not his own family.

¹⁰Probably a remnant of the Canaanite population.

¹¹Early to worship Baal, the sun-god.

¹²*i.e.* only a stump left of the Asherah pillar.

They note three things:

(1) Altar of Baal cast down.

(2) The stump of the Asherah pillar.

(3) A new altar and a sacrificed bullock.

¹³It was not the intention of Jehovah that the deed should be kept secret. The act signified that Gideon took upon himself the burden of restoring the true worship.

¹⁴*i.e.* for execution.

¹⁵And so had committed sacrilege.

¹⁶It is suggested that Joash was chief magistrate of Ophrah and presided at the trial.

¹⁷The emphasis is on 'ye.'

¹⁸Joash is sarcastic. "If Baal be a god surely he can avenge himself." The men of the city cannot combat this argument.

¹⁹Gideon was so called by the people. His father did not name him.

²⁰"Let Baal plead."

Gideon rouses the Tribes against Midian.

33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were ¹gathered together, and went ²over, and pitched in the valley of ³Jezreel. 34 But the Spirit of the LORD ⁴came upon Gideon, and ⁵he blew ⁶a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.

¹To make their annual raid.

²*i.e.* over Jordan, from east to west.

They would cross the Jordan at the upper ford, near Beth-shean, and thus gained entrance into the plain of Jezreel.

³Intro., p. lxxx.

⁴Clothed.

⁵Gideon seizes the occasion to make his attack.

⁶The call to war.

The army of Gideon.

(1) He is joined by his own clan of Abiezer.

(2) Encouraged by their support he summons all Manasseh.

(3) Then he calls upon the northern tribes.

35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and ⁷they came up to meet them.

young Abi-ezrite. So Gideon's call to arms met with ready and united response. Instead of cowering in dens and caves, leaving their lands to be ravaged by the horde of eastern Bedouins, the men of the north and centre round the plain of Esdraelon rush to the standard of Gideon to repel the invader.

The Double Sign.

36 And Gideon said unto God, ¹If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, 37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool ^{a2}*in the floor*; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. 38 And it was so: for ³he rose up early on the morrow, and ^{b4}*thrust* the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, ^{5a}a bowl full of water. 39 And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece, ⁶let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. 40 And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 87. ^b see R.V. and comment, p. 88.

Selection of the Army.

7. Then ¹Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people who were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the ²well of Harod: *so that the ³host of the Midianites were on the north side of*

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 82.

⁷ *i.e.* went up to the place where the others were gathered together.

Mark the effect of the action of one true man. Gideon's act in destroying the altar of Baal had impressed the people with the idea that Jehovah had inspired the

ready and united response.

lands to be ravaged by the horde of eastern Bedouins, the men of the north and centre round the plain of Esdraelon rush to the standard of Gideon to repel the invader.

¹ Gideon does not distrust God's power, but desires to be assured that God approves of the expedition.

² On the threshing floor, a flat, circular space, open to heaven.

³ *i.e.* to be sure that the fleece had not been interfered with.

⁴ Squeezed.

⁵ Note the details given. Such a minute description denotes the truth and accuracy of the story.

⁶ The dew in the fleece whilst the ground was dry might be due to natural causes, so Gideon asked for a sign contrary to nature. It was impossible for the hard surface of the exposed floor to be wet whilst the fleece was dry.

It was granted him, and from that time he showed no sign of distrust in himself, no mark of wavering in his faith in God.

¹ So called for the first time. The explanation is given to indicate that it is Gideon.

² Fountain or spring. (Intro., p. lxxvii.) = the spring of trembling.

³ Camp.

them, by the ⁴hill of Moreh, in the ⁵valley. 2 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are ⁶too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. 3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from ⁷mount Gilead, And there returned of the people ⁸twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. 4 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down ⁹unto the water, and I will ¹⁰try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, ¹¹This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. 5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, ¹²Every one that lapped of the water with his tongue, as a dog lapped, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. 6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. 7 And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place. 8 So the people ¹³took victuals in their hand, and their

⁴Intro. p. lxxxiii.

⁵Valley of Jezreel.

Gideon's men are on the heights—the Midianites are in the valley.

⁶It was necessary to show that it was Jehovah, and Jehovah alone, who gave them the victory. By this Gideon's hands would be strengthened to put down idolatry.

⁷There is no Gilead in western Manasseh. Two explanations are given of the difficulty:

(1) That mount Gilead should be "*mount Gilboa*."

(2) That Gilead here is equivalent to Manasseh, *i.e.* let him depart from the camp of Manasseh on this height.

⁸The sight of the vast host of Midian had evidently daunted many timid hearts. More than two-thirds of the band deserted Gideon.

⁹*i.e.* to the well of Harod.

¹⁰Test or prove.

¹¹Jehovah assures Gideon that He will select the right men for him.

¹²The test may appear frivolous but in reality it was not so.

The experienced warriors would be men always on the alert. So they drink in a manner that would leave them ready to meet a sudden attack. They also exhibit the quality of self-control. The rest, eager to drink, throw themselves at full length on the ground to satisfy their thirst. The men of experience, whilst satisfying their thirst, keep in mind that they are on a military expedition in which watchfulness against surprise is of more importance than anything else.

Thus the test appointed by God assured Gideon that the three hundred were men upon whom he could absolutely rely.

¹³*i.e.* Took what they required from the people before they left. This explains how each man had a pitcher, lamp and trumpet.

trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and *the host of Midian* was beneath him in the valley.

a see R.V. and comment, p. 88.

But when assured that he is carrying out the Divine will he obeys implicitly and weakens his army without a murmur.

Contrast Gideon's previous self-distrust with his absolute faith now.

He distrusted himself and asked for three proofs of God's presence, *viz.*—

- (1) A sign from the angel.
- (2) The double sign of the fleece.

Gideon visits the Midianite camp; and is encouraged by the Dream of a Man of Midian.

9 And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, ¹get thee down unto the *host*; for I have delivered it into thine hand. 10 But if thou ²fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the *host*: 11 And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the *host*. Then went he down with ³Phurah ⁴his servant unto ⁵the outside of the armed men that were in the *host*. 12 And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like ⁶⁶*grasshoppers* for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. 13 And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his ⁷fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a ⁸cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto ⁹a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay ¹⁰along. 14 And his ¹¹fellow answered and said, This is nothing else

a see R.V. and comment, p. 88. *b* see R.V. and comment, p. 86.

¹ Descend into the valley and attack Midian camp.

² Hesitation would be natural for—

- (1) Gideon was to attack, not to defend.
- (2) The attack was to be made in a broad open plain, not in a narrow valley.
- (3) The number of his men would appear inadequate to the task.

So he is bidden to visit the camp of Midian for further encouragement.

³ Intro., p. li.

⁴ Armour-bearer.

⁵ Gideon and his armour-bearer lay outside the camp watching and listening.

The dream and its interpretation would encourage them; already the host was predisposed to panic.

⁶ Locusts.

⁷ Barley loaf = Gideon, an Israelite peasant.

⁸ Tent = The camp of the Midianites.

⁹ Neighbour, comrade.

¹⁰ The food of the poor.

Symbolic of the poverty and degradation of the Israelites under the Midianite oppression, also denoting the insignificance of Gideon compared with the vast host of Midian.

¹¹ The tent, *i.e.* of the Midianite leader.

¹⁰ At full length.

¹¹ Neighbour, comrade.

11 save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. 15 And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that 12 he worshipped, and returned into the 13 host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the 14 host of Midian. 16 And he divided the three hundred men into 15 three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and 16 lamps within the 17 pitchers. 17 And he said unto them, 18 Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. 18 When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and 19 say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. 19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp 20 in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they brake the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. 20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets 21 in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. 21 And they stood every man 22 in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. 22 And the three hundred 23 blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword 24 against

11 The gathering under Gideon must therefore have been known to the Midianites. The leaders despised the Israelites. The speaker had some recollection of how Jehovah had fought for Israel, and recalled to mind the many occasions on which a few Israelites had overthrown vast armies.

12 *i.e.* acknowledged the hand of Jehovah.

13 *i.e.* the 300 men in readiness to attack.

14 Camp.

15 Each company taking a different route, and being posted so as to make it appear that the Israelites had surrounded the camp. (So Saul against Ammon, 1 Sam. xiv.).

16 Torches.

17 To hide the light of the torches.

18 Time your action by mine.

19 Shout. The battle-cry of Israel was a terrible shout.

20 The dead of night, after the change of watch.

The Jewish watches were three—

(1) From sunset to 10 p.m.

(2) From 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

(3) From 2 a.m. to sunrise.

They subsequently adopted the Roman watches, *viz.*—

(1) From 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

(2) From 9 p.m. to midnight.

(3) From midnight to 3 a.m.

(4) From 3 a.m. to 6 a.m.

21 *i.e.* ready to blow the second time *v* 22).

22 The stages of the panic.

(1) Stood in alarm.

(2) Ran about in confusion.

(3) The cry of alarm.

(4) Fled in panic.

23 The second blast of the trumpets.

24 *i.e.* mistaking friend for foe.

his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to ²⁵Beth-shittah in ²⁶Zererath, and to the border of ²⁷Abel-meholah, unto ²⁸Tabbath. 23 And ²⁹the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites. 24 And Gideon sent messengers throughout all *mount Ephraim*, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and ³⁰take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto ³¹Beth-barah and Jordan. 25 And they took two princes of the Midianites, ³²Oreb and ³³Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock ³⁴Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of ³⁴Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan.

c see R.V. comment, p. 86.

The plan of Gideon was admirably adapted to cause a panic. He had gathered the information that the Midianites were in fear of Israel and Jehovah. The placing of his men, the flashing of the torches and the sound of the trumpets would convey the impression that the camp was surrounded. The Midianites first alarmed, then running about in confusion and finally panic-stricken in full flight, would, in the darkness and confusion, readily mistake friends for foes. Midianites, Amalekites, and other Eastern tribes mingled together, would have difficulty in distinguishing their own allies from the army of Israel, which they imagined had rushed the camp. Meanwhile Gideon and his men blew with the trumpets, shouted their war-cry, and waved their torches. They needed to do no more, the fugitives of the panic-stricken horde cut each other to pieces.

The Expostulation of Ephraim.

8. And the men of ¹Ephraim ²said unto him, ³Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him ⁴sharply. 2 And he said unto them,

²⁵ Intro., p. lxxiii.

²⁶ Zaretan, Int., p. lxxxviii.

²⁷ Intro., p. lxx.

²⁸ Intro., p. lxxxvii.

²⁹ Those who had been dismissed reassemble and join in the pursuit. They may have been summoned by proclamation. Issachar is not mentioned in the narrative. The Midianites occupied the plain of Jezreel inhabited by the tribe of Issachar, and thus this tribe was unable to move.

³⁰ Seize the streams and so intercept the flight of Midian.

So Ehud seized the fords near Jericho against Moab (iii. 28).

And Jephthah seized the fords to prevent the escape of the men of Ephraim (xii. 5).

³¹ Intro. p. lxxi.

³² Intro. p. l. = *raven*.

³³ Intro. p. liii. = *wolf*.

³⁴ Taking their names from the execution of these Midianite princes. Gideon had already crossed Jordan in the pursuit. The Ephraimites catch Oreb and Zeeb on the west side, and carry their heads to Gideon then on the east side.

¹ The leading tribe; also kinsmen of Manasseh.

² *i.e.* when they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb.

³ They object to play a secondary part.

They desire an acknowledgment of their supremacy.

⁴ Strongly, violently.

⁵What have I done now in comparison of you? ⁶Is not the ⁷gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the ⁸vintage of Abi-ezer? ³ ⁹God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? ¹⁰Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.

⁵He had dispersed the host of Midian, but Ephraim had captured and slain the chieftains.
⁶A reply that became proverbial = The subsequent success (gleaning after the crop) of Ephraim was of more importance than the whole of the deeds (the vintage) of Gideon and his Abiezrites.

⁷ Gleaning may mean the two heads of the Midian princes brought by Ephraim.

⁸ Vintage the thousands of inferior soldiers slain by Gideon and his men.

⁹ To whom the honour of the victory was due.

¹⁰ The soft answer of Gideon turns away their wrath. But Gideon acknowledges the greatness of the achievement of Ephraim on the present occasion only, he does not admit their claim to permanent supremacy.

Instances of the arrogance of Ephraim.

- (1) In their demand from Joshua for more territory because they were "a great people" (Josh. xvii. 14-18).
- (2) In their expostulation with Gideon for not summoning them to the expedition against the Midianites (viii. 1-3).
- (3) In their insolent behaviour towards Jephthah because he had not called upon them to aid the Eastern tribes against the Ammonites (xii. 1-3).

This spirit of arrogance may have been due to many causes, e.g.,

- (1) The double portion assigned by Jacob to the sons of Joseph was equivalent to the bestowal of the birth-right. Hence Ephraim may have assumed to be the heir of the patriarch.
- (2) The Ark was at Shiloh. Therefore the religious capital was in Ephraim.
- (3) Shechem, the recognized place for the assembling of the tribes, was also in Ephraim. Thus the political capital was situated in Ephraim.
- (4) Its central position in the hill country may have secured it from invasion, and probably by this time Ephraim was superior to other tribes in number.

The bitter disappointment felt by Ephraim at the subsequent supremacy of Judah, intensified by the fact that Jerusalem became the religious and political capital, whilst the monarchy became hereditary in the house of David of the rival tribe, was a great factor in bringing about the schism in the reign of Rehoboam.

The Pursuit.

4 And Gideon ¹came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them. ⁵ And he said unto the men of ²Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they be ³faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian. ⁶ And the ⁴princes

¹This verse gives us Gideon's movements. He sent messengers to Ephraim to seize the waters, whilst he himself crossed the Jordan in pursuit of Zebah and Zalmunna who with 15,000 men, had managed to reach the eastern side of the river. Whilst he was on the east side the heads of Oreb and Zeeb were brought to him.

² Intro., p. lxxxvii. The names give us the route of the fleeing Midianites, viz. towards the south.

³ Faint and weary with the exertions of the night and the rapid pursuit.

⁴ Chiefs, heads of the city.

of Succoth said, ⁵Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, ⁶that we should give bread unto thine army? 7 And Gideon said, Therefore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will ⁷tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers. 8 And he went ⁸up thence to ⁹Penuel, and spake unto them likewise: and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him. 9 And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this ¹⁰tower. 10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in ¹¹Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, ¹²all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword. 11 And Gideon went up ¹³by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host: for the host ¹⁴was secure. 12 And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and ¹⁵discomfited all the host.

The Punishment of Succoth and Penuel.

13 And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle ^a¹before the sun was up, 14 And caught a young man of the men of ²Succoth, and enquired of him: and he ³described unto him the ⁴princes of Succoth, and the ⁵elders thereof, even threescore and seventeen men. 15 And he came unto the men

^a see R. V. and comment, p. 88.

⁵ They jeer at the attempt of Gideon to overtake the Midianites, who on their camels would easily outstrip the Israelites.

⁶ The men of Succoth will not risk the subsequent vengeance of the Midianites by supplying Gideon's men with food. The incident illustrates the lack of unity among the tribes.

⁷ Thresh.

⁸ From the valley of the Jordan.

⁹ Intro., p. lxxxiv.

¹⁰ The keep or central tower of a walled town.

¹¹ Intro., p. lxxxii.

¹² So the slaughter of Oreb and Zeeb had already taken place.

¹³ The road by which the Arabs of the East made their way to Palestine.

Gideon appears to have made a detour and to have fallen upon the Midianites from the east.

¹⁴ Considered themselves safe from pursuit.

¹⁵ The sudden arrival of Gideon once more occasioned a panic.

¹ Lit. from the heights of Heres.

² Gideon returns by a different route, otherwise Penuel would have been punished first.

³ Wrote down the names.

⁴ Officials, heads of families.

⁵ Evidently the council or senate, probably of seventy members with seven presidents.

of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary? 16 And he took the ⁶elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them ⁷he taught the men of Succoth. 17 And he ⁸beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the ⁹men of the city.

⁶ Who were responsible for the rude reply of verse 6.

⁷ Gave them a lesson. It may also be translated 'threshed.'

⁸ Brake down. It was rebuilt by Jeroboam (1 Kings xii. 25).

⁹ Elders or chief men.

The Death of Zebah and Zalmunna.

18 Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, ¹What manner of men were they whom ye slew at ²Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they; each one resembled ³the children of a king. 19 And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons ⁴of my mother: as the LORD liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. 20 And he said unto ⁵Jether his first-born, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he was yet a youth. 21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, ⁶Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ⁷ornaments that were on their camels' necks.

^a see R. V. and comment, p. 88.

⁶ The Midian chiefs regard it as an insult that they should be put to death by a mere youth.

⁷ Crescent-shaped ornaments of gold worn on the necks of men, women and camels.

¹ *Lit.* Where are the men?

The question would indicate to the princes that Gideon intended to avenge their death.

² *Intro.*, p. lxxxviii. The incident is not recorded.

³ An Eastern expression for beauty, strength and dignity.

⁴ *i.e.* of the same mother, so most closely akin to Gideon. They were not merely sons of his father, who may have had more than one wife.

⁵ The heir and so the legal blood-avenger. Gideon in calling upon his son to perform the duty of avenging the death of those slain at Tabor desired:

(1) To teach his son courage and fearlessness.

(2) To give him honour in the eyes of his clan.

(3) To add to the disgrace of the Midianite princes.

Gideon's Rule and Death.

22 Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, ¹Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast ²delivered us from the hand

¹ The first indication of the desire of Israel to have a king.

² Saved.

of Midian. 23 And Gideon ³said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; ⁴the LORD shall rule over you. 24 And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the ⁵earrings of his ⁶prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) 25 And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey. 26 And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and ⁷seven hundred shekels of gold; beside ⁸ornaments, and ⁹collars, and ¹⁰purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camels' necks. 27 And Gideon made an ¹¹ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel ¹²went thither a whoring after it: which thing ¹³became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house. 28 Thus was ¹⁴Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness ¹⁵forty years in the days of Gideon. 29 And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. 30 And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: ¹⁶for he had many wives. 31 And his concubine that was in Shechem, ¹⁷she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech. 32 And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

^a see R. V. and comment, p. 88.

³ Gideon refuses the honour with modesty and piety.

⁴ The Lord was the king. This was the first principle of the theocracy.

⁵ *Lit.* nose rings.

⁶ Spoil.

The mistake of Gideon.

In his desire to keep Israel united he would combine the offices of leadership and priesthood.

He was strong in faith, so he could not deliberately have fallen away from the worship of Jehovah.

The facts are:

(1) The priesthood was weak at the time, and had failed in its duty.

(2) Gideon was strong, he had revived the national faith.

Why not then unite the two offices of priest and judge in his own person?

Would not this be the best way of keeping Israel true to Jehovah?

⁷ About seventy pounds.

⁸ *i.e.* the golden crescents (see v. 21).

⁹ Ear-drops, pendants.

¹⁰ The royal colour.

¹¹ A garment worn by the high priest when consulting Jehovah by means of the Urim and Thummim.

¹² Worshipped it. Idolatry is always regarded as spiritual adultery.

¹³ Led them astray and became the cause of the fall of the house of Gideon.

¹⁴ This verse sums up the result of Gideon's campaign. It describes the end of the Midian oppression and the deliverance of Israel.

¹⁵ A generation.

¹⁶ So Gideon kept regal state—he was king in all but name.

¹⁷ She appears to have been a Canaanitish woman (ix. 1-4). Josephus gives her name as Drumah; Jotham (ix. 18) calls her 'maid-servant,' a contemptuous reference to the inferior position she would hold in Gideon's household.

Renewal of Idolatry by Israel.

33 And it came to pass, ¹as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after ²Baalim, and made ³Baal-berith their god. 34 And the children of Israel ⁴remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: 35 Neither ⁵shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.

9. And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to ¹Shechem unto his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, 2 Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the ²men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, ³reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember also that I am your bone and your flesh. 3 And his mother's brethren ⁴spake of him in the ears of all the ⁵men of Shechem all these words: and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother. 4 And they gave him threescore and ten ⁶pieces of silver out of ⁷the house of Baal-berith, wherewith Abimelech hired ⁸vain and light persons, which followed him. 5 And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons, ⁹upon one stone: notwithstanding yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left;

¹Gideon's personal influence had restrained them whilst he was alive.

²The Baalim.

³Baal of the covenant.

The worship of the Ephod, the symbol of Jehovah, soon degenerated into idol worship.

In like manner the calf-worship of Jeroboam was followed by the Baal worship of Ahab.

⁴Ungrateful for their past deliverance, they ceased to be anxious to serve Him.

⁵Ingratitude to Jehovah led them to neglect the family of Gideon.

¹Intro., p. lxxxv.

His mother's relatives were probably Canaanites.

²Chief men, lords.

³Rule.

⁴The plot was thus secretly concocted.

⁵Chief men, lords.

The plot was hatched at Shechem, the murder of the sons of Gideon took place at Ophrah (v. 5).

⁶Shekels.

⁷The temple, i.e. they took the money out of the temple treasury.

⁸Vagabond cut-throats, ready for any act of villainy so long as they were paid for it.

⁹A sacrifice (as it were) to Baal. Perhaps the rock on which Gideon had erected his altar.

The first mention of the wholesale slaughter of a dynasty.

Baasha slew all the house of Jeroboam (1 Kings xv. 29).

Zimri slew all the house of Baasha (1 Kings xvi. 11).

Jehu slew all the house of Ahab (2 Kings x. 1-11).

Athaliah slew all the seed royal (2 Kings xi. 1).

for he hid himself. 6 And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the ¹⁰house of ¹¹Millo, and went, and made Abimelech king, by the ^{a12}plain of the pillar that was in Shechem.

a see R.V., and comment, p. 88.

Why did the chiefs of Shechem follow Abimelech?

If they were Canaanites it is clear their sympathy would be with Abimelech, who was of Canaanite blood on his mother's side.

If Ephraimites they may have been jealous of being ruled by princes of the tribe of Manassch, and so have been inclined to one who was a Shechemite.

So Abimelech's cause would be favoured both by discontented Ephraimites of Shechem, and by the whole native population.

His rule does not appear to have extended further than Shechem and the immediate neighbourhood.

The Parable of Jotham.

7 And when they told it to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of ¹mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. 8 ²The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. 9 But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my ³fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to ^{a4}be promoted over the trees? 10 And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. 11 But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go ^ato be promoted over the trees? 12 Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. 13 And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which ^bcheereth God and man,

a see R.V. and comment, p. 88.

Thus we get the contrast, viz.

Rooted in the ground, the olive, fig and vine bear fruit—the position is stable and solid.

Over the trees, i.e. uprooted—the position is unstable and insecure.

Probably also an allusion to the instability of regal power.

⁵ Alluding to the wine used in the drink offerings.

¹⁰ The garrison.

¹¹ The citadel or fortress of Shechem

¹² Oak or terebinth; i.e. the sacred tree that stood by the memorial stone set up by Joshua (Josh. xxiv. 26).

¹ Intro., p. lxxxv. Jotham might well stand on the height on one side of the valley and be heard across it. He would have ample time to make his escape ere his pursuers crossed the intervening valley.

² The first fable.

There is only one other fable in Scripture. It is found in 2 Kings xiv. 9.

Difference between parable and fable:

Fable:

(1) Treats of morality or worldly wisdom, not with spiritual truths.

(2) A fanciful story, in which animals often act and speak as human beings.

Parable:

(1) Treats of some spiritual truth.

(2) Is a natural story, a narrative of everyday life.

³ Alluding to the oil used in the meat-offerings.

⁴ Margin "to go up and down for other trees."

The meaning is however "to float about," and is rendered elsewhere by "to stagger," "to wander."

and go ^{to be promoted over} the trees? 14 Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. 15 And the bramble said unto the trees, ⁶If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the ⁷bramble, and devour the ⁸cedars of Lebanon. 16 Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands; 17 (For my father fought for you, and ⁹adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian: 18 And ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, three-score and ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the ¹⁰son of his maidservant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother;) 19 If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you: 20 But if not, let ¹¹fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the ¹²house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the ¹²house of Millo, and devour Abimelech. 21 And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to ¹³Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

a see R.V. and comment, p. 88.

The other fable in Scripture was spoken by Jehoshaphat, king of Israel, to Amaziah, king of Judah—

"The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle" (2 Kings xiv. 9).

⁶The astonished bramble cannot conceive that the trees were serious in their offer.

⁷The most worthless of trees.

⁸The most noble of trees. A burning bramble might set fire to lofty trees. So the ambitious Abimelech brought ruin on himself, and others better than himself.

⁹Put his life in peril. The application of the fable.

Trees = nation of Israel.

Olive, fig, vine = good, honourable, religious men, who refused kingship because they had other work in the world, and because God had not yet approved of a monarchy.

Gideon had declined the position of king.

Bramble = worthless, self-seeking, ambitious men like Abimelech.

Fire = the result of their schemes. The usual issue of such self-seeking ambition is ultimately ruin; the schemes ending in strife and bloodshed.

¹⁰Contemptuous reference to the inferior position of Abimelech's mother in Gideon's household.

Jotham reminds the Shechemites of the great deliverance wrought for them by Gideon, and charges them with base ingratitude—they had put to death seventy sons of their great benefactor.

¹¹How prophetic of the future of Shechem and Abimelech.

¹²See v. 16.

¹³Intro., p. lxxi.

The Rebellion of Gaal.

22 When Abimelech ^ahad reigned three years over Israel, 23 Then God sent ²an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem ³dealt treacherously with Abimelech: 24 That the ⁴cruelty done to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, which ^baided him in the killing of his brethren. 25 And the men of Shechem ⁵set liers in wait ⁶for him in the top of the mountains, and they robbed all that came along that way by them: and it was told ⁷Abimelech. 26 And ⁸Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brethren, and ⁹went over to Shechem: and the men of Shechem put their ¹⁰confidence in him. 27 And they went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trode the grapes, and ^cmade merry, and ¹¹went into the house of their ¹²god, and did eat and drink, and ¹³cursed Abimelech. 28 And Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who is Abimelech, and who is ¹⁴Shechem, that we should serve him? is not he the ¹⁵son of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his ¹⁶officer? ¹⁷serve the men of ¹⁸Hamor the father of Shechem: for why should we serve ¹⁹him? 29 And ²⁰would to God this

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 89. ^b see R.V. and comment, p. 89. ^c see R.V. and comment, p. 89.

¹⁵ So connected neither with Ephraim, nor with the Canaanites. Gideon cast down Baal's altar, why then should his son rule over Baal's worshippers? A subtle appeal to nationality, tribal jealousy and religion.

¹⁶ *Lit.* overseer.

¹⁷ Let us serve our old native princes.

¹⁸ *Intro.*, p. xlvii.

¹⁹ Abimelech.

²⁰ Gaal wished he were ruler of the city, then he would depose Abimelech.

¹ *Lit.* "been a prince"—*i.e.* regarded as a king at Shechem only. The rest of Israel looked upon him as a prince or petty chieftain.

² A spirit of dissension or faction.

³ Formed a secret plot against his authority.

⁴ An intimation that this conspiracy was brought about by God as a punishment for the violence done to the house of Gideon.

Abimelech and the men of Shechem were the guilty parties.

Punishment falls upon both parties by their own deed in quarrelling among themselves.

⁵ The conspiracy originated in brigandage. The great routes from Judah to the north and from Gilead to the west passed near Shechem.

⁶ For Abimelech—perhaps hoping to seize his person.

⁷ Who took no steps against the brigands, and so the conspiracy developed.

⁸ Probably a Canaanitish adventurer.

⁹ Passed over the mountains and entered the town.

¹⁰ Espoused his cause.

¹¹ The plot came to a head at the time of vintage during an idolatrous feast in the temple of Baal-berith.

¹² Baal-berith. We may note how thoroughly Shechem was given over to idolatry.

¹³ Reviled.

¹⁴ This prince over Shechem, *i.e.* what are his claims to rule in Shechem?

people were under my hand! then would I remove Abimelech. And he said to Abimelech, ²¹Increase thine army, and come out. ³⁰ And when Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was ²²kindled. ³¹ And he sent messengers unto Abimelech ²³privily, saying, Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren be come to Shechem; and, behold, ²⁴they ²⁴fortify the city against thee. ³² Now therefore up ²⁵by night, thou and the people that is with thee, and lie ²⁶in wait ²⁷in the field: ³³ And it shall be, that in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and ²⁸set upon the city: and, behold, when he and the people that is with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them as ²⁹thou shalt find occasion.

d see R. V. and comment, p. 89.

²¹ Addressed to the rebels = I would call him to gather his forces together and fight out the issue.

²² Hot against Gaal.

²³ Secretly.

²⁴ "Make a strong party in the city against thee," or "have seized the city against thee."

²⁵ Quickly and secretly to take them by surprise.

²⁶ *i.e.* in ambush.

²⁷ Outside the city, to surprise the Shechemites when they came out to gather in the vintage.

²⁸ Array your troops against the city, *i.e.* issue from ambush and draw up your forces for attack.

²⁹ As opportunity may arise.

Abimelech Defeats Gaal and Captures Shechem.

³⁴ And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that were with him, by night, and they ²laid wait against Shechem in four companies. ³⁵ And Gaal the son of Ebed went out, and ³stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and Abimelech rose up, and the people that were with him, from ⁴lying in wait. ³⁶ And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, ⁵Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as if they were men. ³⁷ And Gaal spake again and said, ⁶See there come people down by the middle of the land, and another

¹ He followed the advice of Zebul.

² For the tactics see v. 44. The generalship of Gaal enabled the Shechemites to regain the gate, though they were defeated in the open.

³ Having assumed the rule of the city he would go there to administer justice.

⁴ Their ambush.

⁵ The object of Zebul was to divert Gaal from noticing the arrival of Abimelech till it was too late to shut the gates and offer effectual resistance.

⁶ Gaal catches sight of not only one company but of two.

company ^acome along by the plain of Meonenim. 38 Then said Zebul unto him, Where is now ⁸thy mouth, where-with thou saidst, Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? is not this the people that thou hast despised? go out, I pray now, and fight with them. 39 And Gaal went out ⁹before the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech. 40 And Abimelech ¹⁰chased him, and he fled before him, and many were overthrown and wounded, even unto the entering of the gate. 41 And Abimelech ¹¹dwelt at Arumah: and Zebul ¹²thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem. 42 And it came to pass ¹³on the morrow, that the people ¹⁴went out into the field; and they told Abimelech. 43 And he took ¹⁵the people, and divided them into ¹⁶three companies, and laid wait in the field, and looked, and, behold, the people were come forth out of the city; and he rose up against them, and smote them. 44 And Abimelech, and the company that was with him, rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and the two other companies ran upon all the people that were in the fields, and slew them. 45 And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and ¹⁷sowed it with salt.

a see R. V. and comment, p. 88.

⁷ By the way of the oak of the soothsayers.

⁸ Thy words of boasting. Zebul now drops dissimulation and challenges Gaal to go out and fight with Abimelech.

⁹ As their leader.

¹⁰ Defeated him in the open and chased him towards the city. Gaal evidently regained the city.

¹¹ Retired for the night to Arumah, waiting a further opportunity. He was not strong enough to take the city.

¹² Zebul was strong enough to expel Gaal and his party, but he could not persuade the citizens to receive Abimelech.

¹³ After Gaal was thrust out.

¹⁴ Going to their work without any suspicion of being attacked.

¹⁵ His own forces.

¹⁶ V. 44 explains the disposition of his forces. Two companies were to attack those in the open country, the third was to make a rush and seize the gate. Abimelech commanded this company in person.

¹⁷ Symbolical of desolation, salt being an emblem of barrenness.

The Death of Abimelech.

46 And when all ¹the men of the tower of Shechem heard that, they entered into an ²hold of the house of the god Berith. 47 And it was told Abi-

¹ The garrison of Millo (see p. 38).

² Fortress, stronghold; the temple was probably fortified. They had fled there as to a sanctuary.

melech, that all the men of the tower of Shechem ³were gathered together. 48 And Abimelech gat him up to mount ⁴Zalmon, he and all the people that were with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid it on his shoulder, and said unto the people that were with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done. 49 And all the people likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put them to the hold, and ⁵set the hold on fire upon them; so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand men and women. 50 Then went Abimelech to ⁶Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it. 51 But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all ⁷they of the city, and shut it to them, and gat them up to ⁸the top of the tower. 52 And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went ⁹hard unto the door of the tower to ¹⁰burn it with fire. 53 And a certain woman cast a piece of ¹¹millstone upon Abimelech's head, and ¹²all to ¹³brake his ¹⁴scull. 54 Then he called hastily unto the young man his ¹⁵armourbearer, and said unto him, ¹⁶Draw thy sword, and slay me, that ¹⁷men say not of me, ¹⁸A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died. 55 And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they ¹⁹departed every man unto his place. 56 Thus God ²⁰avendered the wickedness of Abime-

^a see R. V. and comment, p. 89.

³ Taken refuge in one place.

⁴ See Intro., p. lxxxviii. Abimelech went to fetch wood to set the temple on fire.

⁵ So literally fulfilling the curse pronounced by Jotham (v. 20).

⁶ Intro., p. lxxxviii.

⁷ The chiefs or rulers.

⁸ *i.e.* the flat roof of the tower.

⁹ Close.

¹⁰ Intending to serve the refugees as he had treated those of Shechem (v. 49).

¹¹ The upper stone of a hand-mill.

¹² All to = entirely, utterly. It is an adverb (see p. 94).

¹³ Brake is past tense, and not an infinitive.

¹⁴ The millstone crushed his head all to pieces.

¹⁵ = esquire, of the middle ages.

¹⁶ So Saul called upon his armourbearer to slay him lest he should fall alive unto the hands of the Philistines (1 Sam. xxi. 4).

¹⁷ Those who had sided with Abimelech when the men of Shechem revolted.

¹⁸ It was considered a disgrace for a warrior to fall by the hand of a woman.

¹⁹ The death of the leader was generally the signal for the dispersal of an Eastern army (1 Kings xxii. 36).

²⁰ Required, *i.e.* brought the consequences of his own violence and cruelty upon his own head.

Abimelech is punished for his sin against his father.

lech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren: 57 And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God *avender* upon their heads: and upon ²¹them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

put an end for a time to any hope of the establishment of a monarchy. The death of Abimelech was long a warning to besiegers not to approach too near the walls of a beleaguered city. Joab makes allusion to it when he sends David the tidings of the death of Uriah the Hittite before the walls of Rabbah (2 Sam. xi. 21).

Tola and Jair Judges.

10. And ¹after Abimelech there arose to ²defend Israel ³Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in ^amount Ephraim. 2 And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir. 3 And after him arose ⁵Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years. 4 And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ⁶ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called ⁷Havoth-jair unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead. 5 And Jair died, and was buried in Canon.

a see R.V. and comment, p. 85.

The Shechemites for their ingratitude towards Gideon.

²¹ The sins of the two parties recoil upon their own heads, and bring about the fulfilment of the curse pronounced by Jotham.

The death of Abimelech

put an end for a time to any hope of the establishment of a monarchy.

The death of Abimelech was long a warning to besiegers not to approach too near the walls of a beleaguered city. Joab makes allusion to it when he sends David the tidings of the death of Uriah the Hittite before the walls of Rabbah (2 Sam. xi. 21).

¹ After the time of Abimelech, not in succession to him. Abimelech is not counted among the Judges.

² *Lit.* to save.

³ Intro., p. xxvii.

⁴ The hill country of Ephraim. Tola chose this as a residence because of its central position. So Deborah dwelt in Mount Ephraim (iv. 5).

⁵ Intro., p. xxvii.

⁶ The animal ridden by persons in high position (see also v. 10, xii. 14).

⁷ Intro., p. lxxvii. = the villages of Jair. The name was given to certain villages in Bashan conquered by Jair (Num. xxxii. 41).

Israel again relapses into Idolatry.

6 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served ¹Baalim, and ²Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him. 7 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the ³hands of the Philistines, and into ⁴the hands of the children of Ammon. 8 And

On these gods (see Intro., p. xlv.).

¹ The Baalim.

² The Ashtaroth.

Seven gods are mentioned here, and in v. 11-12 we find seven oppressions from which Israel had been delivered.

³ Pressing on Judah from the south. The oppression of the Philistines is narrated in chaps. xiii.-xvi.

⁴ Attacking the tribes east of Jordan, and pushing their inroads as far as Ephraim and Judah (v. 9).

⁵that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel: eighteen years, all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan in the ⁶land of the Amorites, which is in ⁷Gilead. ⁹Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed.

Repentance of Israel.

10 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served ¹Baalim. 11 And the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the ²Egyptians, and from the ³Amorites, from the children of ⁴Ammon, and from ⁵the Philistines? 12 The ⁶Zidonians also, and the ⁷Amalekites, and the ⁸Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I ^adelivered you out of their hand. 13 Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: ⁹wherefore I will ^adeliver you no more. 14 Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. 15 And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. 16 And they put away the ¹⁰strange gods from among them, and served the LORD; and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. 17 Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead.

α see R. V. and comment, p. 85.

⁵ Either the year in which God "sold them into the hands" of the Philistines and Ammonites or the year in which the Ammonites passed beyond Jordan, an act which appears to have moved Israel to repentance.

⁶ i.e. the district formerly ruled over by Sihon and Og.

⁷ Here = the whole district east of Jordan.

¹ The Baalim.

Seven gods named in vv. 6-9. Now seven deliverances are mentioned.

² Ex. xii. 29-36 (*Moses*).

³ Num. xxi. 2-3 (*Moses*).

⁴ In league with Moab.

Judges iii. 15 (*Ehud*).

⁵ Judges iii. 31 (*Shamgar*).

⁶ In the army of Jabin.

Judges v. 19 (*Barak*).

⁷ Judges vi. 34 (*Gideon*).

⁸ Intro. p. lxiii. The Septuagint has "*Midianites*," which may be the correct reading.

⁹ A threat with an unexpressed condition. As long as Israel worshipped other gods they must expect no assistance from Jehovah.

¹⁰ i.e. gods of foreign nations.

The putting away of these idols was a sign of genuine repentance, and so God once more had compassion on His people.

And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in ¹¹Mizpeh. 18 And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another, ¹²What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

¹¹ Mizpeh in Gilead (Intro., p. lxxxiii). The natural place for the gathering of the tribes east of Jordan.

¹² They want a leader. What man will come forward and lead them against the Ammonites? To him they promise the headship of the Eastern tribes.

The Early History of Jephthah.

11. Now Jephthah ¹the Gileadite was ²a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and ³Gilead begat Jephthah. 2 And Gilead's ⁴wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman. 3 Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of ⁵Tob: and there were gathered ⁶vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him.

¹ The son of Gilead.

² So the angel addresses Gideon (vi. 12).

³ A family name in the tribe of Manasseh.

⁴ Lawful wife.

⁵ Intro., p. lxxxviii. A district north of Gilead towards Syria.

⁶ Idle men preferring the wild life of independence. In like manner a band of followers gathered round David (1 Sam. xxii. 1).

Jephthah Elected to the Leadership.

4 And it came to pass ¹in process of time, that the children of ²Ammon made war against Israel. 5 And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch ³Jephthah out of the land of Tob: 6 And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our ⁴captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon. 7 And Jephthah said unto ⁵the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress? 8 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, ⁶Therefore we turn again to

¹ Several years after the expulsion of Jephthah, at the end of the eighteen years oppression.

² Intro., p. lix.

³ Jephthah had evidently earned fame as a freebooter. His trained band would be of great assistance in the coming contest.

⁴ Leader in the war.

⁵ The leaders of the tribe had joined in the expulsion of Jephthah.

⁶ Because we formerly acted unjustly towards you, now we will remedy our error.

thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and ⁷be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. ⁹ And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and ⁸the LORD deliver them before me, shall I be your head? ¹⁰ And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, ⁹The LORD be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words. ¹¹ Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah ¹⁰uttered all his words before the LORD in ¹¹Mizpeh.

ABIMELECH.

1. The son of Gideon's concubine.
2. Left his father's house of his own accord to plan treason.
3. Appealed to the Shechemites to assist him in his ambition and succeeded.
4. Abimelech hired his band of 'vain' fellows for the purpose of murdering his brethren.
5. Abimelech destroyed Shechem.

⁷ We will make you head of the clan. They appealed to Jephthah's generosity.

⁸ The faith of Jephthah is shown by his appeal to Jehovah. "*If the Lord deliver them before me.*"

⁹ The undertaking is inaugurated by a solemn ratification before Jehovah of the agreement made between Jephthah and the elders of Gilead.

Jephthah bargained for the headship; in this his action contrasts unfavourably with that of Gideon in rejecting kingship, but the ratification of the oath was not designed merely to bind the men of Gilead. It was a solemn appeal to Jehovah.

¹⁰ May signify some form of oath.

¹¹ Intro., p. lxxxiii.

JEPHTHAH.

1. The son of a strange woman.
2. Driven out by his brothers from his father's inheritance.
3. Appealed to the 'elders of Gilead' to redress his wrongs, but in vain.
4. Jephthah and his freebooters did not war against his father's house, but probably gained fame as fighting against Ammon.
5. Jephthah saved Gilead.

Preliminary Negotiations before Actual Warfare.

¹² And Jephthah sent ¹messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, ²What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against ³me to fight in my land? ¹³ And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from ⁴Arnon even unto ⁵Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore restore those lands again peaceably. ¹⁴ And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of

¹ To endeavour to clear up the cause of quarrel.

² What is your object?

³ Jephthah speaks as head of Gilead.

⁴ Intro., p. lxxi.

⁵ Intro., p. lxxix.

Ammon: 15 And said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, Israel ⁶took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon: 16 But when Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea, and came to ⁷Kadesh; 17 Then Israel ⁸sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land: but the ⁹king of Edom would not hearken thereto. And in like manner ¹⁰they sent unto the king of Moab: but he would not consent: and Israel abode in Kadesh. 18 Then they went along through the wilderness, and ¹¹compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and pitched on the ¹²other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon ¹³was the border of Moab. 19 And Israel sent messengers unto ¹⁴Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of ¹⁵Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land into my place. 20 But Sihon ¹⁶trusted not Israel to pass through his ¹⁹coast: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in ¹⁷Jahaz, and fought against Israel. 21 And the LORD God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they smote them: so Israel possessed all ¹⁸the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. 22 And they possessed all the ¹⁹coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from ²⁰the wilderness even unto Jordan. 23 So now the LORD God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people

⁶They refrained from doing so by special command of God.

⁷Num. xx.1. Intro. p.lxxx1.

⁸Num. xx. 14-17.

⁹Num. xx. 18.

¹⁰There is no actual mention of an embassy to Moab.

¹¹Went round; made no effort to force their way through.

¹²The north side away from Moab.

¹³The river was the northern boundary of Moab.

¹⁴Intro., p. II.

¹⁵Intro., p. lxxviii.

¹⁶Put no confidence in the word of Israel.

¹⁷Intro., p. lxxix.

¹⁸Not of the Ammonites nor of the Moabites.

¹⁹Border.

²⁰Of Arabia east of Gilead.

Israel, and shouldest thou possess it? 24 Wilt not thou possess that which ²¹Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the LORD our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess. 25 And now art thou any thing better than ²²Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them. 26 While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and ²³her towns, and in ²⁴Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore did ye not recover them within that time? 27 Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the LORD the ²⁵Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon. 28 Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he ²⁶sent him.

²¹ Intro., p. xliii. The God of Moab, but also worshipped by Ammon.

²² Intro., p. xlvi. Though king of Moab he did not dispute the title of Israel to the conquered land.

²³ Dependent towns (see i. 27).

²⁴ Intro., p. lxxi

²⁵ Vindicator. Will show which of us is the rightful claimant.

²⁶ *i.e.* by his ambassadors.

THE FIRST EMBASSY.

Demand of Jephthah.

Why do the Ammonites make war against Israel?

Reply of the Ammonites.

(1) A claim to the land lying between the Arnon and the Jabbok.

(2) A demand for the peaceful restoration of this territory.

The land demanded by the Ammonites was occupied by Gad and Reuben.

THE SECOND EMBASSY.

Jephthah disputes the statement of the King of Ammon.

(1) He denies that the land in dispute ever belonged to Ammon.

(2) He supports his statement by historical facts, *viz.*:

- I. In the journey from Egypt to Canaan Israel had attacked neither Moab nor Edom.

They had asked permission to march through the lands of these nations.

This permission was refused.

They then marched round these territories, and when they made for the Jordan on the east they directed their course north of the Arnon, the northern boundary of Moab (*vv.* 15-18).

Therefore no territory had been taken from Moab (*v.* 18).

- II. The conquered territory belonged to the Amorites. Sihon had refused Israel a passage through his land. He had gratuitously provoked a contest. He had been defeated, and Israel occupied his territory (*vv. 19-22*).
Therefore Israel succeeded the Amorites (v. 22).
- III. Ammon had never claimed the Amorites' land whilst the Amorites held it. So their present claim is preposterous.
- IV. The land had *once* been Moabite land, but Chemosh, their god, had not secured them in possession. Jehovah, God of Israel, had given the land to His people (*vv. 23-24*).
- V. When Israel defeated the Amorites, Balak did not put forward a claim to the conquered territory, much less did he fight for it (*v. 25*).
- VI. Israel's claim had been left unchallenged for 300 years (*v. 26*).
The basis of Israel's claim is:
(1) Actual possession.
(2) Conquest.
(3) Undisputed occupation for 300 years.
- VII. So Israel's claim is just, and if Ammon choose to fight, the Lord will be the Judge (*v. 27*).

Jephthah's Vow. His Victory.

29 Then the ¹Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and ²he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and ³passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he ⁴passed over unto the children of Ammon. ³⁰ And Jephthah ⁵vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, ³¹ Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a ⁶burnt offering. ³² So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the LORD delivered them into his hands. ³³ And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to ⁷Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto the ⁸plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

¹ See iii. 10.

² Collecting his forces.

³ Passed over to Mizpeh, which was the rendezvous.

⁴ For the purpose of attacking them.

⁵ Instances of vows:—

1. Jacob at Bethel (Gen. xxviii. 20-22).
2. Hannah's vow (1 Sam. i. 11).
3. Absalom's vow (2 Sam. xv. 7-8).
4. St. Paul's vow at Cenchrea (Acts xviii. 8).

⁶ Did Jephthah intend to offer a human sacrifice. (For discussion on this point, see p. xli.)
Jephthah suffers deeply for his rash vow.

⁷ Intro., p. lxxxiii. Four miles from Heshbon.

⁸ Abel-Ceramim, seven miles from Rabbah (Intro., p. lxx.).

The Fate of Jephthah's Daughter.

34 And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his ¹house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with ²timbrels and with dances: and she was ³his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. 35 And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he ⁴rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for ⁵I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back. 36 And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, ⁶do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon. 37 And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my ⁷fellows. 38 And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. 39 And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, 40 That the daughters of Israel went yearly to ⁸a lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

¹A residence had been assigned to him as head of Gilead.

²Like Miriam (Ex. xv. 20).

³What pathos this adds to the narrative!

⁴A sign of great grief.

The Israelites were very punctilious in the performance of vows, e.g. Saul would have put Jonathan to death (1 Sam. xiv. 44).

⁵I have made a solemn vow.

⁶She would offer herself freely for the welfare of her country.

She does not reproach her father for his rash vow. She submits cheerfully since Israel has triumphed.

Her only lamentation is for her childlessness. Jephthah's line ceased with his daughter.

She is freeing, as she thinks her, father and her country from the awful obligation of the oath.

⁷Companions.

To have no children was a source of great grief to Hebrew women. Their great hope was to be the mother or ancestress of the Messiah.

It was considered a judgment of God for a family to die out.

⁸Praise, i.e. celebrate her devoted heroism, not to bewail her death.

a see R.V. and comment, p. 89.

The Murmuring of Ephraim. The Subsequent Battle.

12. And the ¹men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, ²Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? ³We will burn thine house upon thee with fire. ² And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and ⁴when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands. ³ And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I ⁵put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand: ⁶wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me? ⁴ Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, ⁷because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites. ⁵ And the Gileadites took the ⁸passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay! ⁶ Then said they unto him, Say now ⁹Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at

a see R.V. and comment, p. 89.

¹ Arrogant and jealous of any honour gained by another tribe (see p. 33).

² They had made a similar complaint against Gideon (viii. 1).

³ What an extraordinary proceeding. They actually cross the Jordan to attack a hero who had subdued the enemies of Israel without their aid.—aid which they themselves had refused to give (see v. 2).

The attitude of Ephraim illustrates the carelessness of the times and the laxity of religion. The incident could not have happened under a Phinehas.

⁴ There is no record of this appeal, but it may well have happened.

⁵ Risked my life in battle.

⁶ Gideon appeased the anger of Ephraim by a soft answer. Jephthah meets them with a straightforward reply, and backs up his words by action.

⁷ The taunts of Ephraim had incensed the men of Gilead. Ephraim may have jeered at their brethren beyond Jordan as having no part in Israel; now they are fugitives themselves and are caught at the fords of Jordan.

⁸ Fords, i.e. seized them before the fugitives could cross.

⁹ An indication of differences of dialect on the east and west of Jordan. Shibboleth = stream; so it was a word natural to the conditions of crossing a river.

It was impossible for him to pronounce the word correctly.

The incident has caused the word Shibboleth to pass into a proverb.

A similar word test occurs in the massacre of the French in Sicily, A.D. 1262, known as the Sicilian Vespers. The French were detected by their failure to pronounce Italian correctly.

the passages of Jordan : and there ¹⁰fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand. ⁷ And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

¹⁰ *i.e.* fell in the expedition — the total number slain in the battle, the pursuit, and at the fords. This signal blow effectually put a stop to the arrogant boastfulness of the tribe of Ephraim.

The Successors of Jephthah.

⁸ And after him Ibzan of ¹Beth-lehem ²judged Israel. ⁹ And he had ³thirty sons, and thirty daughters, whom he ⁴sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons. And he ²judged Israel seven years. ¹⁰ Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Beth-lehem. ¹¹ And after him Elon, a Zebulonite, ²judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years. ¹² And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in ⁵Aijalon in the country of Zebulun. ¹³ And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, ⁶a Pirathonite, ²judged Israel. ¹⁴ And he had ⁷forty sons and thirty ^a⁸nephews, that rode on threescore and ten ⁹ass colts: and he judged Israel eight years. ¹⁵ And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in ¹⁰Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the ¹¹mount of the Amalekites.

a see R. V. and comment, p. 90.

¹ Bethlehem of Zebulun (Intro., p. lxxii.), not the Bethlehem in Judah.

Ibzan and Elon are northern Judges. It is probable that the victory of Jephthah had liberated the north and east.

² These three Judges appear to have achieved no warlike exploit, but simply to have directed the civil government.

³ Indicative of royal state, polygamy and great wealth.

⁴ Gave in marriage to other tribes, thus allying his house to other families.

An additional indication of Ibzan's wealth and influence.

⁵ Intro., p. lxx.

⁶ A native of Pirathon, so of the tribe of Ephraim.

⁷ Abdon also kept royal state, had many wives, and was wealthy.

⁸ Sons' sons, *i.e.* grandsons.

⁹ Indicative of their wealth and dignity.

¹⁰ Intro., p. lxxxiv.

¹¹ Intro., p. lxxxiii. A district in Ephraim, either a settlement of Amalek, or the scene of a battle with them.

An Angel Foretells the Birth of Samson.

13. And the children of Israel ¹did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the ²Philistines ³forty years. **2** And there was a certain man of

¹ Another lapse into idolatry, followed by the oppression at the hands of a heathen nation.

² Intro., p. lxi.

³ A generation. The oppression was ended by the victory of Samuel (1 Sam. vii. 13).

⁴Zorah, of the ⁵family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his ⁶wife was barren, and bare not. ³ And the angel of the LORD ⁷appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. ⁴ Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and ⁸drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not ⁹any unclean thing: ⁵ For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and ¹⁰no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall ¹¹begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. ⁶ Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, ¹²A man of God came unto me, and his ¹³countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name: ⁷ But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be ¹⁴a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death. ⁸ Then Manoah ¹⁵intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and ¹⁶teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. ⁹ And God ¹⁷hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. ¹⁰ And the woman ¹⁸made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me

⁴ A city bordering on Dan and Judah (Intro., p. lxxxviii.).

⁵ Tribe.

⁶ Compare Sarah (Gen. xvi. 1), Rebekah (Gen. xxv. 21), Hannah (1 Sam. i. 2), Elizabeth (Luke i. 7).

⁷ Two appearances:

(1) To the woman alone (v. 3).

(2) To Manoah and his wife. The wife fetched Manoah (vv. 9-23).

⁸ The Nazarite vow (see p. xxxii.).

⁹ Which was specially forbidden to Nazarites (Num. vi. 3-4).

¹⁰ The Nazarite vow (see p. xxxii.).

¹¹ An exact description of Samson's work. He did not actually deliver Israel, but he began the work, which was completed by Samuel (1 Sam. vii. 12), at the battle of Ebenezer.

¹² *i.e.* a man with a message from God (see p. 97).

¹³ His appearance.

¹⁴ Notable Nazarites are Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist.

¹⁵ They accept the message in faith, and ask for further guidance.

¹⁶ Instruct us more precisely.

¹⁷ Their prayer for further instruction is granted.

¹⁸ Anxious that her husband should see the angel.

the other day. 11 And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. 12 And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. ^a19 *How shall we order the child*, and ²⁰how shall we do unto him? 13 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her ²¹beware. 14 ²²She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe. 15 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until ²³we shall have made ready a kid for thee. 16 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, ²⁴Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the LORD. 17 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, ²⁵What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may ²⁶do thee honour? 18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is ^b27 *secret*? 19 So Manoah took a kid with a ^c28 *meat* offering, and offered it upon a ²⁹rock unto the LORD: and the angel did wonderously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. 20 For it came to pass, ³⁰when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 90. ^b see R.V. and comment, p. 90. ^c see R.V. and comment, p. 90.

¹⁹ What shall be the manner of the child?

²⁰ What shall be his work? The angel had already told the woman

(1) The manner of the child, *i.e.* a Nazarite.

(2) The work—to begin to deliver Israel.

Manoah asks for confirmation, and receives it.

²¹ Take good heed and observe the instructions given to her.

²² see v. 4.

²³ The intention of Manoah is—

(1) To offer hospitality if his visitor is a human being.

(2) To offer sacrifice if he is divine.

²⁴ The reply of the angel indicates—

(1) That he is not man, and so does not need food.

(2) That he is not God, so cannot receive a sacrifice. The offering must be to the Lord.

²⁵ So Jacob asked the name of the angel with whom he wrestled at Peniel (Gen. xxxii. 29).

²⁶ By making thee a gift.

²⁷ Margin, *wonderful*, *i.e.* beyond the comprehension of man.

²⁸ Meal (see p. 90).

²⁹ As an altar.

³⁰ Compare Gideon's case (vi. 21).

the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and ³¹fell on their faces to the ground. 21 But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah ³²knew that he was an angel of the LORD. 22 And Manoah said unto his wife, ³³We shall surely die, because we have seen God. 23 But his wife ³⁴said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a ^c³⁵meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these. 24 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. 25 And the Spirit of the LORD began to ³⁶move him at times in the ³⁷camp of Dan between Zorah and ³⁸Eshtaol.

c see R. V. and comment, p. 90.

³¹ In worship and in fear.

³² Discerned, understood.

³³ According to the general idea, that no man could look on God and live (see Gideon vi. 22), (see Exodus xxxiii. 20).

³⁴ With sound common sense. There was no need for Divine assurance, as in the case of Gideon (vi. 22-23). The woman rightly argues that God would not have appeared to them to tell them what He had, nor would He have accepted their offering, if He intended their death.

³⁵ Meal (see p. 90).

³⁶ Stir him up—i.e. to fill him with noble impulse.

³⁷ Mahaneh-Dan (Intro., p. lxxxii.).

³⁸ Intro., p. lxxiv.

The Marriage of Samson.

14. And Samson went down to ¹Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the ²daughters of the Philistines: now therefore ³get her for me to wife. 3 Then his father and his mother said unto him, ⁴Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the ⁵uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for ⁶she pleaseth me well. 4 But his ⁷father and his mother knew

¹ Intro p. lxxxviii.

² Against the law which forbade inter-marrying with Canaanites (Deut. vii. 3-4).

³ It was the custom for the parents to arrange the marriage.

⁴ The parents objected strongly to the proposed marriage.

⁵ A term of reproach applied especially to the Philistines.

⁶ *Lit.* she is right in my eyes.

⁷ The parents yielded, but did not know that God was over-ruling this marriage for his own purposes.

not that it was of the LORD, that ⁸he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for ⁹at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. ⁵Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a ¹⁰young lion roared against him. ⁶And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but ¹¹he told not his father or his mother what he had done. ⁷And he went down, ¹²and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. ⁸And after a time ¹³he returned to take her, and he ¹⁴turned aside to see the carcase of the lion; and behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. ⁹And he took thereof in his hands, and ¹⁵went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion. ¹⁰So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there ¹⁶a feast; for so used the young men to do. ¹¹And it came to pass, ¹⁷when they saw him, that they brought thirty ¹⁸companions to be with him.

Samson's Riddle.

¹²And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth ^{1a}a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within ²the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty ^{a3}sheets and thirty change of garments: ¹³But if ye cannot declare it me, then

a see R. V. and comment, p. 90.

⁸ The Lord. The marriage is the cause of the quarrel between Samson and the Philistines.

⁹ An intimation of the date of the Book of Judges, *i.e.*, not earlier than David's reign.

¹⁰ A full grown cub, *i.e.* in the full strength and vigour of his youth.

Lions in Palestine:

(1) David killed a lion and a bear (1 Sam. xvii. 34).

(2) Benaiah slew a lion in a pit in the time of snow (2 Sam. xxiii. 20).

(3) A lion killed the disobedient prophet (1 Kings xiii. 25).

(4) A lion killed the man who refused to smite the prophet (1 Kings xx. 36).

¹¹ So his parents could not have disclosed the meaning of the riddle (*vv.* 13-16).

¹² They were now betrothed.

¹³ To complete the marriage and take his bride to his home.

¹⁴ Out of the direct path and leaving the company of his father and mother.

¹⁵ Ate as he went on.

¹⁶ The bridal feast (*p.* 94).

¹⁷ Possibly Samson's marriage was so unpopular that none of his own friends would accompany him. The bride's parents supply the deficiency.

¹⁸ The friends of the bridegroom (*p.* 94).

¹ A favourite amusement of Orientals.

² The usual duration of the marriage feast.

³ Shirts of fine linen.

shall ye give me thirty ⁴sheets' and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, ⁵Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. 14 And he said unto them, ⁶Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle. 15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye ⁷called us to ⁸take that we have? is it not so? 16 And Samson's wife ⁹wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee? 17 And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she ¹⁰lay sore upon him: and she ¹¹told the riddle to the children of her people. 18 And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day ¹²before the sun went down, ¹³What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, ¹⁴If ye had not ¹⁵plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle. 19 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and ¹⁶he went down to ¹⁷Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And ¹⁸his anger was kindled, and he went up to his

a see R.V. and comment, p. 90.

⁴Shirts of fine linen. Presents of costly garments are common gifts in the East.

⁵They accept the wager.

⁶The riddle is given in rhythmical form—
Eater = lion.
Food = honey.
Strong = lion.
Sweetness = honey.

The circumstance of the bees swarming in the carcase of the lion enabled Samson to propound a riddle the secret of which was known to himself alone.

⁷Invited us to the feast.

⁸*Lit.* spoil us, reduce us to poverty.

⁹Sullen guests and a weeping wife rendered the marriage festivities joyless and dull.

¹⁰Pleaded urgently. *Lit.* pressed him sore.

¹¹In fear of their threatened vengeance.

¹²Before sunset; they kept back their reply till the last moment, in order to give a greater impression.

¹³The Philistines give the solution in the rhythmical form of the riddle.

¹⁴Samson indicates that he is aware they had learnt the solution through the treachery of his wife.

¹⁵*i.e.* if you had not learnt the answer from my wife.

¹⁶Samson spoils the Philistines to pay the wager.

¹⁷*Intro.*, p. lxxi. The further the story, and thus his exploit was less likely to be made known.

¹⁸In his anger he deserts his wife, leaving her in her father's house.

father's house. 20 But Samson's wife was given to his ¹⁹companion, whom he had used as his friend.

15. But it came to pass ¹within a while after, in the ²time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a ³kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her ⁴father would not suffer him to go in. ² And her father said, I verily thought that ⁵thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I ⁶gave her to thy companion: is not her ⁷younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her. ³ And Samson said concerning them, ⁸*Now shall I be ⁹more blameless than the Philistines though I do them a displeasure.* ⁴ And Samson went and caught three hundred ¹⁰foxes, and took ¹¹firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. ⁵ And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into ¹²the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives. ⁶ Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son in law of the ¹³Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and ¹⁴burnt her and her father with fire. ⁷ And Samson said unto them, ^b*Though ye have done this yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease.* ⁸ And he smote them ¹⁵hip and thigh with a great slaughter; and he went down and dwelt in the ^c*16*top of the ¹⁷rock Etam.

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 90. ^b see R.V. and comment, p. 90. ^c see R.V. and comment, p. 91.

¹⁹ One of the thirty, v. 11—
“the friend of the bridegroom” = our best man.

¹ After many days.

² About the end of our April.

³ A common form of present. Samson desires a reconciliation with his wife.

⁴ By the woman being in her father's house it is clear that she had only been betrothed to Samson's companion, but the father had now received a double dowry.

⁵ A fair inference from Samson's conduct (xiv. 20).

⁶ *i.e.* in marriage.

⁷ With a desire to retain the dower Samson had given, the father proposes to give him the younger sister.

⁸ This time, *i.e.* he will have more justification than he had in his attack on Askelon.

⁹ Now I shall be justified in retaliating, *i.e.* innocent as regards the Philistines.

¹⁰ Jackals.

¹¹ Torches.

¹² To burn the crops was the greatest injury he could inflict.

Abalom obtained an interview with Joab by a like act (2 Sam. xiv. 30).

Some of the corn was in shocks or sheaves; some was still left standing.

¹³ Inhabitant of Timnah.

¹⁴ Was this in anger against Samson, or an act of justice to appease him?

If the former, v. 7 reads: “If ye act thus I will not cease till I have taken full vengeance.”

If the latter, v. 7 reads: “Though ye have punished my wife and my father, etc.”

¹⁵ A proverbial expression = with great slaughter.

¹⁶ Cleft of the rock, *i.e.* a cavern at the top of a high cliff.

¹⁷ Intro., p. lxxiv.

The Men of Judah Deliver Samson to the Philistines.

9 Then the Philistines ¹went up, and pitched in Judah, and ²spread themselves in ³Lehi. 10 And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against ⁴us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us. 11 Then three thousand men of Judah went to the ^a*top* of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, ⁵Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. 12 And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me ⁶yourselves. 13 And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.

^a see R. V. and comment, p. 91.

Samson Slays a Thousand Philistines with the Jawbone of an Ass.

14 And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines ^a*shouted* ¹against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms ²became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands ³loosed from off his hands. 15 And he found a new ⁴jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and ⁵slew a thousand men therewith. 16 And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, ⁶heaps

^a see R. V. and comment, p. 91.

¹ Ascended into the high-land of Judah to take vengeance for their burnt crops.

² Scattered in search of Samson.

³ Intro., p. lxxxii. The place is so named in anticipation (see v. 17).

⁴ For we have committed no offence against you. The offender is not of our tribe.

⁵ We may note how the spirit of Judah was crushed by the Philistine oppression.

Samson was of the tribe of Dan, and they may have considered his act as merely a personal quarrel.

⁶ He desires to keep them out of the fray.

¹ Lit. to meet him.

² Were as weak as half-burnt flax, yielding easily to his effort to break them.

³ Lit. 'were melted.'

⁴ Being unarmed he seized the nearest weapon.

⁵ The Philistines must have been seized with a panic.

⁶ In the original there is a pun on 'chamor,' an ass, and 'chamor,' a mass or heap.

upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men. 17 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place ⁷Ramath-lehi.

⁷ The height or hill of the jawbone (Intro., p. lxxxii).

Samson Miraculously Supplied with Water.

18 And he was ¹sore athirst, and called on the LORD, and said, ²Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of ³the uncircumcised? 19 But God ^aclave an ^bhollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof ⁶En-hakkore, which is in Lehi ⁷unto this day. 20 And he judged Israel ⁸in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 91.

¹ After his exertions in the fight and pursuit.

² Samson confesses that God had been his deliverer, and prays for further assistance.

³ The Philistines (see p. lxi).

⁴ Descriptive of the bursting forth of a spring of water.

⁵ Better "the hollow that was in Lehi." A hollow in the cliff from which a spring gushed forth, supplying Samson with water to quench his thirst.

⁶ = the fountain of him who calls.

⁷ i.e. when the account was written.

⁸ i.e. during the period of the Philistine oppression.

Samson Escapes from Gaza.

16. ¹Then went Samson to ²Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her. ² And it was told the Gazites, ³saying, Samson is come hither. And they ⁴compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were ⁵quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him. ³ And Samson lay till midnight, and ⁶arose at midnight, ^aand took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is ⁸before Hebron.

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 91.

¹ And—there is no mark of time.

² The chief town of the Philistines.

³ His visit became known.

⁴ Secured the gates, and thus thought they had him fast in the city.

⁵ Took no action during the night, but waited for day.

⁶ The guard must have been asleep.

⁷ Samson tore up gates and posts together, and carried them away.

The bar kept the two leaves of the gate together, thus Samson carried off everything at once. The whole proceeding seems to have been regarded by Samson as a huge joke.

⁸ Towards. Near Gaza there is a hill in the direction of Hebron, and from which it is visible

Samson is captured through the Treachery of Delilah.

4 And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of ¹Sorek, whose name was Delilah.
 5 And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see ²wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to ³afflict him: and we will give thee ⁴every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver. 6 And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou ⁵mightest be bound to afflict thee.
 7 And Samson ⁶said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs that ⁷were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be ⁸as another man. 8 Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green ⁹withs which had not been dried, and she bound him with them. 9 Now there were men ¹⁰lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known. 10 And Delilah ¹¹said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound. 11 And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes ^athat never were ¹²occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man. 12 Delilah therefore took ¹³new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And there were liers

a see R. V. and comment, p. 91.

¹ Near the home of Samson (Intro., p. lxxxvii.).

² Both Philistines and Delilah imagined that Samson's strength was due to some charm.

³ Humble.

⁴ Each one gave this sum, so the bribe was a very large one, = nearly £700.

⁵ She imagines that some kind of cord would overcome the charm in which his strength lay.

⁶ Samson treats the matter as a joke.

⁷ And therefore flexible.

⁸ i.e. as an ordinary individual in strength.

⁹ A pliant twig used for binding bundles. The Margin has "new bow strings."

¹⁰ "Abiding in the inner chamber." Samson could not have known of them nor did they ever appear, otherwise Delilah could not have subsequently deceived him.

¹¹ She makes it appear as if it were a joke, and that she had roused Samson with the cry in order to be gratified with an exhibition of his great strength.

¹² Used (see p. 96).

¹³ She fancies the charm lies in the fact that the ropes had never been used.

in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread. 13 And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the ¹⁴seven locks of my head with the web. 14 And she ¹⁵fastened it with the pin, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, ^b and ¹⁶went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web. 15 And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth. 16 And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was ¹⁷vexed unto death; 17 That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: ¹⁸if I be shaven, then ¹⁹my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man. 18 And when Delilah saw that ²⁰he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up ²¹this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought ²²money in their hand. 19 And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to ²³afflict him, and his strength

^b see R.V. and comment, p. 91.

¹⁴ **Plaits.** His hair was arranged in seven plaits.

¹⁵ She wove Samson's hair into the cloth as she would weave ordinary threads, and then fastened the piece of cloth securely in the loom with the peg.

¹⁶ Tore it up.

¹⁷ Weary of her importunity.

¹⁸ Samson's strength did not lie in his hair, but on the faithful observance of his vow.

¹⁹ **My strength,** as if it were his own strength. His strength lay in obedience to Jehovah.

²⁰ *i.e.* told her the truth at last.

²¹ Just once more, for I am now certain that I have wormed his secret from him.

²² *i.e.* the money they had promised.

²³ Humble.

went from him. 20 And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and ²⁴shake myself. And he ²⁵wist not that the ²⁶LORD was departed from him.

The Death of Samson.

21 But ¹the Philistines took him, and ²put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did ³grind in the prison house. 22 Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven. 23 Then the lords of the Philistines ⁴gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto ⁵Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, ⁶Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. 24 And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. 25 And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may ⁷make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars. 26 And Samson said unto the lad that ⁸held him by the hand, ⁹Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. 27 Now the ¹⁰house was full of men and women; and ¹¹all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the ¹²roof about three

²⁴ Free myself as before.

²⁵ Knew not; did not perceive.

²⁶ And therefore his strength had departed from him.

¹ Coming out of the inner chamber, now that they perceived his strength was gone.

² To prevent Samson from doing any further mischief.

So Nebuchadnezzar put out the eyes of Zedekiah (2 Kings xxv. 7).

³ A degrading class of work to which slaves and captives were put.

⁴ They made the capture of Samson an occasion of a great sacrificial feast to their god Dagon.

⁵ The national God of the Philistines. The fish god, with the body of a man, and the tail of a fish (see Intro., p. xliii.).

⁶ This impious boast brought severe punishment. It was Jehovah Who had given Samson into their hands, and not the might of their god, to whom they impiously attribute their triumph.

⁷ In various ways.

(1) They may have subjected him to their insults.

(2) It may have been a performance of feats of strength.

(3) Or, by dancing and playing.

The Philistines would certainly mock and jeer at one, once so formidable, and now a sightless captive.

⁸ The blind Samson would require leading.

⁹ Allow me to rest against. He feigns to be tired, and to need rest and support.

¹⁰ The temple would appear to have had a flat roof, supported by pillars, and open in front (see note p. 65).

¹¹ The Lords of the Philistines sat below at a sacrificial feast.

¹² The common people stood above on the flat roof.

thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. 28 And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, ¹³O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be ¹⁴at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. 29 And Samson took hold of ¹⁵the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and ¹⁶on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. 30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might, ¹⁷and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life. 31 Then his ¹⁸brethren and all the house of his father ¹⁹came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying place of ²⁰Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

"The building was a spacious Theatre,
Half round on two main pillars vaulted high

The other side was open, where the throng
On banks and scaffolds under skie might stand."

Milton—'Samson Agonistes' (1605—10).

¹³ This prayer acknowledges the true source of his strength.

¹⁴ This spirit of vengeance is not to be commended.

¹⁵ The two principal pillars at the entrance, the main support of the roof, and near enough to each other to enable him to grasp both of them.

¹⁶ Margin, "he leaned himself on them."

¹⁷ The removal of the pillars caused the roof (now unable to support the weight of the people), and the people on it to fall with a terrible crash on those below.

¹⁸ The family or clan of the tribe of Manasseh to which Samson belonged, not the household of Manoah only.

¹⁹ Taking advantage of the awe occasioned by the extraordinary event.

²⁰ who was probably dead.

The Story of Micah.

His Theft. He Makes an Image.

17. And there was a man of ^amount Ephraim, whose name was Micah. 2 And he said unto his mother, The ²eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou ³cursedst, and spakest of also in mine

a see R.V. and comment, p. 86.

The incident is related as an instance of the degeneracy of religion.

¹ The hill country of Ephraim.

² About £140.

³ Didst utter a curse or adjuration (see Lev. v. 1). The mother had adjured her son by God to tell her if he had taken the silver.

ears, behold, the silver is with me; ⁴I took it. And his mother said, ⁵Blessed be thou of the LORD, my son. ³ And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, ⁶I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a ⁷graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee. ⁴ Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took ⁸two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a ⁹graven image and a ¹⁰molten image: and they were in the house of Micah. ⁵ And the man Micah had ¹¹an house of gods, and made an ¹²ephod, and ¹³teraphim, and consecrated one of his ¹⁴sons, who became his priest. ⁶ In those days ¹⁵there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

⁴ He makes the confession through fear of the oath he was called upon to take.

⁵ Thus removing the curse by pronouncing a blessing.

⁶ I verily dedicate.

⁷ The intention was to worship Jehovah, not a strange god.

Micah and his mother broke the 2nd Commandment, not the 1st.

So the Israelites set up the golden calf at Sinai (Ex. xxxii.).

So Jeroboam made the two golden calves at Dan and Bethel (1 Kings xii. 29).

⁸ Probably this sum was spent on the images, and the remainder on "the house of God" (v. 5).

⁹ A carved image.

¹⁰ One cast in a mould.

¹¹ A house of God, *i.e.* for the image he had made.

¹² A costly priestly garment.

¹³ Images connected with magical rites, not for worship (see p. 99).

¹⁴ Not a Levite.

¹⁵ Descriptive of the want of religions and national unity of the times.

Micah Appoints a Levite as His Priest.

⁷ And there was a ¹young man out of ²Beth-lehem-judah of the ³family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he ⁴sojourned there. ⁸ And the man departed out of the city from Beth-lehem-judah ⁵to sojourn where he could find a place: and he came to ⁶mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. ⁹ And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Beth-lehem-judah, and I go ⁷to sojourn where I may find a place. ¹⁰ And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a ⁸father and a priest, and I will give thee

¹ For his name see xviii. 30. He was a grandson of Moses.

² Intro., p. lxxii.

³ Tribe—referring to the town as being situated in that tribe.

⁴ Lived there, but had no settled home.

⁵ To get his living where he could.

⁶ Hill country of Ephraim.

⁷ See v. 8.

⁸ Spiritual father or director.

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 86.

ten⁹ shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in. 11 And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him,¹⁰ as one of his sons. 12 And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. 13 Then said Micah,¹¹ Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.

⁹ A shekel equals about half-a-crown.

¹⁰ Was treated as one of the family.

¹¹ Descriptive of the delight of Micah in securing one of the Levitical order. The service of the Levite added greatly to the sanctity of the worship.

The Danites send out Men to Explore the Land.

18. In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day¹ all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel. 2 And the children of Dan sent of their family five men ^afrom their ²coasts, men of valour, from ³Zorah, and from ⁴Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there. 3 When they were by the house of Micah, they ⁵knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and ⁶what makest thou in this place? and ⁷what hast thou here? 4 And he said unto them, ⁸Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest. 5 And they said unto him, ⁹Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous. 6 And the priest said unto

This incident is related to illustrate the unsettled rule of the time.

¹ They had not been able to win the lowland, but had been driven back into the mountains by the Amorites (see lxvii.).

² *Lit.* "ends," meaning "the whole of the people."

³ *Intro.*, p. lxxiv.

⁴ *Intro.*, p. lxxxviii.

⁵ So they must have seen him before. A grandson of Moses must have been well known.

⁶ What are you doing, i.e. what is your business here?

⁷ What is your pay or salary?

⁸ See xvii. 11-12.

⁹ By means of the Ephod and the Teraphim.

^a see R. V. and comment, p. 91.

them, ¹⁰Go in peace: before the LORD is your way wherein ye go. 7 Then the five men departed, and came to ¹¹Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt ^{b12}*careless*, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was ^{c13}*no magistrate in the land*, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no ¹⁴business with any man. 8 And they ¹⁵came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What say ye? 9 And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land. ¹⁰When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and ¹⁶to a large land: for ¹⁷God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth.

b see R.V. and comment, p. 92. *c* see R.V. and comment, p. 92.

¹⁰ *i.e.* Jehovah will guide and direct you. The Levite most probably invented the answer, for Jehovah would not be enquired of in such a manner.

¹¹ Intro., p. lxxxii.

¹² In security. *Careless* = without care or anxiety for their safety in the luxury of successful commerce. They were a colony from Zidon.

¹³ No one of sufficient authority over the land to call them to account for any act of violence.

¹⁴ Dealings. So there would be none to take up their quarrel.

¹⁵ Bringing back a favourable report.

¹⁶ Of wide extent, far different from the mountain tract in which our tribe is confined.

¹⁷ They relied upon the answer given them by the Levite (v. 6).

The Danites Carry off Micah's Images.

¹¹ And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men ^{a1}*appointed* with weapons of war. ¹² And they went up, and pitched in ²Kirjath-jearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place ³Mahaneh-dan unto this day: behold, it is behind Kirjath-jearim. ¹³ And they passed thence unto ^{b4}*mount Ephraim*, and came unto the ⁵house of Micah. ¹⁴ Then

a see R.V. and comment, p. 92. *b* see R.V. and comment, p. 86.

¹ Girded, equipped.

² Intro., p. lxxxii.

³ The camp of Dan, see xiii. 25 and Intro., p. lxxxii.

⁴ The hill country of Ephraim.

⁵ Near their route northward.

answered the five men that went to spy unto the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these ⁶houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore ⁷consider what ye have to do. 15 And they ⁸turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him. 16 And the six hundred men ^{9a}appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate. 17 And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven mage, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were ^{10a}appointed with weapons of war. 18 And ¹¹these went into Micah's house; and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye? 19 And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, ¹²lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a ¹³father and a priest: is it ¹⁴better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? 20 And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the ¹⁵midst of the people. 21 So they turned and departed, and put the ¹⁶little ones and the cattle and the ¹⁷carriage before them.

a see R.V. and comment, p. 92. c see R.V. and comment, p. 92.

⁶ Probably a small village had clustered round Micah's house to share in the worship instituted by him.

⁷ Lay your plans to get possession of them.

⁸ i.e. leaving the main road.

⁹ Girded.

The course of events may have been as follows:—

The 600 halt at the entrance of the village.

The five spies go to the house of Micah to salute him.

The Levite accompanies them to the gate to the main body.

Then the five spies hurry back to the house of the Levite and carry out the images and priestly robes.

The Levite perceives what they have done and protests, but is induced by the persuasions of the Danites to join them.

¹⁰ Girded.

¹¹ The five spies who knew where to find the images, etc.

¹² To lay the finger on the mouth is the gesture of silence.

¹³ Spiritual father and guide.

¹⁴ They flatter the Levite's pride, and work upon his ambition.

¹⁵ Serving the double purpose of securing the images and the person of the Levite, and guarding them against any attempt at rescue.

¹⁶ Their presence indicates a regular migration, not armed men only.

¹⁷ Baggage. They made preparations against pursuit. The armed men brought up the rear.

The Pursuit by Micah.

22 And when they were ¹a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the ²houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and ³overtook the children of Dan. 23 And they ⁴cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? 24 And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee? 25 And the children of Dan said unto him, ⁵Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows ⁶run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household. 25 And the children of Dan went their way: and when ⁷Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.

¹ To collect a force for pursuit might take some little time. Perhaps the theft was not instantly discovered.

² See v. 14, *i.e.* of the village that had grown round the house of Micah.

³ As being unencumbered with baggage they would soon overtake the slow moving company of the Danites.

⁴ Shouted after.

⁵ The Danites do not want a contest, but they make their meaning quite clear. If Micah wants his images back he must fight for them, and in that case is likely not only to lose his images but his life and the lives of many of those with him.

⁶ Full upon, *i.e.* attack.

⁷ Micah sees the hopelessness of his case, wisely gives up the attempt to regain his images and returns home.

The Capture of Laish.

27 And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. 28 And there was no ¹deliverer, because it was far from ²Zidon, and they had no ³business with any man; and it was in the valley that lieth by ⁴Beth-rehob. And ⁵they built ⁶a city, and dwelt therein. 29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto ⁷Israel:

¹ No one to bring them any succour.

² The allusions to Zidon indicate that that city was the mother city and Laish a colony.

³ See note xviii. 7.

⁴ Intro., p. lxxii.

⁵ The Danites.

⁶ The city, *i.e.* they rebuilt it.

⁷ Jacob, the father of Dan,

howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first. 30 And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of ⁸Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the ⁹captivity of the land. 31 And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, ¹⁰all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

⁸ Should be 'Moses,' see R. V.

⁹ The Philistine domination after the great defeat of Israel at Ebenezer. This period is referred to as 'captivity' in Ps. lxxviii. 61 (see excursus p. 105).

¹⁰ Until the battle of Ebenezer when the ark was captured by the Philistines.

The Outrage by the Benjamites of Gibeah.

19. And it came to pass in ¹those days, when there was ²no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite ³sojourning ^aon ⁴the side of ⁵mount Ephraim, who took to him a ⁶concubine out of Beth-lehem-judah. 2 And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Beth-lehem-judah, and was there four whole months. 3 And her husband arose, and went after her, ⁷to speak friendly unto her, and to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a ⁸couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, ⁹he rejoiced to meet him. 4 And his father in law, the damsel's father, ¹⁰retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there. 5 And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they ¹¹arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son in law, ¹²Comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way. 6 And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them

This incident illustrates the state of the kingdom in the times of Judges.

¹ The period is not long after the death of Joshua (Intro., p. xxxiv.).

² Indicative of no settled rule.

³ *i.e.* with no settled abode.

⁴ The northern extremity of the district.

⁵ See R. V. comment p. 86.

⁶ Inferior wife, generally a slave woman.

⁷ *Lit.* "to speak to her heart," *i.e.* to bring about a reconciliation.

⁸ One for himself; the other for his wife.

⁹ The Levite was quickly reconciled to his wife.

¹⁰ *Heb.* "held him fast," *i.e.* received him with hearty welcome.

¹¹ *i.e.* intending to set out for home.

¹² *Lit.* "strengthen."

^a see R. V. and comment, p. 92.

together: for the damsel's father had said unto the man, ¹³Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be ¹⁴merry. 7 And when the man rose up to depart, his father in law urged him: therefore he lodged there again. 8 And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart: and the damsel's father said, ¹⁵Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. ¹⁶And they ¹⁷tarried ¹⁸until afternoon, and they did eat ¹⁹both of them. 9 And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant, his father in law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now the day ²⁰draweth toward evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home. 10 But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against ²¹Jebus, which is Jerusalem; and there were with him two asses saddled, his concubine also was with him. 11 And when they were by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. 12 And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a ²²stranger, that is not of the children of Israel; we will pass over to ²³Gibeah. 13 And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in ²⁴Ramah. 14 And they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down upon

^b see R.V. and comment, p. 92.

¹⁸ Be willing.

¹⁴ *i.e.* with wine.

¹⁵ *Lit.* "strengthen."

¹⁶ Lingered, stayed on.

¹⁷ The declining of the day.

¹⁸ It is unusual for men and women to eat together.

¹⁹ The delay in setting out was the cause of the subsequent tragedy. The father-in-law evidently desired to persuade the Levite to stay another night.

²⁰ The original name of Jerusalem. Two hours distant from Bethlehem. They would arrive there about 5 o'clock.

²¹ Foreigners; so Jerusalem was still in the hands of the Jebusites.

²² *Intro.*, p. lxxv.

²³ *Intro.*, p. lxxxv.

them when they were by Gibeah, ²⁴which belongeth to Benjamin. 15 And ²⁵they turned aside thither, to go in and to lodge in Gibeah: and when he ²⁶went in, he sat him down in a ²⁷street of the city: for there was no man that took them into his house to lodging. 16 And, behold, there came an ²⁸old man from his work out of the field at even, which was also of ^{29b}mount Ephraim; and he ³⁰sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place were Benjamites. 17 And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a ³¹wayfaring man in the street of the city: and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? 18 And he said unto him, We are passing from Beth-lehem-judah, ^atoward the side of mount Ephraim; from thence am I: and I went to Beth-lehem-judah, but I am now going to the ³²house of the LORD; and there is no man that receiveth me to house. 19 Yet ³³there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man which is with thy servants: there is no want of any thing. 20 And the old man said, ³⁴Peace be with thee; howsoever let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street. 21 So he brought him into his house, and ³⁵gave ³⁶provender unto the asses; and they ³⁷washed their feet, and did eat and drink. 22 Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain ³⁸sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the

a see R.V. comment, p. 92. b see R.V. and comment, p. 86.

²⁴ *i.e.* situated within the territory of that tribe.
²⁴ Nightfall prevented them going on to Ramah.

²⁵ Entered at the gate.

²⁷ The street, *lit.* "a broad place," = the market place

²⁸ Hospitality is offered by a stranger. The fact emphasizes the shameful inhospitality of the people of Gibeah.

²⁹ So a fellow-countryman of the Levite.

³⁰ *i.e.* it was not his native place.

³¹ Traveller, one upon a journey.

³² *i.e.* he was going to Shiloh.

Inviteth me to his house.

³³ The Levite only wanted shelter. He was well provided in other respects.

³⁴ The customary form of Eastern address.

³⁵ They first attend to the animals. The usual Eastern custom.

³⁶ Fodder.

³⁷ Customary among Easterns after a journey. Necessary after a journey in a hot country where sandals are worn.

³⁸ Worthless fellows (see note, p. 94).

house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him. 23 And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; ³⁹seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this ⁴⁰folly. 24 Behold, here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing. 25 But the men would not hearken to him: so ⁴¹the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go. 26 Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was, till it was light. 27 And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold. 28 And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered. Then the man took her up upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place. 29 And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and ⁴²divided her, together with her bones, into ⁴³twelve pieces, and sent her into all the ⁴⁴coasts of Israel. 30 And it was so, that all that saw it said,

e see R. V. and comment, p. 85.

³⁹ He appeals to the rights of hospitality.

⁴⁰ Great wickedness. So Lot (Gen. xix. 8).

⁴¹ The Levite.

⁴² For the purpose of rousing the nation to action. So Saul sends round the pieces of an ox to call the people to arms against Nahash, King of Ammon (1 Sam. xi. 7).

⁴³ One for each tribe.

⁴⁴ Borders.

⁴⁵There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, ⁴⁶take advice, and speak your minds.

⁴⁵The tale inflamed the nation with a determination to punish the wrongdoers.

⁴⁶Take counsel among yourselves, *i.e.* reflect and consider in order to give an opinion.

Assembly of Israel at Mizpeh.

20. Then all the children of Israel went out, and the ²congregation was gathered together ³as one man, from ⁴Dan even to ⁵Beer-sheba, with the ⁶land of Gilead, unto the LORD in ⁷Mizpeh. ² And the chief of all the people, even of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand ⁸footmen ⁹that drew sword. ³ (Now the ¹⁰children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh.) Then said the children of Israel, ¹¹Tell us, how was this wickedness? ⁴ And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said, I came into Gibeah that belongeth to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. ⁵ And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, and thought to have slain me: and my concubine have they forced, that she is dead. ⁶ And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel: for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. ⁷ Behold, ye are all children of Israel; ¹²give here your advice and counsel. ⁸ And all the people arose ¹³as one man, saying, ¹⁴We will not any of us go to his tent, neither will we any of us turn into

¹The Levite's appeal is answered. All Israel take up the case.

²The whole assembly.

³Unanimously.

⁴The northern boundary.

⁵The southern boundary. *i.e.* all on the west of Jordan. From Dan or Laish in the north to Beersheba in the south is an expression signifying the whole country = our "Land's End to John O'Groat's house"

⁶Those on the east of Jordan. They all came with the exception of the men of Jabesh Gilead (xxi. 9).

⁷Intro., p. lxxxiii. Here Samuel assembled the tribes (1 Sam. vii. 2).

⁸The Israelites had neither chariots nor cavalry.

⁹A meeting of soldiers.

¹⁰They would receive a summons, but did not attend the gathering.

¹¹Say, how did this wicked deed take place?

¹²Come to a decision and pass sentence.

¹³The decision was unanimous.

¹⁴We will not disperse and return home till the doers of this crime have been punished.

his house. 9 But now ¹⁵this shall be the thing which we will do to Gibeah; we will go up by lot against it; 10 And ¹⁶we will take ten men of an hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and an hundred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victual for the people, ¹⁷that they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel.

¹⁵ This is the manner in which we will act against Gibeah.

¹⁶ We will choose one man in ten by lot to go against the city.

And one in ten to supply the army with provisions, *i.e.* to attend to the commissariat.

¹⁷ *i.e.* that the rest of the army may punish the wickedness of Gibeah as it deserves.

The Decision of Israel. The Reply of the Benjamites.

11 So ¹all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man. 12 And the tribes of Israel ²sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness is this that is done among you? 13 ³Now therefore deliver us the men, ⁴the children of Belial, which are in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away ⁵evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel: 14 But ⁶the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel. 15 And the children of Benjamin ⁷were numbered at that time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men. 16 Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men ⁸lefthanded; every one could sling stones ⁹at an hair breadth, and not miss. 17 And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men

¹ All firmly resolved to combine in insisting upon the punishment of the offenders.

² They very properly give the tribe of Benjamin an opportunity of freeing themselves from complicity in the outrage.

³ The demand is a reasonable one.

⁴ Worthless fellows (see p. 94).

⁵ The act of the criminals involved the whole tribe in guilt unless they were given up. The death of the wrong-doers would remove the guilt from the tribe.

So the sin of Achan fell on all Israel (Josh. vii. 1). The sin of Saul punished the nation (2 Sam. xvi. 5-6).

⁶ The tribe adopt the cause of the criminals as their own. A spirit of clan-ship led them to take this step.

⁷ Mustered.

⁸ Probably they could use both hands equally well. ⁹ So as to hit a mark as small as a hair.

The sling was of twisted thongs of leather.

The Benjamites were famed for their skill in archery and slinging. Jonathan and Saul were great archers.

that drew sword: all these were men of war.

Note the diminution in numbers since the census taken by Moses (Num. xxvi. 51).

Then Israel numbered 601,730. Now 400,000.

Then Benjamin numbered 45,600. Now 26,000.

A significant indication of the disturbed and troublous times. Constant and harassing petty warfare had told upon the numbers of the people.

First and Second Attacks upon Gibeah Reversed.

18 And the children of Israel arose, and went up to ^{1a}the house of God, ²and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, ³Judah shall go up first. 19 And the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah. 20 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel ⁴put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah. 21 And the children of Benjamin ⁵came forth out of Gibeah, and ⁶destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men. 22 And the people the men of Israel ⁷encouraged themselves, and set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day. 23 (And the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until even, and asked ⁸counsel of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him.) 24 And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin ⁹the second day. 25 And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again ¹⁰eighteen thousand men; ¹¹all these drew the sword.

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 93.

¹Bethel. Shiloh was too far from the scene of operations.

²The ark was brought to Bethel (see v. 27). Phinehas inquired of the Lord through the Urim and Thummim (see v. 28).

³The answer does not promise success. It merely assigns the leadership to Judah.

⁴Drew up their forces in order of battle.

⁵The high situation of the town and the difficult approach to it rendered Gibeah a position of great strength.

⁶Descriptive of men struck down by the stones of the slingers.

⁷Still relying on their numbers, so not yet in the right spirit to consult Jehovah.

⁸So the high priest was there.

⁹i.e. second time of attack, not the day after the first attack.

¹⁰In the two fights 40,000 men were lost. The slingers of Benjamin must have inflicted terrible slaughter upon the host of Israel in the passes.

¹¹Fighting men, soldiers not villagers.

The Third Assault. Capture of Gibeah.

26 Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto ¹ *the house of God*, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and ²fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 27 And the children of Israel ³inquired of the LORD, (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, 28 And ⁴Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD said, ⁵Go up; for tomorrow I will deliver them into thine hand. 29 And Israel set ⁶liers in wait round about Gibeah. 30 And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times. 31 And the children of Benjamin went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city; and they began to smite of the people, and kill, as at other times, in the ⁷highways, of which one goeth up to ⁸ *the house of God*, and the other to ⁹Gibeah in the ¹⁰field, about thirty men of Israel. 32 And the children of Benjamin said, ¹¹They are smitten down before us, as at the first. But the children of Israel said, ¹²Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways. 33 And all the men of Israel ¹³rose up out of their place, and put themselves

^a see R.V. and comment, p. 93. ^b see R.V. and comment, p. 93.

¹² With a double object: (1) of dividing the forces of Benjamin, (2) of allowing the men in ambush to seize the city.

¹³ *i.e.* left the place they had occupied, or retired from their former position.

¹ Bethel.

² The double defeat has humbled the people. they now approach Jehovah in a right spirit.

³ Note the three enquiries:

First. "Who shall go up first?" They have no doubt as to the justice of their undertaking, and no fear as to their success. They desire only to know who is to lead them.

Second. *Shall we go up?*

Still no doubt as to success. They only want to know if Jehovah approves,—evidently they imagine they can do without His assistance.

Third. *Shall we go up or cease?* The full issue is now left to God. So they obtain a complete answer.

⁴ Intro., p. 1.

⁵ A definite promise of success at last.

⁶ A body of men in ambush. The same stratagem which had been successful against Ai (Josh. viii. 4), and also employed by Abimelech against Shechem (Judges ix. 43).

⁷ The principal roads, one running to Bethel, and the other to Gibeah, not direct to the town, but into the open country.

Two roads.

(1) From Jerusalem to Bethel, the main road.

(2) A cross road, passing under the hill of Gibeah, and connected with this main road.

⁸ Bethel.

⁹ Intro., p. lxxv.

¹⁰ The open country near Gibeah.

¹¹ The Benjamites imagine Israel to be defeated as before.

in array at ¹⁴Baal-tamar; and ¹⁵the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of ¹⁶their places, even out of *the meadows of Gibeah*.
 34 And there came against Gibeah ¹⁷ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle was ¹⁸sore: but they ¹⁹knew not that evil was near them.
 35 And the LORD smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day ²⁰twenty and five thousand and an hundred men: all these drew the sword.
 36 So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten: ²¹for the men of Israel ²²gave place to the Benjamites, because they ²³trusted unto the liers in wait which they had set beside Gibeah. 37 And the liers in wait hastened, and rushed upon Gibeah; and the liers in wait ²⁴drew themselves along, and ²⁵smote all the city with the edge of the sword.
 38 Now there was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers in wait, that they should make a ²⁶*great flame with smoke* rise up out of the city.
 39 And when the men of Israel ²⁷retired in the battle, Benjamin began to smite and kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons: for they said, Surely they are smitten down before us, as in the first battle. 40 But when the flame began to arise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and, behold, the flame of the city ascended up to heaven. 41 And when the men of Israel ²⁸turned again, the men of Benjamin were amazed: for ²⁹they saw that evil was come upon them. 42 Therefore they turned their backs before

c see R.V. and comment, p. 93. *d* see R.V. and comment, p. 93.

¹⁴ The palm place (Intro., p. lxxi.). It takes its name from some palm-trees.

¹⁵ The men in ambush.

¹⁶ Out of ambush.

¹⁷ This would appear to be the number of the men in ambush, who attacked the Benjamites in the rear.

¹⁸ Severe.

¹⁹ The men of Benjamin were not aware of the stratagem.

²⁰ Almost wiping the tribe out of existence.

²¹ A more detailed account of the battle.

²² Retired before them in pretended flight.

²³ *i.e.* relied on their stratagem for success.

²⁴ Spread themselves out.

²⁵ They sacked the city before attacking the Benjamites in the field. The appointed sign.

²⁶ This was the signal to Israel. They continued their flight till they saw the smoke of the city, thus drawing the men of Benjamin further from Gibeah.

²⁷ *i.e.* in their feigned flight. Compare the assault on Ai (Josh. viii. 15).

²⁸ Stayed their flight, turned round and attacked Benjamin.

²⁹ Clearly perceived that the battle was lost, and that they were threatened on all sides with destruction.

the men of Israel unto the ³⁰way of the wilderness; but the ³¹battle overtook them; and them which came out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them. ⁴³ Thus they ³²inclosed the Benjamites round about, and chased them, and ³³trodethem down *with ease* over against Gibeah toward the sunrising. ⁴⁴ And there fell of Benjamin ³⁴eighteen thousand men; all these were men of valour. ⁴⁵ And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the ³⁵rock of Rimmon: and they ³⁶gleaned of them in the highways ³⁷five thousand men; and pursued hard after them unto Gidom, and slew ³⁸two thousand men of them. ⁴⁶ So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men that drew the sword; all these were men of valour. ⁴⁷ But six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness unto the rock ³⁹Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months. ⁴⁸ And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, ⁴⁰and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of every city, as the beast, and all that came to hand: also they set on fire all the cities that they came to.

^a sec R. V. and comment, p. 93.

How the Tribe of Benjamin was Preserved from Extinction.

²¹ Now the men of Israel had ¹sworn in ²Mizpeh, saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife. ² And the people came *to the house of God*, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept sore; ³ And said, O LORD

^a sec R. V. and comment, p. 93.

³⁰ The wilderness stretching from Jericho to Bethel, perhaps making for the Jordan.

³¹ The victorious forces of Israel pressed hard upon the Benjamites.

³² *i.e.* attacked them on all sides.

³³ As treading grapes.

³⁴ In the main battle 18,000 fell.

³⁵ Intro., p. lxxxv.

³⁶ Another metaphor from the harvest, *i.e.* the slaughter in the battle was like the harvest proper. Compared with it the fugitives slain in the pursuit were a mere handful—the gleanings only.

³⁷ *i.e.* 5,000 of the second band; probably they had gone along the second highway of v. 31.

³⁸ 2,000 more in the pursuit.

³⁹ Intro., p. lxxxv.

⁴⁰ They treated the tribe of Benjamin and its cities with the same severity as they dealt out to the heathen Canaanites.

The sin of Benjamin well deserved punishment, but this savage cruelty may indicate revengeful feelings for the former defeats of the combined tribes.

May not Phinehas have been the instigator of this ruthless punishment in his desire to root out the abominable rites of idolatry?

¹ A rash oath taken at the gathering at Mizpeh in their indignation against Benjamin.

² See Intro., p. lxxxiii.

God of Israel, ³why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to day one tribe lacking in Israel? 4 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. 5 And the children of Israel said, Who is there among all the tribes of Israel that ⁴came not up with the congregation unto the LORD? For they had ⁵made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the LORD to Mizpeh, saying, He shall surely be put to death. 6 And the children of Israel ⁶repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day. 7 How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them of our daughters to wives? 8 And they said, ⁷What one is there of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the LORD? And, behold, there came none to the camp from ⁸Jabesh-gilead to the assembly. 9 For the people ⁹were numbered, and, behold, there were none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead there. 10 And the congregation sent thither ¹⁰twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children. 11 And this is the thing that ye shall do, ¹¹Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain by man. 12 And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any male: and they brought

³ They repented bitterly of the rash oath they had taken.

⁴ *i.e.* did not respond to the call to march against Gibeah.

⁵ Another rash oath, also taken at Mizpeh.

⁶ Felt remorse for the oath they had taken against Benjamin.

⁷ What city out of the tribes?

⁸ Intro., p. lxxix.

⁹ Were mustered.

¹⁰ One thousand from each tribe.

¹¹ Devote them to destruction.

them unto the camp to ¹²Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan. ¹³ And the whole congregation ¹³ sent some to speak to the children of Benjamin that were in the rock Rimmon, and ^bto call peaceably unto them. ¹⁴ And Benjamin ¹⁴ came again at that time; and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead: and ¹⁵ yet so they sufficed them not. ¹⁵ And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the LORD ¹⁶ had made a breach in the tribes of Israel. ¹⁶ Then the elders of the congregation said, ¹⁷ How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin? ¹⁷ And they said, ¹⁸ There must be an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin, that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel. ¹⁸ Howbeit ¹⁹ we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin. ¹⁹ Then they said, Behold, there is a ²⁰ feast of the LORD in Shiloh yearly in a place ²¹ which is on the north side of Beth-el, on the east side of the ²² highway that goeth up from Bethel to ²³ Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah. ²⁰ Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, ²⁴ Go and lie in wait in the vineyards; ²¹ And see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in ²⁵ dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. ²² And it shall be, when their fathers or their

^b see R.V. and comment, p. 93.

¹² The ark had returned from Bethel to Shiloh.

¹³ They sent a deputation to the rock Rimmon to make peace with the survivors of the tribe of Benjamin. They had returned from Jabesh Gilead beyond the Jordan to Shiloh which is in Canaan proper.

¹⁴ Returned to their abandoned cities.

¹⁵ There were 200 short.

¹⁶ The loss of one tribe would be a breaking up of the number twelve.

¹⁷ How shall we find wives for them and yet keep our oath? They keep the oath in the letter, but break it in the spirit

¹⁸ *i.e.* the territory assigned originally to Benjamin must remain the independent possession of the remnant of the tribe. Thus the tribe would be preserved.

¹⁹ Forbidden by their oath to give their daughters as wives to the Benjamite survivors, they adopt a plan to allow the Benjamites to take them for themselves.

²⁰ Possibly the Feast of Tabernacles.

²¹ The minute description of the situation told the Benjamites the exact spot where they would come upon the dancing maidens.

²² Flight to Benjamin along the high road would be easily effected.

²³ Intro., p. lxxxv.

²⁴ The elders suggest to the Benjamites what they should do, and guarantee a peaceable adjustment of any complaint that might be made subsequently by the friends of the maidens (see v. 22).

²⁵ The dances of a vintage festival.

brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes : because we reserved not to each man his wife ²⁶in the war : ²⁷for ye did not give unto them at this time, that ye should be guilty. ²³ And the children of Benjamin did so, and took them wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught : and they went and returned unto ²⁸their inheritance, and repaired ²⁹the cities, and dwelt in them. ²⁴ And the children of Israel ³⁰departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance. ²⁵ ³¹In those days there was no king in Israel : every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

²⁶ *i. e.* against Jabesh Gilead.

²⁷ *i. e.* the maidens have been taken, you have not given them in marriage, and so have not broken the oath.

Compare the rape of the Sabine women by the Romans under Romulus in the early days of Rome (Livy, Book 1 Chap. ix.).

²⁸ The land of their possession.

²⁹ Destroyed by the other tribes after the capture of Gibeah.

³⁰ *i. e.* from Shiloh; having arranged everything.

³¹ Descriptive of the state of the country. There was neither settled form of government, nor a recognized central authority.

COMMENTS

ON THE

REVISED VERSION.

"Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword." (i. 8.)

Had fought. Had taken. Had smitten.

R.V. **Fought. Took. Smote.**

The A.V. would make it appear that these events had happened before the defeat of Adoni-bezek at Bezek, whereas they occurred afterwards. The tense of the R.V. makes this clear.

"The Canaanites that dwell in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley." (i. 9.)

The mountain. The south. The valley. (see also i. 19.)

R.V. **The hill country. The South. The lowland.**

Hill country = the highland of the central range, forming in Judah what is known as the hill country of Judah (see p. liv.).

The South = *the Negeb* (see p. liv.).

The Valley = the *Shephelah* or plain of the Philistines (see p. liv.).

"Thou hast given me a south land." (i. 15.)

R.V. **Thou hast set me in the land of the South.**

Achsah requests that, as Caleb had given her Debir which is situated in the dry and comparatively barren Negeb, he would also grant her "springs of water." The south is *the Negeb* (see p. liv.).

"Also Judah took Gaza with the coast thereof, etc." (i. 18.)

Coast. and passim.

R.V. **Border.**

Coast, which is now applied to the seaside only, formerly meant "a border" generally (see Glossary). The R.V. has rightly replaced a word of archaic meaning by its modern equivalent.

"And the house of Joseph sent to descry Beth-el." "And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city." (i. 23, 24.)

Descry. Spies.

R.V. **Spy out. Watchers.**

The people of Beth-el remained close in the city. The Israelites dared not attack, being in ignorance of the path that led to the gate. So they set posts or pickets to closely watch the city.

"*They put the Canaanites to tribute.*" (i. 28.)

Tribute.

R.V. **Taskwork.**

"*The Canaanites dwelt among them and became tributaries.*" (i. 30.)

Tributaries.

R.V. **Subject to task work.**

Task work = Forced labour upon public works, e.g. the building of the Temple and Palaces in the reign of Solomon.

Israel had been forced to work in the brickfields of Egypt to build the great cities and monuments of Egypt, and when in power themselves they adopted the same principle towards subject nations. They followed a well-recognized custom of the East.

"*The Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain.*" (i. 34.)

Mountain.

R.V. **Hill country.**

See Comment on i. 9.

"*The gods of the people that were round about them.*" (ii. 12.)

People.

R.V. **The Peoples.**

The R.V. translates correctly. The different nations by which Palestine was occupied at the time of the conquest worshipped many gods, each nation having its own special deity.

"*And served Baalim and the groves.*" (iii. 7.)

The groves.

R.V. **The Asheroth.**

Ashtaroth (singular, *Asheroth*) is the general name to denote the leading female deity of the Canaanitish tribes, a moon goddess. The name Ashtaroth (translated in the A.V. *groves*) was transferred from the deity itself to the wooden images of the goddess.

"*The Lord raised up a deliverer . . . to the children of Israel who delivered them.*" (iii. 9.)

Deliverer. Delivered.

and passim.

R.V. **Saviour. R.V. Saved.**

Not merely delivering the people from the oppression, but saving them from the consequences of their idolatry.

"*He could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out.*" (iii. 22.)

R.V. **And it came out behind.**

The passage is difficult. The R.V. adopts the rendering that the sword came out through the body of the king.

"And he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim." (iii. 27.)

The mountain of Ephraim.

R.V. **The hill country of Ephraim.**

The A.V. would make it appear that the district described is a single mountain or mountainous range. What is meant is the hilly district in the territory of Ephraim. (See p. liv.)

"Pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim." (iv. 11.)

Unto the plain.

R.V. **As far as the oak.**

What is meant is the oak forest of Zaanaim, near Kedesh. The character of the country will explain why Sisera took refuge there (v. 17).

"She covered him with a mantle." (iv. 18.)

A mantle.

R.V. **A rug.**

The rug upon which Jael would sleep, and which according to Eastern custom is spread upon the ground.

"Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent." (iv. 21.)

A nail of the tent.

R.V. **A tent-pin.**

Jael took one of the pegs or pins used to fasten the tent ropes to the ground. The hammer would be the heavy wooden mallet used to drive these pegs into the ground.

"For he was fast asleep and weary. So he died." (iv. 21.)

R.V. **For he was in a deep sleep; so he swooned and died.**

The A.V. gives a better and more intelligible rendering. Sisera was fallen into a deep sleep and was exhausted, *i.e.* thoroughly tired out. "*So he swooned and died*" is hardly intelligible. With a tent-peg driven through his temples Sisera would die instantly.

"The hand of the children of Israel prospered and prevailed." (iv. 24.)

Prospered and prevailed.

R.V. **Prevailed more and more.**

The pressure of Israel upon Jabin became heavier and heavier. The idea conveyed by the original is progress and continual increase.

"And they came as grasshoppers for multitude." (vi. 5.)

Grasshoppers.

R.V. **Locusts.**

Locusts conveys not merely the idea of the multitude of the invaders, but also the devastation wrought by their inroad.

“*And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites.*” (vi. 6.)

Greatly impoverished.

R.V. **Brought very low.**

Not merely brought to a state of poverty, but to a condition of utter helplessness.

“*His son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress.*” (vi. 11.)

Threshed wheat by the winepress.

R.V. **Was beating out wheat in the winepress.**

The original does not mean the usual method of threshing wheat on the open floors with threshing implements or with oxen; but that Gideon was beating out the wheat with a stick or flail. This was the method employed by the poor people only. Gideon was beating out the wheat in the winepress or trough, which was probably in a concealed spot and thus hidden from the sight of the Midianites.

“*My family is poor in Manassah.*” (vi. 15.)

Poor.

R.V. **Poorest.**

The meanest or humblest in position, not the poorest in worldly goods.

“*Shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.*” (vi. 17.)

That thou talkest with me.

R.V. **That it is thou that talkest with me.**

Gideon required to be assured that it was really God who was speaking to him. The R.V. makes this clear.

“*Cut down the grove that is by it.*” (vi. 25.)

The grove.

and passim.

R.V. **The Asherah.**

The wooden columns, the images and symbols of the goddess Asheroth or Astarte.

“*Upon the top of this rock in the ordered place.*” (vi. 26.)

This rock in the ordered place.

R.V. **This strong hold in the orderly manner.**

This stronghold = the top of the mountain, upon which the fortress of Ophrah was situated.

In the orderly manner = according to the manner prescribed by the Law (Ex. xx. 24-26).

“*I will put a fleece of wool in the floor.*” (vi. 37.)

In the floor.

R.V. **On the threshing-floor.**

The threshing floor was a flat space, generally open, but sometimes covered. Gideon would lay the fleece stretched out on the floor.

"And thrust the fleece together." (vi. 38.)

Thrust.

R.V. Pressed.

"Pressed" describes the action of wringing the moisture out of the fleece.

"So that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them." (vii. 1.)

So that the host of the Midianites were. (see also vii. 8.)

R.V. And the camp of Midian was.

"Camp" or "encampment" describes the position of the Midianites.

"Gideon. . . returned from battle before the sun was up." (viii. 13.)

Before the sun was up.

R.V. From the ascent of Heres.

The A.V. follows the Chaldean Version. The Septuagint renders as a proper name, *i.e.* "by the ascent (or mountain road) of Heres," thus marking the route and not the time of Gideon's return.

"The ornaments that were on their camels' necks." (viii. 21.)

"Beside ornaments and collars." (viii. 26.)

Ornaments. Collars.

R.V. Crescents. Pendants.

The ornaments were of gold in the shape of half-moons or crescents, such as men and women wore upon their necks, and which they also hung upon the necks of camels. The custom is still prevalent in Arabia.

"Collars" should be ear-drops or pendants (Lit. "little drops").

"By the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem." (ix. 6.)

Plain.

(see also ix. 37.)

R.V. Oak.

What is meant is the stone or monument set up by Joshua (Josh. xxiv. 26) under the famous oak or terebinth at Shechem (Gen. xxxv. 4) as a memorial of the covenant.

"And go to be promoted over the trees." (ix. 9, 11 and 13.)

To be promoted over the trees.

R.V. To wave to and fro over the trees.

Lit. "to float about," "to move unsteadily," and may mean either the restlessness of an idle king, or the distractions and cares of a monarch's life. It may also refer to the instability of kingly greatness.

"When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel." (ix. 22.)

Had reigned.

R.V. Was Prince.

Abimelech was not king over all Israel, but a prince or chieftain over a portion of the nation, possibly over the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh only.

"The men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren." (ix. 24.)

Aided him in the killing of.

R.V. Strengthened his hands to slay.

The men of Shechem had supported Abimelech by furnishing him with money, with which he was able to hire worthless fellows, to accomplish his design of putting his brothers to death (ix. 4, 5.)

"And made merry, and went into the house of their god." (ix. 27.)

Made merry.

R.V. Held festival.

The Shechemites were holding the usual festival at vintage time.

"They fortify the city against thee." (ix. 31.)

R.V. They constrain the city to take part against thee.

Gaal and his men were not fortifying the city, but stirring up the citizens to revolt against the rule of Abimelech.

"Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech." (ix. 56.)

"And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads." (ix. 57.)

Rendered. Render.

R.V. Required. Requite.

The A.V. here uses "render" in the sense of "requite." The R.V. supplies the modern word.

"The daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah." (xi. 40.)

Lament.

R.V. Celebrate.

Not to lament her fate, but rather to praise or celebrate her devotion.

"And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites." (xii. 5.)

Passages.

R.V. Fords.

The A.V. uses "passages" in the sense of "a mountain pass," or "a ford of a river." The R.V. replaces by the modern word.

"*And he had forty sons and thirty nephews.*" (xii. 14.)

Nephews.

R.V. Sons' sons.

The original means "*sons' sons,*" i.e. grandsons.

"*How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?*" (xiii. 12.)

R.V. What shall be the manner of the child, and what shall be his work?

The child was to be a Nazarite, and his work would be to begin to deliver Israel. So much the angel had already told the woman (xiii. 5). Manoah asks for further confirmation.

"*Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?*" (xiii. 18.)

Secret.

R.V. Wonderful.

The original signifies "wonderful" (see Isaiah ix. 6).

"*Meat offering.*" (xiii. 19 and 23.)

R.V. Meal offering.

Taking the modern sense of "meat" = flesh food, the A.V. would seem to mean "an offering of the flesh of some animal."

But the old English sense of "meat" is anything to eat. In fact, the offering consisted of fine flour, salt, mixed with oil and frankincense, but without leaven. It contained no flesh at all. The R.V. rendering "meal offering" conveys the true idea of its character.

"*Thirty sheets and thirty change of garments.*" (xiv. 12.)

Sheets.

R.V. Linen garments.

Tunics or shirts of linen worn next the skin.

"*Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure.*" (xv. 8.)

R.V. This time I shall be blameless in regard of the Philistines, when I do them a mischief.

The R.V. correctly describes the feeling of Samson. Before, when he raided Askelon, he was allied to the Philistine nation by marriage. Now that his wife was given to another, he was no longer under any obligation to the Philistine nation, and thus free to take his revenge.

"*Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease.*" (xv. 7.)

Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged.

R.V. If ye do after this manner, surely I will be avenged.

Lit. "If ye do these things (i.e. act in this manner) I will not cease till I have been avenged."

"*The top of the rock Etam.*" (xv. 8 and 11.)

Top.

R.V. **Cleft.**

What is meant is a "cliff cave," the natural refuge of fugitives. Samson had taken refuge in some such cave. The men of Judah went up (verse 11) to the top of the rock, and then went down (verse 12) to the cave to bind Samson.

"*The Philistines shouted against him.*" (xv. 14.)

Against him.

R.V. **As they met him.**

The Philistines shouted with joy as Samson came in sight bound and escorted by the men of Judah.

"*But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw.*" (xv. 19.)

An hollow place that was in the jaw.

R.V. **The hollow place that is in Lehi.**

"The word translated 'hollow place' means 'a mortar.' Here it is evidently a hollow or basin among the cliffs of Lehi, which, from its shape, was called 'the mortar' (with special allusion to the name of the place, Lehi, which means a jawbone). In this hollow a spring burst out in Samson's need, and abundantly quenched his thirst" (S.C.).

"*And took the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all.*" (xvi. 3.)

Took. Went away with them.

R.V. **Laid hold of. Plucked them up.**

Samson grasped or laid hold of the gates and posts and tore them up out of the ground together with the bar that fastened them.

"*New ropes that never were occupied.*" (xvi. 11.)

That never were occupied.

R.V. **Wherewith no work hath been done.**

The A.V. uses "occupy" in the obsolete sense of "employ, use." The ropes had not been used for any work.

"*And went away with the pin of the beam.*" (xvi. 14.)

Went away.

R.V. **Plucked away.**

Samson tore out the pin from its socket and went away with the loom and the pin fastened to his hair.

"*Five men from their coasts.*" (xviii. 2.)

Their coasts.

R.V. **Their whole number.**

Lit. "ends," an expression signifying "from their whole body."

"How they dwelt careless." (xviii. 7.)

Careless.

R.V. In Security.

The A.V. uses the word "*careless*" in the obsolete sense of "free from care and anxiety," *i.e.* secure.

"There was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing." (xviii. 7.)

There was no magistrate in the land.

R.V. There was none in the land possessing authority.

What is meant is that there was no neighbouring chieftain powerful enough to do them any harm.

"Six hundred men appointed with weapons of war." (xviii. 11, 16, 17.)

Appointed.

R.V. Girt.

Heb. "*girded*," *i.e.* with their swords girt to the side, ready to march and for battle.

"Put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them."

Carriage. (xviii. 21.)

R.V. Goods.

The A.V. uses "carriage" in the obsolete sense "of something carried," *i.e.* baggage or luggage, and not as "the act of carrying," or "the vehicle whereon anything is carried." (See 1 Sam. xvii. 20-22; Acts xxi. 15.) The R.V. replaces by a modern word.

"A certain Levite sojourning on the side of Mount Ephraim." (xix. 1.)

On the side of Mount Ephraim. (also xix. 18.)

R.V. On the farther side of the hill country of Ephraim.

Lit. "in the more remote parts of the hill country," *i.e.* the Levite lived in the part furthest removed from Judah.

"And they tarried until afternoon, and they did eat both of them." (xix. 8.)

And they tarried until afternoon.

R.V. Tarry ye until the day declineth.

The mood is imperative. The father induces his daughter and the Levite to stay a little longer.

Afternoon *Lit.* "the declining of the day."

"And the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God." (xx. 18.)

"All the people went up and came unto the house of God." (xx. 26.)

"In the highways of which one goeth up to the house of God." (xx. 31.)

The house of God.

R.V. Beth-el.

The A.V. follows the Vulgate which has "*the house of God.*"

The R.V. follows the Septuagint which renders "*Beth-el.*" The word *Beth-el*, though meaning the house of God, always refers to the town Beth-el, and not to the site of the tabernacle, which is rendered by a different word. Beth-el, on the border of Ephraim, and only five or six miles from Gibeah, would be a convenient rendezvous. Shiloh is distant sixteen miles from Gibeah. The ark was probably moved from Shiloh to Beth-el.

"Came forth out of their places, even out of the meadows of Gibeah."

The meadows of Gibeah.

(xx. 33.)

R.V. Maareh-geba.

The R.V. follows the Septuagint and translates by a proper name. Etymologically the word signifies a bare open region destitute of wood, but such a place would be very unsuitable for an ambush.

"They should make a great flame with smoke rise up out of the city."

(xx. 38.)

A great flame with smoke.

R.V. A great cloud of smoke.

Lit. "*to cause smoke rising to ascend.*"

"Trod them down with ease."

(xx. 43.)

With ease.

R.V. At their resting place.

Heb. "rest." Probably it means that the Benjamites were pursued even to their cities where they hoped to find rest and shelter.

"Sent some to speak to the children of Benjamin that were in the rock Rimmon, and to call peaceably unto them."

(xxi. 13.)

To call peaceably unto them.

R.V. Proclaimed peace with them.

Israel made peace with Benjamin after the war.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED.

Abroad = away from home, not necessarily out of the country. Ibsan "sent his daughters abroad," *i.e.* married them into other tribes (xii. 9).

All to, an adverb = altogether, completely, entirely. "And all to brake his skull" (ix. 53) = she completely crushed his skull. *Brake* is here past tense, and not an infinitive.

'Al' was originally used as an intensive adverb, prefixed to verbs compounded with 'to' as an intensive preposition. Then 'al to' came to be regarded as an adverb used in composition with verbs; and finally as an adverb simple, used not only with verbs but with adjectives" (WRIGHT).

Amazed. In the A.V. this word has a somewhat different meaning from its modern signification.

Modern = great surprise or astonishment.

A.V. = confounded, bewildered by fear or any strong emotion. So the Benjamites were amazed (*i.e.* bewildered, in hopeless perplexity as to what to do) when they saw the city fired behind them (xx. 41).

Baal-berith = the covenant Baal, or the Baal of the covenant, *i.e.* Baal with whom Israel had made a covenant, just as they had made a covenant with God.

Here we see the process of religious decline at Shechem.

First, there was the worship of Jehovah under the form of an image.

Secondly, there was the worship of Baal, as the covenant god, in place of Jehovah.

Belial. This word is given in the A.V. as if it were a proper name. "Sons of Belial" (xix. 22). The word, however, signifies *worthlessness*. Hence "Sons of Belial" means worthless, good-for-nothing fellows.

Breach, a creek, *i.e.* the places where the sea has broken in and made a breach in the land. Asher "abode in his breaches," *i.e.* remained in the bays on the sea coast.

Bridal Customs (as illustrated in the history of Samson).

1. The selection of the bride is not undertaken by the suitor himself, but is the duty of his parents, or of a friend.

Thus Samson, when he had seen a woman of Timnath whom he desired to make his wife, said to his parents, "Get her for me to wife" (xiv. 1-2).

So Isaac wooed Rebekah through Eliezer, the servant of Abraham (Gen. xxiv. 1-4).

So Shechem sued for the hand of Dinah through his father, Hamor (Gen. xxxiv. 4-8).

2. If the proposal is favourably received by the parents of the maiden the dowry is then arranged.

There is no mention of this in the history of Samson, but the proposal of his wife's father to substitute the younger daughter can be explained by this custom. The father had already received a dowry from Samson, and when the woman had been given to the

friend of Samson another dowry had been given. So if the father could induce Samson to take his younger daughter the father would retain the double dowry.

Eliezer bestowed presents on Rebekah and her relations (Gen. xxiv. 53-54).

Shechem offered "*never so much dowry (for Dinah) and gifts*" (for Jacob and his sons) (Gen. xxxiv. 12).

Occasionally some service was rendered in lieu of a present:—

Jacob served seven years for Leah and seven years for Rachel (Gen. xxix. 18-20).

Othniel won the hand of Achsah, Caleb's daughter, by the capture of Debir (i. 12).

David gained Michal, Saul's daughter, by his exploits against the Philistines (1 Sam. xviii. 23-25).

3. After the marriage contract or dowry has been settled, the parties are *betrothed*, when the maiden becomes the *espoused* wife of her *future* husband. There is often a considerable interval between the espousal and the marriage.

Thus it is said of the Virgin Mary that she was the "*espoused*" wife of Joseph (St. Matt. i. 18, St. Luke ii. 5).

4. During the interval between betrothal and marriage the bridegroom communicates with his bride by means of a friend, who was named the "friend of the bridegroom."

This person is termed "companion" (xiv. 20). From xiv. 11 it would appear that the parents of the bride supplied this person and other guests at the feast, contrary to the usual custom (see note, xiv. 11, p. 58).

5. The Marriage Feast. A grand feast was prepared for the marriage, the splendour and length of which depended upon the circumstances of the bridegroom.

The Wedding Feast of Samson lasted seven days (xiv. 15).

This period was spent in entertainments of various kinds.

Samson propounded a riddle for his guests to solve (xiv. 10-12).

6. The bride was conducted to the bridegroom's house by a procession generally at night. There was no procession at Samson's wedding for, disgusted with the treachery of his wife and her friends, he returned to his father's house without his bride (xiv. 19).

Careless. "*How they dwelt careless.*" In the literal sense of 'void of care' corresponding to the Lat. *securus* and English *secure*.

Carriage. "*Put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them.*" Baggage, luggage, requiring to be carried; not "the act of carrying" or "the vehicle whereon any thing is carried."

Change of Garments. We have a similar use of 'change' as plural in Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (IV. iii. 37), "with scarfs and fans and double *change* of bravery." The possession of a large number of robes was an indication of wealth in the East (Job xxvii. 16), and it was a common custom to make presents of costly robes.

Chariots of iron. War chariots having wheels with iron tires. It does not mean that the chariots were made of iron. They were low

chariots entered from behind, carrying two persons, one of whom managed the horses and the other used his military weapons.

These iron chariots of the Canaanites were objects of great dread to the Israelites.

The tribe of Manasseh could take possession of the hill country and the forests but could not drive the Canaanites out of the towns of Bethshean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam and Megiddo in the plain of Jezreel, nor could Judah get possession of the low country because of the chariots of the Canaanites which were so formidable on the plain.

Coasts (from the Latin *costa*, a rib, through the French *coste*) = a border, though now applied to the sea coast only.

Cubit (Jewish, *anemah*). A measure of length, the distance from the elbow to the extremity of the little finger. The greatest estimate is between nineteen and twenty inches, and the least rather less than a foot. For the purpose of general calculation, eighteen inches is the length agreed upon.

Descry. "And the house of Joseph sent to descry Bethel" (i. 23) = to observe in a military sense, to reconnoitre.

"Who hath descried the number of the foe" (*Richard III.* v. iii. 9).

Ephah. A measure of capacity (dry measure) equivalent, according to Josephus, to nearly nine gallons, but according to Rabbinical calculations, not quite four and a half gallons.

Ephod. A sacred vestment, originally reserved for the high priest, but afterwards worn by ordinary priests.

The Ephod consisted of two parts, one of which covered the back, and the other the breast and upper part of the body. The two parts were joined on the shoulder with two large onyx stones, on each of which was engraved the names of six of the tribes of Israel.

With the Ephod the priest wore a girdle of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twisted linen round the waist.

Gideon made an ephod at Ophrah, out of the ornaments taken from the Midianites.

Micah made an ephod for the worship of the image he had made (xvii. 5).

Fearful. "Whosoever is fearful and afraid" (vii. 3). Here used in the sense of "timorous, faint-hearted," and not in the usual sense of "causing fear."

Gate. Kitto thus describes the kind of gate that Samson carried away from Gaza: "They do not fit into the wall, but lie against it. They are not shaped to the arch; they close, but rectangularly and folding. There is no hinge, but the joints of the doors descend into a socket in the stone, and in like manner the door is secured above it in a projecting bracket of wood. There is no difficulty but in the *weight* of the larger doors in lifting them out of their sockets; and the feat of Samson consisted in thus lifting and carrying both valves at once—for they were barred together—of the heavy town gate, and carrying them away."

There appears to have been some spot set apart near the gate of a

city where important matters were transacted, and where kings and magistrates sat and administered justice.

Haft (A.S. *hæft*, from *hæfed*, past. part. of *habban*, to have or hold) = that by which anything is held, a handle. "*And the haft also went in after the blade*" (iii. 22).

Key (see Lock).

Lewdness (Lewd is from A.S. *læwed*, lay, as opposed to clerical). In Old English "lewd" meant "the people" as distinguished from the clergy; then it came to signify (1) the common people, (2) the ignorant and unlearned, (3) the wicked, and (4) the vicious; similarly "lewdness" originally meant rusticity, ignorance. Its modern meaning is villainy, wickedness.

Lock. The sliding bolt of the lock is secured by a number of small pins which drop into corresponding holes in the bolt as soon as the latter is pushed into the hole or staple of the door post.

The key also has small pieces, made to correspond with the holes into which they are introduced to open the lock; the former pins being thus pushed up, the bolt can be drawn back.

Man of God, a name that appears to have been the ordinary designation of a prophet. It is a title frequently assigned to Elijah and Elisha.

The appellation first appears with reference to the angel who appeared to Manoah and his wife, announcing the birth of Samson (xiii. 6).

The prophet who denounced the calf-worship, instituted by Jeroboam at Bethel, is styled "*a man of God out of Judah*" (1 Kings xiii. 1).

The widow at Zarephath is the first to call Elijah by this title, "*O thou man of God*" (1 Kings xvii. 18).

Millstone. The mills were of two kinds:

1. Large stationary mills in which the millstone was turned by an ass.
2. Handmills, constructed of two stones, the "upper" and "nether"; the former was the lighter of the two, and from its position it was called the "rider." It was the upper or rider millstone which a woman cast at Abimelech (ix. 53).

"These millstones are seldom more than a few inches above two feet in diameter, though we have sometimes seen them larger. They are circular and flat. The upper stone is made to turn upon the other by means of a handle of wood, which is inserted into it, and by means of which two women, seated opposite to each other, are able to keep it in rotatory motion without excessive labour" (KITTO).

Grinding was a work performed by females, and Samson in prison was put to this work as a special insult and degradation. The desire of the Philistines was not to turn Samson's strength to account so much as to inflict upon him *indignity and humiliation.

* "The humiliating character of this labour is shown by the allusions to it in Scripture as a disgrace which the Chaldeans would inflict upon such of their Hebrew captives as they meant to chastise and degrade (Is. xlvi. 2, Lam. v. 13).

Occupy (L. *occupare*, to lay hold of) = to use, employ, trade with. "*New ropes that never were occupied,*" *i.e.* used (xvi. 11).

Ox-goad. An instrument seven or eight feet in length, armed with a sharp point of iron at one end for spurring on the oxen drawing the plough, and at the other with a small spade or paddle of iron for cleaning the plough from the clay which clogged it.

Such an instrument would be a formidable weapon. Kitto thus describes one: "I once saw a goad in the hand of a Druse ploughman, which as a weapon of war would be far more effective in the hands of a strong man, than nine-tenths of the spears in use among the modern Bedawin. The shaft was ten feet long, and made of an oak sapling; the goad appeared to be an old spear-head, very sharp and firmly fastened. On examining it and expressing some surprise at its size and strength, the Druse remarked with a smile, 'It is for the Arabs as well as the oxen.' Probably the Israelites on the Philistine border were accustomed, like the Druses of Bashan, to use their implements of husbandry as weapons of war."

Present. Equivalent to "tribute" or ["fee," "*to bring presents*" (Ps. lxxviii. 29) = to own submission.] The tribute was made in kind, thus necessitating a considerable number of porters and attendants. The payment of the tribute was conducted with great ceremony.

Prophetess. Prophecy has two significations—

1. As regards the future = to foretell; to predict future events.
2. As regards the present = to forth tell, to proclaim, to preach and expound.

Deborah fulfils both functions, for:—

1. She foretold the future—

- (a) That God would draw Sisera to the river Kishon, and deliver him into the hand of Barak (iv. 6-7).
- (b) That the honour of the victory should not be with Barak, but with a woman (iv. 9).
- (c) In the command to Barak to attack "*for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand*" (iv. 14).

2. The song of Deborah is a notable example of prophetic declamation under inspiration.

Provender (Fr. *provende*, Lat. *providenda*, things to be provided) = provision, generally for beasts. The Levite tells the old man who offered him hospitality at Gibeah that he had straw and *provender* for his asses (xix. 19).

The Romans condemned to work in the public mills of the city, those who were convicted of crimes not worthy of death" (KITTO).

The blindness of Samson would qualify him to perform this kind of labour even better than a person who could see. "There is nothing in grinding corn with the hand-mill that requires attention which a man deprived of sight cannot give; while he has this advantage, that his head is not fatigued by the rotatory action which he gives to the upper stone. We ourselves employ blind horses, or blindfold those that can see, when we employ them in rotatory motion" (KITTO).

By providing stones of sufficient size and weight, the Philistines might render the work very laborious, even for Samson.

Servant of the Lord. A name specially applied to Moses. "*My servant Moses*" (Num. xii. 7).

It is a peculiar title of the Messiah, "*Behold my servant, whom I uphold*" (Is. xlii. 1).

The title is rarely applied to others.

To Joshua, but only after his death, "*Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died*" (Josh. xxiv. 29) (see also Judges ii. 8).

To David, "*I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him*" (Ps. lxxxix. 20).

Shekel. A Jewish standard of value by weight. A shekel of silver was equivalent to about 2s. 6d. of our money; 3,000 shekels made a talent.

Sojourn (O. F. *sojourner*, to stay for the day) = to dwell for a time. The word is especially applied to residence away from home.

Sojourner = a temporary resident.

The Levite that became Micah's priest left Bethlehem-judah to *sojourn* where he could find a place (xvii. 8).

Of the Levite connected with the outrage at Gibeah it is said that he was *sojourning* on the side of Mount Ephraim (xix. 1), *i.e.* that he had taken up his residence there at a place that was not the home of his family.

Summer-parlour, or better, as in the marginal reading, "*a parlour of cooling.*" The room was an *upper room*, constructed for the purpose of *coolness*, a provision which must have been very needful in the hot climate of the plain of Jericho.

In most good eastern houses there is a chamber in the upper part of the house, and often apart from the general mass of building. The window, projecting and overlooking the most open situation, is latticed, excluding the glaring light and heat, but admitting the air. All the arrangements of the room are adapted to promote coolness, and to form a pleasant and refreshing retreat during the heat of the day.

Teraphim (used only in the plural) were images connected with magic and divination rather than worship, most probably of the nature of a fetish. By some they have been generally considered as similar to the *Fenates* of the Romans, or household god securing domestic prosperity. They were images in human form, either the whole figure, or the head and shoulders only.

Notices.

1. Rachel stole Laban's images (teraphim) (Gen. xxxi. 19). Laban calls these his gods (xxxii. 30).
2. Micah "*had a house of gods, and made an ephod and teraphim*" (xvii. 5).
3. Michal put an image (teraphim) in David's bed to deceive the messengers of Saul (1. Sam. xix. 13).
4. Josiah put away "*the wizards and the images (teraphim) and the idols*" in the religious reformation (2 Kings xxiii. 24).

The Spirit of the Lord came upon them. "An expression marking the peculiar office of the Judges. They were saviours called and directed by the Holy Spirit, who endued them with extraordinary wisdom, courage and strength for the work which lay before them" (S. C.).

The expression is used particularly of **Othniel** (iii. 10); of **Gideon** (vi. 34); of **Jephthah** (xi. 29). And of **Samson** (xiii. 25, xiv. 6-19, xv. 14).

The absence of the expression in the case of **Ehud** and **Barak** is noteworthy, thus:—

Ehud. Though he was raised up by the Lord as a deliverer, the assassination of **Eglon** is not to be regarded as an act of the Spirit of God.

Barak. His dependence upon **Deborah**, and his superstitious desire to have her presence with the army, show that he was not filled with the Spirit of God like his fellow-judges, **Othniel**, **Gideon**, **Jephthah** and **Samson**.

Timbrel or **Tabret** was similar to the modern tambourine, being formed of a circular framework of wood covered with a piece of skin, and with pieces of brass attached to make a jingling noise.

Threshing. The threshing floor was a level spot in the open, with the earth beaten down hard and flat.

The threshing was done in three ways:—

1. By oxen, by simply treading out the grain.
2. By dragging a rude apparatus of logs over the threshing floor, by which the grain was crushed out and the straw broken.
3. By the flail, which was used only for small seeds, or by poor persons.

Urim and Thummim. What these were we have no means of deciding. The words mean, "Light and Perfection." They were put in the breastplate of judgment worn by the High Priest. "*Thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart*" (Ex. xxviii. 30). The breastplate was worn over the ephod.

All that we know for certain is that they were worn by the priest when enquiring of the Lord are—

The favourite theory is that the **Urim** and **Thummim** were identical with the twelve stones on which the names of the Tribes of Israel were engraved, and that the answer was given by the illumination of the letters which were to make up the answer.

The simplest solution is that an answer was given by the word of the Lord to the High Priest, when, clothed with the **Ephod** and **breastplate**, he had enquired of the Lord.

Instances of enquiring of the Lord.

1. The children of Israel after the death of **Joshua** enquire of the Lord, "*Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?*" and receive as reply, "*Judah shall go up*" (i. 1-2).
2. Again in the expedition against the men of **Benjamin**, they put the same question and receive the same reply (xx. 18).

3. Saul consults Ahiah when about to engage the Philistines (1 Sam. xiv. 3, 18).
4. David enquires of the Lord before going to the rescue of the men of Keilah (1 Sam. xxiii. 2).
5. David enquires respecting the men of Keilah, if they would be treacherous and deliver him up to Saul (1 Sam. xxiii. 12).
6. David enquires whether he will be successful in his pursuit of the Amalekites who had sacked Ziklag (1 Sam. xxx. 8).

In Ezra we find the Tirshatha declaring that the priests who had lost their genealogy must not take part in any priestly duties till "there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim" (Ezra ii. 63), so that inquiry of the Lord might be made. It would seem that Zerubbabel deemed that the loss would only be temporary.

Wayfaring (A.S. *feran*, to go, to travel) = travelling on the way. "Way-faring man" (xix. 17) = a traveller.

Wine-press. This consisted of two receptacles or vats—the upper and the lower. The grapes were pressed or trodden in the upper vat, whence the juice flowed down into the lower one.

These vats were usually dug out of the solid rock. Hence the wine press afforded shelter and concealment to Gideon when he desired to thresh his wheat without the knowledge of the Midianites.

Wist (A.S. *witan*, to know, *wiste* is the past tense). Samson "wist not that the Lord was departed from him" (xvi. 20).

UNDESIGNED COINCIDENCES.

These may be used as a proof of the veracity of a writer.

If we find him telling the truth in these instances where we have the means of checking his account, it is reasonable to believe that he is telling the truth in those statements which we cannot check.

Instances of undesigned coincidences in Judges are:—

1. Laish, afterwards Dan, was in early times a city of the Sidonians. The six men sent out by the Danites are said to have come "to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land that might put them to shame in anything; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man" (xviii. 7).

The inference is that Laish, though far from Sidon, was in early times belonging to Sidon, and probably inhabited by Sidonians, for it was "after their manner" that the people lived.

Moses records "We took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites, the land that was on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto Mount Hermon.

(Which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir)" (Deut. iii. 8-9).

Why this mention of the Sidonian name of Hermon? It is not near Sidon, and appears to have belonged to the king of Bashan.

"Laish or Dan is close to the mountain, and if, as we infer from Judges, there was at Laish a Sidonian colony, speaking the Sidonian language, what could be more natural than that Hermon should have a Sidonian name." (BLUNT).

2. The absence of warlike weapons in the possession of the Israelites.
 - (1) Ehud makes a dagger expressly for the purpose of assassinating Eglon, as if he was without arms and was compelled to make a weapon for the occasion (iii. 16).
 - (2) Shamgar slays six hundred Philistines with an *ox goad*, as if no other weapon was available (iii. 31).
 - (3) Deborah asks in her song, "*Was there a shield or a spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?*" (v. 8), as if the Israelites had been deprived of their arms.
 - (4) Samson when he went down to Timnath was unarmed, for he "*had nothing in his hand*" when he rent the lion (xiv. 5-6).
 - (5) Samson slew a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass, for he had no other weapon (xv. 15).

All these circumstances are mentioned during periods of oppression.

"Turning to the First Book of Samuel we learn that the Philistines allowed no smith in the land lest under the pretence of making agricultural implements they should forge swords and spears (1 Sam. xiii. 19). How this notice agrees with the state of Israel during the time of the Judges" (BLUNT).

3. The gods of the Amorites mentioned by the prophet (vi. 10).

Here we find a curious coincidence with the words of Joshua in his appeal to the people to put away idolatry. Joshua uses the same expression "*the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell*" (compare Judges vi. 10 with Josh. xxiv. 15-18).

The prophet is desirous of bringing the people back to the observance of the law and naturally refers to the words used by Joshua in his last appeal and warning to the people.

Incidents illustrated by Ancient History

1. The cutting off of the great toes and thumbs (i. 6-7).

Athenians cut off the thumbs of the conquered inhabitants of the island of Ægina. By this means they could employ them as galley slaves, to handle the oar, though they were unable to hold the spear.

According to Curtius, the Persians cut off the hands, feet and ears of some thousands of captive Greeks.

A Parthian king once compelled one of his courtiers to catch food thrown to him in his mouth like a dog.

2. The Stratagem of Gideon (vii. 16-22).

Hannibal when surrounded and shut in by Fabius Maximus, tied lighted faggots upon the horns of some oxen, and driving the terrified animals over the heights on one side of the valley, caused Fabius to abandon the head of the pass, through which he himself marched quietly out of the valley.

Niebuhr gives an example from modern history, relating how an

Arab chief escaped from a castle on the mountains by using a similar stratagem to that adopted by Gideon.

3. **The death of Abimelech** (ix. 50-54).

In the siege of Argos, Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, was dashed from his horse and stunned by a heavy tile thrown from the house-top by a woman of the city. The Argive soldiers then fell upon him and despatched him.

4. **The fate of Jephthah's daughter** (xi. 30-40).

When the Greek fleet sailing against Troy was detained at Aulis by contrary winds, the seer Calchas declared that the fleet was prevented from sailing because Agamemnon had offended the goddess Diana, and that the sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia was the only means of propitiating the goddess. Iphigenia was sent for, and was on the point of being sacrificed when Diana substituted a stag in her place, and carried off the maiden to be her priestess in her temple at Tauris.

5. **The seizure of the maidens at Shiloh by the Benjamites** (xxi. 19-23).

So Romulus provided the first citizens of Rome with wives by inviting the neighbouring Sabines and Latins to a festival in honour of the god Consus. During the games a band of Roman youths rushed in and carried off the maidens. This is known as the Rape of the Sabine women.

ALLUSIONS.

The defeat of Sisera (iv. 7).

"Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison: which perished at Endor: they became as dung for the earth" (Ps. lxxxiii. 9-10).

The death of Oreb and Zeeb: of Zebah and Zalmunna (vii. 25., viii. 18-21).

"Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb; yea all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna" (Ps. lxxxiii. 11).

"And the Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb" (Is. x. 26).

The death of Abimelech (ix. 53).

"Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez?" (2 Sam. xi. 21).

The times of the Judges generally.

"Therefore thou deliverdest them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies" (Neh. ix. 27).

Deborah's song (v.).

"O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at

the presence of God : even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel" (Ps. lxxviii. 7-8).

Samuel gives a summary of the history of Israel under the Judges.

"And when they forgot the Lord their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. And they cried unto the Lord, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord, and have served Baalim and Ashtarothe; but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee. And the Lord sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe" (1 Sam. xii. 9-11).

St. Paul, in mentioning instances of faithfulness recorded in the Old Testament, says:—

"Time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Heb. xi. 32-34).

The idolatries and oppressions in the times of the Judges.

"56 Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies.

"57 But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.

"58 For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

"59 When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel.

"60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among them.

"61 And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.

"62 He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.

"63 The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.

"64 Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation" (Ps. lxxviii. 56-64).

Also

"34 They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them.

"35 But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.

"36 And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.

"37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.

"38 And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood.

"39 Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.

"40 Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insonuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

"41 And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.

"42 Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

"43 Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity,

"44 Nevertheless, he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry.

"45 And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies" (Ps. cvi. 34-45).

The defeat of the Midianites.

"For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian" (Is. ix. 4).

EXCURSUS I. (on xviii. 30, 31.)

"And Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land" (xviii. 30). (For "Manasseh" read "Moses.")

Is this an allusion to the Assyrian captivity, or primarily to the carrying away by Tiglath-Pileser of the northern tribes of Israel (2 Kings xv. 29)?

The following reasons may be adduced against this supposition:

1. The statement n v. 31, "*And they set them up Micah's graven-image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh,*" would indicate that this worship continued only so long as the tabernacle was at Shiloh.

But the tabernacle only stood in Shiloh till the reign of Saul, and was never taken there again.

So if Micah's image remained only as long as the tabernacle was at Shiloh, Jonathan's sons can only have been there till Saul's time at the latest.

2. David would not have been likely to tolerate the continuation of image-worship at Dan.
3. Certainly at the establishment of the Temple worship Solomon would have put down the image-worship.
4. Had the image-worship under Levitical control been in existence in the time of Jeroboam, he would not have set up one of the golden calves at Dan, and appointed as priests those who were not of the sons of Levi.

Consequently we may infer that the statement of xviii. 30 has no reference to the Assyrian captivity.

"The captivity" may refer to the Philistine oppression, when they

captured the ark, and thus the ark in their possession was figurative of the captivity of the land.

And this oppression by the Philistines was so tyrannical that the land might well be considered in captivity. Sayce ("Early History of the Hebrews") even regards David as setting up his throne at Hebron as a vassal king of Philistia.

But even precluding this figurative explanation, it is quite possible that the Syrians may have invaded the north of Israel in the time of the Philistine supremacy and carried away some Israelites from the captured towns.

The most probable explanation is that the image-worship at Dan was suppressed and abolished by Samuel after the ark had been sent back by the Philistines.

EXCURSUS II. (On the Situation of Harosheth.)

Situation of Harosheth. "The narrative of the battle leads us to seek it somewhere down the Kishon, for only in that direction would they fly from an attack coming from the north-east. Again, it cannot be very far from the camp, for the Hebrews pursued them to it. They had, before the battle, marched some ten or twelve miles, and we cannot suppose that they could pursue an enemy more than eight or ten miles further. Now exactly in the line of their necessary retreat, and about eight miles from Megiddo, at the entrance of the pass to Esdraelon from the plain of Acre, is an enormous double mound, called Harothieth, which is the Arabic form of the Hebrew Harosheth, the significance of the word being the same in both languages. This *tell* is situated just below the point where the Kishon in one of its turns beats against the rocky base of Carmel, leaving no room even for a footpath. A castle there effectually commands the pass up the vale of the Kishon into Esdraelon, and such a castle there was on this immense double *tell* of Harothieth. It is still covered with the remains of old walls and buildings. I have not the slightest doubt of this identification.

"It was probably called Harosheth of the *Gentiles* or *nations*, because it belonged to those Gentiles of Acre and the neighbouring plains, which we know from Judges i. 31, the Hebrews could not subdue" (THOMPSON, "The Land and the Book," 436-7).