

THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE EDITION.



THE OLD TESTAMENT
NEHEMIAH.

BY THE

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MAP OF THE CAPTIVITIES

P R E F A C E .

THE Book of Nchemiah 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the several subjects with which the student should be acquainted, comprising full Geographical and Biographical Notes, historical references to the ancient monarchies of the Eastern world, and other important details, which are clearly set forth in the Table of Contents.

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 difference between the Authorized and Revised Versions, the alterations being pointed out and explanations given of the reasons for the change; (2) a Glossary 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.

F. M.

Mileham.

CONTENTS.

THE NARRATIVE OF THE BOOK	v
TITLE.. .. .	xi
THE AUTHOR	xi
DATE	xiii
LIFE OF THE AUTHOR	xiii
EZRA	xviii
SCOPE OF THE WORK	xx
PLACE IN THE CANON	xx
LANGUAGE	xxi
THE FOUNDATION OF JUDAISM	xxi
THE JEWISH FEASTS	xxiv
CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS	xxvi
GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES	xxvii
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES	xxxviii
THE SAMARITANS	xlvi
PERSIA	1
DISCREPANCY IN THE CHRONOLOGY OF NEHEMIAH	liii
TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM	lv
ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH	lix
THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.. .. .	I
COMMENTS ON THE REVISED VERSION	55
GLOSSARY	63
MONEY, WEIGHTS AND MEASURES	66
THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS	67
CUSTOMS	68
APPENDIX	70
LAND OF THE CAPTIVITIES	ii
KINGDOM OF JUDAH	lxii
JERUSALEM.. .. .	liv
KINGDOM OF ISRAEL	54

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

THE NARRATIVE OF THE BOOK.

[The Student should read the Narrative in a connected form with a view to obtaining a ready grasp of the history of the period.]

Nehemiah hears of the miserable condition of Jerusalem and Judah.

Nehemiah was a Jew, probably of the tribe of Judah, and filled the office of cup-bearer to Artaxerxes Longimanus at Shushan, the winter residence of the Persian kings. In the 20th year of the reign of Artaxerxes, Hanani, the brother of Nehemiah, came from Jerusalem with other Jews to Shushan and told Nehemiah of the ruined state of the city, and the miserable condition of the Jews in the province of Judah. Thirteen years had intervened since the mission of Ezra. During that period Artaxerxes had been occupied in repressing an Egyptian rebellion. Megabyzos, the Satrap of Syria, had taken advantage of the circumstance to openly defy the Persian king. The Jews, no longer able to rely upon the support of Artaxerxes, had been unable to resist the opposition of the Samaritans. They were in sore distress within the city, and the object of scornful treatment by their adversaries, and were unable to resist, for the wall of Jerusalem was broken down and the fortified gateways burnt with fire.

He obtains leave to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city.

The tidings of this wretched state of affairs greatly affected Nehemiah. He was smitten with grief, and, pious Jew that he was, prayed to his God for assistance and guidance. He remembered the promises of Jehovah to his people, that, though because of their transgressions they should be dispersed among nations, yet if they repented God would grant them return to the chosen city. Nehemiah clearly saw that there could be no permanent prosperity for the Jews unless the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, so that the people might successfully resist the attacks of their malicious neighbours. Accordingly he formed the purpose of making request to Artaxerxes to grant him permission to visit Jerusalem for the purpose of rebuilding the walls. It was five months ere he obtained a favourable opportunity. On the occasion of a private banquet, when the queen was present, he purposely assumed a sad expression of countenance as he was performing the duties of his office as cup-bearer. Not that he had not been of a sad heart during those five months, but he had carefully disguised his feelings from the King. Any expression of gloominess or unhappiness might have brought upon Nehemiah the displeasure of the King, for royal servants under the Persians were expected to regard attendance upon the King as a high honour. Intrigue is always rife in Eastern countries, and the King would quickly seize upon any change of demeanour as indicative of a plot against his life, and might suspect Nehemiah of the intention to administer poison in the wine. Hence Nehemiah ran considerable danger in the course he determined upon. The King noticed the change in his demeanour, and enquired the reason.

Nehemiah described the condition of Jerusalem, and made request that he might be allowed to visit the city and rebuild the walls. Artaxerxes complied with the request, and granted Nehemiah leave of absence for a set period.

Journey to Jerusalem : Arrival at the city.

Accordingly Nehemiah set out for Jerusalem attended with an armed retinue. He took with him letters of safe conduct to show to the governors of the different provinces to the west of the Euphrates, as a proof that his mission was sanctioned by the Persian King. In addition he took with him a letter enjoining Asaph, the keeper or ranger of the King's park near Jerusalem, to provide him with the timber necessary for the projected work.

Nehemiah naturally travelled more quickly than Ezra had done, and appears to have reached Jerusalem in about three months. His arrival at once roused the opposition of Sanballat and Tobiah, and indeed of all the neighbouring nations, who, anxious to frustrate any effort to restore Jerusalem to her ancient position of being the most powerful city of Palestine, were naturally stirred to active opposition against Nehemiah, the object of whose mission must either have been known, or have been suspected by them, for "*it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.*"

Inspection of the ruined state of the walls.

On his arrival Nehemiah did not immediately communicate the purpose for which he had come, but after a rest of three days rode secretly, by night, round the walls and examined the condition in which they were. He then called the leaders of the people together, told them that he had received the royal permission to repair the walls, and called upon them to begin the work at once. No sooner was his design made known than the adversaries of the Jews commenced to ridicule the work, and to put a false interpretation upon the motives for rebuilding, suggesting that the fortifying of the city was being done with the object of rebelling against Persian rule.

The appeal to the people to undertake the work of rebuilding the walls.

The people took up the project with alacrity. The work was parted out amongst different sections in an admirably organized manner, and such was the zeal of the workers that many, who had finished the section allotted to them, went to the assistance of others whose portion was not then completed. Thus the walls were rebuilt in the wonderfully short space of 52 days.

Difficulties : (1) Opposition from without.

The work was not without opposition and difficulties. Sanballat and his allies were moved with wrath and indignation. At first they mocked what they considered the feeble efforts of the Jews, and Tobiah particularly sneered at the weakness of the wall, as not being strong enough to keep out the prowling fox or jackal. But they did not confine their opposition to sneers, for Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem with his

Arabians, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites conspired "*to come and to fight against Jerusalem and to hinder the work.*" The method of attack was very artful. Probably Sanballat dared not openly make an armed onset upon the Jews, for that would be to act in flagrant opposition to the edict of the Persian King. But the Arabians under Gashem, whose allegiance to Persia was of a doubtful kind, would be useful auxiliaries in such a case. Had the attack been successful it would have been easy to represent it as a plundering expedition of marauding Arabs whom Sanballat was unable to restrain. But open attack was frustrated by the precautionary measures and increasing vigilance of Nehemiah. Watch was kept night and day to guard against surprise; during the day the builders worked with arms at their side, others kept guard at the breaches in the wall, whilst Nehemiah held his body-guard in readiness to advance at once to any spot that might be assailed. Those Jews who lived near, and were assisting in the work, were ordered to stay in Jerusalem at night and sleep in the city. This latter regulation ensured, first, that these outlying Jews would not be surprised in detail and murdered by the enemy; secondly, that a large garrison would always be at hand for defence; and lastly, that the work would be renewed in the early morning without delay.

Difficulties: (2) Intrigues of the adversaries.

Sanballat was therefore compelled to change his tactics. He retired to the plain of Ono, nearly thirty miles from Jerusalem, and sent five messages to Nehemiah, inviting him to a conference at Ono. Sanballat alleged that a report was being spread that Nehemiah intended making himself king at Jerusalem, and had hired prophets to proclaim him king. The wily Samaritan pretended friendship for Nehemiah, and feigned to be interested in assisting the Jewish leader to contradict these reports, should they reach the ears of the Persian king. On the fifth occasion Sanballat sent an open letter (the contents of which would be necessarily known to the Jews), with the object of weakening the influence of Nehemiah. Meanwhile Tobiah corresponded with "*the nobles of Judah,*" and fomented intrigue against Nehemiah. The prophetess Noadiah and other prophets were hired to put Nehemiah in fear. One of these hired prophets, Shemaiah by name, endeavoured to induce Nehemiah to take refuge in the Temple, in order to save his life against a plot for his assassination, which, the prophet falsely asserted, had been entered into. Nehemiah's trust in God never wavered, and he shrewdly divined the real nature of all the communications of his adversaries. He perceived clearly that Sanballat's intention was to assassinate him at Ono; he declined to follow the advice of the nobles of Tobiah's party, and refused to trust in Tobiah; lastly, he saw through the pretended prophecy of Shemaiah, and rejected his advice, first, because, as Governor, he could not take refuge in the Temple lest, by showing fear, he should weaken his influence with the people; secondly, because such an act of sacrilege would alienate the pious Jews, his chief supporters; and thirdly, because such a step would be tantamount to an admission of the truth of the charges made against him, and his enemies would not be likely to lose the opportunity of reporting his action as a proof of his guilt.

Difficulties : (3) within the City.

There were also difficulties within the walls. The poorer classes were threatened with complete ruin. The condition of hostilities put an end to trade and prevented agricultural labour. All labourers, who depended upon wages, were on the verge of starvation. The distress was great. In order to obtain money to pay the "king's tribute" they had mortgaged their lands, and had even been obliged to sell their children as slaves to their richer brethren, who had taken advantage of their distress. In their misery they threatened to seize corn by violence, and complained to Nehemiah. Nehemiah was filled with indignation at the conduct of the richer Jews. He summoned a meeting of the nobles, and blamed them for exacting usury; he appealed to the priests and nobles to remit the interest they had charged, and to restore the property they had taken. He also contrasted his own conduct with theirs. He and his companions in exile had redeemed their poorer brethren in captivity from slavery to the heathen, but the rich Jews in Judah had actually reduced the poor Jews of the province into a state of slavery. The appeal was successful, and the nobles and priests took an oath to restore what they had exacted, and to cease the practice of usury. Incidentally Nehemiah mentions, that during the whole of his tenure of the office of governor, he had refused to levy the tax allowed to him as ruler of the province and exact any provision for his maintenance. On the contrary he had kept open table at his own charge for one hundred and fifty of "*the Jews and rulers*" in addition to the officials and bodyguard who had accompanied him from Babylonia, and all this, because "*the bondage was heavy upon the people.*"

But a sore feeling appears to have remained in the hearts of some of the richer classes, and these, combined with those families allied with Tobiah by marriage, were a constant source of disaffection, and gave trouble to Nehemiah.

The Walls Finished. Commanders appointed.

When at last the walls were built, and the gates erected, Nehemiah appointed the porters and singers and Levites to the charge of them. At the same time he entrusted the government of the whole city to his brother Hanani, and Hananiah, the ruler of the palace, *i.e.* the commander of the garrison in the temple-citadel.

According to some Nehemiah now returned to Persia, in fulfilment of his promise (ii. 6), and after a brief stay came back to Judah B.C. 444, as *Tirshatha* or Governor.

First Religious Reform.

Nehemiah now undertook a great Religious Reform. He first took a census of the people with the intention of replenishing the population of Jerusalem. Such census was taken according to the genealogy of the people, and for this purpose he made use of the register of the genealogy of those who returned under Zerubbabel, which he appears to have found in the archives at Jerusalem. Then he summoned the Jews from the various towns and villages, and assembled them in the court near the water-gate,

The Reading of the Law.

This gathering took place on the first day of Tisri (the seventh month), or September, the day of the Feast of Trumpets. A pulpit of wood was erected, and on it Ezra took his stand and read to the people "*out of the book of the law of Moses.*" Six Levites stood on his right and seven on his left, while thirteen Levites explained and interpreted what was read to the people. On the second day of the reading they came to the passage (Lev. xxiii. 39-43), which enjoined the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month. The last recorded observance seems to have been that which was conducted by Zerubbabel shortly after his return from Babylon (Ez. iii. 4). Nothing can be more clearly indicative of the religious and civil decay that preceded the arrival of Nehemiah than the neglect of the observance of this feast.

The Solemn Fast and Covenant.

There followed a solemn fast on the twenty-fourth day of the same month. At the fast a solemn confession was made by the Levites on behalf of the people, and a covenant was entered into that "*the seed of Israel*" should separate themselves "*from all strangers.*" The covenant was recorded in writing, and sealed by Nehemiah as governor, by the heads of the priestly courses, by the chief of the Levites and by the princes, as heads of houses. Thus it was a national covenant.

Particulars of the Covenant.

The covenant commenced with a general agreement "*to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God.*" It then went on to particularize certain provisions of the law which had been neglected, and so the people bound themselves.

1. Not to give their daughters in marriage to the people of the land, nor to marry Canaanitish women themselves.
2. To strictly observe the Sabbath and holy days, and to prohibit foreign traders from offering wares for sale on those days.
3. To observe the regulations for the Sabbatical or seventh year, pledging themselves to remit all debts incurred in the previous six years.
4. To pay yearly one-third of a shekel to provide for the expenses of the Temple. [The actual amount prescribed by the Law was half a shekel, but the poverty of the people rendered it impossible to prescribe the full amount.]
5. To cast lots to decide who should furnish the wood required for the sacrifices.
6. To offer to God the firstborn of their sons and cattle, and the firstfruits of the ground.
7. To give tithes for the maintenance of the Levites and priests.

Thus full provision was made for the maintenance of the Temple worship and the support of the Priests and Levites.

The City Peopled.

Nehemiah now entered upon the task of restoring order in the province of Judah, and of increasing the population of Jerusalem.

Lots were drawn by which one out of ten were selected to live "*in Jerusalem the holy city*," the remainder settling in the other towns and villages of the country. For this purpose a census was necessary, and this, with the distribution of the people, will be found in xi. 3; xii. 26.

The Walls Dedicated.

And now that the settlement of the population was effected the walls were solemnly dedicated to God. The time selected was most appropriate. The inhabitants of the city had been selected, and their chief duty would be to guard and defend the city and Temple. But before those duties could be entered upon, it was necessary that the walls should be dedicated to the Lord. The procession was divided into two great bodies, and, starting from the western side, one body went round the southern half of the wall, and the other round the northern half. They joined in the open space to the east of the Temple, where they sang and gave thanks. Great sacrifices were offered, and the people rejoiced.

At the same time officers were appointed to superintend the chambers in the Temple, which had been set apart for the storing of the treasure, the firstfruits, the tithes, and other offerings given in support of the Temple and for the maintenance of the priests and Levites.

Absence of Nehemiah at Babylon.

We now have a break in the memoirs of Nehemiah, due probably to his return to Babylon. The work and reform had taken twelve years, and now, in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah was recalled by the Persian King. After a short interval he was allowed to return to Jerusalem (as Governor) with his former powers.

Abuses during his absence.

During his absence the Jews had fallen away from the covenant they had so solemnly sworn to twelve years before. They had resumed marriages with the Gentiles, and in this, Eliashib the high priest had set them an example. His grandson had married the daughter of Sanballat, and Eliashib was "*allied*" to Tobiah, to whom he had assigned chambers in the Temple.

The Second Reform.

So Nehemiah had to go through the work of the reform anew.

1. He turned Tobiah out of the chamber of the Temple, purified it, and restored it to its proper use.

2. As the tithes had ceased to be paid, he found that the Levites had been compelled to leave Jerusalem, and to support themselves on the produce of the lands in the Levitical cities. Accordingly, he ordered that the tithes should be paid, and appointed treasurers to secure their regular collection, and to superintend their distribution to the Priests and Levites.

3. He once more secured the observance of the Sabbath, which he found profaned in the following ways:—

- (a) In a tour through the country he found the villagers "*treading the wine-presses on the Sabbath.*"
- (b) Country produce was brought into the city on the Sabbath.
- (c) Tyrian merchants, who lived in the city, sold fish and other wares to the inhabitants on the Sabbath.

Accordingly, Nehemiah caused the gates of the city to be closed during the whole of the Sabbath, and posted guards to prevent sellers from entering with their goods, and, when these encamped outside the walls on the Sabbath, he threatened to attack them by force, if they continued the practice.

4. Once more he abolished the system of foreign marriages, and expelled the grandson of the high priest Eliashib from the city.

Conclusion.

The Book of Nehemiah closes with a prayer to God that He would remember the good work he had done. The book must have been written shortly after this, and probably Nehemiah died shortly afterwards. He was a patriot, and a capable, upright, and incorruptible governor. His reforms laid the foundation of Judaism (see p. xxi.).

THE TITLE.

The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah are found in the Hebrew Canon as one book under the title of "**The Book of Ezra.**"

Later, a division was made, and the two books were distinguished as "**The First**" and "**The Second Book of Ezra.**"

About the close of the 4th century the Second Book of Ezra became known as "**The Book of Nehemiah.**"

The chief arguments for the separation of the Books and for the modern titles are—

- (1) There are distinct differences in the composition to mark distinct authorship.
- (2) The author of the Book of Ezra identifies himself with Ezra, and the author of the Book of Nehemiah identifies himself with Nehemiah.
- (3) The opening sentence of the book of Nehemiah, "*The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah,*" is almost conclusive that that Book is a separate work.

THE AUTHOR.

The whole of the Book cannot have been written by Nehemiah.

Reason. In xii. 11 and xii. 22 there is mention of Jaddua.

This Jaddua was high priest in the reign of Alexander the Great about 100 years after the time of Nehemiah.

Therefore the whole of the book cannot be the work of Nehemiah.

The Book of Nehemiah is in Four Sections.

- I. Chaps. i.—vii. The First Visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem; the rebuilding of the walls of the city; the Register of those who returned with Zerubbabel.

This section was written, as is allowed by all critics, by Nehemiah himself, for

- (1) The narrative is continuous.
- (2) The style is uniform.
- (3) Wherever reference is made to Nehemiah the first person singular is used.

The period covered by this section appears to be less than a year, and embraces the 20th year of Artaxerxes, viz., B.C. 445—444.

It was written at least twelve years later than the events described.

Reason. Mention is made of the 32nd year of Artaxerxes.

"From the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king" (v. 14).

II. Chaps. viii.—x. The Religious Reform. B.C. 444.

This section cannot have been written by Nehemiah, for

- (1) Nehemiah is alluded to in the third person.
- (2) He is called "the Tirshatha." (In the first section his title is *pekkah* or governor).
- (3) Ezra is more prominent than Nehemiah.
- (4) The style and language differ materially from that of the rest of the book.
 - (a) The parenthetic prayers of Nehemiah are wanting.
 - (b) Characteristic phrases, such as "*God of heaven*," "*the good hand of God*," are wanting.
 - (c) The law of Moses is frequently mentioned.

The prominence given to Ezra has caused the section to be assigned to Ezra, but it is almost impossible that he can have been the author, for

- (1) Though the prayer of Chap. ix. 6-38 may have been the work of Ezra, it contains expressions very different from his style.
- (2) The writer must have been a layman and not a priest, for he classes himself with "the people."

"Also we made ordinances for us" (x. 32).
"We cast the lots" (x. 34).
"We should bring the firstfruits of our dough" (x. 37).

All that can be said with certainty is that the writer was an eye-witness of the events and a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Canon Rawlinson allows the conjecture that Zadok, the scribe or secretary of Nehemiah, may have been the author.

III. Chaps. xi.—xii. 26. Contains six lists.

These lists would be taken from contemporary State archives, and may have been incorporated by Nehemiah himself into his work, but from the inclusion of Jaddua (xii. 22) it may be inferred that either an addition was made later, or that this section is the work of a later compiler.

- IV. Chaps. xii. 27—xiii. The Dedication of the Walls. The Reforms carried out by Nehemiah after his return from Babylon, B.C. 432-1.

This section was undoubtedly composed by Nehemiah, for

- (1) The first person singular is again used.
- (2) The characteristic style of Nehemiah reappears.

Conclusion. The first and fourth sections are the work of Nehemiah.

"But the second section and some at least of the lists given in the third section seem to have been added to Nehemiah's memoirs by another hand, which also prefixed to the whole book the heading, "*The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah*" (SAYCE).

DATE.

The date of the portions written by Nehemiah would be about B.C. 430.

The portions added by a later writer may be assigned to B.C. 320, for we have mention of Jaddua the High Priest and Darius the Persian (xii. 22), the latter of whom is identified with Darius Codomanus (B.C. 335-330).

LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah (i. 1). He may have been—

I. Of the tribe of Judah, for—

1. He speaks of Jerusalem as "*the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres*" (ii. 3).
2. Hanani, his brother, seems to have been of that tribe. "*He and certain men of Judah*" (i. 2).

II. Of the tribe of Levi, for—

1. The appointment of his brother Hanani is mentioned along with that of the porters, singers, and Levites (vii. 2).
2. The interests of the priests and Levites are carefully attended to by Nehemiah.

He was probably born in captivity, for we find him at Shushan, the winter palace of the kings of Persia, in high office as the cup-bearer of Artaxerxes Longimanus (i. 2).

All that is known certainly concerning him is found in the Book of Nehemiah (for detailed history, see p. v.).

The following notable incidents may be discussed here:—

I. The State of the City. How can it be accounted for?

The early years of the reign of Artaxerxes were occupied in suppressing the great Egyptian rebellion. During that rebellion Megabyzos, the satrap of Persia, had successfully defied the authority of the king.

May not the disaffection of the satrap and the inability of the King of Persia to support the Jews account for the condition in which we find the Jews at the time when the Book of Nehemiah commences? We find:—

1. Ezra no longer governor.
2. The walls of Jerusalem broken down and the gates burnt (i. 3).
3. Their adversaries, the Samaritans, all powerful and menacing their existence.
4. The people (priests and laity) have received their heathen wives again.

II. The Commission of Nehemiah. He was appointed Tirshatha, or governor of Jerusalem.

1. To rebuild the walls of the city.
2. Letters were given him from the king to the different satraps, through whose provinces he would have to pass (ii. 7).
3. A letter is given him to Asaph, the keeper of the king's province, to supply him with timber (ii. 8).
4. A troop of cavalry was assigned him as a bodyguard.
5. A definite period was allotted to him as governor (ii. 6).

III. The Work of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah's great work was rebuilding (for the first time since their destruction by Nebuchadnezzar) the walls of Jerusalem, thus once more making the city a fortified town. The restoration of the city walls was the only step that could revive the nation, secure its future independence, and preserve the Mosaic institutions. Nehemiah perceived this clearly, and devoted his whole energies to the task. The significance of his action is shown by the opposition of his enemies.

IV. The Adversaries of Nehemiah.

The three principal opponents of his policy are (see iv. 7):—

1. Sanballat, the Horonite (see p. xlii.) = Samaritans.
2. Tobiah, the Ammonite (see p. xli.) = Ammonites.
3. Geshem or Gashmu, the Arabian (see p. xl.) = Arabians.
4. Ashdodites = Philistines.

Jerusalem fortified would regain its former pre-eminence and become the leading town of Palestine. Hence the opposition of neighbouring tribes and nations.

Their methods were three in number:—

1. **Open attack.** "*And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem and to hinder it.*"

Had the attack been successful and had Nehemiah been compelled to appeal to Persia, Sanballat and his allies could have represented the affair as a freebooting expedition of Arabians. For such purpose the Bedouin Arabs under Geshem could be speciously employed.

This attempt was frustrated by the forethought and vigilance of Nehemiah. The workers on the walls worked with swords at their sides, and organized guard was maintained at the breaches in the wall and at the gateways.

2. Assassination.

Sanballat retired to Ono, about thirty miles from Jerusalem, and endeavoured to entice Nehemiah to meet him there to discuss matters in a friendly spirit. His object was to draw Nehemiah away from Jerusalem in order either to seize his person or to assassinate him. Nehemiah saw through the design ("*They thought to do me mischief,*" vi. 2), and refused to leave the work.

3. Intrigue.

- (a) Sanballat alleged that a report was being spread that Nehemiah had hired prophets to proclaim him king, and sent Nehemiah an open letter, urging that it would be well for Nehemiah to confer with him as to the best means of contradicting the report. The object of this letter was twofold—
 - (1) That the charge of treason might deter the people from continuing the work, and so delay the building of the walls.
 - (2) That Nehemiah might consent to the proposed interview in order to meet the charges laid against him, and thus give opportunity for his assassination.
- (b) Tobiah corresponded with "the nobles of Judah," with whom he was allied by marriage, and who reported to him all the doings of Nehemiah, with the object of weakening the support given to Nehemiah and his policy.

He also wrote letters similar to those of Sanballat to put Nehemiah in fear.

- (c) Prophets, notably Shemaiah and Noadiah, the prophetess, were hired to proclaim against the policy of Nehemiah, and to put him in fear (vi. 14).

Shemaiah pretended that there is a plot to assassinate Nehemiah, and urged him to take refuge in the Temple (v. 10). (For particulars and reasons why Nehemiah refused, see Shemaiah, p. xlv.)

In addition, Nehemiah had difficulties to contend with within the walls of the city. The opposition came from—

- 1. The Nobles and the Rulers, whom he rebuked for their conduct in exacting usury from their brethren (v. 1-13). We find certain of these nobles carrying on a treasonable correspondence with Tobiah (vi. 17).
- 2. The Gentilizing party, who had intermarried with foreign nations.

V. The work of Nehemiah other than rebuilding the walls.

- 1. Repression of the exactions of the nobles and the usury of the rich.

Rescue of the poor Jews from spoliation and slavery (v. 1-13).

2. Religious Reform, consisting of—

- (a) The Public Reading of the Law (viii. 1-12).
- (b) The Keeping of the Feast of the Tabernacle (viii. 13-18).
- (c) The National Confession (ix.).
- (d) The Solemn Covenant (x.), including—
 1. An oath not to intermarry with the heathen (x. 30).
 2. The prohibition of traffic on the Sabbath (x. 31).
 3. The observance of the Sabbatical Year (x. 31).
 4. The imposition of a poll tax of one-third of a shekel for the maintenance of the Temple service (x. 32-34).
 5. The insistence on the offering of First Fruits and Tithes for the maintenance of the priests and Levites (x. 35-38).
3. Measures to increase the number of the inhabitants of Jerusalem (xi. 1—xii. 26).
4. Dedication of the City Walls (xii. 27-43).
5. Organization of the Levites (xii. 44-47).
6. The Separation of Israel from the mixed multitude (xiii. 1-3).

VI. The Second Visit of Nehemiah (B.C. 432-1).

The date of this visit is fixed by xiii. 6: "*All this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king: and I came to Jerusalem.*"

At that visit Nehemiah

1. Insisted upon the sanctity of the Temple being preserved inviolate, and ejected Tobiah from one of the chambers which had been assigned him by Eliashib the high priest, who was allied with him through some relationship by marriage (xiii. 4-9).
2. Made provision for the maintenance of the Levites, which had been neglected (xiii. 10-14).
3. Vindicated the sanctity of the Sabbath by suppressing the traffic by which Jews and foreign merchants profaned the day (xiii. 5-22). (See p. 49).
4. Suppressed foreign marriages by expelling from all sacred functions those of the high priests' family who had contracted heathen marriages, and by rebuking and punishing those of the common people who had likewise taken foreign wives (xiii. 23-29).

VII. When did this Second Visit take place?

In the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes Longimanus (B.C. 432-1), but there are two theories as to Nehemiah's length of absence—

1. From v. 14, "*I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years,*" it would appear that Nehemiah was governor of Judah for twelve years, from B.C. 445-4 to B.C. 433-2.

He returned to his post at Sushan (xiii. 6). By some "*after certain days*" (xiii. 6) is construed to mean about one year; but his absence must have been longer than this, for it is hardly probable that the abuses existing at his second visit could have been revived so strongly during an absence of only twelve months.

2. That Nehemiah's first mission lasted only for a limited period, and that he returned to Shushan in about a year.

This agrees with the limitation made by Artaxerxes. "*How long shall thy journey be? And when wilt thou return? . . . And I set him a time*" (ii. 6).

According to this theory, Nehemiah returned to the court of the king immediately after the completion of the walls.

This theory gives an interval of twelve years between the visits of Nehemiah, and affords ample time for the development of the abuses put down on his second visit.

Objection. Nehemiah states (v. 14) that he was governor from the twentieth to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes.

Reply. The compiler may have meant that Nehemiah was governor in the twentieth year and in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, or that Nehemiah was nominal governor, though not resident in Jerusalem.

Summary. The serious nature of the abuses found by Nehemiah on his second visit, and their widespread character, render it almost certain that his absence from Jerusalem must have been for a considerable period. This view is confirmed by the manifestly long interval of years between the earlier and later portions of the book.

VIII. The Character of Nehemiah.

1. **A patriot.** He is moved by the account given him of the state of his country to effect its restoration (i. 3).

He represses usury and exaction, and relieves his poorer countrymen from spoliation and slavery (v. 1-13).

During his office as governor he refused to receive his allowance as governor from the people in consideration of their poverty.

2. **Pious.** His parenthetical prayers (see p. 4) are a proof of his piety.
3. **Energetic.** Shown by his prompt measures for the rebuilding the walls—a work effected in the extraordinarily short period of fifty-two days.
4. **Prudent.** Evincing in his conduct towards Sanballat and other adversaries. His wisdom and foresight effectually frustrated their efforts to retard his work and to entrap his person.
5. **A Statesman.** The abiding character of his work and reform are conclusive evidence of the statesmanship of the great Jewish governor (see p. xviii.).

IX. The Effect of his Work.

The object of Nehemiah was the restoration of Jewish independent nationality. In furtherance of this end he took two great measures—

1. The rebuilding of the walls of the city. He saw clearly that in the restoration of the city walls lay the foundation of future independence,
2. The separation of the Jews from other nations.

This he effected—

- (a) By the open reading of the Law. Previous to his time the Law (as far as it existed in writing) was the exclusive possession of the Priests. Nehemiah now put it within the reach of every pious Jew. In a word, he made the written law the future basis of Jewish national life.
- (b) By the further obligations imposed upon the people, viz.—
 - (1) The prohibition of marriages with foreigners.
 - (2) The strict observance of the Sabbath, and the observance of the Sabbatical year.
 - (3) The payment of a Temple tax of one-third of a shekel.
 - (4) The payment of tithes and first-fruits to the Levites.

3. Result. The Law became—

1. A protection against idolatry.
2. A standard (a) of religious life, (b) of social life.
3. The barrier which separated the Jews distinct from other races, and enabled them to survive even the disastrous overthrow of their nation and the destruction of their city and temple by the Romans.
4. A bond uniting the Jew of the Dispersion with the Jew at Jerusalem.
5. The centre of national life. Palestine might be conquered, but the Law remained. No nation has been so oppressed, so dispersed as the Jewish nation, and yet the Jew has preserved his distinctive religion and his distinctive nationality. The Law is still his standard of religious and social life.

Ezra and Nehemiah laid the foundation of Judaism. (For additional notes, see p. xxi.).

EZRA.

Ezra, the priest and the scribe, was the descendant of Seraiah, the high priest in the days of Zedekiah.

In the reign of Artaxerxes, Ezra was resident in Babylon, and in the seventh year of the reign of that King he obtained leave to go to Jerusalem, and to take with him a company of Israelites, together with priests, Levites, singers, porters, and Nethinim.

The commission given him was for the purpose of effecting a religious reform, and he does not appear to have been invested with other powers.

His great reform was the enforcement of separation from the wives upon all who had contracted mixed marriages. This reform he accomplished in a little more than six months after his arrival at Jerusalem.

We hear nothing more of him till thirteen years later, when Nehemiah was Governor at Jerusalem.

Connection of Ezra with Nehemiah.

Ezra assisted Nehemiah in carrying out religious reforms.

1. In reading the Law to the assembled people (Neh. viii.).

This appears to have been done at the request of the people (viii. 1).

The Law was read on the first day of the seventh month (Tisri, viii. 2).

It was read from a pulpit or platform of wood, and the people assembled in the open space before the water-gate (viii. 3-4).

Ezra was supported by prominent Levites, who stood with him on the platform, six on his right hand and seven on his left hand. Other Levites assisted in the reading of the Law, and interpreted it to the people.

2. At the dedication of the walls (xii. 27-43).

Ezra led the right hand column in the procession, skirting the southern wall from the valley gate, and going up by the stairs of the city of David to the water-gate. He appears to have held in respect to this column the same position as that occupied by Nehemiah in the other (xii. 36).

So in the religious reforms of Nehemiah we may conclude that Ezra was his great assistant in carrying them out.

There is no other mention of Ezra being prominent in the Book of Nehemiah.

Difficulties.

We are met with three great difficulties with respect to the omission of the name of Ezra.

1. His name does not appear till the reading of the Law (viii.).

Two explanations are suggested.

(a) That Ezra had returned to Babylon after effecting the reforms related in Ezra ix., and did not re-visit Jerusalem till about the time the walls were completed. It would be natural for the people to take the opportunity of his reappearance to request him to resume his former practice of publicly expounding the Law.

(b) That, though Ezra had never been absent from Jerusalem for any long period, he was no longer in authority. His opponents, therefore, had been able to frustrate his efforts for religious

reform. So he spent the greater part of the time in retirement, engaged in the study of the Law, and in the compilation of the historical works connected with his name. According to this theory we must assume that the rebuilding of the walls had roused the patriotism and religious fervour of the people, and that Ezra was summoned from retirement to publish the Law to the people.

The former explanation appears the more probable.

- (1) It satisfactorily accounts for the absence of the name of Ezra in the list of those who assisted in rebuilding the walls.
- (2) It is hard to conceive that the miserable state of the people, the usurious conduct of the rich towards the poor, and the heathen marriages could have existed without a protest on the part of Ezra, had he been present in Jerusalem.

2. His name does not appear in the list of those who sealed the covenant.

But the list was sealed only by those who represented the chief families of the community. The list is not personal, but representative, and so the heads of the priestly courses signed for the priests. The name of Seraiah stands first in the list given, and to his family belonged both Ezra the scribe and Eliashib the high priest.

Hence we have no reason to be surprised at the omission of Ezra's name. The inclusion of Ezra the individual would have been an anomaly in a list which contains representative names only. Clearly Ezra had ceased to hold an office which entitled him to seal, and clearly he was not a representative of a priestly house. On all grounds the omission of his name is natural and regular.

3. Why did not Ezra attempt to suppress the revival of abuses during the absence of Nehemiah?

The only explanation is that Ezra must have died before the completion of Nehemiah's twelve years of office.

SCOPE OF THE WORK.

The period comprised within the Book of Nehemiah extends—

From B.C. 445-4, the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus,

To B.C. 433-2, the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, or at most to the year following.

PLACE IN THE CANON.

In our Bible the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah are placed after the Books of the Chronicles as continuing the historical narrative of those books.

In the Hebrew Bible the order is Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles. Chronicles concludes the Hebrew Canon.

LANGUAGE.

HEBREW, for, unlike the Book of Ezra, the Book of Nehemiah is written throughout in Hebrew.

The Influence of the Captivity on the Language of the Hebrews.

Hebrew seems to have been forgotten by the majority of the people, for when Nehemiah caused the Law to be read, it was necessary to have interpreters to translate it to the people (Neh. viii. 7-8).

"The last observance of the Feast of Tabernacles seems to have been that which took place shortly after the return of Zerubbabel (Ez. iii. 4). The obligation to observe the Feast had been overlooked even by Ezra, and the memory of it had passed away. Could anything prove more clearly that the language of the Pentateuch had ceased to be the every-day language of the Jewish people" (SAYCE).

The Jews came back from the captivity speaking Aramaic. This was brought about as follows:

Aramaic was the language of diplomacy, and was understood by the educated classes. The ministers of Hezekiah desired Rab-shakeh to speak in the Syrian (Aramaic) language, which they understood, and not in the language of the people (Hebrew) (2 Kings xviii. 26).

Aramaic was also the language of trade. Carchemish was the chief centre of trade in Western Asia, and commerce was chiefly conducted by Aramean merchants.

Thus the Jews in Babylon had to learn either the Assyrian language or **Aramaic**, and as many of them embarked in trade, whilst the upper classes already knew **Aramaic**, they would naturally prefer that language.

Disappearance of the Hebrew Language.

Subsequent contact with the Greeks caused the final disappearance of Hebrew.

In our Lord's time Aramaic was the vernacular of Palestine, so St. Matthew's Gospel addressed to Hebrew Christians was originally written in Aramaic. After the destruction of Jerusalem the Jews of Palestine, who spoke Aramaic, would be dispersed throughout the Roman Empire. The Jews of other countries would know no other language but Greek, and thus those Jews, who spoke Aramaic, would be compelled to learn Greek.

THE FOUNDATION OF JUDAISM.

The reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah are the beginnings of the Judaism of our Lord's time.

Thus:—

- (1) The high-priest becomes the head of the people and takes the place of the king.

The monarchy, as known under David, Solomon and their successors, passes away.

- (2) The Scribe takes the place of the Prophet.

- (3) The written "Law" closed and sealed by Ezra in the Canon of the Old Testament is the absolute rule of the people, whilst prophecy disappears.
- (4) The Jew though dispersed among many nations becomes rigidly exclusive.

The foundation of this exclusiveness is exhibited on three occasions.

- (a) The exclusion from priestly office of those priests who could not establish their genealogical claims to priestly descent (Ezra ii. 62).
- (b) The refusal to allow the Samaritans to join in the work of rebuilding the Temple (Ezra iv. 3).
- (c) The reforms with respect to mixed marriages.

Rightly developed, these ideas would have resulted in purity of worship and in a widespread religion claiming universality for the worship of Jehovah in all lands and by all peoples—exclusive only in denying the existence and destroying the worship of other gods. This idea was the basis of the Apostolic teaching.—God the God of all nations, but the only God, all others being excluded.

This beautiful idea was gradually abused till it culminated in the absurd exclusiveness, formality, letter-worship and arrogant spiritual pretensions of the Pharisees of our Lord's time.

We may here discuss the three great religious decisions of Ezra and Nehemiah.

1. The exclusion of the priests who could not establish their lineage from Aaron.

At the time only a temporary exclusion was extended. Zerubbabel and the Jewish leaders evidently contemplated an early restoration of the power of inquiry of God by means of the Urim and Thummim.

Their decision was both wise and just.

Wise. The false forms of worship of Israel and the kings of Judah had taught the lesson, that purity of worship could be obtained only by a rigid determination to admit nothing doubtful.

Just, because admission was only postponed, waiting the divine decision. Such decision could not be obtained, owing to the loss of the Urim and Thummim, and so the exclusion of these priests became permanent.

2. The refusal to allow the Samaritans to share in the rebuilding of the Temple.

The return of the Jews was a religious, not a political restoration. The returned exiles were charged with the duty of restoring the worship of Jehovah.

The Samaritans made this request, "*Let us build with you : for we seek your God, as ye do ; and we do sacrifice unto him, since the days of Esarhaddon*" (Ezra iv. 2). But their worship of Jehovah was little more than nominal for "*these nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children and their children's children*" (2 Kings xvii. 41).

Thus the Samaritans were not only of a mixed race, but their religion was impure.

The whole design of the Great Restoration would therefore have been defeated, had the Jews granted the request of the Samaritans.

The bitter experience of the past had taught the Jews the danger of any compromise in religion with neighbouring nations.

In addition, religious union with the Samaritans would have destroyed the political independence of the scanty Jewish community.

The reply of Zerubbabel is twofold.

- (1) He denies the validity of their claim. "*Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God*" (iv. 3).
- (2) He pleads the decree of Cyrus, which granted the privilege of rebuilding the Temple to the Babylonian Jews only. To admit the Samaritans to a share in the work would be to violate the terms of the decree, and might lead to a revocation of the privilege. The exact and absolute character of Persian decrees is well known. "*The law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not*" (Dan. vi. 12). Even King Darius was unable to save Daniel from the den of lions (Dan. vi. 14-16).

3. The Marriage Reform.

- (a) Seven nations, viz. the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites were proscribed by Moses (Deut. vii. 1), and the children of Israel were forbidden to intermarry with any of them. "*Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son*" (Deut. vii. 3). Five of these are mentioned in Ezra, and the Ammonites, Moabites and Egyptians are added (ix. 1). The Ammonites and Moabites were expressly excluded. "*An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord*" (Deut. xxiii. 3).

- (b) We find the following breaches of this law in the history of the Israelites:—

- (1) The sons of Naomi married Orpah and Ruth, Moabitish women (Ruth i. 4).
- (2) Ruth married Boaz, and was the ancestress of David (Ruth iv. 13-22).
- (3) David married Maachah, the daughter of Talmi, king of Geshur (2 Sam. iii. 3).
- (4) Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt (1 Kings iii. 1).
- (5) The mother of Rehoboam was Naamah, an Ammonitess (1 Kings xiv. 21). (See also 1 Chron. ii. 17 and 34.)

We find that Ezra excluded women of all foreign nations, thus exceeding the Mosaic Law in the severity of his reform.

He was justified in his action for—

- (1) The Mosaic enactments had reference particularly to the occupation of the land of Canaan by the Israelites. Moses warned them of the consequences that would ensue from mixed marriages, "*They will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods*" (Deut. vii. 4).

- (2) These marriages in olden times had resulted in idolatry.
- (3) The Babylonish captivity was a punishment inflicted upon the nation for this idolatry.
- (4) The experience of the past, therefore, taught Ezra that nothing save rigid adherence to the law would avail to prevent a repetition of idolatry and disaster.
- (5) The religious separation of the Jews was the only means of preserving Judaism.

Had Ezra acted otherwise in the critical condition of the Jewish community, the object of the return in restoring the worship of Jehovah would have been frustrated.

Nehemiah added to the work of Ezra.

- (1) The fortifying of Jerusalem aroused the national spirit, and established the political unity and independence of the Jews.
- (2) The public reading of the Law made the Law of Moses the regulator of both civil and religious life. The strict reforms, particularly regarding foreign marriages and Sabbatical observances, erected a barrier between Jew and Gentile. Politically, the Jew might be the vassal of Greek or Roman, but hedged in by the provisions of the Law, religiously observed, he looked upon his nation as God's peculiar people. Hence, gradually arose that extreme abhorrence with which the Jew regarded the Gentile, so clearly exhibited in the Gospel narrative.

THE JEWISH FEASTS.

When the altar was set up and the Feast of Tabernacles, kept it is recorded that the Jews "*offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts, of the Lord that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the Lord*" (iii. 5); that is, that they resumed the usual burnt offerings.

- (1) Daily—morning and evening.
- (2) At the new moon.
- (3) On all "set feasts."
- (4) On the occasion of freewill offerings.

1. **A Burnt Offering** was an offering which was wholly consumed by fire on the altar, and the whole of which except the refuse ashes "ascended" in the smoke to God. The burnt offering was always accompanied by a "meat (*meal*) offering" of flour and oil and a drink offering of wine.

2. **The Daily Burnt Offering.** There was offered morning and evening—

- (1) A lamb of the first year for a burnt offering.
- (2) A tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil for a "meat (*meal*) offering."
- (3) A fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering.

11. The New Moons. The first day of the lunar month was observed as a holy day.

The special offerings were—

- (1) Two young bullocks and seven lambs of the first year as a burnt offering.
- (2) A kid for a sin offering.

All secular pursuits were suspended as on the Sabbath. The trumpets were blown over the burnt offerings (Numb. 10).

III. The Set Feasts. These were (Lev. xxiii. 2-37).

- (1) The Sabbath.
- (2) The Passover.
- (3) The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost.
- (4) The Feast of Trumpets.
- (5) The Day of Atonement.
- (6) The Feast of Tabernacles.

2. The Passover or Feast of Unleavened Bread was instituted to remind the Israelites of their deliverance from Egypt. The Passover was observed very strictly. The original mode of celebrating the feast is given in the twelfth chapter of Exodus. It was kept on the 14th day of the 1st month (Nisan).

The only recorded occasions of keeping the Passover besides the institution of the Feast (Ex. vii.) are:—

- (a) By Moses, at Sinai, in the second year after the Exodus (Numb. ix. 1-5).
- (b) By Joshua at Gilgal, on the entrance into Canaan after the people had undergone the rite of circumcision (Josh. v. 10).
- (c) By Hezekiah after the purification of the Temple (2 Chron. xxx. 1-2).
- (d) By Josiah after the religious reformation (2 Kings xxiii. 21).
- (e) By Zerubbabel and Joshua after the dedication of the Temple.

All the above are occasions marking the renewal of the covenant relation with God.

The Israelites always associated the Passover with the deliverance from Egypt. After the solemn keeping of the Feast under Zerubbabel, they would also be reminded of their return from the Babylonish captivity.

3. The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, so-called because it was celebrated on the fiftieth day (seven weeks) after the first day of the Passover. On this day were presented the first-fruits of the wheat harvest, and the giving of the law from Mount Sinai was commemorated.

4. The Feast of Trumpets fell on the 1st day of the 7th month (Tisri), and was one of the seven days of holy convocation, and was distinguished by being "*a day of blowing trumpets*" (Lev. xxiii. 24), not merely blowing trumpets of the temple at the time of the offering of the sacrifices.

5. The Day of Atonement, kept on the 10th day of the 7th month (Tisri); was the great day of national humiliation. On this day only did the high-priest enter the Holy of Holies, and sprinkle the Mercy Seat with the blood. On this day the Scapegoat, over which the priest had confessed the sins of the people, was driven into the wilderness.

6. The Feast of Tabernacles was the third of the great annual festivals. It lasted for seven days, from the 15th till the 22nd Tisri. During the feast the people dwelt in tents or bowers made of the branches of trees, and often placed upon the flat roofs of their houses. It was held in commemoration of the wanderings of the Jews in the wilderness, and was also the Jewish harvest thanksgiving. The Feast of Tabernacles followed.

(1) The dedication of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings viii. 65).

(2) The erection of the altar by Zerubbabel (Ezra iii. 4).

(As the Feast commemorated originally the wanderings in the wilderness, it would henceforth commemorate the return from Babylon.)

(3) The Reading of the Law by Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh. viii. 14-16.)

7. Feast of the Wood-Offering. Josephus mentions the Festival of Wood-Offering on the 14th day of the fifth month. At this Festival every Jew brought an offering of wood for the altar of burnt offering.

There is no mention of any such offerings or feast in the Pentateuch. The priests were enjoined "*to burn wood*" on the altar of burnt-offering, "*every morning*," and the fire was not to be allowed to "*go out*" (Lev. vi. 12-13). Nor do we find any regulations made by David or Solomon for the supply of wood for this sacred fire.

After the return from the captivity it may have been that the wood was scarce, and that the task of supply became expensive. So Nehemiah originated a system by which the duty of supplying the wood should devolve upon the great families or clans in turn, and lots were cast to decide the order in which the several families should perform the duty.

Out of this system grew the Festival of the Wood-offering mentioned by Josephus and alluded to above.

CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS.

Malachi, the last of the prophets.

(1) He prophesied after the times of Haggai and Zechariah, for

(a) The restoration of the Temple is not alluded to in his prophecies, and the existence of the Temple service is taken for granted (Mal. i. 10; iii. 1-10).

(b) The captivity is not referred to, and so must have been an event of the distant past.

(c) Ezra makes no allusion to Malachi.

(2) Malachi refers to a "*governor*" (Mal. i. 8) using the same word "*pekhah*" as applied to Nehemiah (Neh. xii. 26).

- (3) Hence it has been conjectured that Malachi delivered his prophecies after the return of Nehemiah from Persia (Neh. xiii. 6), that is about the 32nd year of King Artaxerxes Longimanus, B.C. 420. This view is borne out by the striking parallelism between the state of things existing in Jerusalem after the return of Nehemiah, and that indicated by the prophecies of Malachi. Compare Mal. ii. 8 with Neh. xiii. 15; Mal. ii. 10-16 with Neh. xiii. 23, &c.; and Mal. iii. 7-12 with Neh. xiii. 10, &c.

Conclusion. It is very probable that Nehemiah was encouraged in his work by the preaching of Malachi, as Hezekiah had been by Isaiah; Isaiah by Jeremiah; and Zerubbabel by Haggai and Zechariah.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

N.B.—The important names are printed in bolder type than the rest.

Adullam, a town in the low country of Judah.

The King of Adullam was defeated and slain by Joshua (Josh. xii. 15).

Adullam was fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chron. xi. 7).

Near Adullam are limestone cliffs, one of the excavations in these was probably the "cave of Adullam," the place of refuge occupied by David (1 Sam. xxii. 1).

Notice in Nehemiah: Adullam was one of the places reinhabited by the Jews after their return from the captivity (xi. 30).

Ai, a town east of Bethel, famous as being the second city captured by Joshua after the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan. The first defeat of the Israelites, the sin of Achan, and the subsequent capture and destruction of the city are fully described in Josh. vii., viii.

Notice in Nehemiah: 123 men of Bethel and Ai returned from captivity (vii. 32).

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 (Judges 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. (See Tobiah.)
- (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," and the two reasons for their exclusion are given:
 - (a) "Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and water" when they came out of Egypt, *i.e.* gave them no hospitality on their journey.
 - (b) Because they "hired Balaam against them that he should curse them."

Anathoth, a priestly city in the tribe of Benjamin, about four miles north-east of Jerusalem. It is famous as being the native city of Jeremiah (Jer. i. 1) and of Abiathar (1 Kings xi. 26). When Solomon deprived Abiathar of the priesthood he banished him to Anathoth "*to his own friends*" (1 Kings ii. 26).

Notice in Nehemiah: 128 men of Anathoth returned from captivity (vii. 27).

Arabians. Known in early times as Ishmaelites, the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar. They seem to have occupied the northern part of the peninsula of Arabia. We find them mentioned several times.

- (1) In the reign of Jehoshaphat when they paid a tribute of 7,700 rams and 7,700 he goats (2 Chron. xvii. 11).

- (2) In the reign of Jehoram, the son and successor of Jehoshaphat, the Arabians revolted, ravaged Judah, sacked the royal palace, carried off the King's wives, and slew all his sons save the youngest, Jehoahaz or Ahaziah (2 Chron. xxi. 16-17, xxi.).
- (3) In the reign of Uzziah "*the Arabians that dwelt in Gur-baal*" were again subdued (2 Chron. xxvi. 7).

In the time of Nehemiah.

The Arabians were prominent in hindering the rebuilding of the wall. Their leader was Geshem or Gashem. (See p. xl.)

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 (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).

Notices in Nehemiah : (1) The Ashdodites, along with the Arabians and Ammonites, joined Sanballat and Tobiah to go up against Jerusalem to hinder the building of the wall (iv. 7).

(2) Certain Jews had married wives of Ashdod, and their children were unable to speak the Jews language, but used a mixed dialect, half Philistine, half Hebrew (xiii. 23-24).

Azekah, a strongly fortified town in the lowland country of Judah. The position has not been identified, but it must have been near Shochoh.

(1) After the battle of Bethhoron Joshua pursued the five Kings as far as Azekah (Josh. x. 11).

(2) When Goliath defied Israel, the Philistines were encamped between Azekah and Shochoh (1 Sam. xvii. 1).

(3) It was fortified and garrisoned by Rehoboam after the revolt of the Ten Tribes (1 Chron. xi. 9).

(4) It was one of the last cities to be reduced by the Babylonians (Jer. xxxiv. 7).

Notice in Nehemiah. Azekah was one of the towns re-occupied by the Jews on the return from the captivity (xi. 30).

Azmaveth or Beth-Azmaveth, a place in Benjamin near Anathoth.

Notice in Nehemiah : 42 men of Beth-Azmaveth returned from captivity (vii. 29).

Bashan, a district on the west of the Jordan, conquered by Moses, and assigned to the half tribe of Manasseh. It lay between Gilcad on the south, and Mount Hermon on the north.

Beeroth (*wells*), one of the four cities of the Gibeonites, about ten miles north of Jerusalem, in the tribe of Benjamin. Baanah and Rechab, who assassinated Ish-bosheth, were natives of Beeroth (2 Sam. iv. 2).

Notice in Nehemiah : 743 men of Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah and Beeroth returned from captivity (vii. 29).

Beersheba, the southern limit of the country occupied by the Israelites. From Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, became the usual expression for the whole of the promised land, equivalent to our "From Land's End to John o' Groat's house" as descriptive of the full extent of the island of Great Britain.

Abraham dug a well here and made a treaty with Abimelech, King of the Philistines (Gen. xxi. 31).

Isaac had somewhat similar dealings with Abimelech, King of the Philistines, and Phichol, his chief captain (Gen. xxvi. 23-33).

Beersheba is mentioned in Nehemiah as one of the places occupied by the Jews who returned from the captivity (Neh. xi. 27).

Bethel (*house of God*), a town on the borders of Ephraim and Benjamin twelve miles from Jerusalem on the road to Sichem.

The original name was Luz.

Chief notices in the Old Testament are :—

- (1) Abram built an altar there (Gen. xii. 8).
- (2) It is the scene of Jacob's dream on his way to Padan-aram (Gen. xxviii. 19).
- (3) The ark was at Bethel in the days of the Judges (Judges xx. 18-26-27).
- (4) It was one of the cities included in Samuel's circuit (1 Sam. vii. 16).
- (5) Here Jeroboam erected one of the golden calves (1 Kings xii. 20).
- (6) Elijah visited Bethel where there was a school of the prophets (2 Kings ii. 3).
- (7) The priests sent by the king of Samaria to teach the colonists "*how they should fear the Lord*" dwelt at Bethel (2 Kings xvii. 28).

Notice in Nehemiah : 123 men of Bethel and Ai returned from captivity (vii. 32).

Bethlehem (*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 (Judges xvii. 7).
- (2) Ibzan, the judge, was a native of Bethlehem (Judges xii. 8).
- (3) It is the scene of the history of Ruth (Ruth i. 1).
- (4) The birthplace of David (1 Sam. xvii. 12).
- (5) Samuel anointed David at Bethlehem (1 Sam. xvi. 13).
- (6) The birthplace of Joab, Abishai and Asahel (2 Sam. ii. 32).

Notice in Nehemiah : 188 of the children of Bethlehem and Netophah returned from captivity (vii. 26).

Chephirah (*the hamlet*). One of the four cities of the Gibeonites (Josh. ix. 17).

Notice in Nehemiah : 743 men of Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah and Beeroth returned from captivity (vii. 29).

Gaba or Geba, a priestly town in Benjamin, about eight miles north of Jerusalem, on the borders of Judah and Israel. It was fortified by Asa out of the materials left by Baasha at Ramah. (See Ramah.)

Notice in Nehemiah : 621 men of Ramah and Geba returned from captivity (vii. 30).

Gibbar or Gibeon, a town in the tribe of Benjamin, about five miles to the north-west of Jerusalem.

Famous in the Old Testament History as—

- (1) The city of the Gibeonites, who by stratagem induced Joshua and the Israelites to make a league with them (Josh. ix.).
- (2) The scene of Joshua's victory over the five kings of the south (Josh. x.).
- (3) The battle between Joab's men and Abner's men (2 Sam. ii.).
- (4) The murder of Amasa by Joab (2 Sam. xx. 8).
- (5) The abode of the Tabernacle in the reigns of David and Solomon (1 Kings iii. 4).
- (6) The scene of Solomon's dream and his choice of wisdom (1 Kings iii. 5).

Notice in Nehemiah : (1) The men of Gibeon took part in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem (iii. 7).

(2) 95 of the children of Gibeon returned from captivity (vii. 25).

Hadid, probably the same as Adida, a town to the east of Lod or Lydda.

Notice in Nehemiah : 721 of the children of Lod, Hadid and Ono returned from captivity (vii. 37).

Harim.

Notice in Nehemiah : 320 of the men of Harim returned from captivity (vii. 35).

Hazor, not the Hazor in the north of Canaan, but a town of the Benjamites, re-occupied by them after the return from the captivity (xi. 33).

Heshbon, the capital of Sihon, King of the Amorites (Numb. xxi. 26). It was situated on the western side of the Jordan, and on the boundary-line between the tribes of Reuben and Gad.

Jarmuth, a town in the low country of Judah. Piram, King of Jarmuth, was one of the confederacy of the five kings who went against Gibeon for having made alliance with Israel. The five kings were routed at Bethhoron, and put to death by Joshua at Makkedah (Josh. x. 3-23).

Notice in Nehemiah. It was reinhabited by the people of Judah after their return from the captivity (xi. 30).

Jericho (city of palms), situated in the plain of the Jordan, exactly over against where the Israelites, under Joshua, crossed that river.

It was captured and destroyed by Joshua (Josh. vi.), who placed the rebuilding of the city under a curse.

In the days of Ahab it was rebuilt by Hiel the Bethelite (1 Kings xvi. 34).

Zedekiah was overtaken and captured at Jericho when he had escaped out of Jerusalem when that city was stormed by the Chaldeans (2 Kings xxv. 5).

It would appear to have belonged to the kingdom of Israel, and to have been selected for the establishment of a school of the prophets (2 Kings ii. 5).

At Jericho Elisha healed the spring of waters (2 Kings ii. 19-22).

Notices in Nehemiah : 345 of the children of Jericho returned from captivity (vii. 36).

Kirjath-arba, or **Hebron**, a city of Judah, 29 miles south of Jerusalem, and 20 miles north of Beersheba. The ancient name was Kirjath-arba, the city of Arba—so called from Arba, the father of Anak.

It is famous for the following events :—

- (1) Abraham pitched his tent "*in the plain of Mamre, which is Hebron*" (Gen. xiii. 18).
- (2) Sarah died at Hebron, and was buried there in cave of Macpelah, 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).
- (4) It was the capital of David on the death of Saul. He reigned there seven years and six months, till he transferred his residence to Jerusalem (2 Sam. v. 7).
- (5) It was the scene of the murder of Abner by Joab (2 Sam. iii. 27).
- (6) Absalom commenced his rebellion against his father David at Hebron, going to that city under pretence of fulfilling a vow which he had made whilst dwelling at Geshur (2 Sam. xv. 7-12).
- (7) It was a priestly city, and a **City of Refuge**.

Notice in Nehemiah : In the list of the places occupied by those who returned from captivity it is recorded that "*some of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjath-arba and in the villages thereof*" (Neh. xi. 25).

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 Bethshemesh. The men of Bethshemesh 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 Nehemiah : 743 of the men of Kirjath-jearim, Chephaniah, and Beeroth returned from captivity (vii. 29).

Lachish, a city in the lowland district of Judah, formerly occupied by the Amorites. It occupied a strong position and commanded the route to Egypt. Thus it is often mentioned in the history of the struggle between Egypt and the empires of Assyria and Babylon for the mastery of the East.

The history of the city testifies to the strength of its position.

- (1) After Joshua had routed the five kings at Bethhoron, it is recorded that he took Lachish "*on the second day*" (Josh. x. 32). All the other cities fell at once.
- (2) It was fortified and garrisoned by Rehoboam after the revolt of the Ten Tribes (2 Chron. xi. 9).
- (3) Amaziah sought refuge in Lachish from the conspirators of Jerusalem and perished there (2 Kings xiv. 18).
- (4) When Sennacherib invaded Judah he took all the fenced cities but Lachish, which seems to have successfully resisted his attack, for Tartan, Rabsharis and Rabshakeh, on their return from their mission to Jerusalem "*found the King of Assyria warring against Libnah, for they heard that he had departed from Lachish*" (i.e. he had raised the siege) (2 Kings xix. 8).
- (5) In Jeremiah we find that Lachish and Azekah, along with Jerusalem were the last of the fenced cities to resist the army of Babylon (Jer. xxxiv. 7; xi. 30).

Notice in Nehemiah: Lachish was re-occupied by the Jews on their return from captivity.

Lod, a town of Benjamin founded by Shemia or Shemer (1 Chron. viii. 12). It is the Lydda of the Acts of the Apostles. It is situated on the road from Jerusalem to Joppa, being distant about seven miles from the latter city.

Notice in Nehemiah: 721 of the children of Lod, Hadid and Ono returned from captivity (vii. 37).

Michmas or **Michmash**, a town in Benjamin on the frontier of Israel, occupying a strong position on the north side of a ravine which separates it from Geba. (See Ramah.)

Here Jonathan gained a notable victory over the Philistines (1 Sam. xiii. 23, xiv.).

Notice in Nehemiah: 122 men of Michmas returned from captivity (vii. 31).

Mizpah or **Mizpeh**, a town of Benjamin, about three and a half miles north of Jerusalem. It was a place of particular sanctity in the times of the Judges.

- (1) The children of Israel gathered together against Benjamin at Mizpah (Judges xx. 1), and here they consulted the Lord (Judges xx. 18). At Mizpah they took an oath against Benjamin (Judges xxi. 1).
- (2) Samuel judged Israel at Mizpah (1 Sam. vii. 6), where he gathered the people of Israel together. At this assembly he inflicted a severe defeat upon the Philistines, who had come up against Israel (1 Sam. vii. 7-12).

- (3) It was one of the three holy cities (Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah), which Samuel visited in turn as judge of the people (1 Sam. vii. 16).
- (4) Asa, King of Judah, fortified Mizpah out of the materials left by Baasha at Ramah (see Ramah).
- (5) It was the residence of Gedaliah, who was appointed Governor of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar after the capture of Jerusalem. There he was assassinated by Ishmael (Jer. xl. xli.).

Notices in Nehemiah: (1) The men of Mizpah joined with the men of Gibeon in repairing the wall of Jerusalem (iii. 7).

(2) Ezer, son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, repaired a portion of the wall "*over against the going up to the armoury at the turning of the wall*" (iii. 19).

Moabites, the descendants of Moab, the eldest daughter of Lot (Gen. xix. 37). They would appear to have inhabited the highland country to the east of the Dead Sea.

In their journey from the wilderness to take possession of the land of Canaan the Israelites did not pass through Moab, but turned to the country north of the Arnon, then occupied by Sihon, King of the Amorites, and Og, the King of Bashan (Deut. ii. 8). Consideration was paid to Moab as being descended from Lot.

Balak, King of Moab, hired Balaam to curse Israel (see Balaam, p. xxix.).

Under Eglon, King of Moab, the Moabites oppressed the southern part of Canaan, particularly the tribe of Benjamin, until Eglon was slain by Ehud (Judges iii. 12-30).

Later there appears to have been friendly relationship between the Moabites and Bethlehem. Ruth, the ancestress of David, was a Moabitess (Ruth i.-iv.).

When David fled from Saul he committed his parents to the protection of the King of Moab (1 Sam. xxii. 3-4).

Twenty years after David defeated the Moabites, and inflicted signal vengeance upon them (2 Sam. viii. 2). Such vengeance must have been called forth by some notorious act of treachery or insult.

It has been conjectured that the King of Moab betrayed the trust which David reposed in him, and either himself killed David's parents or surrendered them to Saul.

At the division of the kingdom Moab fell under the jurisdiction of Israel, and paid an annual tribute (2 Kings iii. 4).

On the death of Ahab the Moabites threw off the rule of Ahaziah (2 Kings i. 1).

Having gained their independence they attacked Judah, but were defeated by Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx.).

Israel, Judah and Edom now entered into an alliance against the Moabites, and inflicted a crushing defeat upon them (2 Kings iii. 6-27).

In the later days of the monarchy the Moabites assisted the Chaldeans in harassing and plundering Judah (2 Kings xxiv. 2), but later in the reign of Jehoiakim general dread of Babylon caused the nations of Palestine to unite against the common enemy (Jer. xxvii. 1).

Chemosh was the chief idol of Moab.

After the return from the captivity, Sanballat (who may have been a Moabite, see p. xliii.) was the leader of the opposition to Nehemiah in his work of refortifying Jerusalem.

As a proof of inter-marriages with Moabites, we find one of the families of Israel who returned from the captivity bearing the name of *Pahath-Moab* (Neh. iii. 11).

Notices in Nehemiah (see Ammonites, p. xxvii.).

Nebo, called in Nehemiah "*the other Nebo*" (Neh. vii. 33), to distinguish it from Nebo on the east of Jordan. As the name occurs in connection with Bethel and Ai, it must have been situated to the north of Jerusalem, within the territory of Benjamin.

Notice in Nehemiah : 52 men of the other Nebo returned from captivity (vii. 33).

Nob. A priestly city of Benjamin, near Jerusalem. Its situation, as being within sight of Jerusalem, is indicated from the passage in Isaiah describing the approach of the Assyrian army, "*Yet shall he remain at Nob that day : he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem*" (Isaiah x. 32).

The tabernacle appears to have been at Nob during some period of the reign of Saul (St. Mark ii. 26).

David, when escaping from Saul, went to Nob to Abimelech the priest, who gave him and his men of the shew-bread, and handed the sword of Goliath over to David (2 Sam. xxi. 1-10).

This transaction was betrayed to Saul by Doeg, an Edomite, whereupon Saul caused all the priests at Nob to be put to death and the city of Nob to be destroyed (2 Sam. xxii. 9-19). Abiathar, the son of Abimelech, escaped and joined David (2 Sam. xxii. 20-23).

Notice in Nehemiah : The Benjamites reoccupied Nob after the return from the captivity (xi. 32).

Netophah, the birthplace of two of David's heroes, Mahari and Haled (1 Chron. xxvii. 13-15). Seraiah, a supporter of Gedaliah, was a native of Netophah (2 Kings xxv. 23). It was a priestly city (1 Chron. ix. 16), the particular Levites who inhabited it being singers (Neh. xii. 28). In Nehemiah it is closely connected with Bethlehem (Neh. vii. 26). Hence it must have been some village in the immediate neighbourhood of that place.

Notices in Nehemiah.

(1) 188 of the children of Bethlehem and Netophah returned from captivity (vii. 26).

(2) The sons of the singers came from "*both out of the plain country round Jerusalem and from the villages of the Netophathi*" (xii. 28).

Ono, a town of Benjamin founded by Shemea or Shemer (1 Chron. viii. 27). It is situated about six miles north of Lod or Lydda, and distant 25 or 30 miles from Jerusalem. It would appear to have been situated in a plain, "*the plain of Ono*" (vi. 2).

Notices in Nehemiah.

- (1) 721 of the children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono returned from captivity (vii. 37).
- (2) Sanballat endeavoured to entice Nehemiah to a conference in one of the villages in the plain of Ono (vi. 2).

The choice of a spot 25 or 30 miles from Jerusalem was made evidently with the idea of drawing Nehemiah to a distance from his supporters. It would have been comparatively easy to assassinate him or to seize his person at such a distance from Jerusalem.

Ramah, one of the frontier fortresses of Benjamin, situated about 5 or 6 miles north of 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.

Notice in Nehemiah: 621 men of Ramah and Geba returned from captivity (vii. 30).

Samaria, the capital of the Kingdom of Israel, built by Omri. In the time of Ezra and Nehemiah it would appear to have been the seat of the Persian government of Palestine, the official at Samaria being under the governor or Satrap of Syria, who had his head-quarters at Damascus.

Senaah, identified with Magdal-Senna or the great Senna, about five miles north of Jericho.

Notice in Nehemiah: 3,930 of the children of Senaah returned from captivity (vii. 38).

Shushan or **Susa**, the capital of Elam, situated on the river Choaspes, which divided the city into two distinct quarters. After its capture by Cyrus it became the principal capital of the Persian Empire, and gave the name of Susiana to the surrounding district.

Shushan was the winter residence of the Persian kings, Ecbatana being the summer residence.

The palace was on the left bank of the Choaspes, and was originally erected by Darius Hystaspis. This palace was destroyed by fire, and was rebuilt with greater magnificence by Artaxerxes Longimanus.

Shushan retained its pre-eminence till the Macedonian conquest, but the preference of Alexander the Great and his successors for Babylon caused it to decline. The palace was not merely a royal residence, but a strongly fortified citadel (see p. 54).

Notice in Nehemiah: Nehemiah was at Shushan performing his office as cup-bearer to Artaxerxes, when he heard from his brother Hanani and certain men from Judah of the deplorable state of Jerusalem and the Jews of the province of Judæa (i. 2).

Tekoa or Tekoah, a town of Judah, about ten miles south of Jerusalem.

It was the home of the wise woman whom Joab employed to effect a reconciliation between David and Absalom (2 Sam. xiv. 2).

Ira, one of David's mighty men, was born there (2 Sam. xxiii. 26).

It was fortified by Rehoboam, as a defence against invasion from the south (2 Chron. xi. 6).

It is famous as the birth-place of the prophet Amos (Amos. vii. 14).

Notices in Nehemiah: The Tekoites were forward in the work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, restoring two portions thereof (iii. 5, iii. 27).

Tyre, the great maritime city of Phœnicia. The Tyrians rendered the Jews great service in the rebuilding of the Temple. They cut down cedars in Lebanon, conveyed them to the sea coast, and then transported them by rafts to Joppa, the port of Jerusalem. They were paid in kind by contributions of wheat, wine and oil. Hiram, King of Tyre, performed a similar service for King Solomon and was paid in a similar manner.

Notice in Nehemiah. Merchants from Tyre brought fish and other goods and sold them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath (for particulars, see note p. 50).

Ur. We may assign Ur either to Chaldæa or Mesopotamia.

- (1) By Chaldæa the Jews always meant the southern part of Babylonia bordering on the Persian gulf. If Ur, therefore, be in Chaldæa proper, we must look for some site in the low country near the Persian gulf.

Tradition points to two sites.

- (a) The modern *Mugheir* (in ruins), which appears by its bricks to have been called by the natives *Hur*; one of the oldest Babylonian cities. It is situated on the right bank of the Euphrates, six miles from the sea course of the river, and 125 miles from the sea, though anciently it may have been a maritime town.

- (b) *Warka*. But it is almost certain that this place is the same as *Erech* (Gen. x. 10).

- (2) In Mesopotamia. Stephen, by implication, places Ur in Mesopotamia, when he says that God appeared to Abraham "when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran (or Haran)" (Acts vii. 2).

The Jews gave the name of Mesopotamia, or Padan-Aram, to the north-western part of the district between the Tigris and Euphrates, as distinct from Chaldæa the lower part of the valley. Padan-Aram was the home of Abraham's kinsfolk (Gen. xlv. 20).

The weight of evidence is in favour of *Mugheir* or *Hur*.

From Genesis xi. 28 we gather that Ur was the native place of Terah, the father of Abraham. Thence Terah, with Abraham, Lot, and Sarah started "*to go into the land of Canaan*" (Gen. xi. 31). Terah journeyed no further than Haran, where he settled and where he died (Gen. xi. 32). Abraham had a subsequent call to leave Haran (Gen. xii. 1-5).

Though it was Terah who removed from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran, the Jews always regarded the migration as the result of a Divine call to Abraham.

Zanoah, a town in the low country of Judah, near Jarmuth.

Notice in Nehemiah : (1) The inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the valley gate (iii. 13). (2) Zanoah was reinhabited by the people of Judah after their return from the captivity (xi. 30).

Ziklag, a town in the south of Judah, which in the reign of Saul seems to have been occupied by the Philistines, for it was given to David, at his request, by Achish, King of Gath. It is memorable as having been sacked by the Amalekites during David's absence. David and his men pursued, overtook, and slaughtered the Amalekites, and recovered the spoil (1 Sam. xxx. 1-25).

David was at Ziklag when he heard of the death of Saul (2 Sam. i. 16).

Notice in Nehemiah : It was reinhabited by the people of Judah after their return from the captivity (xi. 28).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

N.B.—The important names are printed in bolder type than the rest.

Asaph (I.), the keeper of the King's forest, or park, who was ordered to supply Nehemiah with timber for (a) beams for the gate of the palace, (b) the wall of the city, (c) the residence of Nehemiah (ii. 8).

The name would seem to indicate that he was a Jew, and thus favours the theory that the forest was near Jerusalem.

His post as "*keeper of the King's forest*" denotes that he was in favour at the court of Artaxerxes.

(On "forest," see p. 63.) (On "palace," see p. 54.)

Asaph (II.), a Levite, one of David's chief musicians, celebrated as a composer. Psalms l., lxxiii., and lxxxiii. are attributed to him.

Either his descendants, "*sons of Asaph*," held the post of chief musicians in the Temple worship as an hereditary office, or else he founded a school of musicians, who were called after him, "*sons of Asaph*" (compare "*sons of the prophets*").

Notices in Nehemiah.

(1) "*The singers, the children of Asaph an hundred forty and eight*" (vii. 44).

(2) "*For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers*" (xii. 46).

Balaam, the son of Beor, who lived at Pethor. He was of the Midianites and appears to have been a prophet among his people. When the Israelites approached the land of Moab on their way to Palestine, Balaam was hired by Balak, King of Moab, to curse the chosen people. Balaam was allowed by God to accompany the messengers of the King of Moab, but was compelled to bless Israel and not to curse them, and thus incurred the anger of Balak.

Foiled in the purpose of cursing the Israelites Balak suggested to the Moabites the expedient of seducing them to sin. The lure was successful, till Phinehas avenged the honour of Jehovah (Numb. xxv).

Subsequently the Israelites were commanded to attack the Midianites as a punishment for their offence in enticing Israel to sin (Numb. xxx. 1-7).

Balaam appears to have sided with the Midianites, and to have been slain in the battle (Numb. xxxi. 8).

Notice in Nehemiah : But "*hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them ; howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing*" (xiii. 2).

Bakbukiah, a Levite, second to Mattaniah in the Temple (xi. 17). He took part in the musical service at the dedication of the walls (xii. 25).

Barzillai the Gileadite. Famous in old Testament history as having offered hospitality to David at Mahanaim, when the king had fled from Jerusalem in the revolt of Absalom.

On David's return to Jerusalem after the defeat and death of Absalom he pressed Barzillai to accompany him to the city, but Barzillai declined on the ground of age. He however sent his son Chimham with David. Thus the descendants of Barzillai settled in Judah. David commended them to the care of his successor, Solomon: "*Shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table ; for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother*" (1 Kings ii. 7).

The injunction was carried out, and in the last days of the Jewish monarchy we find the name of Chimham in connection with Bethlehem, "*the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem*" (Jer. xli. 17). Possibly David or Solomon had assigned to Chimham land in the neighbourhood of David's birthplace.

The descendants of Barzillai are mentioned in the list of those who returned from captivity (Nehemiah vii. 63, see note on this passage).

Eliashib, High-priest at Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah.

Notices in Nehemiah.

- (1) Eliashib and the priests restored the sheep-gate and built the wall from the tower of Meah as far as the tower of Hananeel.
- (2) He was the grandson of Jeshua or Joshua, the high-priest in the time of Zerubbabel. "*Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim begat Eliashib*" (xii. 10).
- (3) He polluted the Temple by assigning a chamber to Tobiah to whom he was allied by marriage (xiii. 4).

- (4) One of his grandsons had married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite. "*And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of E'iasih the high-priest, was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite*" (xiii. 28). This person is generally considered to be Manasseh, the founder of the Samaritan worship on Mount Gerizim (p. xlix.).

Ezra (see p. xvii.).

Geshem, or **Gashmu**, the Arabian, the third great adversary of Nehemiah (see Sanballat, p. xlii.). He may have been

- (1) A sheik of an Arab tribe in the south of Judæa, or
- (2) The leader of a band of Arabs in the service of Sanballat

[According to recent discovery Sargon, King of Assyria, had peopled Samaria in part with Arabians, hence Geshem sided with the Samaritan party.]

He is mentioned thrice.

- (1) As joining Sanballat and Tobiah in ridiculing the efforts of the Jews to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (ii. 19).
- (2) As intriguing with Sanballat to entice Nehemiah to a conference in the plain of Ono (vi. 1-2).
- (3) As being Sanballat's authority for the report that Nehemiah intended to rebel and proclaim himself king (vi. 6).

His people are mentioned as joining with Sanballat, Tobiah, the Ammonites and the Ashdodites to go up and fight against Jerusalem. The Arabs under Geshem would be useful in such an attack. If the attack had been successful, Sanballat could have excused the breach of the Persian king's commands by representing the assault as one of the plundering expeditions of the Bedouin Arabs.

Hachaliah or **Hacaliah** (R.V.), the father of Nehemiah (i. 1.; x. 1). The mention of the father's name marks Nehemiah as distinct from the Nehemiah of Ezra ii. 2 and Neh. iii. 16.

Hanan, son of Zaccur, a Levite, one of the treasurers over the store-houses of the Temple (xiii. 13). It would appear that he represented the singers and porters (see note, p. 49).

Hanani (I.), brother of Nehemiah. He is mentioned twice.

- (1) In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes he journeyed with certain men from Judah, from the province of Judah to Sushan, and informed Nehemiah of the miserable state of the province and Jerusalem (ii. 1-3).
- (2) On the completion of the walls of the city Nehemiah appointed Hanani governor of Jerusalem, and entrusted to him and Hananiah the charge of the arrangements for guarding the gates of the city (vii. 2-3).

Hanani (II.), one of the priests forming the special band of musicians that brought up the rear of the first company in the dedication of the walls (xii. 36).

Hananiah, ruler of the palace or castle at Jerusalem. Nehemiah entrusted the arrangements for guarding the gates of Jerusalem to Hananiah, and his own brother, Hanani (vii. 2).

Hananiah is described as "*a faithful man, and feared God above many*" (vii. 2).

Jeshua or Joshua. I. Son of Jehozadak, was the first high priest after the Babylonish captivity. He was probably born in Babylon, whither his father Jehozadak had been taken (1 Chron. vi. 15). He accompanied Zerubbabel from Babylon on the issue of the decree of Cyrus and took a leading part in the rebuilding of the Temple and in the administration of the Jewish community at Jerusalem. (For particulars, see Zerubbabel).

II. A Levite, a head of a house, who returned from the captivity with Zerubbabel (Ezra ii. 40).

He took an active part in the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra iii. 9).

He and his house took part in the great religious confession of God's goodness and their own wickedness at the fast proclaimed by Nehemiah (Neh. ix. 4-5).

Jezrahiah, leader of the musicians in the singing at the Temple in the dedication of the walls. "*Jezrahiah their overseer*" (xii. 42).

Joel, the son of Zichri, a Benjamite, overseer over the Benjamites (xi. 9).

Johanan, son of Tobiah the Ammonite. He had married the daughter of Meshullam, the son of Berechiah (vi. 18).

Jozabad, chief of the Levites, joined with Shabbethai in the oversight of the outward business (p. 42) of the house of God (xi. 16).

Judah, the son of Senuah, a Benjamite, second in command to Joel, or deputy-overseer over the Benjamites (xi. 9).

Kadmiel, a Levite who, with his family, returned with Zerubbabel (Ezra ii. 40).

Kadmiel and his house are mentioned on two occasions—

- (1) With Jeshua, the Levite, he and his family were active in rebuilding the Temple (Ezra iii. 9).
- (2) They took part in the great religious confession of God's goodness and their own wickedness at the fast proclaimed by Nehemiah (Neh. ix. 4-5).

Mattaniah, the son of Micha, and a descendant of Asaph. After the return from Babylon he lived in the villages of Netopathi, which the singers had built in the vicinity of Jerusalem (xii. 28).

Meshullam (I.), son of Berechiah, who assisted in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem (iii. 4). He also repaired the Temple wall adjoining which he had "*his chamber*" (iii. 30). He was probably a priest and had married his daughter to Johanan the son of Tobiah.

Meshullam (II.), son of Besodeiah; with Jehoiada he repaired the old gate in the city wall.

Meshullam (III.), one of those who stood on the left hand of Ezra when he read the law to the people (viii. 4).

Meshullam (IV.), the head of a priestly house who sealed the covenant with Nehemiah (x. 7).

Meshullam (V.), one of the princes of Judah who sealed the covenant with Nehemiah (x. 20).

Meshullam (VI.), one of the priests who returned from Babylon under Zerubbabel. He represented the house of Ezra (xii. 13).

Meshullam (VII.), head of the priestly family of Ginnethon. He returned from Babylon under Zerubbabel (xii. 16).

Meshullam (VIII.), a family of porters (xii. 25).

Meshullam (IX.), one of the princes of Judah marching with the first company in the dedication of the walls (xii. 33).

Nehemiah (I.) (see Life of Author, p. xiii.).

Nehemiah (II.), son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Beth-zur, who helped to repair the wall of Jerusalem (iii. 16).

Nehemiah (III.), one of the leaders of the Jews who returned from Babylon under Zerubbabel (vii. 7).

Noadiah, a prophetess who joined with Sanballat and Tobiah in their attempt to intimidate Nehemiah (see Shemaiah) (vi. 14).

Og, King of Bashan (see note, p. xxix.), who, after the defeat of Sihon King of the Amorites, gave battle to Israel at Edrei. He was defeated and slain and his sixty cities captured (Deut. iii. 1-13) (see Sihon, p. xlv.).

Pedaiah, a Levite, appointed (as representative of the Levites) one of the treasurers over the store-houses in the Temple (xiii. 13) (see note, p. 48).

Pethahiah (I.), the son of Meshezabeel, and descendant of Zerah, described as being "*at the King's hand in all matters concerning the people*" (xi. 24). This may mean

- Either (1) a subordinate officer at Jerusalem acting as the King's agent in the matters concerning the province;
- or (2) The Jewish representative at Susa.

It would appear that it was through his representations that the King commanded that a certain portion should be allotted for the maintenance of the singers (xi. 23).

Pethahiah (II.), a Levite, mentioned in the list of those who assisted at the great confession (ix. 5). He may be the same Pethahiah mentioned in Ezra (x. 23) as having married a foreign wife.

Sanballat, the Horonite, a native probably of Beth-horon. The name is probably Assyrian ("*Sin*" = the moon-god of the Assyrians; "*balatu*" = giveth life), from which it is inferred that he was descended from one of the Babylonian families, who had been settled in Samaria.

[Another theory is that he was a Moabite of Horonaum, a town in Southern Moab, and that this will account for the frequent mention of his name in conjunction with Tobiah the Ammonite.]

It would appear

- (1) That he was one of the "*governors beyond the river*" (ii. 9-10).
- (2) That he had his residence at Samaria (iv. 2).
- (3) That his authority extended over the whole of Palestine, for he was over the Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodites (iv. 7).

He was the constant adversary of Nehemiah, and from the moment of Nehemiah's arrival in Jerusalem set himself to thwart him in every measure taken for the restoration of Jerusalem. His chief allies were Tobiah the servant (p. xlvi.), and Geshem the Arabian (p. xl.).

Motive for the opposition. Threefold.

- (1) Samaritan hatred of Jews dating from the rebuilding of the Temple by Zerubbabel (Ez. iv. 1-6).
- (2) On the fall of Jerusalem, Samaria had probably become the chief city of Palestine. The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, and the restoration of Jewish national independence, meant a corresponding decline of Samaria and the surrounding nations.
- (3) Nehemiah, as Tirshatha, would be entitled to receive the tribute of Judæa, which may previously have been paid to Samaria.

The above reasons are sufficient to account for the incessant and uncompromising hostility of Sanballat and his allies towards Nehemiah, and may be inferred from ii. 10, "*It grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.*"

The course of the opposition.

- (1) **Ridicule.** "*They laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king?*" (ii. 19).
- (2) **Open attack.** They "*conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it*" (iv. 8).

Their design was frustrated by the vigilance and precaution of Nehemiah.

(3) **Intrigue.**

- (a) **Assassination.** Sanballat and Geshem endeavoured to persuade Nehemiah to meet him in the plain of Ono, some thirty miles from Jerusalem. The design was evidently to entice Nehemiah from Jerusalem in order to seize his person or to assassinate him while far from hope of succour. "*They thought to do me mischief*" (vi. 2). Nehemiah declined the invitation, though it was repeated four times (vi. 3-4).

(b) **Attempts to weaken the authority of Nehemiah and alarm the Jews.**

- (1) By an open letter, the contents of which would be known throughout the city, stating that it was generally reported (and that Gashmu or Geshem supported the report), that the rebuilding of the walls was intended to enable Nehemiah to lead the Jews to revolt against the King of Persia, and suggesting that Nehemiah would do well to have a conference with him (Sanballat) in order to devise the best means for contradicting the report.

The object of the letter was twofold, first to discourage the Jews and lead them to withdraw their support from Nehemiah, lest they should incur the wrath of the King of Persia; and secondly to lure Nehemiah to a conference, when he would fall into the hands of his adversaries.

- (2) The hiring of false prophets, notably, Shemaiah and Noadiah, the prophetess. Shemaiah endeavoured to persuade Nehemiah that there was a plot to assassinate him, and that he would be well advised to take refuge in the Temple.

Nehemiah saw clearly that compliance would, first, weaken his authority over the Jews; secondly, be an admission of his guiltiness.

- (3) Intrigues of Tobiah with the Jewish nobles, with whom he was allied by marriage (viii. 17). Correspondence passed between the nobles and Tobiah (viii. 17).

The daughter of Sanballat was married to one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest (xiii. 28) (see p. xxxix.).

Shechaniah (I.), the son of Arah, and father-in-law of Tobiah (vi. 18).

Sechaniah (II.), the father of Shemaiah (II.).

Shabbethai, chief of the Levites, joined with Jozabad in the oversight of the outward business (p. 42) of the house of God (xi. 16).

Shelemiah, a priest, appointed by Nehemiah as one of the treasurers over the store-houses of the Temple (xiii. 13) (see note, p. 48).

He may be the same as Shelemiah (iii. 30), and if so was the father of Hananiah the son of Immer (iii. 29).

Shemaiah (I.), the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehatabeel, a prophet.

Particulars recorded of him are—

- (1) "He was shut up" (vi. 10). There are three interpretations.
 - (a) On account of ceremonial uncleanness (*cf.* Jer. xxxvi. 5).
 - (b) Possessed by a prophetic spirit, and therefore constrained to warn Nehemiah.
 - (c) The action was symbolical, as an announcement to Nehemiah that he should take refuge in some hiding-place.
- (2) He was bribed by Tobiah and Sanballat to deceive Nehemiah by false prophecy, viz.
 - (a) That Nehemiah was in danger of assassination by night. "Yea, in the night will they come to slay thee" (vi. 10).
 - (b) That he should escape from his enemies by taking refuge in the Temple (vi. 10).
- (3) Nehemiah refused to follow his advice for the following reasons:
 - (1) It was incompatible with his office as governor and leader of the people to timidly fly from danger. "Should such a man as I flee?" (vi. 11).

- (2) It was not lawful for a layman to enter into the Temple even to save his life. "Who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the Temple to save his life?" (vi. 11).

The R. V. (margin) has "could go into the temple and live," bringing out strongly the death penalty inflicted on any layman violating the sanctity of the Temple.

- (3) He suddenly detected the plot and its object.
 (a) That God had not sent Shemaiah.
 (b) That the prophecy was uttered not to warn but to deceive Nehemiah.
 (c) That Shemaiah was bribed by Tobiah and Sanballat.
 (d) The object of the plot was:
 (1) That Nehemiah should show fear, and thus lower himself in the eyes of the people.
 (2) That he should "sin" by transgressing the law in violating the sanctity of the people.
 (3) That his enemies might report his conduct to the king of Persia, and quote his action in taking refuge in the Temple as a proof of his guilt.

Shemaiah (II.), (the son of Shecaniah (II.)). He was keeper of the East gate of the city, and assisted in rebuilding the city walls (iii. 29).

Shemaiah (III.), the head of a priestly house who sealed the covenant with Nehemiah (x. 8). He is probably identical with Shemaiah who formed one of the special band of musicians which brought up the rear of the first company in the dedication of the walls (xii. 35).

Shemaiah (IV.), a prince of Judah, who formed one of the first company at the dedication of the walls (xii. 34).

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 the Israelites 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 is often referred to in Jewish history (see Numb. xxxii. 33; Deut. i. 4, iii. 1, iv. 47, xxxi. 4; Josh. ii. 10, ix. 10, xiii. 12-30; Neh. ix. 22), and was celebrated in song of triumph, the victory 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. cxxxv. 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).

Tobiah, the Ammonite, described as "*the servant*," a vehement ally to Sanballat in his hostility to Nehemiah.

"*Servant*" or slave. It is conjectured that Tobiah had been originally the slave of Sanballat, but had risen to a post of dignity and honour in his master's house. He was probably scribe or secretary to Sanballat.

Motive of his opposition (see Sanballat, p. xliii.).

Tobiah was probably further influenced by the race hatred existing between the Ammonites and the Jews.

Course of the opposition (see Sanballat, p. xliii.).

Tobiah being connected by marriage with a priestly family, was enabled to form a strong party among the Jewish nobles in opposition to Nehemiah.

He corresponded with this party (vi. 11), who supported him, first, by endeavouring to win Nehemiah to favour him, "*they reported his good deeds before me*" (vi. 19); secondly, by giving him information of what was going on in Jerusalem, "*uttered my words to him*" (vi. 19).

Particular mention of Tobiah.

(1) **His ridicule of the walls of Jerusalem.** "*Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall*" (iv. 3).

(2) **His marriage alliances.**

(a) He was the son-in-law of Shechaniah, the son of Arah (vi. 18).

(b) His son Johanan married the daughter of Meshullam, the son of Berechiah (vi. 18).

(3) **His intrigue and treasonable correspondence with the nobles** (vi. 19).

(4) **His occupation of a chamber in the Temple**, by permission of Eliashib the priest, who seems to have furnished a great chamber for him by removing the Temple stores and then throwing two or three chambers into one. Nehemiah, on his return from Babylon, promptly cast the furniture of Tobiah out of the chamber, and purified it from the pollution (xiii. 4-9).

Uzzi (I.), the son of Bani, a Levite, overseer of the Levites dwelling in Jerusalem (xi. 22).

Uzzi (II.), a priest, chief of the house of Jedaiah (xii. 19). He assisted in the dedication of the walls (xii. 42).

Zabdiel, a priest, son of one of the great men, and overseer over 128 mighty men of valour (or able men), employed in the work of the service of the house of God (xi. 14).

Zadok (I.), probably the same as Zidkijah (x. 1). He is described as scribe, "*Zadok the scribe*" (xiii. 13).

He took part in the repair of the walls (iii. 29).

He sealed the covenant after Nehemiah (x. 1), and may have been the scribe who drew up the document.

He was appointed by Nehemiah as one of the treasurers over the store-houses of the Temple (xiii. 13) (see note, p. 49).

If Zidkijah be Zechariah as R.V., we must assume that this person was not Zadok, but either some high official under Nehemiah or one of the royal house of Zerubbabel.

Zadok (II.), son of Baana, who repaired part of the wall (iii. 4). He was one of those who sealed the covenant (x. 21).

Zerubbabel (*Zorababel*, *St. Matt. and St. Luke*), son of Shealtiel (*Salathiel*, *St. Matt. and St. Luke*). (In 1 Chron. iii. 19 he is given as the son of Pedaiah, the brother of Shealtiel. Therefore he was most likely the nephew of Shealtiel and succeeded his uncle as the head of Judah.)

From the book of Ezra we learn that Zerubbabel was the head or prince of Judah in the time of the captivity. He was styled "the Prince of the Captivity," and is designated by his Chaldean name Sheshbazzar.

On the issuing of the decree of Cyrus he put himself at the head of those who desired to return to Jerusalem, and the sacred vessels were committed to his care.

The principal events of note with which he is connected are—

- (1) The erection of the altar (Ezra iii. 2); the keeping of the feast of Tabernacles (Ezra iii. 4)
- (2) The rebuilding of the Temple.
- (3) His refusal to allow the Samaritans to join in the work (Ezra iv. 2-3), thus laying the foundation of the enmity between Jews and Samaritans.

Notice in Nehemiah: He is mentioned at the head of the list of those who returned (vii. 7, xii. 1).

THE SAMARITANS.

Their Origin. Settlers brought from the countries east of the Euphrates to colonize the kingdom of Israel depopulated by the deportation of the Israelites.

There appear to have been three separate colonizations.

First, by Shalmaneser, or Sargon, after the capture of Samaria.

"The king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel" (2 Kings xvii. 24).

Second, by Esarhaddon, as stated by the Samaritans themselves,

"we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon, king of Assur, which brought us up hither" (Ezra iv. 2).

Third, by Asnapper or Osnapper, *"the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnapper brought over and set in the cities of Samaria, and the rest that are on this side the river"* (Ezra iv. 10).

Asnapper is generally identified with Assur-bani-pul (Sardana-palus) king of Assyria and grandson of Esarhaddon.

The following nations are named in Ezra iv. 9. *"The Dinaites,*

the Apharsathchites, the Tarfelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, and the Elamites."

As all the Israelites could not possibly have been deported, intermarriages would take place, and so the Samaritans of Ezra's time were a mixed race.

Their Religious Worship. The strangers from Babylon, Cuthah, etc., were, of course, idolators and worshipped their respective idols according to the places whence they came. God's displeasure was manifested against them, and He "*sent lions among them which slew some of them*" (2 Kings xvii. 25).

When they appealed to the King of Assyria he despatched one of the captive priests to teach them "*how they should serve the Lord*" (2 Kings xvii. 27). The colonists, however, set up their own gods and mingled their worship with that of Jehovah. "*They feared the Lord, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence*" (2 Kings xvii. 33).

Origin of the feud between the Samaritans and Jews.

When the Jews commenced to rebuild the Temple, the Samaritans came to Zerubbabel and asked to be allowed to join in the work on the ground, that they had worshipped the God of the Jews, from the time they had entered the land. Their request was refused with the curt declaration, "*Ye have nothing to do with us*" (Ezra iv. 3). From his time the Samaritans were the bitter opponents of the Jews.

Their opposition lasted from the reign of Cyrus to the reign of Darius (B.C. 536—B.C. 521) and was displayed.

- (1) "*They hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose*" (iv. 5) i.e. either bribed officials at the Persian court to interpose delays and create difficulties in order to hinder the work, or paid the officials over the province of Syria to send unfavourable reports to the capital concerning the people of Judah.
- (2) In the reign of Ahasuerus they wrote "*an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem*" (iv. 6). The accusation appears to have had no effect.
- (3) In the reign of Artaxerxes, Bishlam and others wrote to the king again to no effect (iv. 7).
- (4) In the same reign Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter to the king (see p. xxxvi.) artfully suggesting that the rebuilding of the walls would enable the Jews to resist the power of the king, stating that the city of Jerusalem had always been a "*rebellious and bad city*,"—proof of which would be found if the records of the kingdom were searched. This letter was successful in its object. Artaxerxes had the records searched and, finding that the Jews had ever been in revolt against the kings of Babylon, gave orders that the building should cease. Then Rehum and Shimshai went up to Jerusalem and made the Jews "*to cease by force and power*" (iv. 23).
- (5) When the building was resumed Tatnai and Shetha-boznai visited Jerusalem to inquire into what was going on. The Jews pleaded the decree of Cyrus as a justification of their proceedings.

The matter was referred to Darius, who found the decree at Achmetha, and ordered that the work should not be interfered with. A clause in the decree of this king, fixing the penalty of death upon anyone interfering with the Jews, effectually put a stop to active opposition for a time.

- (6) The opposition of the Samaritans continued through the government of Nehemiah, his chief opponents being Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geskur the Arabian.
- (7) The opposition and enmity of the Samaritans against the Jews was increased by the action of Nehemiah in expelling from Jerusalem Manasseh the grandson of Eliashib the High Priest 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. Manasseh was the first high-priest of this Temple for which the Samaritans claimed 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.

From this time Samaria was the resort of all malcontent Jews, and the enmity between the two peoples became greater than ever, being intensified by the controversy between them as to which was the true Temple.

Gradually the Samaritans abandoned idolatry and claimed to partake of Jewish blood, as instanced by the remark of the woman of Samaria to our Lord, "*Art thou greater than our father Jacob which gave us the well?*" (St. John iv. 12).

The Samaritans in the time of our Lord.

Their worship.

They had adopted the Mosaic Law with these differences.—

- (1) They accepted only the five books of Moses.
- (2) They celebrated the Passover on Mount Gerizim.
- (3) They directed their worship towards Mount Gerizim, though the temple no longer stood there.

They claimed Jewish descent which the Jews derided, terming them Cuthæans, mere strangers from Assyria.

The bitter enmity between Jews and Samaritans is often alluded to in the New Testament.

- (1) The Samaritans refused to receive our Lord "*because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem*" (St. Luke ix. 51-56).
- (2) In the parable of the Good Samaritan our Lord chooses one of the hated race in order to emphasize the lesson of neighbourliness (St. Luke x. 30-35).
- (3) The woman of Samaria expresses surprise that our Lord should ask her for water to drink. "*How is it that thou being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?*" (St. John iv. 9). St. John gives the reason of her surprise, "*For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans*" (St. John iv. 9).

- (4) An allusion is made to the dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans when the woman of Samaria remarks to our Lord, "*Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where man ought to worship*" (St. John iv. 20).
- (5) The Jews said of Jesus "*Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?*" (St. John viii. 48), "Samaritan" being the worst epithet they could apply to our Lord.

PERSIA.

Persia. The empire of Persia was most extensive.

On the *East* it included Afghanistan.

On the *West* it embraced the whole of Asia Minor.

On the *North* it reached to the Caucasus.

On the *South* it included Egypt.

The Capitals were—

Babylon, in the valley of the Euphrates.

Susa or Shushan, in Susiana or Elam.

Achmetha or Ecbatana, in Media.

Persepolis (not mentioned in Scripture), in Persia.

Persian Kings.

Title in Scripture.	Title in Profane History.	Date. B.C.	Reign. Years.
Cyrus (Dan. x., Ezra i.).	Cyrus.	537.	7 years.
Ahasuerus (Ezra iv. 6).	Cambyses.	530.	7 years.
Artaxerxes (Ezra iv. 7-23).	Smerdis.	522.	7 months.
Darius (Ezra iv. 24, vi.).	Darius Hystaspis.	521.	36 years.
Ahasuerus (Esther)	Xerxes.	485.	21 years.
Artaxerxes (Ezra vi., Neh. ii.).	Artaxerxes.	465.	41 years.
(Not mentioned in Scripture).	Longimanus.		
(Not mentioned in Scripture).	Xerxes II.	424.	46 days.
(Not mentioned in Scripture).	Sogdianus.	424.	6 months.
Darius (Neh. xii. 22).	Darius II.	423.	18 years.
(Not mentioned in Scripture).	Artaxerxes II. (Mnemon).	405.	13 years.
(Not mentioned in Scripture).	Artaxerxes III. (Ochus).	358.	19 years.
(Not mentioned in Scripture).	Arses.	337.	2 years.
Darius (Neh. xii. 22).	Darius III. (Codomanus).	335.	4 years.

Artaxerxes. The Artaxerxes of Nehemiah is undoubtedly Artaxerxes Longimanus, B.C. 465—B.C. 424. He received his surname from the circumstance of his right hand being longer than his left.

He succeeded his father, Xerxes I., who had been murdered by Artabanus. By the advice of Artabanus, Artaxerxes put his own brother Darius to death.

The reign is notable for the insurrections of the Satraps, and for a formidable revolt of the Egyptians in B.C. 460. The first army was defeated and the leader slain, but subsequently the chief rebel was defeated, B.C. 456. The Athenians supported the Egyptians in their revolt, and defeated the Persians at Salamis (in Cyprus), both by land and by sea. Subsequently the Persian king concluded peace with the Greeks on terms very advantageous to the latter.

Megabyzos, the satrap of Syria, was successful in his contest with the king, and forced him to agree to his own terms of peace, though subsequently he was one of the commanders of the successful army against the Egyptians.

Thus the early part of the reign was full of disorder and trouble (see p. xiii.).

Mention in Scripture :

1. He commissioned Ezra to go up to Jerusalem to carry out religious reforms (Ezra vii. 1) in the seventh year of his reign B.C. 458.
2. Nehemiah was one of his cupbearers, and was allowed by the king to go to Jerusalem to superintend the building of the walls of the city in the twentieth year of his reign, B.C. 445, (Neh. ii. 1).

Xerxes II., not mentioned in Scripture.

Sogdianus, not mentioned in Scripture.

Darius II., *Nothus*, obtained the crown by murdering his brother Sogdianus. His government was weak, and the reign is notable for the insurrections of the Satraps. The Egyptians successfully established their independence.

Artaxerxes II., *Mnemon*, not mentioned in Scripture.

Artaxerxes III., *Ochus*, not mentioned in Scripture.

Arses, not mentioned in Scripture.

Darius III., *Codomanus*. The last King of Persia, defeated by Alexander the Great. This conquest put an end to the Persian Empire.

Who is the Darius mentioned as "Darius the Persian?" (Neh. xii. 22).

If the passage be written by Nehemiah this can be no other than Darius II. (*Nothus*), and if so, Darius Nothus was King when Jaddua was born. Modern commentators, however, agree that Darius III. Codomanus, the antagonist of Alexander the Great, is intended.

In xii. 22 we have a list of high priests in order of succession, Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua.

A Jaddua was high priest in the reign of Alexander, and Josephus records that he met and confronted Alexander, when the conqueror visited Jerusalem after the battle of Issos. Accordingly it is assumed that this verse was added by a later hand, and that the King referred to is Darius Codomanus.

The word *Persian* affixed to his name is considered to prove that the passage was written after the close of the Persian Empire, and when the Grecian Empire had commenced.

Government under the Persians.

1. **The King**, an absolute monarch, styled "the King," "the Great King," "the King of Babylon" (Ezra v. 13, Neh. xiii. 6), and never "the King of Persia" till the dissolution of the Persian Empire.
2. **The Council of Seven** (Ezra vii. 14, Esther i. 14). Darius Hystaspis gained the throne through a conspiracy of seven nobles against Pseudo Smerdis. The Council of Seven appears to have had its origin in this event.
3. **The Satraps**. Darius Hystaspis divided the Persian Empire into great provinces, called satrapies from the title of the ruler, who was a "Satrap."

The satrap was a kind of vassal king, and was generally connected with the king by birth or marriage.

He was responsible for a fixed tribute, out of which the satrap, the staff of officials and his army were paid, the balance being handed over to the royal treasury.

His power was checked by the presence of a royal scribe, whose duty it was to send to the king a report of the administration of the satrapy.

The troops of the province were under a separate commander, and the great fortresses were under the command of officers independent of the satrap.

In the reign of Darius, Tatnai, "the governor beyond the river," appears to have been the satrap of the province west of the Euphrates.
4. **The Pekhahs**, translated "governor" (v. 14) (*pekhah*, the governor of a district), is the Babylonian equivalent of the Persian "Tirshatha," and denotes a local or provincial governor under the satraps. The governors were responsible to the satraps, and the satraps to the king.

DISCREPANCY IN THE CHRONOLOGY OF NEHEMIAH.

Hanani visited Babylon in *the month Chisleu (the ninth month) of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes.*

In consequence of this visit Nehemiah made his request to Artaxerxes *in the month Nisan (the first month) of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes.*

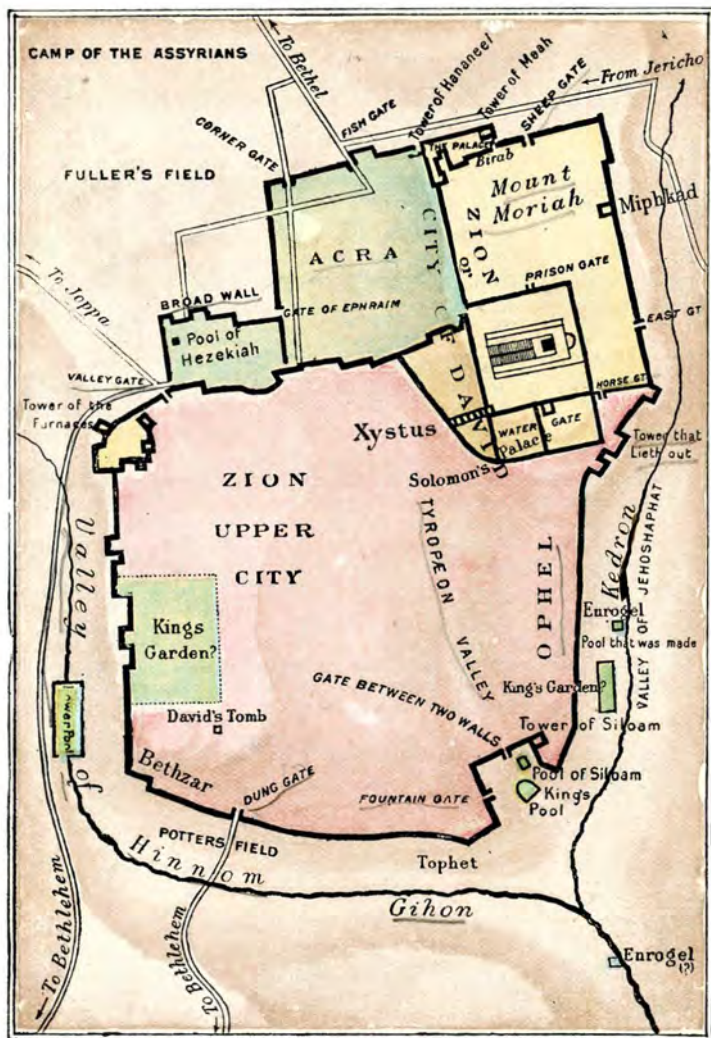
Thus apparently Nehemiah made his request *nine months previous* to the visit of Hanani, whereas the petition must have been made *after that visit.*

Two explanations of the apparent error have been suggested :—

1. After their return from exile the Jews altered the order of the months. Tisri (formerly the seventh month) opens the sacred year. In this calculation Chisleu is the third month and Nisan the seventh month.
2. That the years of the reign of King Artaxerxes are to be reckoned not from the beginning of the year, but from the month in which he ascended the throne. If this month fell between April and November, Chisleu would precede Nisan in any year of that monarch's reign.

Either of the above explanations removes the discrepancy, but both are open to objections.

1. Why should Nehemiah adopt the computation according to the later Jewish sacred year in preference to the civil computation of his time? He reckons years by the years of the Persian king, and in the Persian calendar Nisan is *the first month*, Chisleu *the ninth.*
2. This explanation is ingenious, but it has no support from other sources.



PLAN OF JERUSALEM TO ILLUSTRATE THE
BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM.

Briefly we may describe Jerusalem as built upon a broad elevated promontory within the fork of the two valleys of Jehoshaphat and Hinnom.

The Valley of Jehoshaphat runs along the eastern side of the city, and joins the valley of Hinnom at the south-east corner.

The river or brook Kedron flows through this valley, and is joined by the Gihon a little distance above Enrogel. The west side of the valley is formed by the Mount of Olives and the Mount of Offence.

The Valley of Hinnom runs along the west and south sides of the city, and joins the valley of Jehoshaphat at the south-east corner.

The brook Gihon flows through this valley and joins the Kedron a little distance above Enrogel.

Thus the north-east corner was clearly the more assailable part of the city. Against this corner the Babylonians in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar made their main attack.

The city itself was divided into two portions or separate hills divided by the Tyropœon valley, which was subsequently filled up in the time of the Maccabees.

We find four distinct portions—

- I. **The Upper City**, long identified with Zion, built on the western spur, and separated by walls from the other hill. This hill is 103 feet higher than Moriah.
- II. **The City of David** (the true Zion), called Acra by Josephus, occupying the north-west portion of the second hill.
- III. **Moriah**, on which was built the Temple, occupying the western portion of this hill. The City of David was higher than the Temple; its summit was lowered by the Maccabees in order that it might not overlook the Temple-Mount. The material thus obtained was thrown into the Tyropœon valley, and the hill is now 100 feet lower than the Temple-Mount.
- IV. **Ophel**, the southern continuance of the Temple hill, a long narrowish promontory separating the Tyropœon valley from the valley of Jehoshaphat, and sloping off on its southern side into the valley of Hinnom. On the eastern side is the "Fount of the Virgin," and at its foot the lower outlet of the same spring—the Pool of Siloam.

Ophel appears to have been assigned to the Levites for their residence.

Gates and Walls.

Following the route taken by Nehemiah in his night inspection of the dilapidated defences of the city, we can trace the course of the walls and the gates (the student should follow the course by means of the map). We start from the western side, turn to the left, and go south, making a complete circuit.

Gates in the Outer Wall.

1. **Gate of the Valley**, opening into the valley of Hinnom. It was near the modern Jappa (or Joppa) gate. It was the chief gate in the western wall of Jerusalem.

Near this gate was the

Dragon Well (the site cannot be identified) so called.

either (1) because the opening was in the form of a dragon's mouth,
or (2) because of the wandering or serpentine course of the stream.

2. **Dung Gate**, on the south side (towards the east), opening into the valley of Hinnom, and so called because the refuse of the city was carried out through this gate into the valley of Hinnom (Gehenna, N.T.), where it was burnt.
3. **The Gate of the Fountain**. A gate on the southernmost part of the city, opening from the Tyropæon valley into the valley of Hinnom, near it was "The King's Pool, or "Pool of Siloam" (see p. lvii.).
4. **East Gate**, in the eastern wall; it would appear to have been the eastern approach to the Temple hill.
5. **The gate Miphkad**, not mentioned save in iii. 31. It must have been in the east, or north-east wall, to the south of the sheep-gate. By some it is supposed to have been the gate through which the bullock for the sin offering was led "*without the sanctuary*" (see Ezek. xliii. 21).
6. **The Sheep Gate**, in the eastern part of the north wall,—the modern St. Stephen's gate. The sheep for the Temple service came through this gate from Eastern Palestine and Moab, the great sheep tending districts. There may have been a sheep market near it.
7. **The Fish Gate**, in the western part of the north wall. The fish brought from Tyre and the Sea of Galilee would come in by this gate. There may have been a fish market near it.
8. **Old or Corner Gate**. We obtain the situation of this gate from xii. 39, "*above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the fish gate.*" Hence it stood between the "gate of Ephraim" and "the fish gate." It may be the "corner gate" of 2 Kings xiv. 13, and if so stood at the corner of the north and west walls.
9. **Gate of Ephraim**, probably situated in the western part of the wall bounding the City of David and before the Broad wall. It was so called because through it passed the main road to Ephraim. It is also known as the "Gate of Benjamin."

Other Gates.

1. **The Water Gate**, leading to the Temple precincts from the south, and so called because the path from the Virgin's spring entered here, and through it water-carriers carried water for the Temple service.
2. **The Horse Gate**, on the south-eastern extremity of the Temple hill. So called because the carriage road to the Temple and Palace led through it. Athaliah was led through this gate away from the Temple to be put to death (2 Kings xi. 16). The "tower which lieth out" was built to protect this gate and the water gate (see p. lvii.).

3. **The Prison Gate**, a gate on the north side of the Temple, leading into the open space to north and east of the Temple, where the processions joined and halted in the dedication of the walls.

All these three gates are connected with the Temple, which was walled off from the rest of the city. In later times the Temple was strongly fortified.

Other Prominent Places.

1. **The Tower of Meah.** Meah means "*a hundred*," "the Tower of the hundred," and so we get three renderings of the passage:
 - (1) That 100 steps led to it.
 - (2) That 100 men were required for its defence.
 - (3) That a hundred cubits of the wall is intended and not a tower.
 Meah was near the sheep-gate and along with the tower of Hananeel intended for its defence.
2. **The Tower of Hananeel.** A well-known tower lying between the fish-gate and the sheep-gate, both of which it defended. It probably took its name from that of the original builder.
3. **The Broad Wall** lay between the "tower of the furnaces" and "the gate of Ephraim." This spot, the weak side of the city, as being most exposed to attack, would require fortifying with a wall of more than usual strength. The "gate of Ephraim" was the quarter whence attack from the Northern Kingdom would naturally come, hence an additional reason for strong fortification. We find that Jehoash, King of Israel, after defeating Amaziah, King of Judah, broke down 400 cubits of the wall of Jerusalem, clearly with the object of leaving the city open to attack from the north (2 Kings xiv. 13). Hezekiah carefully repaired this breach and strengthened the wall (2 Chron. xxxii. 5).
4. **Tower of the Furnaces**, a tower on the north-west angle of the extreme west wall; the origin of the name is unknown; it contributed greatly to the defence of the west side.
5. **Pool of Siloah** (iii. 15), also "**The King's Pool**" (ii. 14), the famous pool of Siloam situated at the foot of the Tyropæon valley. It was an artificial pool and consisted of an upper and lower reservoir, to which water was supplied by a subterranean conduit from the Virgin's spring, which has been identified with the Gihon of Scripture. It takes also the name of "the King's pool" from its proximity to "the King's garden."
6. **The King's Garden** must have been at the southern extremity of the Tyropæon valley, in close proximity to the Pool of Siloam, but whether within or without the city is uncertain.
7. **The Stairs that go down from the City of David.** A flight of steps ascending the steep slope of Ophel and leading up to the Temple and City of David through the "water gate." Remains of these stairs are still to be seen.

8. The Sepulchre of David, an excavation in the rock, probably on the south-east cliff of Ophel, near the Temple.
9. The pool that was made, probably that made by Hezekiah (Is. xxii. 9-11).
10. The House of the Mighty, near the "*pool that was made*," must be the barracks of David's body-guard, whose technical name was "*Gibborim*," "the mighty" (ii. Sam. xxiii. 8). "Their quarters would naturally be in the vicinity of the palace" (САУСЕ) (see p. 13).
11. The Armoury—clearly the armoury erected by King Solomon in connection with "the house of the forest of Lebanon" (1 Kings x. 17), and in which were placed the "targets" or shields of gold. That arms of all kinds were stored here is clear from the reference (Is. xxii. 8). "*Thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest*" (see p. 63).
The going up to "the armoury" was at "*the turning of the wall*" (iii. 20). "*Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them*" (2 Chron. xxvi. 9). This "*turning of the wall*" must therefore have been near "*The Tower that lieth out.*"
12. The King's high house, or rather "the upper house of the king." Calculating from the position of "*the tower that lieth out*" (see p. 13), this would be immediately south of the Temple on the summit of "Ophel."
13. "The Great Tower that lieth out." The foundations of this tower have been recently discovered by Sir Charles Warren. It lies south-east of the Temple (see map). The remains of a great wall have been found here with several towers projecting from it, and one of them is more prominent than the rest. This may be the "great tower," and one or other of the rest may be referred to in iii. 25 as being near "the King's high house," and in iii. 26 as near the water-gate. The important angle where these have been found would necessarily be strongly fortified to protect the approach to the palace and the Temple. These later discoveries assist us in assigning the localities of "the house of the mighty" (10), "the armoury" (11), and the "King's high house" (12).
14. The court of the prison was within the precincts of Solomon's palace. Jeremiah was "*shut up in the court of the prison, which is in the King of Judah's house*" (Jer. xxxii. 2).
15. The place of the Nethinims (place = house), the official residence of those of the Nethinim engaged in the service of the Temple. From the mention of the gate of Miphkad in connection with it, we may assume that this house was on the wall, to the north-east of the Temple. The Nethinim generally lived "in Ophel" (iii. 26).

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

Part I. Nehemiah's Commission to re-build the Walls (i.—ii. 11).

- (1) The evil tidings of the state of Jerusalem. The distress of Nehemiah (i. 1-4).
- (2) Nehemiah's prayer before "the God of heaven" (i. 4-11).
- (3) He obtains leave to visit Jerusalem. The Commission (ii. 1-11).

Part II. Nehemiah's First Visit to Jerusalem. The Walls re-built (ii. 11. vii. 4).

- (1) The night circuit of the city walls (ii. 12-15).
- (2) The work of re-building undertaken (ii. 16-20).
- (3) Distribution of the work—the names of the builders (iii.).
- (4) Opposition to the work (iv.).
 - (a) The ridicule of Sanballat and his allies (iv. 1-6).
 - (b) The threats of the adversaries and the fear of armed intervention (iv. 7-8).
 - (c) The precautions of Nehemiah against sudden attack (iv. 8-23).
- (5) Difficulties within the city (v.).
 - (a) Nehemiah frees the poor oppressed by the usury of the nobles (v. 1-13).
 - (b) The generosity of Nehemiah in not taking tax from the people for his support as governor (v. 14-19).
- (6) The intrigues of the enemy. Completion of the walls (vi.).
 - (a) His adversaries attempt to lure him to a conference in the plain of Ono (vi. 1-9).
 - (b) The attempt of Shemaiah through false prophecy to persuade him to take refuge in the temple to save his life from a feigned plot for his assassination (vi. 10-14).
 - (c) The wall completed in fifty-two days (vi. 15).
 - (d) The intrigues of Tobiah with the Jewish nobles (vi. 17-19).
- (7) Measures for the protection of the city (vii. 1-5).

[According to some Nehemiah now returned to Persia in fulfilment of his promise (ii. 6), and after a brief stay came back to Judah, B.C. 444, as *Tirshatha* or Governor.]

Part III. The First Reformation by Nehemiah (vii. 5—xiii. 47).

- (1) The register of those who returned with Zerubbabel (vii. 6—73).
- (2) The public reading of the Law by Ezra (viii. 1-12).
- (3) The Feast of Tabernacles kept (viii. 13-18).
- (4) The Great National Confession (ix.).

- (5) **The Sealing of the Covenant (x.).**
 - (a) The names of those who sealed (x. 1-29).
 - (b) The obligations of the Covenant (x. 29-39).
 - (1) Prohibition of Mixed Marriages (x. 29-30).
 - (2) Prohibition of Sabbath Traffic (x. 31).
 - (3) Observance of the Sabbatical Year (x. 31).
 - (4) Imposition of a Tax of $\frac{1}{3}$ of a shekel for the maintenance of the Temple service (x. 32-34).
 - (5) The strict observance of the payment of first-fruits and tithe (x. 35-39).
- (6) **Extracts from Registers (xi. 1—xii. 26).**
 - (a) List of those who dwelt at Jerusalem (xi. 1-24).
 - (b) Villages occupied by the Jews (xi. 25-36).
 - (c) Register of High Priests, Levites and Singers (xii. 1-26).
- (7) **The Dedication of the walls (xii. 27-43).**
- (8) **Appointment of officers to govern Levitical organization and to superintend the tithes, etc. (xii. 44-47).**
 Nehemiah returns to Persia (xii. 6)

Part IV. The Second Reformation of Nehemiah. Correction of abuses that had crept in during his absence (xiii.).

- (1) Separation from "*the mixed multitude*" (xiii. 1-3).
- (2) Nehemiah vindicates the sanctity of the Temple by clearing the chamber assigned to Tobiah by Eliashib (xiii. 49).
- (3) He provides for the maintenance of the Levites (xiii. 10-14).
- (4) He vindicates the sanctity of the Sabbath by putting an end to Sabbath traffic (xiii. 15-22).
- (5) He puts an end to mixed marriages and expels Manasseh the son of Joiada, the high priest, who had married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite.

NEHEMIAH:

TEXT AND NOTES.



MAP OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH.

NEHEMIAH.

TEXT AND NOTES.

The Superscription. Bad News from Jerusalem.

1. ¹The ^awords of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month ²Chisleu, in the ³twentieth year, as I was in ⁴Shushan the ⁵palace, ² That Hanani, one of my ⁶brethren, came, he and certain men ⁷of Judah; and I ⁸asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. ³ And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and ⁹reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is ¹⁰broken down, and the ¹¹gates thereof are ¹²burned with fire. ⁴ And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the ¹³God of heaven,

a see R.V. b see R.V. comment, p. 54.

¹¹ The fortified gateways, the first object of assault by a besieging army.

Two replies.

(1) The miserable condition of the people.

(2) The defenceless state of the city.

¹² The practice of victors when they had captured a city was:

(1) To make breaches in the walls at the places most open to attack.

(2) To destroy the fortified defences which protected the gateways.

The sad account so affected Nehemiah that he withdrew from his duties at the court and gave himself to fasting and prayer.

¹³ A Persian title of God—not Jewish. An indication of the book having been written in the Persian period.

V. 1. Indicates that Nehemiah was the author, and marks the division in the original work that here the narrative of Nehemiah commences.

V. 2. Refers to the Jews in the land of Judah as distinct from those who had remained at Babylon.

V. 3. The province always means Judah, now a province under Persian rule (see p. 1.).

V. 3. The walls of Jerusalem had been breached (broken down) by Nebuchadnezzar, and though it is not mentioned in Scripture that he burnt the gates yet such was the common practice of the Assyrians.

So Hanani and his companions may be referring to the ruinous state of the city's defences consequent upon its capture by Nebuchadnezzar.

□***

¹ The only historical book that commences thus.

² The ninth month, corresponding to the end of November and the beginning of December (for discrepancy with ii. 1, see p. liii.).

³ Of Artaxerxes, B.C. 444.

⁴ Susa (p. xxxvi.).

⁵ Palace=castle (p. 63), a distinct quarter of the city.

⁶ Either (1) a fellow Jew.

or (2) a relative of Nehemiah (see p. xi.).

⁷ Out of Judah—not belonging to the tribe of Judah. They had come from the province of Judah.

⁸ Two enquiries—

(1) As to the condition of the Jews in the province of Judah.

(2) As to the state of the city.

⁹ Reproach, i.e. the scorn of the Samaritans (iv. 1-4).

¹⁰ Either (1) as left by Nebuchadnezzar. or (2) as the result of Samaritan interference.

The latter the more probable (see note below v. 3).

But this would be well known to Nehemiah. He would also know that the attempt to rebuild the walls had failed. So the tidings would not give him any fresh knowledge. Why should he have been so distressed? But if we suppose that there had been some violent interference on the part of the enemies of the Jews, and that a further dismantling of the walls had taken place, we obtain good reasons for his grief.

The tense of the verb (lit. "have been burned") would also imply recent disaster.

The Prayer of Nehemiah.

5 And said, I beseech thee, O Lord ^aGod of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and ^bobserve his commandments: 6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, ^cand confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. 7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. 8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the ^dnations: 9 But if ye ^eturn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; ^fthough there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen ^gto set my name there. 10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and

The prayer has strong points of resemblance to that of Ezra (ix. 5-15), and more particularly to that of Daniel (ix. 4-19).

ANALYSIS.

- (1) The address (v. 5).

To God—

of might—who can effect the restoration.

of mercy—who will pardon their sin.

- (2) A confession (v. 6-7).

In the name of the people, of their utter corruption in failing to keep God's commandments.

- (3) An appeal to the Divine Promise (v. 8-9).

That if His people repented He would gather them together again.

- (4) A supplication.

(a) For the people.

(b) For himself (Nehemiah), that he might obtain his request from the king.

Many phrases of the prayer are taken from Deuteronomy.

During the time of mourning Nehemiah resolved upon his plan, viz. to request the king to grant him permission to go to Jerusalem and restore the defences of the city.

As a cupbearer, he would be in high authority and would have private access to the king.

a see R.V. b see R.V. c see R.V. d see R.V.
e see R.V. comment. p. 54. f see R.V. g see R.V.

by thy strong hand. 11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who ^adesire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant ¹this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of ²this man. ^bFor I was the king's cupbearer.

^a see R.V. ^b see R.V. comment, p. 54.

Cupbearer, an officer of high rank with Egyptian, Persian, Assyrian and Jewish monarchs.

Pharaoh's cupbearer (chief butler) was the means of releasing Joseph from prison (Gen. xl, xli.)

The name Rabshakeh, cupbearer (2 Kings xviii. 17).

¹= this occasion.

²= the king Artaxerxes.

The Commission of Nehemiah.

1. And it came to pass in the month ¹Nisan, in the ²twentieth year of ³Artaxerxes the king, ^athat wine was before him: and I ⁴took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime ⁵sad in his presence. ² Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore ⁶afraid. ³ And said unto the king, ⁷Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of ⁸my fathers' ⁹sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? ⁴ Then the king said unto me, ¹⁰For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. ⁵ And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that ¹¹thou wouldest send me unto Judah,

^a see R.V. comment, p. 54.

¹Or Abib, the first month of the Jewish year (p. 69)

²On discrepancy with i. 1 see p. liii.

³Intro. p. 1.

⁴The cupbearer would pour out some of the wine and taste it as a safeguard against assassination of the king by poison.

⁵Sadness would be a breach of court etiquette. So Mordecai could not enter the palace clothed in sackcloth (Esther iv. 2). Nehemiah had repressed signs of sorrow in the King's presence for three months, but on this occasion he purposely allowed his sorrow to be visible that it might attract the King's attention.

⁶Afraid

(1) Lest the King should imagine his troubled countenance implied some plot against him. Nehemiah might have been immediately put to death.

(2) Lest his request should offend the King. "A Persian subject was expected to be perfectly contented as long as he had the happiness of being with the King." (S.C.)

⁷The usual form of address to an Eastern King (1 Kings i. 31, Dan. ii. 4).

⁸From this many conclude that Nehemiah was of the tribe of Judah and of the royal house.

⁹The sepulchre of the kings.

¹⁰What do you desire? How can I help you?

¹¹The appeal would be understood by the king, for the Persians have great respect for the tombs of their ancestors.

unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. 6 And the king said unto me (the queen also sitting by him), For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I ¹²set him a time. 7 Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let ¹³letters be given me to the ¹⁴governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah. 8 And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make ¹⁵beams for the gates of the ¹⁶palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

a see R.V. comment, p. 54.

(2) The city walls.

(3) His own residence as governor.

The Queen. The feast would not be public, for the queen would not be present at a public banquet (see Esther i. 9-12).

The Persian kings always had a chief wife—Head of the Harem, e.g. Vashti and subsequently Esther (see book of Esther).

The chief queen of Artaxerxes was Damsipia. Some conclude that Esther is the "queen" here referred to.

Nehemiah pleads a sufficient cause for sadness.

The first ejaculatory prayer by Nehemiah—A characteristic of the book.

The request was for a great favour, viz.:

(1) To leave the king's presence.

(2) To rebuild the walls and defences of Jerusalem.

¹²The time set is not stated. Nehemiah was governor twelve years.

¹³Letters of safe conduct.

¹⁴The provincial governors (*pekhs*, p. 63) of the province west of the Euphrates (p. 62).

¹⁵Forest = a walled park or pleasure ground, p. 63. Probably near Jerusalem, for the name Asaph is Jewish.

¹⁶Castle (*birah*), afterwards the tower of Antonia (p. 63).

Timber to erect three buildings.

(1) A citadel in Jerusalem.

Instances of Ejaculatory Prayer in Nehemiah.

(1) "So I prayed to the God of heaven" (ii. 4).

When his sadness was noticed by Artaxerxes.

(2) "Hear, O our God; for we are despised, and turn their reproach upon their own head, etc." (iv. 4).

When Sanballat and Tobiah mocked at the Jews, when they commenced to rebuild the walls.

(3) "Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people" (v. 19).

When Nehemiah had persuaded the richer Jews to forego interest, and to release the people from debt. At the same time he recounts his own disinterestedness.

(4) "Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands" (vi. 9).

When Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem had endeavoured to terrify him by threats from continuing the work of rebuilding.

(5) "My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear" (vi. 14).

After Shemaiah had failed in persuading him to take refuge in the temple to guard against a feigned plot for his assassination.

(6) "Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds, that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof" (xiii. 14).

After he had ejected the furniture and other belongings of Tobiah from the chamber of Elishama in the temple, and had restored to the Levites the tithes and other dues.

Instances from the New Testament are:—

- (1) Jesus at the grave of Lazarus. "*Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me*" (St. John xi. 41).
- (2) Jesus in the temple at the feast. "*Father save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour, Father glorify thy name*" (St. John xii. 27-8).
- (3) Jesus on the cross praying for his murderers. "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*" (St. Luke xxiii. 34).
- (4) St. Stephen when he was stoned. "*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*" (Acts vii. 60).

The Journey to Jerusalem.

9. Then I came to the ¹governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's ²letters. Now the king had sent ³captains of the army and horsemen with me. 10 When ⁴Sanballat the ⁵Horonite, and ⁶Tobiah the ⁷servant, the ⁸Ammonite, heard of it, it ⁹grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. 11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there ¹⁰three days.

¹The governors of the province west of the Euphrates.

²The letters of safe conduct (v. 7).

³An armed escort accompanied Nehemiah, who was acting under the King's commission appointing him governor at Jerusalem.

Ezra, accompanied by many Jews, refused an escort (Ezra viii. 22).

⁴Intro. p. xlii. ⁵of Beth-horon. ⁶Satrap of Samaria.

⁷Intro. p. xlii. ⁸servant=slave, probably the secretary to Sanballat.

⁸Ammonites (Intro. p. xxvii.). Were always bitter enemies of the Israelites.

⁹The restoration of Jerusalem was likely to interfere with the importance of Samaria, which after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, had become the chief city of Palestine.

¹⁰Three days.

(1) For rest.

(2) For consideration as to what would be his best course.

Nehemiah Inspects the City Walls by Night.

12 And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither ¹told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there ²any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. 13 And I went out by ³night by the ⁴gate of the valley, even before the ⁵dragon well, and

a see R. V. comment, p. 55.

¹He wisely conceals his purpose till he has made himself acquainted with the state of things.

²A mounted retinue would have roused attention to his act.

³He makes his tour round the walls by night, and with few attendants, and thus avoids the notice of the people and the suspicion of his enemies.

⁴See note p. lvi.

⁵Not mentioned elsewhere: either from the form of the spout like a dragon's mouth, or from the winding serpentine course of the stream.

to the ⁶dung ^aport, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. 14 Then I went on to the ^bgate of the fountain, and to the king's ⁷pool: but there was ⁸no place for the beast that was under me to pass. 15 Then went I up in the night by the ⁹brook, and viewed the wall, and ¹⁰turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned. 16 And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet ¹¹told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.

^a see R. V. comment, p. 55. ^b see R. V. comment, p. 55.
^c see R. V. comment, p. 55.

Four Classes.

- (1) The Priests, the religious leaders.
- (2) The nobles = heads of houses.
- (3) Rulers = civil authorities.
- (4) The rest, etc. = general mass of the people, who afterwards did the actual labour of building.

Nehemiah declares his Commission.

17 ¹Then said I unto them, Ye see ^athe distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a ²reproach. 18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.

^a see R. V.

⁶ The Dung Gate, opening into the valley of Hinnom, and so called because the refuse of the town was carried through it into the valley of Hinnom (p. 55).

⁷ i.e. the pool of Siloam.

⁸ The piles of rubbish were so great that Nehemiah was compelled to dismount and go on foot.

⁹ Kedron, p. 1v.

Viewed, i.e. surveyed.

¹⁰ Nehemiah did not turn back, but having gone along the eastern wall, he turned westward, examined the wall on that side, and re-entered the city by the valley gate, having made a complete circuit of the city.

¹¹ i.e. revealed my commission to rebuild the wall.

¹ Then, not a note of time. Nehemiah formed his plans, and then appealed to the patriotism of the people, at the same time declaring the commission he had received from the king. The people responded immediately to the appeal.

² Before the Samaritans and other adversaries, as being unable to protect themselves. Nehemiah encourages the people by relating the blessing of God which had so far favoured him, and the good will of the king who had authorized him to rebuild the walls. The people were "strengthened" to

people exhorted and encouraged each other, and thus undertake the work.

The Derision of their Adversaries.

19 But when ¹Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, ²What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the ³king? 20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, ⁴The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no ⁵portion, nor ⁶right, nor ⁷memorial, in Jerusalem.

¹ The triumvirate of adversaries.

(1) Sanballat, the Horonite (p. xlii.).

(2) Tobiah, the servant or slave (p. xlii.).

(3) Geshem, the Arabian (p. xl.).

² In sarcasm. They ridiculed the puny attempt of the Jews to fortify the city, and at the same time imputed to them the motive of rebellion; and if they rebelled, how would those feeble defences resist the army of the king.

They afterwards openly charged Nehemiah with rebellion (vi. 6).

³ The King, i.e. of Persia.

⁴ A noble answer. It was a work for the establishment and protection of the worship of Jehovah, and so God would prosper it.

⁵ Portion, share or part. Compare the rallying cry of Sheba, "*We have no part in David*" (2 Sam. xxi.).

⁶ Right, claim, no foundation for your former request to join in the work (Ezra, iv. 2).

⁷ Memorial, no record or proof of any past connection with Jerusalem.

The Names of those who built the Walls, and the Portions of the Walls which they severally rebuilt.

3. Then ¹Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the ²priests, and ³they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it; unto the tower of ⁴Hananeel. 2 And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri. 3 But the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build, who also laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the ⁵locks thereof, and the ⁶bars thereof. 4 And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel.

See map of Jerusalem, p. liv.

Also Topography of Jerusalem, p. lvi.

¹ Grandson of Jeshun. First high priest after the return from captivity (p. xli.).

² The priests repaired the wall near the priests' quarters.

³ Intro. p. lvi.

⁴ At the north-east corner, opposite Jericho. It may be observed that the people of provincial towns repaired the part of the wall nearest their own city.

⁵ Locks, probably cross bars securing the gates. See R.V. comment, p. 55.

⁶ Bars, the staples or catches holding the bars at each end.

And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana. 5 And next unto them the ⁷Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of ⁸their Lord. 6 Moreover the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. 7 And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah, *unto the throne of the ⁹governor on this side the river.* 8 Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of one of the ¹⁰apothecaries, and they fortified Jerusalem unto the ¹¹broad wall. 9 And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the ¹²half part of Jerusalem. 10 And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even over ¹³against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of

⁷Inhabitants of Tekoah (p. xxxvii.). The common people were ardent in the cause (see v. 27), but their chiefs declined to take part in the work for God. The metaphor is that of oxen ploughing, yoked in pairs. The laborious work was distasteful to the chiefs of Tekoah.

⁸Lord may mean

(1) Jehovah—the Jewish interpretation—thus they refused to work for God.

(2) Nehemiah—who as governor would be the lord over all Jewish towns.

This is perhaps the better interpretation.

If we read their lords as R. V. (margin) = the leaders of the Jews—a term which would not accurately describe the powers of the Jewish officials at Jerusalem over the “nobles” of a provincial town.

⁹Governor beyond the river, i.e. the governor of the Persian province west of the Euphrates.

^a see R. V. comment, page 55.

Two interpretations.

(1) That they repaired the wall as far as a place that might have been an official residence of the Persian satrap of the province, when he visited Jerusalem, and is here designated “throne.”

(2) That the men of Gibeon and Mizpah, or part of them, were under the jurisdiction of the Persian governor, and were not under the rule of Nehemiah, yet by permission of the governor joined in the work.

The R. V. adopts the latter view (see comment, p. 55).

¹⁰Apothecary = a preparer of ointments, perfumes, etc., not a dealer in medicinal drugs. The use of cosmetics by women, and of spices, etc., in embalming the dead, caused this to be an important industry.

If we follow the Septuagint repaired should be *left*, i.e. that the portion of the wall had not been destroyed by the Chaldeans, and so the repairers left it alone as not needing restoration, or that the builders deviated from (i.e. left the line of) the old wall and built inside it.

¹¹Broad wall, a portion of the western corner about 400 cubits, built by Uziah, pulled down by Jehoash, king of Israel, to weaken the defences on the North (2 Kings xiv. 13), and repaired by Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 5).

¹²i.e. the district belonging to Jerusalem, not the city; Shallum (v. 12) ruled over the other half.

¹³Each inhabitant (like the dwellers in the town (v. 2), repaired the portion of the wall nearest his own house.

Hashabniah. 11 Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Panuah-moab, repaired ^a*the other piece*, and the tower of the furnaces. 12 And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Halohesh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, he and his ¹⁵*daughters*. 13 The valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and ¹⁶*a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung gate*. 14 But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Beth-haccereim; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. 15 But the gate of the fountain repaired Shallun the son of Colhozeh, the ruler of ^b*part* of Mizpah; he built it, and covered it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of Siloah by the king's garden, and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David. 16 After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half ^b*part* of Beth-zur, unto the place over against the sepulchres of David, and to the pool that was made, and ^c*unto the house of the mighty*. 17 After him repaired the Levites, Rehum the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half ^b*part* of Keilah, ^d*in his part*. 18 After him repaired their brethren, Bavai the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half ^b*part* of Keilah. 19 And next to him repaired

¹⁴ Rather "another piece." It would appear that some were able to repair a second part as well as the one they had originally undertaken.

The translation "another piece" is given in v. 19, 20, 21, 24, 27, 30.

¹⁵ Who may have contributed money though not taking a personal share in the work.

¹⁶ Probably requiring little repair, and so little work was needed.

¹⁷ District, i.e. as distinct from the town of Mizpah (see also v. 14, 16, 17, 18).

¹⁸ Probably a reference to the mighty men of David for whom that king may have built barracks. The site would well be known by this name though the building had been destroyed.
i.e. for his district.

a see R.V. and also v. 19, 20, 21, 24, 27, 30.

b see R.V., comment, p. 56. c see R.V., comment, p. 56.

d see R.V.

Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece over against the going up ¹⁹to the armoury at the turning of the wall. 20 After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece, from the turning of the wall unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. 21 After him repaired ²⁰Meremoth the son of Urijah the son of Koz another piece, from the door of the house of Eliashib even to the end of the house of Eliashib. 22 And after him repaired the priests, the men of the ²¹plain. 23 After him repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house. After him repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah by his house. 24 After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad another piece, from the house of Azariah unto the ²²turning of the wall, even unto the corner. 25 Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning of the wall, and ²³the tower which ²⁴lieth out from the king's high house, that was by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of I'arosh. 26 Moreover the ²⁵Nethinims dwelt in ²⁶Ophel, unto the place over against the water-gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out. 27 After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that ²⁷lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel. 28 From above the ²⁸horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house. 29 After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate. 30 After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and

¹⁹ Lit. "the armoury of the corner," the north-west corner of the special wall of the city of David (Sp. Com.). The armoury in the house of the priest of Lebanon may have given the name (see 1 Kings x. 17-21, xiv. 26). "The armour of the house of the priest" (Isaiah xxii. 8).

²⁰ He had already repaired another portion of the wall (v. 4).

²¹ The plain, i.e. the Jordan valley.
The Jordan valley.

²² The turning of the wall. "Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall" (2 Chron. xxvi. 9).

²³ Evidently a position of importance in the defence of the city.

²⁴ Or projected prominently from the wall of the city. It was "probably a watch tower commanding the valley of the Kedron, and all the approaches of the city from the south-east, the east, and the north-east." (Sp. Com.).

Every palace in ancient times had its prison.

²⁵ Nethinim, note p. 24.

²⁶ Ophel, see p. lv.

²⁷ Another watch tower, also projecting beyond the wall. It would form part of the defences of the Temple.

²⁸ Athaliah was put to death near this gate (2 Kings xi. 16).

The Priests and Levites seem to have repaired all the walls near to the temple.

Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece. After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber. ³¹ After him repaired ²⁹ Malchiah the goldsmith's son unto ³⁰ the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and to the ³¹ going up of the corner. ³² And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.

²⁹Lit. "One of the goldsmiths," i.e. a member of one of the trade guilds of goldsmiths.

³⁰Lit. "the house of the Nethinim" (see p. 24, and also p. lv.).

³¹going up = ascent. At this spot there is a very steep ascent.

Opposition of the Samaritans. They Ridicule the Work.

4. But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was ¹wroth, and took great indignation, and ²mocked the Jews. ² And he spake before his ³brethren and the ⁴army of Samaria, and said, What do these ⁵feeble Jews? ^a*will they fortify themselves?* ⁶will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? ⁷will they revive the stones out of the heaps ^b*of the rubbish which are burned?* ³ Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if ⁹a fox go up, he shall even ¹⁰break down their stone wall. ⁴ ¹¹Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and ^d*turn* their reproach upon their own head, and

¹Jealous of the authority of Nehemiah.

²He dared not openly attack one commissioned by the King of Persia, so vents his spleen in spiteful mockery.

³His counsellors and confederates.

⁴The armed men under Samaritan authority.

⁵Both in number and power as compared with surrounding nations.

⁶Do they think that they have only to sacrifice to their God and the work will be done? will they complete so great a work offhand?

⁷Will they attempt to put these burnt stones together again? i.e. do they hope to work a miracle?

⁸It is the stones that are burnt.

⁹Jackals, which infested ruins (Lam. v. 18). and vineyards (Cant. ii. 15).

^a see R.V. (margin). ^b see R.V. comment. p. 56.
^c see R.V. (margin). ^d see R.V.

¹⁰Note the irony. A fox breaking through the wall of the city as easily as he would enter ruins or slip through a vineyard fence. Compare the ironical leap of Ilemus over the walls that Romulus was erecting.

¹¹For parenthetical prayers see p. 4.

^{12a} give them for a prey in the land of captivity: 5 And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger ¹³before the builders. 6 So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto ^{14b}the half thereof: for the people had a ¹⁵mind to work.

a see R.V. b see R.V. comment, p. 56.

¹²Let them suffer captivity as we have done.

¹³The words of irony (v. 2, 3) had been spoken openly before those engaged in building the wall.

¹⁴Raised all round to half the height intended. The wall was now a complete circuit without gaps or breaches.

¹⁵i.e. their heart was in the work.

The Threats of the Adversaries.

7 But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the ¹Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that ^athe walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth. 8 And conspired all of them together to come and to ²fight against Jerusalem, and ^bto hinder it. 9 Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a ³watch ⁴against them day and night, because of them. 10 And ⁵Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. 11 And our adversaries said, They shall not know neither see, till we come ^cin the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease. 12 And it came to pass, that when the ⁶Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ^dten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.

a see R.V. b see R.V. c see R.V. d see R.V. comment, p. 57.

p. xlii. p. xlii. p. xxviii p. xxvii. p. xxix.

¹Either these nations, which is not an impossible theory, as the Persian government would not be strong enough to repress entirely such a petty feud, or warriors from these tribes forming part of the army of Samaria (V. 2) Such an attack might well escape the notice of the King of Persia.

Ridicule is now replaced by rage when they see the progress of the work.

²Posted sentinels.

⁴Over against, i.e. opposite their camp or camps.

⁵The Jews (i.e. the people in Jerusalem).

Three difficulties stated:

(1) The incessant labour of working and watching (v. 10).

(2) The fear of a sudden surprise attack (v. 11).

(3) The appeal of the village Jews for their able-bodied men to return to them (v. 12), either (1) for defence of their own villages or (2) to save their lives when the Samaritans should assault the city.

⁶i.e. the Jews dwelling in places bordering on Samaria.

7 = repeatedly.

The R.V. gives the better rendering. The Jews inhabiting villages bordering on Samaria entreat their fellow villagers, who had gone up to Jerusalem to assist in the work of rebuilding the walls, to return to their homes.

Nehemiah's Measures for Defence.

He had to provide—

- (1) For the continuous work of building the wall.
- (2) For the protection of the workers against attack, especially sudden attack.

So he arranged—

- (1) The people armed according to families at the places where the defence was weakest.
- (2) Divided his own bodyguard into two bands, one half working, the other half under arms and holding those weapons of the workers that would impede their labour.

NOTE.—these weapons are spears, bows, shields, and mail armour. Not the swords which the workmen could wear without inconvenience.

- (3) The workmen were to keep their weapons as they laboured. The carriers of burdens to carry their load with one hand and keep their weapon in the other. The masons to have their swords girded to their side.
- (4) The nobles were behind ready to direct.
Thus there were three lines of defenders.
 - (a) The workers at the wall—all with weapons to their hand.
 - (b) The armed men behind the workers.
 - (c) The rulers or nobles ready to give orders and lead their men.
- (5) Nehemiah himself kept a trumpeter with him to sound the alarm. He would probably keep moving from place to place encouraging the workers and maintaining vigilance.
- (6) The personal work of Nehemiah was so continuous that he, his relatives, personal attendants and body-guard did not put off their clothes, and even when washing kept their weapons close to their hand.

Nehemiah's Measures for Defence.

13. Therefore set I ^ain the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people ²after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. 14 And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, ³Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your ⁴brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. 15 And it came to pass, when our enemies ⁵heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to

^a see R.V. comment, p. 57.

¹As the A.V. stands Nehemiah set guards at the places where the walls were not on a steep slope, and so likely to be the object of attack. The actual position of the defenders was on higher ground behind the wall.

²The best arrangement for united effort in fighting. The "families" would be defending their own home, and the feeling of clanship would give them discipline and organization.

³Uttered either on his tour of inspection or upon the appearance of the enemy—the latter the more probable (v. 15).

⁴All was at stake:

- (1) Nationality = brethren.
- (2) Home = sons and daughters.
- (3) Domestic affection = wives.

(4) The Messianic promise = houses. The hope of begetting the Messiah was prominent in the careful preservation of family lineage.

⁵The enemy find Nehemiah prepared, so make no attack.

nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work. 16 And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my ⁶servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the ⁷*habergeons*; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. 17 They which ⁸builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. 18 For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And ⁹he that sounded the trumpet was by me. 19 And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and ¹⁰large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. 20 In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us. 21 So we ¹¹laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears ¹²from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. 22 Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, ¹³Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and ¹⁴labour on the day. 23 So neither I, nor my ¹⁵brethren, nor my ¹⁶servants, nor the men of the ¹⁷guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, ¹⁸saving that every one put them off for washing.

a see R.V. b see R.V. c see R.V. d see R.V.
comment, p. 57.

⁶His own retinue or body-guard.

⁷Habergeon = a coat of mail for protecting the head and breast (*hals, neck; bergeon, to protect*).

⁸Two classes of workmen

(1) The carriers of burdens and the loaders (v. 17). These had one hand free and carried a weapon in it.

(2) The actual builders (v. 18) = the masons who would require both hands for their work; these wore a sword girded at their side.

⁹The trumpeter, to sound the call to arms, stood by Nehemiah ready to give the signal at his word.

¹⁰Wide, i.e. going on at places far apart.

¹¹From early morning till late at night—i.e. as long as the light lasted.

¹²No one was to return to his own village for the night, but to stay in Jerusalem, that they might.

(1) Assist in guarding the city at night.

(2) Be ready to go to work on the walls at once in the morning.

¹³Relatives.

¹⁴Personal attendants (Jews).

¹⁵The body-guard assigned to him as governor (possibly foreigners).

Difficulties within the City. The Misery of the People.

5. And there was a great cry of the ¹people and of their wives against their ²brethren the Jews. ² For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many: therefore ^a*we take up* corn for them, that we may eat, and live. ³ Some also there were that said, We ^b*have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the* ³*dearth*. ⁴ There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards. ⁵ Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought ^c*unto bondage* already: ⁴*neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards.*

a see R.V. comment, p. 57. *b* see R.V. *c* see R.V.

¹= the poorer classes.
²= the rich classes.

The classes of the distressed:—

- (1) The workers on the walls, who, whilst engaged in this work had been unable to earn food for themselves and their families (v. 2).
- (2) Those who had mortgaged their lands for food (v. 3).
- (3) Those who had borrowed money in order to pay the taxes.

It would appear that there was a menace in the complaint.

³ Either an actual famine in the land or that so many had been engaged in the work and pent up in the city that provisions were scarce.

The distress was great, lands and property mortgaged, children sold as slaves.

The high interest charged upon loans increased the distress.

⁴ The complaint.
i.e. we have neither lands nor money remaining.

Jewish Laws on Slavery.

A Hebrew might become a slave to a fellow Hebrew for three causes.

- (1) **Poverty.** The debtor might sell himself, but it does not appear clear that the creditor could (Lev. xxv. 25-39).
- (2) **Theft.** The man might be sold as a slave if his property was not sufficient to provide the restitution prescribed by the law. He was required to work out the value by service (Ex. xxii. 1-3).
- (3) **A Parent** might sell his daughter, not as an ordinary maidservant, but with the view to concubinage (Ex. xxi. 7).

The term of bondage could be terminated—

- (1) By payment of claims.
- (2) By the recurrence of the year of Jubilee (Lev. xxv. 40).
- (3) By the having served six years (Ex. xxi. 2).

Elishta increased the widow's oil, and thus saved her the necessity of selling her two sons as bondmen to satisfy the claims of her creditor (2 Kings iv. 1-7).

Laws on Usury.

Interest could be taken from a foreigner, but it was absolutely forbidden to take any from a Hebrew (Deut. xxiii. 19, 23).

Relief of the poor by loans was enjoined, and excuses for evading this law were forbidden.

Pledges for return of the loan could be taken with certain limitations in favour of the poor: as

(1) the outer garments, which served as the cloak by day, and as the bed covering by night, must be returned before sunset.

(2) A widow's garment could not be taken in pledge.

(3) Nor could either the upper or lower millstone be deposited in pledge.

The practice of mortgaging land, often at exorbitant interest, had its beginning during the captivity. The rate was one in 100 per month or twelve per cent. per annum (v. 11).

Measures to relieve the Distress.

6 And I was very ¹angry when I heard their cry and these words. 7 Then I consulted with myself, and I ²rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, ³Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I ⁴set a great assembly against them. 8 And I said unto them, ⁵We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even ⁶sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then ⁷held they their peace, and ⁸found nothing to answer. 9 Also I said, ⁹It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the ¹⁰reproach of the heathen our enemies? 10 ¹¹I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, ¹²might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, ¹³let us leave off this usury. 11 Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the ¹⁴hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them. 12 Then said they, ¹⁵We will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took ¹⁶an oath of them, that they should do according to this pro-

¹ (1) At the excessive usury.

(2) At the want of patriotism which would make gain out of brother Jews in such a manner and at such a time.

² contended with = Argued the matter with them. Persuasion seems to have failed, so Nehemiah held an indignation meeting against them.

³ Ye lend upon pledge.

⁴ A contrast.

Nehemiah and others had spent money in redeeming Jews sold to heathen masters.

These men (the usurers) caused Jews to be sold for gain.

⁵ Cause to be sold.

⁶ They could not justify their conduct.

⁷ Because your conduct gives our adversaries an opportunity to reproach us.

⁸ Nehemiah himself had taken interest, but had not lent on pledge.

⁹ Give up this system of taking pledges. It was the exacting of pledges that had ruined the poor Jews.

¹⁰ i.e. per month = twelve per cent. per annum.

¹¹ Two points required redress—

(1) The restoration of lands held on pledge.

(2) The remission of the heavy interest.

Unanimous assent is given—

(1) To restore the pledges.

(2) Not to exact interest in the future.

¹² Such an oath before the priests was not only a solemn act but became legally binding.

a see R.V. comment, p. 58. b see R.V. c see R.V. d see R.V. e see R.V. and comment, p. 58.

mise. 13 Also I shook my ¹³lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise.

¹³ The folds of his girdle—the oriental pocket. A symbolical act, signifying that the man who broke this covenant should be emptied of all his possessions just as Nehemiah emptied his pocket, and should be cast out of God's favour just as Nehemiah cast everything out of the folds of his dress.

The Generosity of Nehemiah.

14. Moreover from the time that ¹I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, ⁵twelve years, I and my brethren ²have not eaten the bread of the governor. 15 But the ⁶former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and ^a*had taken of them* bread and wine, beside ⁷forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God. 16 Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither ³bought we any land: and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work. 17 Moreover there were at ⁴*my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers*, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us. 18 Now that which was prepared for me ^c*daily* was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and ⁸once in ten days

¹ Nehemiah recounts how he had relieved the poorer Jews in other ways.

²(1) He had not laid upon them any taxation to support himself and his court.

³(2) He had not bought up the land of the poor, but had laboured with them in building the wall.

⁴(3) He had daily kept a free table—150 Jews besides foreign officials had partaken of his bounty.

⁵(4) This had continued for twelve years during the whole of his governorship. The Persian governors received no salary, but were supported by the province they governed. The taxation was partly in money, partly in produce.

⁶ Former governors had not only enacted this contribution but had allowed their under-officers to oppress the people.

⁷ Forty shekels a day = about £5. The expense is calculated by the quantity of provisions consumed.

⁸ The stock of wine was replenished every ten days, not that wine was drunk only once in ten days.

a see R.V. b see R.V. c see R.V.

I provided this myself—I did not claim my rights as governor, and require the province to be taxed to furnish my table.

store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this required not I the bread of the governor, because the ⁹bondage was heavy upon this people. 19 ¹⁰Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.

⁹ Tribute paid to the Persian king.

¹⁰ See p. 4.

Attempts to Hinder the Work. Opposition from Without.

5. Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem, the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I ¹had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors ^{a2}*upon the gates*;) 2 That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the ³plain of Ono. But they ⁴thought to do me mischief. 3 And I sent messengers unto them, saying, ⁵I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: ⁶why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? 4 Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner. 5 Then sent Sanballat his ⁷servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an ⁸open letter in his hand; 6 Wherein was written, It is reported among the ⁹*heathen*, and ¹⁰Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, ¹¹that thou *mayest be their king*, according to ¹²these words. 7 And thou hast

A twofold attempt on the part of Sanballat and the others—

(1) To entice Nehemiah out of the city. An attempt at assassination.

(2) To play upon the fears of the Jews by representing that Nehemiah was contemplating revolt.

¹ To the full height. All round the city.

² *i.e.* In the fortified gateways. Naturally the last part of the work.

³ At least twenty miles from Jerusalem (p. xxxv.), requiring an absence of at least three days.

⁴ They meditate assassination. Nehemiah so far from assistance would be at their mercy.

⁵ Nehemiah will allow nothing to interfere with the work.

⁶ In his absence the people may slacken their zeal.

⁷ Tobiah.

⁸ Open = not sealed.

The letter was "open" that all might read the charges alleged against Nehemiah, and be deterred from continuing the work.

It was also an insult—the letter should have been sealed.

⁹ Among the surrounding nations.

¹⁰ Gashem, therefore no mere rumour, but an official report to the king of Persia.

^a see R.V. comment, p. 58. ^b see R.V. comment, p. 58. ^c see R.V.

¹¹ The same charge as that preferred by Rehum against Zerubbabel (Ezra iv. 12-16).

¹² These reports about thee.

also appointed ¹³prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah; and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and ¹⁴let us take counsel together. 8 Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart. 9 For they all ^amade us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. ¹⁵Now, therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.

^a see R.V.

¹³ Prophets—*e.g.* Malachi, may have supported Nehemiah, as Haggai and Zechariah encouraged Zerubbabel. Sanballat hints that these prophets had been bribed by Nehemiah.

¹⁴ As if he were a friend desirous of assisting Nehemiah to refute the charges.

Note. The charges are against Nehemiah personally, not against the Jews—an artful design to alienate the people from Nehemiah and the work.

¹⁵ An ejaculatory prayer (see p. 4).

Intrigues within the City.

10 Afterward I came unto the house of ¹Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who was ²shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee; ³yea, in the night will they come to slay thee. 11 And I said, ⁴Should ⁵such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, ^abeing as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. 12 And, ⁶lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. 13 ^bTherefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, ⁷and do so, and sin, and that they might

^a see R.V. comment, p. 58. ^b see R.V. comment, p. 59.

¹ A false prophet hired by Sanballat to deceive Nehemiah.

² (1) For some ceremonial uncleanness, or

(2) Under pretence that his life was in danger.

(3) A symbolical act warning Nehemiah.

³ He prophesied that an attempt would be made that night to slay Nehemiah.

Safety would be best secured by taking refuge in the sanctuary.

⁴ Why should I, the governor, the leader of the movement, flee? That would be to acknowledge my guilt and to abandon the people.

⁵ *i.e.* a layman, not a priest. It is not lawful for me to enter the temple, and as governor I can protect myself.

⁶ A sudden ejaculation. The thought suddenly occurs to Nehemiah that this is

only another plot of his enemies—that the prophecy is false—the man has been hired by Sanballat and Tobiah.

⁷ It is an attempt to cause him—

(1) To commit sin—a sacrilege as being a layman in violating the sacred precincts of the Temple.

(2) To give occasion to his enemies to quote his own deeds as proof of his guilt.

have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me. 14 ⁸My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the ⁹prophetess ¹⁰Noadiah, and the rest of the ¹¹prophets, that would have put me in fear.

⁸ An ejaculatory prayer (see p. 4).

⁹ Instances of women as prophetesses are Huldah (2 Kings xxii. 14); Anna (St. Luke ii. 36).

¹⁰ Noadiah (p. xlii.).

¹¹ Clearly false prophets.

Note. Nehemiah refuses to comply with the suggestion of Shemaiah for the following reasons:—

- (1) It would imply consciousness of guilt, and would be reported to the king as bearing this construction.
- (2) It would be a degradation of his office as governor, and so weaken his authority.
- (3) It would discourage the people.
- (4) Would be a violation of the Temple, and so be a dishonour to God, and the cause of much indignation among the pious Jews.

Completion of the Wall.

15 So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month ¹Elul, in ²fifty and two days. 16 And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

¹ See months (p. 69) = latter part of August and the beginning of September.

² The time has been considered too short. Josephus states that the work took two years four months to complete.

Instances of rapid building.

(1) Alexandria built by Alexander the Great in 30 days.

- (2) The walls of Jerusalem rebuilt by Titus in three days.
- (3) The rapid erection of the walls of Athens by the Athenians urged on by Themistocles.

There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the statement for—

- (1) The wall was not entirely destroyed. In many places it only required repairing.
- (2) The materials were ready to hand. "*Much rubbish*" (ii. 14, iv. 2) = the stones of the old wall lying about.
- (3) A great number of people assisted.
- (4) The work was systematically distributed.
- (5) There were at least thirty-seven working parties. So that no party would have a very great length to repair.
- (6) The work was never interrupted, notwithstanding the menaces and intrigues of their enemies.
- (7) The people worked with zeal, they "*had a mind to work*" (iv. 6), and Nehemiah continually encouraged them.
- (8) Many who had finished the portion allotted them, set to and assisted their companions.

The Effect.

- (1) Their enemies and the heathen are compelled to acknowledge the hand of God, evident
- (a) In the favour shown by the Persian king who might have been expected to regard the work with suspicion, and to lend a ready ear to representations against the Jews.
- (b) In the failure of their efforts—they could neither intimidate nor deceive Nehemiah.

Enemies within the City.

17 Moreover ¹in those days the nobles of Judah sent ²many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of ³Tobiah came unto them. 18 For there were many in Judah ⁴sworn unto him, because he was the son in law of ⁵Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son ⁶Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam, the son of Berechiah. 19 Also ⁷they ^areported his good deeds before me, and ^buttered my words to him. And Tobiah sent ⁸letters to put me in fear.

a see R. V. b see R. V.

⁷ They spoke of Tobiah as if he were sincere in his professions of good will. They reported to Tobiah all the plans of Nehemiah, in fact let him know all that was going on in the city.

⁸ Letters of a similar character to that written by Sanballat (V. 5-8).

The intelligence communicated by the nobles would furnish material for such letters.

¹ i.e. during the work of rebuilding.

² Treasonable correspondence of the nobles with Tobiah.

³ p. xlv.

⁴ Either

(1) Sworn friendship—so Jonathan to David (1 Sam. xviii. 3), or

(2) a conspiracy under oath to hinder Nehemiah in his work.

⁵ p. xlv.

⁶ p. xli.

A double connection by marriage.

Though a slave his position as secretary to Sanballat would warrant marriage into the noble families of Judah.

Arrangements for the Protection of the City.

7. Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had ¹set up the doors, and the porters and the singers and the ²Levites were appointed, ² That I gave my brother ³Hanani, and Hananiah the ^aruler of the ^bpalace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many. ³ And I said unto them, ⁶Let not ⁷the gates of Jerusalem be ⁸opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar them: and appoint watches of the

a see R. V. comment, p. 59.

¹ Thus completing the fortifications (comp. v. 1).

² The Levites had experience in the duty of guarding the Temple. Nehemiah wisely assigns to them the charge of the city.

³ (p. xl.). (See chap. i. 2).

⁴ Governor (p. 59).

⁵ Castle (see p. 59).

⁶ An unusual practice. City gates were usually opened at sunrise and closed at sunset. The object of the regulation was to guard against surprise.

⁷ The gates were not to be opened till the people were stirring and about.

⁸ The precautions are precise.

(1) Gates not to be opened till all the people are up and about.

(2) The guard always to be present at the opening and shutting of the gates.

(3) The inhabitants were divided into companies—a particular post was assigned to each company, and every man had to take his turn on guard.

(4) Each man was responsible for guarding his own house.

inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one to be over against his house. 4 Now the city was *large and great*: but the people were ⁹few therein, and the houses were not builded.

^a see R. V.

⁹ 42,360 returned with Zerubbabel, and less than 2,000 with Ezra. Others had come at different times, but the total could not exceed 50,000, and many of these were spread over the whole of Judæa. The population of the city could not have exceeded 5,000.

The Register of those that returned with Zerubbabel.

5 And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I ¹found a register of the genealogy of them that came up at the ²first, and found written therein.

Nehemiah now intends to provide Jerusalem with inhabitants. He must first take a census of the people which he makes by their genealogy, i.e. register according to fathers' houses.
¹ Found i.e. in the archives.
² With Zerubbabel.

I. The People.

6 These are the children of the province, that went up out of the captivity, of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city; 7 Who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number, I say, of the men of the people of Israel was this; 8 The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two. 9 The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two. 10 The children of Arah, six hundred fifty and two. 11 The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand and eight hundred and eighteen. 12 The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four. 13 The children of Zattu, eight hundred forty and five. 14 The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore. 15 The children of Binnui, six hundred forty and eight. 16 The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and eight. 17 The children of Azgad, two thousand three hundred twenty and two. 18 The children of Adonikam, six hundred threescore and seven. 19 The children of Bigvai, two thousand threescore and seven. 20 The children of Adin, six hundred fifty and five. 21 The

children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight. 22 The children of Hashum, three hundred twenty and eight. 23 The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and four. 24 The children of Hariph, an hundred and twelve. 25 The children of Gibeon, ninety and five. 26 The men of Bethlehem and Netophah, an hundred fourscore and eight. 27 The men of Anathoth, an hundred twenty and eight. 28 The men of Beth-azmaveth, forty and two. 29 The men of Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred forty and three. 30 The men of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one. 31 The men of Michmas, an hundred and twenty and two. 32 The men of Beth-el and Ai, an hundred twenty and three. 33 The men of the other Nebo, fifty and two. 34 The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four. 35 The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty. 36 The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five. 37 The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and one. 38 The children of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty.

II. The Priests.

39 The priests : the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three. 40 The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two. 41 The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven. 42 The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.

III. The Levites.

Three classes.

(1) Levites proper. (2) Singers. (3) Doorkeepers.

43 The Levites : the children of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, and of the children of Hodevah, seventy and four.

44 The singers : the children of Asaph, an hundred forty and eight.

45 The porters : the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, an hundred thirty and eight.

IV. The Nethinim. (See Note)

46 The *Nethinims* : the children of Ziha, the children of Hashupha, the children of Tabbaoth, 47 The children of Keros, the children of Sia, the children of Padon, 48 The children

of Lebana, the children of Hagaba, the children of Shalmal,
 49 The children of Hanan, the children of Giddel, the
 children of Gahar, 50 The children of Reaiah, the children
 of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, 51 The children of
 Gazzam, the children of Uzza, the children of Phaseah, 52
 The children of Besai, the children of Meunim, the children
 of Nephishesim, 53 The children of Bakbuk, the children
 of Hakupha, the children of Harhur. 54 The children of
 Bazlith, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha, 55
 The children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of
 Tamah, 56 The children of Nezia, the children of Hatipha.

a Should be *Nethinim*—*im* is the sign of the plural = *those given*—a name applied to the class because they were given to the Levites as helpers. (Hieroduli, or temple bondsmen). They performed the lowest and most laborious duties of the Temple. They were foreigners and originally heathens, either prisoners of war, or Canaanites left in the land. We have several notices of their assignment to the service of the Sanctuary:

(1) Moses assigned some of the captured Midianites to the Levites, "*which kept the charge of the tabernacle*" (Numb. xxxi. 47).

(2) Joshua made the Gibeonites "*hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord*" (Josh. ix. 27).

(3) David and other kings enlarged their numbers (Ezra viii. 20).

It would appear that they gradually ceased to be regarded as slaves, and to be considered a special class (the lowest) of the Temple servants. Their voluntary return from exile to take their former low position considerably raised their status; from this time the position was honourable.

V. The Children of Solomon's Servants (See Note).

57 The children of Solomon's servants : the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Perida, 58 The children of Jaala, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel, 59 The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Amon. 60 All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, were three hundred ninety and two. 61 And these were they which went up also from Tel-melah, Telharesha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer : but they could not shew their "*fathers' house*," nor their "*seed*," whether they were of Israel. 62 The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred forty and two.

a see R.V. comment, p. 59. *b* = pedigree.

¹The descendants of the Canaanitish nations whom Solomon compelled to forced labour. "*And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel. Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bond service unto this day*" (1 Kings ix. 20-21).

Solomon's great works on the Temple, Palaces and Jerusalem originated this system of forced service. Many of these labourers worked at Lebanon and in the quarries, and others in Jerusalem on the buildings.

VI. Priests and Levites of Uncertain Genealogy.

63 And of the priests : the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of ¹Barzillai, which took ²one of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite to wife, and was called after their name. 64 ³These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found : therefore ^a*were they, as* ⁴*polluted*, put from the priesthood. 65 And the ⁵Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not ⁶eat of the most ⁷holy things, till there stood up a priest with ⁸Urim and Thummim.

^a see R. V. and comment p 59.

¹ Barzillai, a rich Gileadite, who lived at Mahanaim. He assisted David when he fled from his son Absalom. On David's return Barzillai, on the ground of his great age, declined the invitation of the king to go to Jerusalem and settle there, but his son Chimham accompanied David to Jerusalem, and seems to have settled in Bethlehem, where he founded a family called after his own name (Jer. xli 17).

² One of the daughters of Barzillai married a priest, who took the family name. Probably this daughter was the heiress of Barzillai.

³ They were unable to show their descent from the great houses or families unto which the tribes were divided. This insistence on genealogical accuracy is an important feature in the return of the Jews from captivity.

⁴ Levitically or ceremonially disqualified.

⁵ Tirshatha (Glossary, p. 64).

⁶ Have any share of the offerings on which the priests subsisted. These would be—(1) the meat (*meal*) offering (Lev. ii. 3-10), (2), the sin offering (Lev. vii. 26), (3), the guilt offering (Lev. vii. 6), and the peace offering (Lev. vii. 31-34), of which certain portions were set aside for the priests.

⁷ The term "*most holy*" is important. These men were not debarred from partaking of the holy things, *i.e.*, the thank-offering, the first-fruits, the tithe and the firstlings of the flock.

The prohibition excluded them from consecrating, from entering the holy place and from offering sacrifice.

⁸ Urim and Thummim (Glossary, p 64).

VII. The Total.

66 The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore. 67 Beside their manservants and their maidservants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven : and they had two hundred forty and five singing men and singing women. 68 Their ¹horses, seven hundred thirty and six : their ²mules, two hundred forty and five : 69 Their ³camels, four hundred thirty and five : six thousand seven hundred and twenty ⁴asses.

¹ Horses, the first mention of horses as used for ordinary purposes; hitherto always named in connection with war. A sign of the increase of wealth to the Jews at Babylon.

² Mules, used for riding by the wealthier classes.

³ Camels, beasts of burden, carrying the tents and baggage.

⁴ Asses, used by the poorer classes.

VIII. The Offerings.

70 And some of the ^achief of the fathers gave unto the work. The Tirshatha gave ^bto the treasure a thousand drams of gold, fifty basons, five hundred and thirty priests' garments. 71 And some of the chief of the fathers gave ^bto the treasure of the work twenty thousand ^cdrams of gold, and two thousand and two hundred ²pound of silver. 72 And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand ¹drams of gold, and two thousand ²pound of silver, and three-score and seven priests' garments. 73 So the priests, and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and some of the people, and the Nethinims, and all Israel, ³dwelt in their cities; and when the ⁴seventh ⁵month came, the children of Israel were in their cities.

a see R.V., comment, p. 59. b see R.V. c see R.V. comment, p. 60.

¹ Dram = a daric, a Persian gold coin worth a little more than the English guinea (Glossary, p. 65).

² Pound. Heb. *Maneh* (Glossary, p. 66).

³ Gradually the people settled into the cities of their families or houses.

⁴ The month Tisri—a sacred month.

In it were on the

1st day—The Feast of Trumpets (Numb. xxix. 1).

10th day—The Great Day of Atonement (Numb. xxix. 7).

15th day—The Feast of Tabernacles (Numb. xxix. 12).

⁵ The 7th month of the year of the return.

The Book of Law Read.

8. And all the people gathered themselves together as ¹one man into the ^{a2}street that was before the ³water gate; and they spake unto ⁴Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. 2 And ⁵Ezra the priest brought the ⁶law before the congregation both of men and women, and ⁷all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the ⁸seventh month. 3 And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the ^{b9}morning until midday, before the men and the women, and

¹ There was no one absent.

² A court or square between the watergate in the city wall and the Eastern gate of the Temple. Now the Harem area.

³ see p. lvi.

⁴ The first mention of Ezra in Nehemiah.

For note on absence of previous mention of name see p. xix.

⁵ Ezra (Intro. p. xviii.).

⁶ Book of the law (see p. xix.).

⁷ All who reached years of discretion—who could hear and understand.

⁸ Tisri, see p. 70. See v. 1. An important day—the Feast of Trumpets (p. xxv), a day "holy convocation"—the most important new moon (p. xxv.).

⁹ From daylight. The reading was shared among those on the platform.

a see R.V. comment, p. 60. b see R.V.

those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. 4 And Ezra the scribe stood upon a ¹⁰pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiyah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. 5 And Ezra ¹¹opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he ¹¹opened it, all the people ¹²stood up: 6 And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands; and they ¹³bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. 7 Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, ¹⁴caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. 8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and ^a*gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.* 9 And Nehemiah, which is the ¹⁵Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is ¹⁶holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. 10 Then he said

¹⁰ Lit. *tower* = a raised platform: fourteen persons were on it.

Six on his right.
Seven on his left.

¹¹ Esdras gives seven on the right, possibly a name has dropped out.

¹¹ Unrolled.

¹² The attitude of reverence and attention. Adopted either out of reverence to the law or whilst Ezra prayed. The usual posture for prayer with the Jews was "to stand."

¹³ Prostrated themselves in adoration and humility.

¹⁴ Either by translating the Hebrew into Aramaic (see p. xxi.) or by expounding difficult passages, i.e. they expounded as they read.

¹⁵ The change from "*pelcah*" to "*Tirshatha*" is an indication that this portion of the book is not written by Nehemiah.

¹⁶ Holy, see v 2. A sacred day—one to be kept with joy. The people had burst into grief when they saw how they had broken the law.

unto them, Go your way, ¹¹eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength. ¹¹ So the Levites ¹²stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. ¹² And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and ¹³to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

¹⁷ "Eat the fat and drink the sweet" may have reference to the portions of the offerings that were eaten and the sweet wine of their vineyards—but it is better to regard it as a proverbial expression "eat, drink and be merry"—for this is a time of joy and gladness, not an occasion for grief and mourning.

¹⁸ Calmed their sorrow by repeating the words of Ezra and explaining the character of the day. They comprehended the reasons why they should rejoice.

¹³ A reference to the custom of distributing food on festal occasions.

The Feast of Tabernacles.

¹³. And on the second day were gathered together the ^achief of the fathers of all the people, the priests and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, ^beven to ²understand the words of the law. ¹⁴ And they ³found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in ⁴booths in the ⁵feast of the seventh month: ¹⁵ And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the ⁶mount, and fetch olive branches, and ^cpine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written. ¹⁶ So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the ⁸roof of his house, and in their ⁹courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the ¹⁰street of the

¹ Heads of houses (see p. 59).

² To consider, i.e. to gain further instruction.

³ They find the precepts of the law concerning the Feast of Tabernacles.

⁴ Booths or huts formed of the boughs of trees (see p. 62).

⁵ On the feast see p. xxvi.

⁶ i.e. the Mount of Olives.

⁷ Rather "branches of the oleaster or wild olive."

⁸ The roofs of Eastern houses are flat (p. 69).

⁹ Courtyards. Eastern houses are built round a quadrangle (p. 69).

¹⁰ See v. 1.

A square or court inside the gate.

^a see R.V. comment, p. 59. ^b see R.V. ^c see R.V. and note 6.

water gate, and in the ^astreet of the ¹¹gate of Ephraim. 17 And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of ¹²Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. 18 ¹³Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the ¹⁴eighth day was a solemn assembly, ^baccording unto the manner.

a see R.V. comment, p. 60. *b* see R.V. comment, p. 60.

According to the manner.

Either (1) according to the custom, *i.e.* as was customary. This would convey the idea, that the celebration of the feast was customary or (2) according to the ordinance of the law—*i.e.* in accordance with the regulations prescribed by the Levitical law.

The Solemn Fast.

9. Now in the ¹twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with ²sackclothes, and ³earth upon them. 2 And the ⁴seed of Israel ⁵separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. 3 And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one ⁶fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God.

¹¹ In the centre of the north wall of Jerusalem, taking its name from the road issuing from it, leading to the territory of Ephraim.

¹³ Joshua. Not that the feast had not been kept, but it had never been kept with such rejoicing and in so strict a manner. Never had so many persons dwelt in booths. Solomon kept the feast with great solemnity and magnificence (2 Kings viii. 2).

Zerubbabel kept the feast after the restoration of the altar (Ez. iii. 4).

¹⁸ The reading continued throughout the feast.

¹⁴ Not part of the feast but a day of holy convocation (Lev. xxiii. 36).

¹ Two days after the feast—one day was allowed for rest.

² A symbol of sorrow—penitence.

³ Earth sprinkled on their heads—a sign of mourning.

⁴ Children of Israel—God's chosen people.

⁵ Either they avoided intercourse with foreigners during the fast or put away their strange (*i.e.* foreign) wives.

⁶ A Jewish day is twelve hours long.

So three hours were devoted to reading the Law, and three hours to confession or worship.

Probably the division was—

Reading from nine o'clock—the third hour (the hour of morning sacrifice) till noon.

Confession or worship from noon till three o'clock—the ninth hour (the hour of evening sacrifice).

Thus there would be no interruption of the Temple services.

Exhortation of the Levites.

4 Then stood up upon ^athe ¹stairs, of the ²Levites, Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani, and cried with a loud voice unto the Lord their God. 5 Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, ³Stand up and ^bbless the Lord your God ^cfor ever and ever: and blessed be ⁴thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

a see R.V. and note 2. b see R.V. c see R.V.

- ¹ Remove the comma.
² The stairs of the Levites, i.e. the platform or scaffold which had been erected and from which they addressed the people (see viii. 4).
³ Stand up. The people had knelt in confession v. 3. They are now to stand up for the prayer of adoration.
⁴ The name of thy glory.

The Levites' Prayer of Adoration.

1. Adoration of God as Creator, Preserver and Lord.

6 ^aThou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast ¹made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou ²preservest them all; and the ³host of heaven worshippeth thee.

a see R.V.

- ¹ God the Creator of heaven and earth.
² God the Preserver.
 preservest=Givest life to.
³ God the Lord of all,—the only object of worship.

2. The Choice of Abraham. God's Covenant with him.

7 Thou art the Lord the God, who didst ¹choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of ²Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of ³Abraham; 8 And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a ⁴covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous:

- ¹ Gen. xv. 7
² See p. xxxvii.
³ Gen. xvii. 5. "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations I have made thee"
⁴ Gen. xvii. 7-8.

The Hivites are omitted.

3. The Deliverance out of Egypt.

9 And ¹didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and ²heardest their cry by the Red sea; 10 And shewedst ³signs and ⁴wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they ⁵dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day. 11 And thou didst ⁶divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their ⁷persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a ⁸stone into the mighty waters.

a see R. V. b see R. V. comment, p. 60.

¹ Ex. iii. 7. "I have surely seen the affliction of my people."

² Ex. xiv. 10. "And behold the Egyptians marched after them, and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord."

³ Signs by Moses and Aaron.

⁴ Wonders in the plagues. (See Ex. vii-xii, also Deut. vi. 23).

⁵ The words of Jethro (Ex. xviii. 11).

⁶ Ex. xiv. 21.

⁷ persecutors=pursuers.

⁸ Ex. xv. 6.

4. God leads them in the Wilderness.

12 Moreover thou ¹leddest them in the day by a ²cloudy pillar; and in the night by a ³pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go.

¹ Ex. xiv. 19, 20.

² In a pillar of cloud by day.

³ In a pillar of fire by night.

5. The Law given from Sinai.

13 Thou camest down also ¹upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: 14 And madest known unto them thy ²holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant:

¹ Ex. xix. xx.

² Ex. xx. 10-11

Not for the first time (see Gen. ii. 3). The observance of the Sabbath in the gathering of the manna is also prior to the giving of the Law from Sinai.

6. God sustains them in the Wilderness.

15 And gavest them ¹bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the ²rock for their thirst, and ³promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst ⁴sworn to give them.

¹ Manna Ex. xvi.

² From the rock at Meribah Ex. xvii. 6.

³ Commanded. The Israelites left Egypt at the command of Jehovah.

⁴ Heb. Which thou hadst lift up thine hand to give them.

7. The Rebellion and Idolatry of the Israelites

16 But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and ¹hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, 17 And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion ²appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

¹ The Israelites are often described as a stiff-necked people. Ex. xxxii. 9. xxxiii. 3, etc.

The phrase describes stubborn resistance and obstinate refusal.

² Numb. xiv. 4. "*And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return to Egypt.*" The design is confessed by the Levites to be equivalent to the act.

8. The Golden Calf and God's Mercy.

18 Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, ¹This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations; 19 Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way wherein they should go. 20 ²Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

¹ Ex. xxxii. 4.

A breach of the Second Commandment not of the First.

Their offence consisted in worshipping God in the form of a material image.

² Numbers xi. 16 when God calls upon Moses to assemble the seventy elders and promises thus. "*I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them*" i.e. upon the seventy.

9. Preservation for Forty Years in the Wilderness.

21 Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.

Deut. ii. 7 "*these forty years the Lord thy God has been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing*"

Deut. viii. 4. "*Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years.*"

10. The Conquest of the Land.

22 Moreover thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst ¹divide them into corners: so they possessed

¹ see R.V. comment, p. 61. "*Didst distribute them on all sides*" (S.C.)

the land of ²Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of ³Og king of Bashan. 23 ⁴Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it.

³ (p. xlv). ⁸ (p. xlii.).

⁴ According to the promise to Abraham. "Look now toward the heaven, and tell the stars, if thou art able to number them: and he said unto him, so shall thy seed be" (Gen. xv. 5).

11. Possession of the Land.

24 So the ¹children went in and possessed the land, and thou subduest before them the inhabitants of the land, the ²Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would. 25 And they took ³strong cities, and a ⁴fat land, and possessed houses full of ⁵all goods, ⁶wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and ⁷became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness.

¹ Of all those that went out of Egypt Joshua and Caleb alone were permitted for their faith to enter the promised land.

² Canaanites = nations of Canaan generally.

³ i.e. fenced cities, such as Jericho, Ai, and Hebron.

⁴ i.e. fat, rich soil, producing abundant crops.

⁵ = of all good things.

⁶ wells = cisterns hewn out. Necessary and valuable in such a country. Thus they became possessors of that upon which they had expended no labour (see Deut. vi. 10-11).

⁷ "Grew proud" or "wanton." It occurs only here and in two other places (S.C.).

"Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked" (Deut. xxxii. 15).

"They are waxen fat" (Jer. v. 28).

It denotes wanton insolence—the effect of luxury and prosperity.

12. Israel's Disobedience.

26 Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law ¹behind their backs, and ²slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.

¹ A mark of contempt.

² Prophets slain.

(1) Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord (1 Kings xviii. 4).

(2) Zechariah was stoned by Joash (2 Chron. xxiv. 20-22.).

(3) Urijah was put to death by Jehoiakim (Jer. xxvi. 20-23).

(4) Isaiah (tradition) was sawn asunder (Heb. xi. 27.).

13. The Times of the Judges.

27 Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their ¹enemies, who ²vexed them: and in the time of their

¹ adversaries.

² distressed.

trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them ¹saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies. 28 But after they had rest, they did evil again before thee: therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them: yet when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies;

14. God's warnings through the Prophets.

29 And ¹testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet they dealt ²proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, (which if a man do, he shall live in them;) and ³withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear. 30 Yet ⁴many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit⁵ in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the ⁶people of the lands. 31 Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.

⁸ As types of the Saviour, Jesus.

The same title is given to the judges "*which delivered them*" (Judges ii. 16).

Othniel and Ehud are styled "*a deliverer*" (Judges iii. 9-15).

Deliverer = saviour.

The allusions are to the times of the Judges characterized by:

- (1) Sin.
- (2) Repentance.
- (3) Deliverance.
- (4) Renewed sin.

in unvarying order.

¹ i.e. by means of the prophets.

² They disregarded Jehovah and his commandments.

³ Like a stubborn ox refusing to work in the yoke.

"*They refused to hearken and pulled away the shoulder*" (Zech. vii. 11).

⁴ From the days of Solomon down to the captivity.

⁵ through thy prophets.

⁶ i.e. the heathen.

5. The Punishment of Israel, a Just Reward for their Transgressions.

32 Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, ¹on our kings, on our princes, and on our

¹ The whole nation in the national divisions of

- (1) Kings and princes.
- (2) Religious orders—priests and prophets.
- (3) The people generally.

priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the ²kings of Assyria unto this day. 33 Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou has done right, but we have done wickedly: 34 Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them. 35 For they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works.

² Kings of Assyria.

- (1) Pul in the reign of Menahem (2 Kings xv. 19).
- (2) Tiglath-pileser, in the reign of Petrah (2 Kings xv. 29), and in the reign of Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 7-10).
- (3) Shalmaneser, in the reign of Hosea (2 Kings xvii. 3-41).
- (4) Sargon, in the reign of Ahaz (Is. xx. 1).
- (5) Sennacherib, in the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 13).
- (6) Esarhaddon, in the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 37), are recorded in scripture as oppressors of Israel and Judah.

16. Israel's Present State of Servitude.

36 Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, ¹we are servants in it: 37 And it yieldeth much ²increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our ³bodies, and over our ⁴cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great ⁵distress. 38 And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it, and our princes, Levites, and priests, ⁶seal unto it.

- ¹ Israel would not serve Jehovah, and now they are compelled to serve other masters.
- ² This increase should have been theirs, but it is now consumed in the payment of tribute to foreign kings.
- ³ Jews were compelled to serve in Persian armies.
- ⁴ For military service. The Persian tribute was in kind as well as in money.
- ⁵ Distress.
 - (1) In consequence of foreign taxation.
 - (2) As under God's judgment.
- ⁶ In the East covenants are rendered binding, by appending the seals of the covenanting parties.

Analysis of the Prayer of the Levites.

1. God in His character of

- (a) Creator. "*Thou hast made heaven, etc*" (v. 6).
- (b) Preserver. "*Thou preservest them all*" (v. 6).
- (c) The only object of worship. "*The host of heaven worshippeth thee*" (v. 6).

2. An acknowledgment of God's favour to Israel.

- (a) The call of Abraham. "*Who didst chose Abram*" (v. 7).
- (b) The covenant with Abraham. "*And madest a covenant with him*" (v. 8).

3. The deliverance out of Egypt.

- (a) The plagues upon Egypt. "*And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh*" (v. 10).
- (b) The dividing of the Red Sea. "*Thou didst divide the sea before them*" (v. 11).
- (c) God's dealings with them in the wilderness.
 - (1) Leading them by day and night. "*Thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar, and in the night by a pillar of fire*" (v. 12).
 - (2) The giving of the law on Sinai. "*Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai*" (v. 13).
 - (3) The confirmation of the Sabbath. "*And madest known to them thy holy Sabbath*" (v. 14).
 - (4) Feeding them in the wilderness with
 - (a) Bread from heaven. "*Thou gavest them bread from heaven*" (v. 15).
 - (b) Water from the rock. "*Thou broughtest forth water for them out of the rock*" (v. 15).
 - (5) Bringing them into the promised land. "*That they should go in to possess the land*" (v. 15).
 - (6) His mercy and long-suffering in spite
 - (a) Of their disobedience. "*And refused to obey*" (v. 17).
 - (b) Of the worship of the golden calf (v. 18).
 - (7) Instructing them by His Spirit. "*Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them*" (v. 20).
 - (8) Preserving them for forty years. "*For forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness*" (v. 21).

4. The Conquest of the Land.

- (a) The subduing of their enemies. "*Thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land*" (v. 24).
- (b) Their acquisition of the cities, houses and possessions of the Canaanites (v. 25).

5. The Times of the Judges.

- (a) Their disobedience. "*They were disobedient and rebelled against thee*" (v. 26).
- (b) The oppression of their enemies. "*Thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies*" (v. 27).
- (c) The raising up of deliverers in the persons of the Judges. "*Thou gavest them saviours*" (v. 27).
- (d) Their relapse into sin, their repentance, and the repeated deliverances in spite of their evil deeds (v. 28).

6. God's warnings to them through His prophets. "*Yet many years didst thou forbear against them, and testifiest against them by the spirit in thy prophets*" (v. 30).**7. Notwithstanding they continued in disobedience.** "*Yet they would not give ear*" (v. 30).**8. Yet God did not entirely destroy them.** "*For thy great mercies sake thou didst not utterly consume them.*"**9. An appeal to God to overlook the sins of**

- (a) The kings and princes.
- (b) The priests.
- (c) The people. (v. 31-36).

10. A description of Israel's present state of servitude.

- (a) Having neglected to serve God, they are now the vassals of foreign monarchs (v. 36).
- (b) The increase of their land which should have been theirs is wasted in tribute to foreign kings (v. 37).
- (c) They and their cattle are forced into military service for their conquerors (v. 37).

11. Their willingness to make a covenant with God. "*Because of all this we make a sure covenant*" (v. 38).

A Shorter Summary.

1. **Acknowledgment of God as Creator, Preserver, and Governor** (v. 6).
2. **An epitome of God's favour to Israel** (v. 7-15).
 - (1) The call of Abraham, and the covenant made with him (v. 7, 8).
 - (2) The deliverance out of Egypt (v. 9-11).
 - (3) The guidance in the wilderness (v. 12).
 - (4) The giving of the law on Sinai; the establishment of the Sabbath (v. 13-14).
 - (5) Their sustenance in the wilderness (a) manna from heaven (b) water from the rock (v. 15).
 - (6) The conquest and possession of the land of promise (v. 16-25).
3. **God's long suffering with their stubbornness and idolatry.**
 - (1) In His readiness to pardon (v. 17).
 - (2) In instructing them by His good spirit (v. 20).
 - (3) In warning them through the prophets (v. 30).
 - (4) In His continued forbearance (v. 30).
4. **A confession of sin both national and personal.**
 - (1) In the wilderness (v. 16-23).
 - (2) In the land of Canaan (v. 24-31).
 - (3) All are guilty—kings, nobles, priests and people (v. 32-37).
5. **A statement of the judgments that had fallen upon them.**
 - (1) Under the judges (v. 27-31).
 - (2) Under the kings (v. 32-35).
 - (3) Their present state of vassalage to foreign monarchs (v. 36, 37).
6. **An acknowledgment of the justice of their punishment** (v. 33).
7. **Their willingness to make a "sure covenant" with God** (v. 38).

The List of "Those that Sealed" the Covenant.

10. Now those that sealed were, Nehemiah, the Tirshatha, the son of Hachaliah, and Zidkijah, 2 Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, 3 Pashur, Amariah, Malchijah, 4 Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, 5 Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, 6 Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, 7 Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, 8 Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah: these were the priests. 9 And the Levites: both Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel; 10 And their brethren, Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, 11 Micha, Rehob, Hashabiah, 12 Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, 13 Hodijah, Bani, Beninu, 14 The chief of the people: Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zatthu, Bani, 15 Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, 16 Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, 17 Ater, Hizkijah, Azzur, 18 Hodijah, Hashum, Bezai, 19 Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,

1st. Nehemiah as the Tirshatha.

2nd. Zidkijah or Zadok, the scribe who drew up the covenant.

3rd. The Priests (v. 2).

The names given are those of priestly houses or families, and thus we can account for the omission of the names of Ezra and Elishahib.

4th. The Levites.

Families or houses as before, not personal names.

5th. The Chiefs of the People (*plural*).

Some of these names are personal, some belong to families, some represent places, and some are independent (ELLICOTT).

20 Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, 21 Meshezabeel, Zadok, Jaddua, 22 Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, 23 Hoshea, Hananiah, Hashub, 24 Hallohesh, Pileha, Shobek, 25 Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, 26 And Ahijah, Hanan, Anan, 27 Malluch, Harim, Baanah, 28 And the ¹rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the ²porters, the ³singers, the ⁴Nethinims, and all they that had ⁵separated themselves from the ⁶people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, ⁷every one having knowledge, and having understanding;

¹ Those who were not heads of houses.

² (p. 66).

³ (p. 67).

⁴ Nethinim (p. 24).

⁵ Either (1) Jews who had remained in Palestine, and had kept themselves from the foreigners resident in the land.

Or (2) Proselytes from the heathen to the Jewish faith.

⁶ Peoples(plural)=nations.

⁷ Every one old enough to understand what he was doing.

The Solemn Oath and the Special Obligations of the Covenant.

29 They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a ¹curse, and into an ²oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes:

¹ A curse upon those who broke the covenant.

² An oath to do God's will and to keep his commandments.

1. Prohibition of Foreign Marriages.

30 And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons:

Intermarriage with the heathen had been at the root of all Israel's sin. On mixed marriages see p. xxiii.

2. Prohibition of trade on the Sabbath. Observance of the Sabbatical year.

31 And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and that we would ¹leave the seventh year, and the ²exaction of every debt.

¹ Let the land lie fallow every seventh year (Ex. xxiii. 10-11).

² To cease pledge-taking

3. A Tax of $\frac{1}{3}$ Shekel for the Temple Service.

32 Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the ¹service of the house of our God; 33 For the ²shewbread, and for the continual ^ameat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.

^a See R.V. comment, p. 61.

4. Provision for the Wood for the Altar.

34 And ¹we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the ²wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law.

5. First Fruits and Tithes.

35 And to bring the ¹firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD: 36 Also the first-born of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God: 37 And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the ²chambers of the house

¹ The Temple Tribute, which should have been half-a-shekel (Ex. xxx. 11-16) (see p. 66). The people were now poorer.
² Shewbread "The loaves of setting forth." Twelve cakes (one for each tribe) of fine flour were placed every Sabbath on the table of shewbread in the Holy Place. They were replaced by fresh loaves on the succeeding Sabbath. The priests alone ate the shewbread.

For these offerings and feasts see p. xxiv.

¹ From this institution of Nehemiah sprang a feast of "wood offering" held on the 14th day of the fifth month, Abib.

² See p. xxvi.

¹ First Fruits.

- (1) Of the ground (Lev. xxiii. 10; Ex. xxii. 29, xxiii. 16-19).
- (2) Fruit of all trees (Ex. xxxiv. 26; Deut. xxvi. 1-10; Num. xviii. 12-13).
- (3) First-born of our sons (Ex. xiii. 2; Num. xviii. 15-17).
- (4) Firstlings of cattle (Ex. xiii. 12-13; Lev. xxvii. 26).
- (5) First fruit of dough (Num. xv. 20-21).

For regulations see p. 67.

² The side chambers of the Temple (1 Kings vi. 5), used as storehouses. Hezekiah appears to have prepared a chamber specially for the reception of the tithe (2 Chron. xxxi. 11).

of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage. 38 And the ³priest the son of Aaron shall be ⁴with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the ⁵tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house. 39 For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and we will not forsake the house of our God.

³ Not the high priest. Son of Aaron marks the distinction between the priest and the Levites, children of Levi.

⁴ A priest was present when the tithes were gathered in the Levitical cities, thus preventing fraud either in the Levites exacting too great a tithe from the people, or in their withholding the share due to the priests.

⁵ The Levites received a tenth from the people and gave to the priests a tenth of all they received. The duty of collection of the tithe and delivery of the priests' share devolved upon the Levites.

THE THREE PRINCIPAL POINTS OF THE COVENANT ARE—

- (1) Not to intermarry with the heathen.
- (2) To observe the Sabbath.
- (3) To keep the Sabbatical year.

THE POINTS OF THE COVENANT.

- (1) To walk in God's law (v. 29).
- (2) To abstain from intermarrying with the heathen (v. 30).
- (3) To observe the Sabbath (v. 31).
- (4) To observe the Sabbatical year (v. 31).
- (5) To contribute $\frac{1}{3}$ shekel annually for the maintenance of the Temple worship (v. 32).
- (6) To bring the wood for the altar (v. 34).
- (7) To bring in the first fruits and the tithes (v. 35-39).

Measures Adopted to Increase the Population of Jerusalem.

11. And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring ¹one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities.

2 And the people blessed all the men, that ²willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

¹ The city was large, the inhabitants of it few, so Nehemiah increased the number of dwellers in Jerusalem by transferring one tenth of the people (chosen by lot) to the capital.

² Apparently some went of their own accord, voluntarily becoming dwellers in Jerusalem. This group is distinct from those mentioned in v. 1

LISTS.

List I. The Chiefs of the Province that dwelt at Jerusalem.

3 Now these are the ¹chief of the ²province that dwelt in Jerusalem: but in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, to wit, Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the ³Nethinims, and the ⁴children of Solomon's servants.

¹ Chiefs (word is plural). A similar list is found in 1 Chron. ix. 2-17 (see Appendix).
² Province, i.e. Judah, as a province of Persia.

³ Nethinim (see p. 24). ⁴ Children of Solomon's servants (see p. 24).

4 And at Jerusalem dwelt certain of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin. Of the children of Judah; Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalaleel, of the children of Perez; 5 And Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Col-hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni. 6 All the sons of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem were four hundred threescore and eight valiant men. 7 And these are the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jesaiah. 8 And after him Gabbai, Sallai, nine hundred twenty and eight. 9 And Joel the son Zichri was their overseer: and Judah the son of Senuah was second over the city. 10 Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin. 11 Seraiah the son of Hilkiyah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, was the ruler of the house of God. 12 And their brethren that did the work of the house were eight hundred twenty and two: and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchiah, 13 And his brethren, ^achief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two: and Amashai the son of Azareel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, 14 And their brethren, mighty men of valour, an hundred twenty and eight: and their overseer was Zabdiel, the son of one of the great men. 15 Also of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hashub the son of Azrikam, the son of

^a see R. V. comment, p. 59.

Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; 16 And Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites, had the oversight of the outward business of the house of God.

A duty distinct from the Temple worship and the care of the building and its courts.

For description of the inner business see Chap. x. 32.

The outward business would include:—

(1) The gathering of the temple tax of $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel.

(2) The collecting of the tithe.

(3) The duties discharged by the Levites as officers and judges in the provincial cities. *"Twenty and four thousand were to set forward the work of the house of the Lord; and six thousand were officers and judges"* (1 Chron. xxiii. 4).

"Chenaniah and his sons were for the outward business over Israel, for officers and judges" (1 Chron. xxvi. 29).

17 And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer: and Bakbukiah the second among his brethren, and Abda, the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. 18 All the Levites in the holy city were two hundred fourscore and four. 19 Moreover the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept the gates, were an hundred seventy and two. 20 And the residue of Israel, of the priests, and the Levites, were in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance. 21 But the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel: and Ziha and Gispa were over the Nethinims.

Ophel. The quarters of the Nethinim, on the southern spur of the Temple hill between the Tyropæon and the Kidron. It had a wall of its own (iii. 27). Ophel could be regarded either as within or without the city, according as the one wall or the other was taken. Here the Nethinim are regarded as living outside the city.

22 The overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem was Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha. Of the sons of Asaph, the singers were over the business of the house of God. 23 For it was the king's commandment concerning them, that a certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day. 24 And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of Zerah the son of Judah, was at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people.

List II. The Towns and Villages occupied by the Jews.

25 And for the villages, with their fields, some of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjath-arba, and in the villages thereof, and at Dibon, and in the villages thereof, and at Jekabzeel, and in the villages thereof, 26 And at Jeshua, and at Moladah, and at Beth-phelet. 27 And at Hazar-shual,

and at Beer-sheba, and in the villages thereof, 28 And at Ziklag, and at Mekonah, and in the villages thereof, 29 And at En-rimmon, and at Zareah, and at Jarmuth, 30 Zanoah, Adullam, and in their villages, at Lachish, and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and in the villages thereof. And they dwelt from Beer-sheba unto the valley of Hinnom. 31 The children also of Benjamin from Geba dwelt at Michmash, and Aija, and Beth-el, and in their villages, 32 And at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, 33 Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim, 34 Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, 35 Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen. 36 And of the Levites were divisions in Judah, and in Benjamin.

List III. The Priests and Levites that went up with Zerubbabel from Babylon.

12. Now these are the priests and Levites that went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, 2 Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, 3 Schechaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, 4 Iddo, Ginnetho, Abijah, 5 Miamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, 6 Shemaiah, and Joiarib, Jedaiah, 7 Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah, Jedaiah. These were the chief of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua. 8 Moreover the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, which was over the thanksgiving, he and his brethren. 9 Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, were over against them in the watches.

List IV. The Genealogy of the High Priests.

10 And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begat Joiada. 11 And Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua.

List V. The Heads of Priestly Houses,

12 And in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; 13 Of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; 14 Of Melicu, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; 15 Of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai; 16 Of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam; 17 Of Abija, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai; 18 Of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; 19 And of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; 20 Of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber; 21 Of Hilkiyah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethaneel.

List VI. The Heads of Levitical Houses.

22 The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, were recorded ^a*chief of the fathers*: also the priests, to the reign of ¹Darius the ²Persian. 23 The sons of Levi, the ^b*chief of the fathers*, were written in the book of the ³chronicles, even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib. 24 And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and ⁴Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren ⁵over against them, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, ward over against ward. 25 Mattaniah, and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, were ⁶porters keeping the ward at the ⁷thresholds of the gates. 26 These were in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe.

^a see R.V. comment, p. 59. ^b see R.V. comment, p. 59.

¹ Darius III. (Codomanus), the foe of Alexander the Great, B.C. 336-331 (p. li.).

Some commentators think Darius II. (Nothus) is referred to (p. li.).

² Persian. This may signify that these verses were written after the close of that empire.

³ Not the Chronicles of Scripture, but public registers kept after the return from the captivity.

⁴ See Intro. p. xli.

⁵ i.e. separate choirs, singing alternate responses.

either (1) antiphonally, one part of the choir answering the other (1 Chron. xvi.).

or (2) in courses, one coming in to serve as another went out (Ezra iii. 10-11)

⁶ The Temple had:

Four chief gates—north—south—east—west.

Two minor gates at Asuppim and Parbar (1 Chron. xxvi. 14-19).

The four chief porters only are named in 1 Chron. ix. 17, 24, 26.

These are the names of the families of the porters.

⁷ At the treasuries or storechambers attached to the gates of the Temple.

The Dedication of the Walls.

27 And at the ¹dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their ²places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with ³cymbals, ⁴psalteries, and with ⁵harps. 28 And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together both out of the ⁶plain country round

¹ On the date of the dedication of the walls see p. x.

² Out of the Levitical cities in which they dwell (see xi. 26).

³ p. 68.

⁴ p. 68.

⁵ p. 68.

⁶ Jerusalem is surrounded by hills. There are no plains in its neighbourhood.

The original is "Kikkar" = the plain. The word "Kikkar" is usually applied to the Jordan Valley, and if this be the meaning, only the southernmost portion of the valley can be intended. But the more probable interpretation is to take "Kikkar" in its strict meaning of "the circle," and so applied it to the country round about Jerusalem. R.V. (margin) *circuit*.

about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi; 29 Also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth: for the ⁷singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem. 30 And the priests and the Levites ⁸purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall. 31 Then ⁹I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks, whereof one went on the right hand upon the wall toward the dung gate: 32 And after them went Hoshaiab, and half of the princes of Judah, 33 And Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam, 34 Judah and Benjamin, and Shemaiah, and Jeremiah, 35 And certain of the priests' sons with trumpets; namely, Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph: 36 And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God, and Ezra the scribe before them. 37 And at the fountain gate, which was over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward. 38 And the other company of them that gave thanks went over against them, and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall; 39 And from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the fish gate,

7 2 Chron. xxiv. 15. Ezra vi. 20.

8 Self-purification must precede the dedication of the walls.

9 We may note the resumption of the first person singular (p. xiii.). The remainder of the Book is the memoir of Nehemiah.

The Dedication.

1. All Levites are brought in from Levitical cities to take part in the dedication.

2. Rites of purification are gone through, viz.

(a) Levites.

(b) People.

(c) Walls.

3. Nehemiah divides the procession into two great columns, each composed

(a) Half of the choir.

(b) Half of the princes.

(c) Half of the people.

(d) A company of musicians.

4. They started facing the Valley, or Jaffa gate, and the first column turned to the right, and the second to the left.

5. Ezra headed the people in the first column (v. 36).

Nehemiah headed the people in the second column.

6. Route of the columns.

First follows the southern wall. (Marching outside the wall).

By the Dung Gate.

The stairs of City of David.

To the Water Gate.

Second follows the northern wall.

By the tower of the Furnaces.

The Broad Wall.

The Gate of Ephraim.

The Fish Gate.

The tower of Hananeel.

The tower of Meah.

The Sheep Gate.

To the Prison Gate.

and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate: and they stood still in the prison gate. 40 So stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me: 41 And the priests; Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; 42 And Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang loud, with Jezrahiah their overseer. 43 Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.

7. We now have the two companies (having made between them a complete circuit of the walls) arrived at that portion of the Eastern wall immediately opposite the Temple.

The student should follow the course by means of the map (p. liv.).

Short Connected Account.

Nehemiah caused all the Levites to assemble at Jerusalem from the Levitical cities. Priests, Levites, people, gates and walls were purified, and then the procession was marshalled in two columns outside the city facing the Valley or Jaffa gate. Each column was led by one half of the choir, and consisted of one half of the princes and one half of the people, the rear being brought up by a special band of musicians. The first column (in which Ezra led the people), turned to the right and followed the southern wall, halting at the water gate facing east. The second column (in which Nehemiah led the people) turned to the left and followed the northern wall, halting at the prison gate facing east. Now that a complete circuit had been made, songs of rejoicing were sung and sacrifices were offered.

Levitical Organization.

44 And at that time were some appointed over the chambers ¹for the treasures, for the ²offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities ³the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that ⁴waited. 45 And both the singers and the porters

¹ To receive the offerings of the people.

² These offerings were stored in the chambers of the Temple.

³ i.e. the portions of first fruits, tithes, etc., appointed by the Law to be collected from each particular city or district.

⁴ i.e. that did service in the Temple.

kept the ⁵ward of their God, and the ward of the purification, according to the commandment of David, and of Solomon his son. 46 For in the ⁶days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God. 47 And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion : and they ⁷sanctified holy things unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified them unto the children of Aaron.

⁵ Charge *i.e.* they observed the regular times and seasons of sacrifice and thanksgiving.

⁶ When religious rites had been zealously and strictly performed. The intervening time had been a period of remissness and laxity.

⁷ Dedicated or set apart (p. 63). The people set apart the tithes for the Levites—the Levites set apart their tenths for the priests (x. 37, 38).

Separation from the Mixed Multitude.

13. ¹On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people ; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever ; 2 Because ²they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them ; howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing. 3 Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they ³separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.

¹ At that time (xii. 44), *i.e.* the day of the dedication of the walls.

Ammonite (see p. xxvii.). Moabite (see p. xxxiv.). They were not prevented from becoming proselytes, but were excluded from alliances and incorporation with the kingdom.

² See p. xxvii.

Balaam (see p. xxxix.).

³ The Israelites had married with these nations in ignorance of the law. When they heard it read, they not only separated from their wives, but also expelled the mixed multitude entirely from the congregation.

v. 13. The Ammonite, better "an Ammonite."

The Moabite, better "a Moabite."

Congregation=Assembly.

The prohibition is found in Deut. xxiii. 3-5 where it extends to the "tenth generation."

("An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation they shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever; because they met you not with bread and water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam, the son of Beor, of Pethor, of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.")

Nehemiah's Second Visit to Jerusalem.

He Vindicates the Sanctity of the Temple.

4 ¹And before this, ²Eliashib the priest, ^ahaving the oversight of the ³chamber of the house of our God, was ⁴allied unto ⁵Tobiah: 5 And he had ⁶prepared for him a ⁷great chamber, where aforetime they laid the ^ameat ⁸offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests. 6 ⁹But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of ¹⁰Babylon came I unto the king, and after ¹¹certain days obtained I leave of the king: 7 And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. 8 And it grieved me sore: therefore I ¹²cast forth all the household ¹³stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. 9 Then I commanded, and they ¹⁴cleansed the ¹⁵chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the ¹⁶frankincense.

a see R. V. *b* see R. V. comment, p. 62.

¹ Now before this, *i.e.* the return of Nehemiah from Babylon.

² Eliashib (p. xxxix.), the high priest of iii. 1.

³ The chambers, *i.e.* those built round the Temple.

⁴ Allied. The word indicates an alliance by marriage (see p. xxxix.).

⁵ Tobiah (p. xli.).

⁶ Prepared = furnished.

⁷ Great chamber. It would appear that many small chambers had been thrown into one.

The chambers intended as storehouses for the offerings designed for the Temple worship, were cleared and furnished for the occupation of Tobiah.

⁸ The offerings assigned to the priests for their maintenance.

⁹ The absence of Nehemiah explains this violation of the Temple.

¹⁰ The empire of Persia comprised Media, Persia, Assyria, Babylon, and thus the kings of Persia are described as

(1) Kings of Persia.

(2) King of Assyria (Ez. vi. 22).

(3) King of Babylon (Neh. xiii. 6).

¹¹ Certain days = an indefinite period.

¹² By virtue of his authority as Tirshatha, Nehemiah would be superior in office to Eliashib.

¹³ Stuff = goods, furniture

¹⁴ A formal purification.

¹⁵ The great chamber assigned to Tobiah.

¹⁶ Frankincense p. 63.

Provision for the Levites.

10 And I perceived that the ¹portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did

¹ The tithes had not been paid to the Levites during the absence of Nehemiah.

the work, were ²fled every one to his field. 11 Then contended I with the ³rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set ⁴them in ⁵their place. 12 Then brought ⁶all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries. 13 And ⁷I made treasurers over the treasuries, ⁸Shelemiah the priest, and ⁹Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren. 14 ¹²Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.

² Not having received the tithes, the Levites were compelled to earn their living by cultivating the lands apportioned to them in the Levitical cities.

Thus the Temple service had been neglected.

³ The rulers were to blame for allowing such neglect to pass unnoticed.

⁴ Them = the Levites. Nehemiah summoned them back from the fields.

⁵ i.e. to perform their proper duties.

⁶ The whole nation. They had confidence in Nehemiah and at once began to pay the tithe again.

⁷ To make the reform permanent Nehemiah organizes treasurers to superintend the collection of the tithe and its distribution.

⁸ Shelemiah for the Temple priests.

⁹ Zadok = the Zidkijah of x. 1. (p. xlvi.).

Zadok for the judicial priests.

Pedaiah for the Levites.

Hanan for the singers and porters (Ryle).

¹² One of the parenthetical prayers of Nehemiah (p. 4).

He prays God to remember the good services he had done for the honour of God in restoring the Temple worship.

Vindication of the Sabbath.

15 ¹In those days saw I in Judah some treading ²wine presses on the sabbath, and ³bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the ⁴day wherein they sold victuals. 16 There dwelt ⁵men of Tyre

¹ i.e. whilst he was in the country, probably on a tour of inspection.

² Wine press, see p. 65.

In captivity the Jews would have been compelled to work on the Sabbath for their foreign masters.

Thus the observance of the seventh day as a day of rest had fallen into disuse.

³ The goods were brought in on the Sabbath.

⁴ They were sold the following day when Nehemiah made his protest.

The Sin was in conveying goods on the Sabbath—not actually selling them on that day.

⁵ The Tyrians (p. xxxvii.) had established a permanent colony in Jerusalem.

also ⁶therein, which brought ⁷fish, and all manner of ⁸ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. 17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and ⁹profane the sabbath day? 18 Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. 19 And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem ¹⁰began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my ¹¹servants set I at the ¹²gates, that there should no ¹³burden be brought in on the sabbath day. 20 So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware ¹⁴lodged without Jerusalem ¹⁵once or twice. 21 Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, ¹⁶I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. 22 And I commanded the ¹⁷Levites, that they should ¹⁸cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. ¹⁹Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.

⁶ Therein = in the city.

⁷ Fish from the Mediterranean, dried or salted.

The Fish gate was so named because the fish from the north were brought into the city through it (p. lvi.).

⁸ Ware = goods for sale (p. 65).

⁹ Sin i.e. in selling goods on the Sabbath, (Jer. xvii. 21-27).

The observance of the Jewish Sabbath was a great bar to the free relations between Jews and Gentiles. The Jews in the midst of heathen nations during the period of the captivity were sorely tempted to relax Sabbatical regulations in order to cultivate friendly relations with heathen merchants.

¹⁰ The Sabbath began at sunset.

¹¹ The personal attendants of Nehemiah.

¹² To superintend the guard there, and to see that the orders of Nehemiah were obeyed.

¹³ Jews might come in or go out—but no merchandise was allowed to enter.

¹⁴ They erected booths against the wall, and were ready both to sell to any Jew who might come out of the city, and also to return to the city as soon as the gates were open.

¹⁵ This occurred for a week or two.

¹⁶ Nehemiah promptly used his authority as governor to put down this evasion of his regulations.

¹⁷ Nehemiah formally assigned the duty of guarding the gates on the Sabbath to the Levites, and thus relieved his own attendants. Such duty as providing for the proper observance of the Sabbath would fall within the province of the Levites. The guard was thus made permanent.

¹⁸ First the Levites are to purify themselves.

¹⁹ Another parenthetical prayer (p. 4).

Measures taken by Nehemiah to Vindicate the Sanctity of the Sabbath.

I. Three Breaches of the Sabbath.

1. The Jews in the country trod their wine presses on the Sabbath (v. 15).
2. They brought wine, grapes, figs, corn and other country produce into the city on the Sabbath, for sale on the next and following days.
3. Tyrian merchants brought fish and other goods and sold them on the Sabbath.

Sin. Conveyance of goods on the Sabbath.

II. Measures taken by Nehemiah to put a stop to these practices.

1. He ordered the gates of the city to be closed at sunset on the day before the Sabbath, and placed some of his own attendants at the gateways to see that his orders were carried out.
2. When the foreign merchants passed the night of the Sabbath outside the walls he threatened to punish them for this evasion of his regulations.
3. He assigned to the Levites the care of the gates of the city during the Sabbath and thus caused the regulations to become permanent.

The protest of Nehemiah against Mixed Marriages.

23 ¹In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of ²Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: 24 And their children spake half in the ³speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. 25 And I ⁴contended with them, and ⁵cursed them, and ⁶smote certain of them, and ⁷plucked off their hair, and made them swear ⁸by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. 26 Did not ⁹Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did ¹⁰outlandish women cause to sin. 27 Shall we

¹ About the same time.

² Ashdod (p. xxix.), a town of the Philistines.

Nehemiah seems to have made a journey through Judæa (v. 15). During this journey he observed the desecration of the Sabbath (v. 15), and also these foreign marriages which had probably been entered into by Jews dwelling on the borders of the nations mentioned.

³ The language of the Philistines.

The children spoke a mixed dialect partly Philistine, partly Aramaic.

⁴ As (1) With the rulers (v. 11).

(2) With the nobles (v. 17).

⁵ Reviled them:

⁶ Either in his indignation Nehemiah smote them and pulled out their hair;

Or, he ordered them to be thus punished.

⁷ To cut off the hair was a symbol of degradation (see Ezra ix. 3).

⁸ A most solemn oath.

⁹ The heathen wives of Solomon persuaded him to allow them to worship their own gods.

Thus they were the cause of the division of the kingdom and of the introduction of idolatry.

Such was the snare of foreign wives.

If Solomon, beloved of God, thus sinned in consequence of marrying a foreign wife, how much more was it likely that the ignorant common people would fall away.

¹⁰ Women from foreign lands—not of Israel.

then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives? 28 And "one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me. 29 Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.

¹¹ Manasseh (see p. xlix.). Evidently he refused to put away his foreign wife, and so was expelled from Jerusalem.

A threefold offence.

- (1) *Treasonable*, as an alliance with Nehemiah's bitterest foe.
 - (2) *A breach of the law*, and a violation of the compact made against mixed marriages in the time of Ezra.
 - (3) *Pollution of the priesthood*.
- remember them, *i.e.* by punishing them for their iniquity.

The Concluding Words of Nehemiah.

30 Thus cleansed I ¹them from all strangers, and appointed the ²wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business; 31 And for the ³wood offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits. ⁴Remember me, O my God, for good.

¹ *i.e.* the people of Israel. These verses contain a brief recapitulation of the work of Nehemiah after his return. It can be classified under two heads.

(1) Purification.

(2) Organization.

(For details see note).

² Wards = offices.

³ (Ch. x. 34. see p. xxvi.).

⁴ A final parenthetical prayer (p. 4).

Particulars of the Reforms wrought by Nehemiah on his Second Visit.

1. He restored the collection of the tithes for the maintenance of the Levites.
2. He brought back the Levites to the Temple service.
3. He restored all the Temple sacrifices and services.
4. He organized the control of the Temple Treasury.
5. He cleansed the chambers of the Temple.
6. He vindicated the Sanctity of the Sabbath by suppressing traffic and trade on that day.
7. He completely suppressed all foreign marriages.

COMMENTS
ON THE
REVISED VERSION.



MAP OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

COMMENTS

ON THE

REVISED VERSION.

"Hanani . . . came, he and certain men of Judah." (i. 2.)

Of Judah.

R.V. Out of Judah.

Not that the men were Jews, but that they had just come from the province of Judah.

"But if ye turn unto me." (i. 9.)

Turn.

R.V. Return.

A much stronger word. It denotes the action of those on "a wrong road" returning and retracing their steps in order to get upon the right road.

"For I was the King's cupbearer." (i. 11.)

R.V. "Now I was cupbearer to the King."

There is no article in the original. The A.V. would make it appear that Nehemiah was the only person who filled this office. Nehemiah was only one among several like officials, who performed the office in turn.

"That wine was before him and I took up." (ii. 1.)

R.V. When wine was before him that I took up.

The R.V. gives the actual occurrence, and states the occasion when Nehemiah made his request. The king was at a banquet and Nehemiah was in attendance as cupbearer.

"The palace which appertained." (ii. 8.)

Palace.

R.V. Castle.

Birah, the Persian word used here means castle or fortress, and is generally applied to the citadel of the capital. The king's palace or residence was usually a part of this fortified quarter of the city—hence the term "palace." The "castle" here referred to was to the north of the Temple, and subsequently became known as the famous "castle of Antonia." In the New Testament period it was the residence of the commander of the Roman garrison at Jerusalem, and there the Roman troops were quartered. Herod the Great named it "Antonia," after his great friend Mark Antony.

"Gate of the valley." (ii. 13.)

R.V. **Valley gate.**

"Gate of the fountain." (ii. 14.)

R.V. **Fountain gate.**

The R.V. gives the actual names of the gate. The A.V. seems to define their position.

"Dung port." (ii. 13.)

R.V. **Dung gate.**

Port from L. *porta* = gate.

Port from L. *portus* = harbour.

It is better to translate "Dung gate" so as to avoid ambiguity.

"Viewed the wall and turned back." (ii. 15.)

Turned back.

R.V. **I turned back.**

There are two views of this passage.

(1) That Nehemiah having traversed the eastern side of the city and examined its wall, had seen enough for his purpose and so turned back and retraced his steps.

(2) That he made his way back along the western side of the city and so made a complete circuit, returning by the same gate (valley gate) from which he had issued.

The R.V. emphasises the former view, but the latter is the more probable statement of the actual route taken by Nehemiah.

"The locks thereof, and the bars thereof." (iii. 3.)

Locks.

R.V. **Bolts.**

"It is doubtful whether 'locks' are intended. Traces of them have been found in Assyrian ruins of the 8th century B.C., and in Egypt they were probably still older. The 'key,' moreover, borne by Eliakim (Is. xxii. 22) implies the use of locks among the Jews. But the word used here (and in verses 6, 13 and 15) is thought to mean rather a 'crossbar' than a lock, while that translated 'bars' is regarded as denoting the 'hooks' or 'catches' which held the cross-bar at its two ends."—(S.C.)

"The men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah, unto the throne of the Governor on this side the river." (iii. 7.)

Unto the throne.

R.V. **Which appertained to the throne.**

The R.V. follows the rendering of Bertheau and de Witte, who with several of the older critics translate, "which belong to the jurisdiction of the governor on this side of the river," that is,

though they assisted in the work of rebuilding the walls, they were not under the government of Nehemiah, whose powers did not extend so far north as these cities.

On this side the river.

R.V. Beyond the river.

The river referred to is the Euphrates. The governor referred to is the governor of the Persian province west of the Euphrates. Writing from Babylon the province would be described as "beyond the Euphrates."

Writing from Jerusalem the province could be described as "this side of the Euphrates."

The R.V. uniformly adopts the former description, which conveys a clearer idea of the province referred to.

"The ruler of part of Mizpah."

(iii. 15.)

Part.

R.V. district.

The R.V. brings out very clearly the district of Mizpah as distinct from the town of that name.

See also v. 16, 17, 18 where *part*=*district*.

"Unto the house of the mighty."

(vii. 16.)

Mighty.

R.V. The mighty men.

At once we are reminded by the R.V. of the "*mighty men*" of King David, who formed his body guard or household troops, and for whom he may well have erected barracks near to his palace. Though the building had been destroyed its site would be well known (see note p. 9).

"Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?"

(iv. 2).

Of the rubbish which are burned.

R.V. Of rubbish seeing they are burned.

From the A.V. we might think it possible for the Jews to pick out whole stones from the heap of burnt rubbish. It is the stones that are burnt, so the hopelessness of the task is apparent. The R.V. makes this clear.

"And all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof." (iv. 6.)

Unto the half thereof.

R.V. Unto half the height thereof.

The A.V. is ambiguous. It might mean that half the circuit was complete. The wall was now continuous all round the city and raised to half the height intended.

"They said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us *they will be upon you.*" (iv. 12.)

R.V. They said unto us ten times from all places, Ye must return unto us.

The A.V. is unintelligible, especially if we remember that the words "they will be upon you," are not in the original.

The R.V. (following Bertheau) gives an intelligible version of what might have happened.

The individuals making the request are "*Jews which dwelt by them,*" *i.e.*, Jewish inhabitants of villages bordering on the Samaritans, and therefore exposed to the attacks of such enemies. Many of them had left their own villages and gone up to Jerusalem to assist in the work of restoring the walls. These would be the able-bodied men of the villages. Their friends from all the villages (places) repeatedly urged them to return. Their motives in making this request may have been either with the object of recalling them to defend their own villages, or with the desire that they might escape the slaughter that would take place if the Samaritans successfully assaulted the city.

"In the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places." (iv. 13.)

R.V. In the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in the open places.

The A.V. would make Nehemiah to guard the places where the walls were not on a steep slope, and so likely to be the object of attack. For the purpose of guarding these assailable points he placed the defenders on the higher ground behind the wall. According to the R.V. Nehemiah stationed the defenders behind the wall on lower ground (*i.e.*, they were covered by the wall) and in open places, where they could easily be manœuvred.

"None of us put off our clothes, saving that everyone put them off for washing." (iv. 23.)

Saving that everyone put them off for washing.

R.V. Everyone went with his weapon to the water.

The original is "every man his weapon water." The R.V. supplies the ellipsis. Even whilst washing themselves each man had his weapon close at hand.

"We take up corn." (v. 2.)

R.V. Let us get corn.

The R.V. implies that there was a menace in the complaint of the oppressed poorer classes, so Nehemiah took up their cause, first, because of the hardship with which they were treated, and, secondly, because a riot against the rich classes would add greatly to his difficulties.

“Rebuked.”

(v. 7.)

R.V. Contended.

The R.V. presents the scene in much stronger light. Nehemiah did not merely “rebuke” the nobles. Expostulation and persuasion were ineffectual. Nehemiah urged the point strongly, and, in effect, held an indignation meeting against the nobles.

Might exact of them money and corn.

(v. 10.)

R.V. Do lend them corn and money on usury.

From the A.V. it would appear that though Nehemiah might have demanded money and corn for his support as governor he had refrained from doing so. We know that he had generously foregone his rights in this respect (v. 14-18).

The R.V. represents Nehemiah as having lent money and corn at interest, but that he had not demanded pledges.

“The doors upon the gates.”

(vi. 1.)

Upon the gates.

R.V. In the gates.

From the R.V. we obtain a more correct idea of what took place. Remembering that “gate” signifies a fortified gateway protecting the doors, *i.e.*, the actual gateways of the wall, we gather that Nehemiah had now set up the doors or gates in the fortified gateways. Naturally this would be the last part of his work.

Heathen.

(vi. 6.)

R.V. Nations.

The R.V. describes more correctly the surrounding nations who had allied themselves with Sanballat and the other adversaries to annoy the Jews and hinder them in their work. Sanballat is threatening Nehemiah that his work will be reported to Babylon by the neighbouring nations, who will intimate to the Persian King that the walls have been rebuilt by Nehemiah with the purpose of having himself proclaimed King. The unanimous report of “the nations” to this effect would have great weight at the royal court. Hence the significance of the rendering of the R.V.

“Being as I am.”

(vi. 11.)

R.V. Being such as I.

The R.V. brings out clearly Nehemiah’s reasons for not taking refuge in the Temple.

- (1) As a *layman*, not a *priest*, such an act would be sacrilege and would alienate the pious Jews.
- (2) As governor, Nehemiah would be showing “the white feather,” and thus dishearten his followers. Moreover, it would be an admission of guilt.

"Therefore."

(vi. 13.)

R.V. For this cause.

R.V. makes emphatic that Nehemiah suddenly but clearly perceived that Shemaiah had been bribed by Sanballat to persuade Nehemiah to take refuge in the Temple, *for the express purpose* of formulating a charge against him.

"Ruler of the palace."

(vii. 2.)

R.V. Governor of the Castle.

The R.V. gives the actual office of Hananiah. He was governor or commander of the garrison in the Temple citadel that guarded the Temple on the north. *Birah* = fortress (see p. 64).

"Stand by."

(vii. 3.)

R.V. Stand or guard.

An armed guard was to stand to arms at the opening and shutting of the gate, thus guarding against a surprise attack.

"Father's house."

(vii. 61.)

R.V. Fathers' houses.

"Chief of the fathers."

(vii. 71.)

R.V. Heads of fathers' houses.

The R.V. brings out clearly the Jewish division of tribe, family, household. Each tribe was divided into families and each family into households or houses; each house had its recognized head. We find them first mentioned in Exodus. "*These be the heads of their fathers' houses, etc.*" (Ex. vi. 14-24). It was by their careful precision in these matters that the Jews were able to preserve the genealogies of the different families. When Joshua desired to detect the offender in the siege of Jericho we find that Achan was detected by casting lots.

The process of elision was (1) the *tribe* of Judah, the *family* of the Zarhites, the *household* of Zabdi, the *person* of Achan (Josh. vii. 18).

"Therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood." (vii. 64.)

R.V. Therefore were they deemed polluted and put from the priesthood.

The R.V. gives the correct account of what happened. The leaders of the return decided that as these claimants to the priesthood could not establish the genealogical accuracy of their claims, they must be declared "polluted" and so excluded from exercising the office of priest. The leaders made their own ruling and did not follow any precedent.

"*Twenty thousand drams of gold.*"

(vii. 72.)

Drams.

R.V. Darics.

Dram might mean the Greek "drachma." The actual coins were the Persian "darics" (see p. 65).

"*The street that was before the water-gate.*"

(viii. i.)

The street.

R.V. The broad place.

The word used (*v'hab*) comes from a root (*rehab*) signifying "broad," "spacious." The R.V. correctly describes the place of assembly, viz. the open space, court, or square in front of the watergate (see note p. 64).

"*According unto the manner.*"

(viii. 18.)

Manner.

R.V. Ordinance.

Here we get two distinct renderings.

A.V. *manner* or custom, would indicate that it was customary to keep the feast. This is not consistent with v. 14, where it is recorded that they found, as was read in the Law, the command to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and that they immediately took steps to celebrate the feast. Had the Israelites been in the habit of keeping the feast, they would not have been so impressed by the passage in the Law concerning it.

R.V. *Ordinance*, or according to the regulations of the Law, would indicate that the people were careful to follow the injunctions they found prescribed in the passages of the Law so lately read. If the observance of the feast had fallen into disuse, it is evident that they would be very particular in following the regulations laid down for the observance of the feast.

Hence the R.V. is the preferable rendering.

"*Their persecutors thou throwest into the deeps.*"

(ix. 11.)

Persecutors.

R.V. Pursuers.

Persecute, from Lat. *persequi* = to follow after, to pursue.

Pursue, from Fr. *poursuivre* = to follow after.

These words are originally the same in meaning. But *persecute* has obtained a technical meaning which is not intended in the passage. Though the Egyptians had persecuted (in the technical sense) the Israelites in Egypt, they were drowned in the Red Sea whilst being the "pursuers" of the chosen people.

"Didst divide them into corners."

(ix. 22.)

R.V. Which thou didst allot after their portions.

The word "*peah*" signifies *corner*. Hence R.V. has in margin "*and didst distribute them into every corner*," and so "*didst distribute them on all sides*" (S.C.). And this is the meaning of the A.V., viz. that the Israelites were distributed according to tribes in all quarters of the land. The R.V. takes the idea of "allotment into corners or quarters," and this brings out not so much the general distribution of the tribes in all quarters of the land, as the apportionment of the land in parts to the different tribes. This, as we gather from the book of Joshua, was done by casting lots.

"Meat offering."

(x. 33.)

R.V. Meal.

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.

GLOSSARY.

Basons, better "*bowls*." They were vessels having covers or lids.

Booth, or huts, made of the boughs of the trees. The boughs were of the olive, palm, pine, myrtle, and other trees with thick foliage (viii. 15-16). At the Feast of Tabernacles the people made these booths or huts, and dwelt in them for the seven days of the feast. This was done in commemoration of the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness, when they dwelt for forty years in tents.

These booths were erected on the flat roofs of the houses and in the courts round which an Eastern house is built.

Chief of the fathers (see Comment on R.V. p. 60).

Children of the province, or children of the Captivity, *i.e.* those of the province of Judah. Judah is now a province of Persia, not a separate kingdom. "The children of the province" are those who returned from Babylon and settled in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood, as distinct from those who remained in Babylonia and Persia.

Children of Solomon's servants (see p. 24).

Cup-bearer. An officer of high rank with Egyptian, Assyrian, and Persian monarchs.

The duties of a "cup-bearer" were to pour out the wine, to taste it so as to guard against any attempt to poison the king, and then to present it to the monarch.

Mention of cup-bearers.

1. The cup-bearer or chief butler of Pharaoh, whose dream was interpreted by Joseph, and who afterwards was the means of bringing Joseph to the notice of the Egyptian king (Gen. xli. 14; xli. 9).
2. *Rabshakeh* would appear to have been the official title of the cup-bearer at the Assyrian court (2 Kings xviii. 17).
3. Nehemiah was one of the cup-bearers to Artaxerxes Longimanus (i. 11).

Solomon appears to have had cup-bearers (1 Kings x. 5).

Frankincense, the fragrant gum obtained by incisions in the bark of a tree called *arbor thuris*, which grows in Arabia. It was used in the Temple service for the purpose of sacrificial fumigation.

Governors beyond the river. The river is the Euphrates. Persia lies to the east of the Euphrates, so the term "beyond the river" signifies the satrapy of Syria to the west of the Euphrates. The "Governor" is the satrap of Syria. "*The Governors*" denotes the pekhahs or local provincial governors under the satraps.

Habergeon (Fr. *haubergeon*, diminutive of *hauberk*, from Old German *hals*, neck; *bergan*, to protect). What is signified is a 'coat of mail' covering the head and the breast, a kind of defensive armour much worn by Assyrian troops. "They were made of thin scales of bronze or iron, sewn upon leather or linen, and overlapping one another" (S.C.).

King's forest. Forest=part of pleasure ground. (Gk. *παράδεισος*=paradise.) Royal parks or enclosed hunting grounds which Persian kings were fond of making near important cities.

The "forest" (ii. 8) from which the timber was obtained by Nehemiah was probably "Solomon's Garden," about six miles from Jerusalem to the south.

Lap, the Latin '*sinus*,' a fold in the bosom of the dress, capable of serving as a pocket. (S.C.)

Palace (Persian, *birah* from *biratu*, a fortress). The name is generally given to important fortified posts defending the frontiers, or commanding the fords of a river. Also designates the citadel of a royal city.

Shushan the palace (i. 1), i.e. the fortress or citadel of the city of Sushan.

The palace at Jerusalem (ii. 8) was on the north side of the Temple ("the palace which appertained to the house"). It communicated with the Temple and was intended for its defence.

It is known later as the Castle of Antonia, rebuilt by Herod the Great and so called by him after Mark Antony, his great friend. Later it was occupied by the Roman garrison of Jerusalem, and into it the chief captain carried St. Paul when he rescued him from the Jewish mob in the Temple courts (Acts xxi. 37; xxii. 24). The Castle of Antonia occupied an important part in the great siege of Jerusalem.

Pekkah translated "governors" (ii. 7), (*pekkah*, the governor of a district) is the Babylonian equivalent of the Persian "Tirshatha," and denotes a local or provincial governor under the satraps. The governors were responsible to the satraps and the satraps to the king.

Persecutors, in the old sense of "pursue" (Lat. *persequi*) (see Comment on R.V. p. 61).

Province, always the province of Judah, the particular district of which Jerusalem was the centre and over which Zerubbabel was governor (*Pekkah* or *Tirshatha*), and which was assigned to Nehemiah also as Governor (or *Tirshatha*).

Rulers. The elders or princes in authority at Jerusalem before the arrival of Nehemiah. They are termed 'princes' (Ez. ix. 1). No special governor had been appointed since the death of Zerubbabel, and the power would naturally fall into the hands of certain Jewish chiefs or 'princes.'

Sanctify used in two senses:

(1) Dedication by religious ceremony. In this sense Eliashib and the priests '*sanctified*' the portion of the wall built by them (iii. 1).

(2) Devote or dedicate in the meaning of '*set apart*.' "*They sanctified (set apart) holy things unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified (set apart) them unto the children of Aaron*" (xii. 47) = that the tithe was set apart for the maintenance of the Levites and that the Levites set apart a tenth of this tithe for the priests.

Saviour, in the sense of "deliverer" (Lat., *salvator*) as applied to the judges, "*Thou gavest them saviours (i.e. deliverers)*" (ix. 27).

Street, rather a square or court, *i.e.* any open place. The "street" (viii. 1) seems to have been an open place between the eastern gate of the Temple and the water gate. There the people assembled to hear the Law read by Ezra.

Stuff = furniture, baggage of an army or traveller.

Examples are:-

- (1) "*Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff*" (Gen. xxxi. 37). Jacob complains that Laban has searched all his "baggage" to find his gods, and has not found them.
- (2) "*Also regard not your stuff*" (Gen. xlv. 20) = household goods. Joseph tells his brethren not to trouble to bring their "household goods" down to Egypt.
- (3) "*He hath hid himself among the stuff*" (1 Sam. x. 22). Saul had hidden himself amongst the baggage of the Israelites assembled at Mizpeh.
- (4) "*Two hundred abode by the stuff*" (1 Sam. xxv. 13). In his pursuit of the Amalekites David left two hundred men to guard the baggage.
- (5) "*He which is upon the housetop and his stuff in the house*" (St Luke xvii. 31) = household furniture.

So Nehemiah, "*Cast forth all the household stuff (i.e. furniture) of Tobiah out of the chamber*" (xiii. 8).

The Nethinim (see p. 24).

Tirshatha, always mentioned with the article—the Tirshatha. (Persian *Farsāta*, from "*Fars*" to fear—denoting "the feared one.")

It is the Persian equivalent of the Babylonian "*pekhah*" (p. 43), denoting a local or provincial governor under the satraps. The governors were responsible to the satraps, and the satraps to the king.

The title "the Tirshatha" is applied to Zerubbabel (Ezra ii. 63), who is also styled *pekhah* (v. 14). "*Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor, i.e. pekhah.*"

Haggai terms Zerubbabel "governor (*pekhah*) of Judah" (Hag. i. 1).

Nehemiah is also termed "the Tirshatha" (Neh. vii. 65-70).

Thus Zerubbabel and Nehemiah were local governors (*Tirshatha* or *pekhah*) of Jerusalem, responsible to the governor (satrap) of Syria.

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.

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 are—

- (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*" (Judges i. 1-2).
- (2) Again in the expedition against the men of Benjamin, they put the same question and receive the same reply (Judges 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*" (ii. 63), so that inquiry of the Lord might be made. It would seem that Zerubbabel deemed that the loss would only be temporary.

Ware (A.S., *waru* = merchandise), i.e. anything offered for sale. "*Which brought fish and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath*" (xiii. 16).

Wine-press. The wine-press consisted of two receptacles one placed above the other. In the upper one, the wine-press proper, the grapes were trodden, and the expressed juice flowed into the lower one, the winevat or vat. These vats or wine-presses were often dug out of the solid rock. The two vats are mentioned together only in Joel iii. 13, "*The press is full, the vats o'erflow.*"

Money, Weights and Measures.

Daric, a golden coin of Persia in value nearly equal to our sovereign.

The obverse of the coin has the figure of a king, crowned, kneeling, a sceptre or spear in his right hand, and a bow in his left.

The reverse of the coin was left rough.

Various interpretations are given of the origin of the name.

- (1) From Darius, who is said to have first had the piece coined.
- (2) From a Persian word meaning "bow" or from "*dara*" = a king, as our own sovereign.
- (3) That the piece was originally a Babylonian coin, and the name derived from "*dariku*," a Babylonian measure or weight, which, like the English pound, afterwards came to denote a coin.

The Jews brought back from exile "*threescore and one thousand*

drams (darics) of gold" (Ezra ii. 69), as part of the contribution to the rebuilding of the Temple. This is the first mention of *coined money* in the Old Testament.

The general estimate of money was by weight, so Ezra weighed the money and the vessels (viii. 26-27; viii. 33).

Pound. "*Five thousand pound of silver*" (Ezra ii. 69). Heb. "*maneh*" equal to 60 shekels, calculated by weight.

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.

Talent, a standard of value by weight. A talent was equivalent to 3,000 shekels.

A talent of silver = £375

A talent of gold = £6,750.

The Religious Orders.

High Priest. For the High Priests mentioned in Nehemiah (see Appendix p. 72).

The High Priest stood at the head of the community; the office was hereditary, and so there arose a kind of priestly dynasty. From the fall of the Persian Empire the High Priest became practically king of the Jews. The royal house of David sank into insignificance.

Priests, only four families returned under Zerubbabel, viz. those of Jedaiah, Immer, Pashur and Harim. 4,289 priests returned. With Ezra came two priestly families, Gershom of the line of Phinehas, son of Eliezer, and Daniel of the line of Ithamar.

The number of the courses of priests was afterwards increased, partly by accession and partly by sub-division. In Neh. xii. 1 we find twenty-two priestly houses recorded. It is probable that two names have dropped out and that early after the return the priests were divided into twenty-four courses, adopting the names denoting the original courses established by David.

Levites, of them we may notice:

- (1) They are mentioned as distinct from the priests on the one hand, and the singers and the porters on the other. In later times this distinction disappears.
- (2) They are few in number in comparison with the priests; 4,289 priests returned with Zerubbabel and only seventy-four Levites. With difficulty and only after special appeal Ezra obtained thirty-eight Levites from Casiphia.
- (3) They are noticeable in the support they give to Ezra in the reading of the Law (Ezra viii.).

David divided the Levites into four classes.

- (1) **The General Assistants** whose duties were "to wait on the sons of Aaron in the work of the House of God."
- (2) **Officers and Judges**, who were engaged in administering the written Law.
- (3) **The Porters**, whose duties were to open and shut the Temple gates,

maintain order, prevent the entrance of unclean persons or things and to act as a night-watch.

- (4) **The Singers** or musicians, who conducted the musical portion of the Temple service.

The usual explanation of the three offices of Levites, porters and singers named in Ezra is that by Levites is meant the first division named above, whilst the porters and singers are those of the third and fourth divisions respectively.

An ingenious theory has been propounded that the Levites of Ezra are the descendants of the priests of the high places removed by Josiah who were not allowed to perform the office of priest, but were allotted to a subordinate position in the Temple worship inferior to the priests but above the ordinary Temple assistants (ii. Kings xxiii. 9).

This theory explains—

- (1) The mention of Levites as distinct from the priests and the singers and porters.
- (2) The small number of those who returned. Their position was peculiar and humiliating. They could not exercise the office of priest, but must take an inferior position.
- (3) Their support of Ezra, in his reforms. Only men of high principle and sincere devotion would accept such a position. But men of this class would be strong in the support they would give to the furtherance of religious reform.

Mention of Levites in the Book of Nehemiah.

- (1) On the completion of the walls the charge of the city was assigned to the Levites (vii. 1). Their experience in the duty of guarding the Temple would give them special qualification for such office.
- (2) The Levites assisted in the reading and expounding of the Law at the great reading by Ezra (viii.)
- (3) The Levites conducted the solemn national confession (ix. 45).
- (4) The charge of guarding the gates on the Sabbath to prevent traffic on that day was assigned to the Levites (xiii. 22).

CUSTOMS.

First Fruits.

The Israelite was enjoined to dedicate to God—

- I. **The first-born son**, in commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelites from the destroying angel when he passed through the land of Egypt and destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians.

The first-born so dedicated were designed for the priesthood, but after the selection of the tribe of Levi the parents were called upon to redeem them by the payment of a certain sum, which was not to exceed four shekels (Num. xviii. 15-16).

- II. **The first-born (male) of cattle.** The above rule held good as regards the first-born of unclean cattle, while those of a cow, sheep, or goat were to be offered on the altar, and the flesh to be consumed by the

offerer, with the exception of the breast and right shoulder, which fell to the priests (Num. xviii. 17-18, Deut. xv. 20).

III. The first-fruits of the soil of all productions suitable for the sustenance of man, e.g. corn, fruits, oil, flour, dough. "*The first (i.e. best) of the first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord*" (Ex. xxiii. 19).

The offerer brought them in a basket to the priests, acknowledged God's mercy in delivering Egypt out of bondage, and concluded thus: "*And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me*" (Deut. xxvi. 1-11).

None of these first-fruits were consumed on the altar, but were given to the Levites (xviii. 12).

IV.—The first-fruits of newly planted trees; for these there was a special regulation. No fruit whatever was to be eaten for the first three years, and the fruit of the fourth year was to be devoted to the Lord (Lev. xix. 23-24).

Object. First, to keep in mind the deliverance from Egyptian bondage; secondly, to remind them of God's bounty displayed in the natural productions of the earth, and to call to their remembrance that it was through Jehovah they obtained possession of the land.

Musical Instruments.

The musical instruments mentioned in Nehemiah are cymbals, psalteries, harps and trumpets.

Cymbals. Two kinds are mentioned in Ps. ch. v. "*loud cymbals*," "*high sounding cymbals*." The former consisted of four small pieces of brass, iron or hard metal; two plates were attached to each hand, and were struck together to make a loud noise. They were somewhat similar to *castanets*. The latter consisted of two larger plates, one held in each hand, and were struck together as an accompaniment to other instruments (B.D.).

Psaltery (Heb. *nebel*), a kind of harp. Josephus tells us that it had twelve notes and was played with the hand.

Harp (Heb. *kinnôr*), a kind of guitar. Josephus says that the *kinnôr* had ten strings and that it was played with a plectrum or quill. But David played on the *kinnôr* with his hand (1 Sam. xvi. 23, xviii. 10). Probably there was a smaller and a larger *kinnôr*, and these may have been played in different ways (1 Sam. x. 5) (B.D.).

Tithe.

The custom of presenting the tithe or tenth part of the produce of the soil to God as a natural feeling of gratitude existed long before the Mosaic law was promulgated. Abraham, after his victory over the four kings, presented to Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God, the tithe of all (Gen. xiv. 17-20).

The Mosaic law naturally adopted and regulated so fitting a custom.

The enactments respecting it were generally similar to those respecting first-fruits.

The tenth of the produce of the land, the tenth of the flocks and herds, the tenth of the fruits of the trees, were to be devoted to the Lord.

There is no distinct statement as to the kinds of agricultural products to be tithed.

There was a power of redemption by the payment of the value, with the addition of the fifth part thereof (Lev. xxvii. 30-32).

The tithes were appropriated to the use of the priests and Levites (Num. xviii. 21). The whole tithe was paid to the Levites, who were to dedicate a tenth to God for the use of the high priest.

Nehemiah reorganized the offerings of first-fruits and tithes, and appointed places where they were to be paid and officers to receive them (xiii. 10-13).

Usury (see p. 15).

Slavery (see p. 15).

Houses.

The roofs of Eastern houses are flat, and were used for various purposes, viz. as sleeping places, for devotion (Acts x. 9), and for several domestic purposes, such as drying corn, flax, etc. (Josh ii. 6).

The better class of houses were built round a court—the outside walls being blank, relieved only by a door, and a few latticed and projecting windows. The apartments opened into this court, and the stairs to the upper rooms were usually in a corner of the court.

At the Feast of Tabernacles, when the Israelites were commanded to dwell in booths or huts formed of the boughs of trees, it was usual to erect such booths on the flat roofs of the houses and in the courts round which the houses were built.

"They made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts" (viii. 16).

APPENDIX.

Months.

Before Captivity.	After Captivity.	Assyrian Name.	Meaning.	Approximate Month.
1 Abib	Nisan	Nisannu	(month of) opening	March
2 Zif	Iyyar	Airu	the bright	April
3 —	Sivan	Sivanu	(month of) brick-making	May
4 —	Tammuz	Duzu	(month of) the sun-god	June
5 —	Ab	Abu		July
6 —	Elul	Ululu	(month of) the Spirit	August

Before Captivity.	After Captivity.	Assyrian Name.	Meaning.	Approximate Month.
7 Ethanim	Tisri	Tasritu	(month of) the Sanctuary	September
8 Bul	Marchsevan	Arakh-savna	the eighth month	October
9 —	Chisleu	Kisilivu	the good (month)	November
	Tebet	Tabitu		December
10 —	Sebat	Sabatu	The dark (month)	January
11 —	Adar	Addaru		February
12 —	Ve-Adar	Arath-makru	Incidental month	(SAYCE).

Months mentioned in Nehemiah are—

Chisleu. Hanani brought the report of the miserable state of Jerusalem to Nehemiah at Shushan "*in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year*" of the reign of Artaxerxes (i. 1).

Nisan. Nehemiah made his request to King Artaxerxes that he might be allowed to go to Jerusalem "*in the month Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the King*" (ii. 1).

Elul. "*The wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days*" (vi. 15).

Tisri. The Law was read on the "*first day of the seventh month*" (viii. 2).
The Feast of Tabernacles was kept in the same month (viii. 18).

The National Confession of Sin was made on the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month (ix. 1).

Heads of Houses who returned from Captivity.

Ezra (A.V.).	Nehemiah vii. 7 (A.V.).	1 Esdras v. 8 (A.V.).
Zerubbabel	Zerubbabel	Zorobabel
Jeshua	Jeshua	Jesus
Nehemiah	Nehemiah	Nehemias
Seraiah	Azariah	Zacharias
Reelaiah	Raamiah	Reesias
	Nahamani	Emenius
Mordecai	Mordecai	Mardocheaus
Bilshan	Bilshan	Beelsarus
Mizpah (Mispar, R.V.)	Mispereth	Aspharasus
Bigvai	Bigvai	Reelius
Rehum	Nehum	Roimus
Baanah	Baanah	Baana

List of the Exiles who returned.

	Ezra.	Nehemiah.	Esdras.
The children of Parosh	2,172	2,172	2,172
„ Shephatiah	372	372	472

	Ezra	Nehemiah.	Esdras.
The children of Arah	775	652	756
" Pahath-Moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab }	2,812	2,818	2,812
" Elam	1,254	1,254	1,254
" Zattu	945	845	945
" Zaccai	760	760	
" Bani	642	648	648
" Bebai	623	628	623
" Azgad	1,222	2,322	3,222
" Adonikam	666	667	667
" Bigvai	2,056	2,067	2,066
" Adin	454	655	454
" Ater, of Hezekiah	98	98	
" Bezai	323	324	323
" Jora	112	= Harif 112 (vii. 24).	
" Hashum	223	328	
" Gibbar	95	= Gibeon 95	
" Bethlehem }	123	188	123
The men of Netophah }	56		56
" Anathoth	128	128	158
The children of Azmaveth	42	= the men of Beth-azmaveth 42	
" Kirjath-arim, Che- phirah, and Beeroth }	743	743	
The children of Rama and Gaba	621	621	
The men of Michmas	122	122	
" Bethel and Ai	223	123	
The children of Nebo	52	52	
" Magbish	156		156
" " the other Elam "	1,254	1,254	
The children of Harim	320	320	
" Lod, Hadid, and Ono	725	721	725
" Jericho	345	345	
" Senaah	3,630	3,930	3,330

	Ezra.	Nehemiah.	Esdras.
Men of the people of Israel	24,144	25,406	26,390
Priests	4,289	4,289	2,388
Levites	74	74	74
Singers	128	148	128
Porters	139	138	139
Nethinim and Solomon's servants	392	392	372
Unregistered	652	642	652

Total	29,818	31,089	30,143
Other MSS. 30,678			

The Gifts and Treasure brought from Babylon.

Ezra.

Heads of fathers' houses	61,000 darics of gold
	5,000 pounds of silver
	100 priests' garments

Nehemiah.

	Darics of gold.	Basons.	Pounds of silver.	Priests' garments.
Tirshatha	1,000	50		530
Heads of fathers' houses	20,000		2,200	
Rest of people	20,000		2,000	67
Total	41,000		4,200	597

List of High Priests mentioned in Nehemiah.

(Neh. xii. 10.)

Jeshua

|

Joiakim

|

Eliashib

|

Joiada

|

Jonathan

|

Jaddua.

Jeshua, see p. xli.

Joiakim. No further mention of him is found.

Eliashib, see p. xxxix.

Joiada. One of his sons had married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite. This son refused to put away his wife, and was expelled from Jerusalem by Nehemiah. "*I chased him from me*" (xiii. 28). (For further notes on this passage see p. xlix.)

Jonathan. In his day were kept—

(a) Genealogical records of the priests and Levites (xii. 11-22).

(b) Chronicles of state (xii. 23).

From Josephus we learn that he murdered his brother Jesus in the Temple because Jesus was intriguing, through the influence of the Persian general Bagoses, to wrest the high-priesthood from him.

Jaddua, the last of the high priests mentioned in the Old Testament.

He was high priest in the reign of Darius Codomanus, the last Persian king, and still high priest in the reign of Alexander the Great (see p. li.).

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