

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE HOUSE OF OMRI, B.C. 904-864.

OMRI, though founder of a new dynasty, ascended the throne, like Jeroboam, without crime. If Zimri had been less bloody, and had left alive any of the sons or grandsons of Baasha, the character of Omri might have come down to us less unstained; but by his war against Zimri he gained only credit, and for his civil conflict with Tibni, however disastrous to the nation, it was difficult to blame him. The centre of his power was at first at Tirzah,<sup>1</sup> but when his competitor had been removed, he determined to found a new capital. Tirzah had originally been selected only as a pleasant abode. The ease with which Omri had himself stormed the city may have disinclined him to trust it for the future; and as the palace had been burnt, there was perhaps less to lose by removal. He accordingly selected a hill suitable for a new city, and purchased it of its owner, a man named Shemer; from whom the place was called *Shimrón*, or in its Greek modification, *Samaria*. The judicious choice of Omri is attested by the lasting importance of this celebrated city, which is regarded as having great advantage, even over Jerusalem, in strength, as well as in fertility and beauty. From the accounts of modern travellers, the following careful picture of the site has been compiled by one who has laboured meritoriously on the geography of Palestine:—<sup>2</sup> “The hill of Samaria is an oblong mountain of considerable elevation and very regular in form, situated in the midst of a broad, deep valley, the continuation of that of Shechem, which here expands into five or six miles. Beyond this valley, which completely isolates the hill, the mountains rise again on every side, forming a complete wall around the city. They are terraced to the tops, sown in grain, and planted with olives and figs. . . . . The hill of Samaria itself is cultivated from its base, the terraced sides and summits being covered with corn and with olive-trees. About midway up the ascent, the hill is surrounded by a narrow terrace of level land, like a belt, below

1. We have not a hint where the chief strength of *Tibni* lay. It may have been in the tribes beyond Jordan.

2. From the pen of Dr. Kitto, art. *Samaria*, in his *Biblical Cyclopædia*.

which the roots of the hill spread off more gradually into the valleys. Higher up too are the marks of slight terraces, once occupied perhaps by the streets of the ancient city. The ascent of the hill is very steep.” We may add that it is a little to the north of Shechem and of Mount Ebal. Samaria was the principal or sole work of Omri’s reign; a durable and splendid monument which he bequeathed to a distant posterity.

He may have been moved to this great undertaking by military motives not indicated to us. The king of Syria appears not to have been slow to discover the weakness which civil contention entailed on Israel, and pressed severely upon the new ruler. Considering that the Benhadad who attacked Baasha took from him the towns of Dan, Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, we may probably infer that the military object of the Syrians in this stage of their progress had been to possess themselves of all the towns which commanded the passes from Hollow Syria and the proper land of Damascus into the Israelitish territory. Omri had not the advantage of such a frontier on the north as Judæa had on the south: and it would appear that he was forced to submit to high claims on the part of Benhadad. We learn incidentally that the latter took various cities from Omri, and forced him to assign streets in Samaria for his use.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the king of Israel was now open to invasion at any time convenient to his powerful rival, and appeared likely before long to become a mere vassal of Damascus. Omri accordingly, to save himself and his people, sought alliance with the Phœnicians.

3. (1 Kings xx. 34:) Either for trade or for the residence of the Syrian representative, who would more or less control Omri’s conduct. So the English make native princes in India accept a British resident, and have demanded “English streets” in Canton.

The king of Syria who attacked Omri is father of the Benhadad who assaults Ahab, and is generally regarded as identical with the Benhadad who took the frontier towns from Baasha. The chronology however rather countenances the idea that the first Benhadad is grandfather to the second, and that the antagonist of Omri is an intermediate prince, *possibly not named Benhadad*, but Tabrimon, Rezon, or some other name of that dynasty. It does not appear to have been usual for a king to bear the name of his immediate father.

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36-45 the new ruler. We learn incidentally that he took various cities from Omri, and forced him to assign streets in Samaria for his use.\* Omri had not the advantage of such a frontier on the north as Judæa had on the south. Considering that . . . the military object of the Syrians in this stage of hostilities had been to possess . . . Israelitish territory. This attempt, to judge from the submission of Omri, was successful\*; the king of Israel was . . . [rev. 2nd ed., with the two fns. consolidated.]

Immediately on becoming sole king of Israel, he obtained the hand of JEZEBEL,<sup>4</sup> daughter of Ethbaal king of Sidon and of Tyre, for his young son Ahab. Let not those who know the after-career of this notorious woman, be too quick to censure Omri for what he could not foresee. Indeed the position of the princes of this northern kingdom, in contact with an ambitious, advancing, and overpowering neighbour, was peculiarly difficult. There were two things which wisdom would exhort them to maintain; the pure faith of the nation, and its independent existence. The latter appeared a condition indispensable to the former; and if intrinsically of less value, yet was certainly that which was felt more peculiarly to be under the care of the kings. One object however was perpetually interfering with the other. When in danger of losing their national monotheism with their nationality itself, to remain isolated was to court destruction; yet to form alliances with heathen powers was to risk alloying their religious superiority;—a superiority which we believe to have been real, however much it may have been exaggerated by unwise partisanship. It is much easier for a prophet or a divine to *say*, that by disowning human alliances and trusting in Jehovah, the nation would have been saved; than for a king or statesman, on whom the responsibility rests, to *act* on such a theory: and to inveigh against Omri and Ahab is too much in writers<sup>5</sup> who cannot spare a word of censure for Solomon’s gratuitous heathen marriages and heathen abominations. Of Omri there is no more known than that he died B.C. 897, and was succeeded by his son.

AHAB appears to have been rather a weak than a wicked man. His evil name has been chiefly earned for him by his wife Jezebel; and *he* can scarcely be regarded as responsible for the marriage which his father contracted for him. It was impossible to cement his alliance with Tyre and Sidon without tolerating the superstitions in which the daughter of Ethbaal had been reared; and the immediate result of tolerating them, was to arouse against himself the whole

4. Ahaziah, king of Judah, grandson of Ahab and Jezebel, was twenty-two years old in the year 865. He was therefore born in 887. Allowing his mother Athaliah to have been only sixteen at his birth, Jezebel’s marriage cannot have been later than B.C. 904, which is the year of Omri becoming sole king.

5. The compilers of the Chronicles.

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[ <i>ref. to fn. 4 relocated from after “Israel”, 2nd ed.]</i>	49-50
its independent physical existence. [ <i>rev. 2nd ed.]</i>	56
to be the duty of the kings. [ <i>rev. 2nd ed.]</i>	58
a superiority which was undoubtedly real, . . . [ <i>rev. 2nd ed.]</i>	62-3
is absurd and monstrous in writers . . . [ <i>rev. 2nd ed.]</i>	67
Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal; and <i>he</i> . . . [ <i>rev. 2nd ed.]</i>	72
in which his wife had been reared; . . . [ <i>rev. 2nd ed.]</i>	75

influence of the prophets of Israel. Solomon's son and grandson had indeed done as much as Ahab, and still more, without encountering the same opposition; but under Solomon the prophetic schools had not at all attained the same growth, nor the same exclusive power over the people, as now in Israel: after Solomon, in Judæa, it is probable that they had been greatly discouraged by the results of Ahijah's interference, which can have been in no respect advantageous, in the estimate of either prophet or priest. As we now read the tale in the books of Kings and Chronicles, the monotonous condemnation passed on Jeroboam and all his successors is apt to blind us to the fact, that in spite of the predictions ascribed to Ahijah and Jehu son of Hanani, no real and vehement opposition on the part of the prophets against the throne began in Israel before the reign of Ahab. And with good reason. For previous kings of this branch had avowed support to no religious rites but those of Jehovah. They had sanctioned worshipping him by emblems, but so did orthodox<sup>6</sup> prophets and priests of those days: they neglected the Levites of Jerusalem; but at that time the Levites seem not yet to have been a race or caste of men, but only a very humble profession. These kings had not defiled the character of Jehovah by ascribing to him, and annexing to his worship, immorality and cruelty; nor had they given honour even to the name of a strange god. A totally new thrill of horror passed through the bosoms of true Israelites when Jezebel brought in the obscene rites of Baal and Astarte,<sup>7</sup> with the tumultuous fanaticism of her priests; and the universal opposition which thereupon arose from the prophets of Jehovah presently made her their inveterate and dangerous enemy.

If we give the least credit to the hostile historian, we cannot refuse to admit that Jezebel, in the course of her feud with the prophets of Jehovah, became a fierce and cruel woman; yet, rightly to appreciate her character, we must remember that they on their part did undoubtedly consider it a meritorious

6. I have already referred to the *Teraphim* and *Cherubim* in proof.

7. It is believed that Baal and Astarte were originally personifications of the sun and moon. Baal (*lord*) is also probably identified with Molech (*king*). The Hebrew writers use the latter term chiefly of the god of the Ammonites, the former of the Phœnician god; but other authorities call the Tyrian and Carthagian god *Melcarth*, whose name and bloody worship are identified with those of Molech.

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79-80 attained the same development, nor . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]  
 87-8 opposition began in Israel on the part of the prophets against the throne before the reign of Ahab. [rev. 2nd ed.]  
 89-90 of Jehovah; their fault was only that they had sanctioned . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]  
 90-3 emblems, and did not care for the race or order of Levi and Aaron. These kings . . . [rev. and fn. added, 2nd ed.]  
 98 priests; the universal . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]

act, to kill the priests of Baal: and a remarkable legend extols the piety of the great Elijah, who on an eminent occasion instigated the people to seize and massacre 450 prophets of Baal and 400 of Astarte, who ate at Jezebel's table. We may hesitate to believe the story to the full, since a credulous admiration of Elijah would lead to great exaggeration of his exploit: yet it would be unreasonable to doubt that these prophets deliberately approved of slaying the priestly votaries of superstition, or that Jezebel had a clear insight<sup>8</sup> into this side of their principles. With her therefore it was a struggle of life and death. To judge of her by other Pagans, she would have tolerated Jehovism, if it would have tolerated her; but as she quite understood that they would kill her priests, and probably herself too, whenever they had the power, she pursued them with implacable enmity. Being a person of stronger will and passions than her husband, she was able to work him into compliance with her claims. Having built a temple to Baal in Samaria, with a high altar, and public images of Baal and Astarte,<sup>9</sup> he in his own person performed worship to his wife's deities. Nor was this all; but yielding into her hands the power of the sword, he allowed her to chase them down and put them to death.

Now commenced the Martyr Age of the prophets in Israel. As they had multiplied all over the land, there were many to be persecuted, and their extermination was not the work of a day. And besides the natural instinct of mercy, they were greatly revered by numbers of the people. One man alone, by name Obadiah, in the high station of *governor of the house* to Ahab,—(Mayor of the Palace might have been his title in Europe),—is stated to have hidden 100 prophets of Jehovah from the rage of Jezebel, and to have maintained them secretly. This cannot have been an exceptional case; and though many were slain, it is probable that a majority were concealed and protected. The

8. A critic who pretends to believe that the Pentateuch is Mosaic, replies, that Jezebel could not have learned that Jehovism was intolerant, until *after* Elijah's massacre of the priests! Intolerance probably grew up with just zeal for pure monotheism. It is the course of human infirmity.

9. In 1 Kings xvi. 33, as in many other places, the received English version following the LXX. darkens the sense by rendering Astarte by the word *grove*. See 2 Kings xxiii. 6, 7, for a strange instance. [I now see that Colenso interprets it of a certain obscene symbol.]

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to murder the priests of Baal: [rev. 2nd ed.]	104
[fn. added to the 2nd ed., of which the end two sentences were added to the 3rd ed.]	110
death. She would undoubtedly have tolerated Jehovism, . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]	112
[fn. 9:] by rendering Ashtoreth by . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]; instance of the absurdity of this. [rev. 3rd ed.; sentence in brackets added to the 3rd ed.]	118
an exceptive case; . . . [rev. 3rd ed.]	128

130 crisis called forth two great prophets in succession, Elijah and Elisha; whose adventures and exploits have come down to us in such a halo of romance, not unmingled with poetry of a high genius, that it is impossible to disentangle the truth. The account of these occupies twice as much space as the history of the kings of Judah and Israel together, from the death of Solomon to the accession  
 135 of Ahab; but as their deeds are nearly all prodigies, attested to us only by a writing compiled three centuries after these events, and having no bearing that can be traced on the real course of the history, we are forced to pass them over very slightly. The ascription however of miraculous powers to these prophets is a notable circumstance, as being altogether new in Jewish history. To find  
 140 anything analogous, we must run back to the legendary days of Moses. One general inference may be drawn,—that the danger and importance of the struggle worked up the minds of Jehovah's worshippers into a high enthusiasm and intense belief of his present energy to aid his prophets. The after-tale also shows, that here, as elsewhere, persecution made its victims bigoted,  
 145 indiscriminating, and ruthless in their turn.

A great drought endured by the land at this period for three years together distressed Ahab, and made it difficult to find fodder for the beasts. Elijah was believed to have predicted its occurrence, and likewise to have announced its termination, having on each occasion met Ahab face to face. The prophet  
 150 himself was miraculously fed; first by ravens, who bring him bread and flesh morning and evening; afterwards, when the brook at which he drank is dried, an inexhaustible barrel of meal and cruse of oil<sup>10</sup> are shared with him by a widow of Zarephath, a Sidonian town. In gratitude for her hospitality, he raises her child from the dead by prayer to Jehovah. When after this he presents himself  
 155 to Ahab, the king (though counting him an enemy) displays no personal rancour against him, and at his request even gathers the prophets of Baal and Astarte for a trial of miraculous power against Elijah. The issue is so triumphant to him, that, as we have stated, he is enabled to massacre the 950 misbelievers: but hereby he awakens such fierce zeal against him in Jezebel that he is forced  
 160 to escape for his life into the kingdom of Judah, whence he first proceeds to Beersheba, and, then supported by a miraculous cake to which an angel points him, travels forty days and forty nights till he reaches the awful solitude of Mount Sinai. From hence he is sent back with a reproof, and with a secret commission to choose Elisha as his successor. No more is heard of him during the

10. This miracle is reproduced with variation in the story of Elisha, who also raises from the dead the son of the Shunammite woman who had fed him: 2 Kings iv.

136 three centuries after the facts, and . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]

150 ravens, who brought him . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]

reign of Ahab. But Ahab's successor, enraged at a hostile message from him, sends soldiers to arrest him. Two companies of fifty men with their officers are consumed by fire from heaven at Elijah's calling: a third company is saved only by pious submission. After this, Elijah is carried up to heaven by a whirlwind in a chariot of fire with horses of fire, while Elisha stands wondering and sorrowing. Yet, later still, according to the Chronicler,<sup>11</sup> Elijah writes a threatening letter to Jehoram, second son of Ahab. 165 170

Our narrative passes abruptly from the religious to the temporal affairs of Israel, but without any distinct note of time, and with the same unhistorical and excited spirit. The great topic is the Syrian war. In attempting to narrate this, we have a very difficult task; because, while our existing materials cannot be thought mere romance or epical invention, they are yet too much disfigured by obvious exaggeration to allow of our accepting the details. It remains for us to follow the invidious and rather arbitrary plan of selecting those prominent facts which combine well with the entire course of the history, and interpreting what is left doubtful by the geographical and military necessities of the case. The Syrian hero is BENHADAD, apparently grandson of the Benhadad who assaulted Baasha. In the reign of Ahab we presume he must have been young, since he carries on an inveterate war against the son of Ahab also. The great idea with which he seems to have been long possessed, was, to advance directly against the city of Samaria, as a certain means of reducing all Israel: perhaps also regarding it as having been specially designed by its founder to defy the Syrian power. Nor did the plan of warfare appear unwise, since he evidently had the frontier fortresses in his hand, which enabled him to march in at pleasure with very superior forces. 175 180 185

The campaigns of this Benhadad against Israel alone are all contained in a narrative evidently of the same tone and genius, which we can scarcely be wrong in describing as a part of some prophetic story of the *Acts of Elisha*, transmitted for a while orally in the schools of the prophets. But there is one campaign in which the king of Judah is joined, and this has all the marks of more sober chronicling, although not without slighter improbabilities:<sup>12</sup> the latter document may be safely referred to the court records of Jerusalem. The difference of spirit is very striking. While Israel and the prophets have the 190 195

11. 2 Chron. xxi. 12. This was *after* the revolt of the Edomites, v. 8; which is placed *after* the ascent of Elijah and the coming of his spirit on Elisha; 2 Kings iii. 10; viii. 22. For this inconsistency however the book of Kings is not chargeable; nor indeed is the Chronicler inconsistent with *himself*; for he does not allude to the ascension of Elijah.

12. 1 Kings xxii. The more legendary accounts are in 1 Kings xx., and 2 Kings vi., vii.

war to themselves, all is marvellous:—extreme danger, divine interposition, and stupendous victory, from which no ultimate results are derived: but when  
 200 the king of Judah aids, we read of historical battle and victory resting with Syria. Having warned the reader of the nature of our materials, we resume the narrative.

The force in which the Syrians at present most trusted, was that of war-chariots; and in plain open country these were highly efficient, ridiculous as  
 205 they are apt to seem to us, who are accustomed to enclosed fields and paved high roads. Even over the rough ground of ancient Britain the native chariots offered a highly respectable opposition to the veteran infantry of the first Roman invader; and it is evident in ancient history,<sup>13</sup> that chariots of war were exceedingly feared until discipline and tactics among foot-soldiery reached  
 210 their highest point. The Syrian chariot did not, like that of the Homeric Greek, carry a single hero armed with sword and spear, but like that of the Egyptians, one or more archers, perhaps armed likewise with swords. But besides the efficacy of the chariot in actual battle, it may be conjectured to have served for the more rapid transport of infantry on march. Uniting solidity with lightness,  
 215 lowness, and breadth, it could traverse any country which was not enclosed —(and in Palestine the hedge and ditch were undoubtedly unknown<sup>14</sup>),—and might possibly carry several infantry soldiers with their scanty equipage, as well as the warriors who were to fight from it in the battle. We may possibly conclude, that wherever 100 chariots went, not less than 400 or 500 infantry  
 220 were carried likewise; who thus might traverse in one day a two-days' march, and at the end be nearly fresh for immediate service. By help of the chariot 200 horses might thus transport 600 men, while in cavalry service each horse carries but one man. If there be any weight in these considerations, it follows that against a large force of chariots it was difficult to move infantry with such  
 225 rapidity as to concentrate them against the attack of an invader.

13. According to Herodotus, the Garamantes of Africa used to hunt down with four-horse chariots the Troglodyte Ethiopians, the most swift-footed of men; apparently to make slaves of them.—Because of the iron chariots of the Philistine district (Judges i. 19), the men of Judah could not succeed on the plain, though they conquered the hill-country.

14. The sacredness of the *landmark* implies this; besides, the ground was too precious, and estates too small.

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213-4 actual battle, we can hardly question that it was of much value for the more rapid transport of infantry at all times. Uniting . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]

216-7 —and could carry on a march several . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]

218-9 We may probably conclude, . . . [rev. 3rd ed.]

223-4 man. Thus against . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]



Two separate campaigns of Benhadad against Ahab in Samaria are reported to us. In the former, the Syrians drove in with overflowing might, as it were sweeping the country before them, while no one dared to offer resistance. But they paused at no inferior town, and made straight on for Samaria. Ahab, finding himself shut up by very superior forces, and the resources of the kingdom cut off, was terrified into the offer of absolute surrender and vassalage; but (according to our only authority) Benhadad sent so outrageous a message as to the full use which he intended to make of this surrender, that Ahab was steeled into despair. The elders of Israel to whom he appealed exhorted him to firmness and vigour, and the prophets came forward to animate Israel and the king to brave and faithful resistance. Ahab indeed personally did not deserve favour from the prophets; but they could not look on tamely and see Jehovah's Israel become the spoil of the stranger. While Benhadad was full of triumph and insolence, banqueting in his splendid pavilion with the thirty-two vassal kings whom he had brought with him,<sup>15</sup> the Israelites made a sudden attack on a part of his chariot force which had ventured upon rough ground, and so discomfited it, with danger so imminent to the whole host, that Benhadad, rising from his banquet, thought nothing better than to mount a fleet horse and escape. The whole army poured after him and got away with as much haste as they could, and no doubt with much disorder and slaughter of the hindmost.

While this success gave great additional courage to the Israelites,—who might now remember the decisive victories of David over the chariots and horse of Hadadezer,—on the other hand, the Syrians did not find reason for discouragement. They imputed their loss entirely to an error of judgment, in having ventured their chariots on to hilly ground;<sup>16</sup> and the captains assured the king that by avoiding this mismanagement, they should conquer Israel in another campaign. Accordingly, next year they repeated their invasion, and entered the country as far as the town of Aphek, which seems to have been on the broad slope of Esdraelon. If this is the Aphek intended, the Syrians, to avoid hilly districts, must have come along the coast near the Phœnicians, and would seem to have entered the land by the remarkable defile through

15. This may seem only to be a romantic version of the thirty-two *captains* named in the more historical account of 1 Kings xxii. 31. Not but that Benhadad was likely to have vassal kings with him.

16. In the religious phraseology of antiquity, this is expressed by saying that “the gods of Israel are gods of the hills, and not of the plains.”

which the river Leontes flows down from the lofty plain of Hollow Syria. This time however the spirit of the Israelites was very different from what it had been  
 260 in the former campaign. The national pride was roused by self-confidence; and while the Syrian host poured over the plain, the bands of Israel kept collecting on the hills, watching and following its motions for six days together. The Syrians were probably so resolved not again to venture off the good ground, that they could not take full advantage of their own numbers, and  
 265 prevent their army from getting separated into portions, each weaker than the enemy. Be this as it may, the Israelites made a brave and successful attack, by which (either in the battle, or in the town of Aphek after the battle) the person of king Benhadad himself fell into the hands of Ahab.

If we could believe our authority, we should now state, that, besides the  
 270 great slaughter of the last year's army, Benhadad this year lost 100,000 men slain in one day on the open field of Esdraelon, and 27,000 more, crushed to death by the fall of a wall in Aphek. If this were real history, disasters so enormous, besides the repeated loss of a most luxurious camp, would have shattered the entire empire of Damascus. Revolt in all parts would have followed,  
 275 and Israel would have had no more danger to fear; just as it afterwards was, when the loss of a single great army broke up the colossal empire of Assyria. On the contrary, the very next notice which we have of this kingdom represents it in a formidable and victorious attitude towards Israel. We are therefore forced to make immense deductions from the account transmitted to us.

It is more probable, that though by bravery and good fortune the Israelites  
 280 had captured the person of the Syrian king, the greater part of his host was untouched and still dangerous. If Ahab had gratified the suggestions of anger and revenge by slaying his foe, a new king might have been chosen in the camp, and the war would have been renewed. To kill the king was as it were to  
 285 set the king free, and lose the advantage which had been gained. Besides, the temper of Ahab appears to have been yielding and amiable; as want of firmness has been judged his chief defect. Accordingly, he treated the captive monarch with much respect; entitling him his "brother Benhadad," and inviting him to sit by his side in his own chariot. After this, he made a treaty, by  
 290 which Benhadad bound himself to restore all the cities of Israel which he held (hereby disabling himself from future invasion by the same route); and to make "streets" for Ahab in Damascus, whether for the purpose of commerce, or to flatter his pride. So moderate an arrangement kindled the indignation of a

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292-3 to flatter Ahab's pride. [*rev. 2nd ed.*]

fanatical Israelitish prophet,<sup>17</sup> who severely rebuked Ahab for having “let go a man whom Jehovah had appointed for utter destruction.” Yet the king, though vexed, was afraid or unwilling to show resentment against the undeserved and unseemly invective. 295

Benhadad thus withdrew himself and (we need not doubt) the best part of his army, unhurt, and faithfully restored the northern towns; but his pride was deeply engaged to recover his lost honour; for which he next chose a different mode of attack. From Damascus southward towards the Ammonites are wide and open plains, on which the eastern tribes of Israel could offer no effectual resistance to a Syrian army. The outlying towns, such as Astarosh Karnaim, were perhaps already in Benhadad’s power, if indeed he had not subdued the Ammonites, who in these times are not heard of as an independent nation.<sup>18</sup> 300  
Some years after his ill-success west of Jordan, he came up against southern Gilead, and possessed himself of the important town of Ramoth, south of the brook Jabbok. From this post he could at any time cross into the plain of the Jordan, and even make a sudden attack on Samaria, as well as on the eastern tribes, northward or southward. 305  
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The western bank of the Jordan was in itself too valuable to leave undefended, and had by this posture of Benhadad become a sort of frontier to the capital. In it there were two considerable cities, Bethshean and Jericho; the former undoubtedly fortified: but the latter had remained without walls from an early æra until the days of Ahab. For defence against the Syrians its fortification was clearly desirable; and the work was (probably in this stage of the war) undertaken by a man of Bethel, named Hiel. That the territory was regarded as Ahab’s, we infer from the mode in which the fact is named,<sup>19</sup> as likewise since 315

17. The prophet bids a man to wound him; and when the man refuses, declares that a lion shall kill him for disobeying the voice of Jehovah: of course a lion *does* kill him. The prophet then succeeds in getting another man to wound him; after which he spreads ashes on his face, and goes thus wounded and disfigured to deliver his message of woe to the king.

If Jehoram, the young son of Ahab, was present during this denunciation, he must afterwards have been much puzzled when Elisha laid down to him the direct contrary principle, and a much more humane one—“Wouldst thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive? Set bread and water before them, etc. etc.,” 2 Kings vi. 22.

18. They are noticed in the Chronicles during the reign of Jehoshaphat (in a passage which will need remark), and again in the reign of Uzziah, after the power of Damascus is broken.

19. Hiel is said to fortify Jericho in *Ahab’s days*, 1 Kings xvi. 34; not in *Jehoshaphat’s days*.

Bethel was in Ahab's kingdom;<sup>20</sup> while, in the want of a northern frontier to the plain of Jericho, we cannot wonder if Rehoboam was forced to surrender this highly fertile district to his rival, though it formed a part of the possessions of Benjamin. Indeed Bethel and Jericho are on another occasion coupled together<sup>21</sup> as chief seats of *Israelitish* prophets under the son of Ahab. We may gather that Hiel undertook the fortification from his own resources, under the condition that he was to be hereditary governor and prince of Jericho. He fulfilled his task successfully; but a great domestic calamity befell him. The Indian climate of Jericho (it seems) was fatal to all his children; of whom it is said, that the eldest died when the foundation of the walls was laid, and the youngest when the gates were set up. In vain had he spent his private fortune in the work; in vain might Ahab grant him an hereditary principedom; when, alas! there were no heirs to enjoy it. Men then called to mind an ancient spell ascribed to Joshua, who, "when the walls of Jericho fell flat before the blast of his trumpets" (as some old poem declared), pronounced in the name of Jehovah this very curse on the man who should rebuild the walls:—

335                               With his firstborn shall he lay the foundation;  
                                      With his youngest shall he set up the gates.

However, the city was the stronger for its fortifications, and Israel now needed the benefit; for king Benhadad beneath the walls of Ramoth could look down on the whole plain of Jordan. At the same time, Ahab was called to be always on the alert, to defend the eastern tribes from a twofold attack.

340                               But a great change of feeling and of policy had for some time passed over the cabinet of JERUSALEM; where JEHOSEPHAT, as we have stated, ascended the throne in the vigour of mature manhood.<sup>22</sup> Like his father Asa, he was a strict worshipper of Jehovah, and exerted himself to repress ever demoralizing practice which sheltered itself under the forms of heathen religion: yet the burning of incense to Jehovah at the high places he steadily upheld, if indeed there was as yet any one to oppose it. Such a king must have felt very painfully the relentless conflict between the prophets of Baal and Jehovah which was

20. *Gilgal* also, in the time of the prophet Amos, belonged to Israel; which seems to be decisive.

21. 2 Kings ii. 3, 5.

22. B.C. 894.

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323-4    Ahab. It may seem that Hiel . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]

346    the high places\*    [fn. omitted in the 2nd and 3rd eds.:]

\*The phrase, "*the people* offered and burned incense in the high places," seems to imply that they dispensed with the aid of priests and Levites; which will account for the pertinacity which the record manifests on the point.

for awhile going on in the neighbouring kingdom, and nothing but an urgent sense of duty and necessity would be likely to lead him into close alliance with Ahab. But before he had been six years on the throne, he became thoroughly convinced that to support Israel against the attacks of Syria was a paramount object, and took a decisive step,<sup>23</sup> from the consequences of which he never flinched through all the rest of his life. He united his young son Jehoram<sup>24</sup> in marriage to the equally youthful Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps he imagined that a maiden of the tender age of fifteen could import no moral evil into his palace, and he believed it a duty to cement the two branches of the house of Israel, which had been made unnaturally hostile with results so calamitous to both. Jehoshaphat was still more respected by the priests and prophets than his father Asa, and the determination of the later sacerdotal party to make him one of their great heroes, has thrown a false light over his whole reign. The account of him given in the Chronicles is evidently to so great a degree an ideal picture, that it is unsafe to believe anything on that testimony alone. Yet the scanty facts deposed in the other record justify important inferences. His predecessors, it is supposed, had succeeded in keeping the nominal homage of the Edomites, and had perhaps been able to enforce the claim to give them kings or regulate the succession to the throne.<sup>26</sup> Under Jehoshaphat however this remained no barren ceremony of state: before half his reign was ended, he even fitted out a fleet on the Red Sea, and prepared for a voyage to Ophir. In building ships at so distant a port, and in planning such a voyage, very much indeed is implied. He must have held so complete a command over Idumæa, as to be able to superintend the cutting of timber in Edomite forests (which do not seem now to exist), and sending all needful

23. The chronology would allow us to believe, that one object which Jehoshaphat bought by the marriage was a toleration of the prophets of Jehovah in Israel; for we have no proof that the persecution continued after that time.

24. As Jehoram is thirty-two years old when he is said to come to the throne, and reigns eight years (2 Kings viii. 17), he dies at the age of forty; but he dies in 865; therefore he is only seventeen in B.C. 888. Now his son Ahaziah is twenty-two at his accession B.C. 865, and was therefore born B.C. 887. This gives seventeen as the age of Jehoram at his marriage, when Athaliah may have been fifteen.

25. She is called daughter of *Omri*, 2 Kings viii. 26; 2 Chron. xxii. 2. If this were accurate, it would disturb our chronology. But 2 Kings viii. 18, induces everybody to explain daughter as *granddaughter*.

26. It is not certain whether the statement in 1 Kings xxii. 47, as to the viceroy in Edom, applies to Jehoshaphat's reign alone, or to former reigns also.

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justify important deductions. [*rev. 2nd ed.*]

364-5

Edomite forests, and sending . . . [*rev. 2nd ed.*]

373

supplies to the harbours of Elath and Ezion Geber. He must also have had a  
 375 sufficient command of the Philistine sea-coast, to furnish him with a maritime  
 population and experienced shipbuilders; for he built and manned his fleet  
 without aid from the king of Israel, or (as far as we can learn) from any foreign  
 quarter. Finally, he must have been able to provide for the security of his cara-  
 vans in going and returning; and must have had a large disposable surplus of  
 380 light merchandise, which would bear the expense of carriage on camels' backs  
 to the Red Sea. Even in our older compilation, the tone in which he is spoken  
 of implies a military greatness beyond his predecessors. Out of such substan-  
 tial realities, the Chronicler has built up a fabric of romance. He furnishes  
 Jehoshaphat with an army of 1,160,000 disposable troops under four great  
 385 generals, "to wait upon the king," besides the garrisons in the fenced cities.  
 The Philistines pay him tribute of silver, and the Arabians present him with  
 7700 rams and 7700 he-goats. So great prosperity must have been a direct  
 reward from Jehovah for his piety; hence his piety must be described as even  
 exceeding that of David. He gives order to his princes to teach in the cities of  
 390 Judah, and sends out Levites and priests with the BOOK of the LAW, who  
 taught the people everywhere. But as half of this tale is an obvious invention,  
 we cannot put any trust in the rest, which is unknown to our better authority,  
 and wholly unparalleled and uncountenanced by all the rest of the history.

In the present day, a ravine close beneath Jerusalem itself is called the  
 395 valley of Jehoshaphat, but there is no proof that the name was so applied in  
 ancient times. Yet it is generally supposed that there *was* a valley so called,<sup>27</sup>  
 identical with that which had received the name Berachah or *Blessing*, because  
 in it Jehoshaphat, after a great victory over the Edomites and other allies, there  
 offered solemn thanksgiving to Jehovah. The name (as so often happens)  
 400 appears to have generated a legend concerning the nature of the victory, which  
 however does not contain a single circumstance that can commend itself as  
 historical.<sup>28</sup>

27. According to a received interpretation of Joel iii.—But it seems more proba-  
 ble that the name in Joel is mystical and not geographical.

28. See Note <sup>3</sup>, p. 183.

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396-7 Yet there *was* a valley so called, and it is generally supposed to be identical with  
 that named Berachah or . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]  
 396 [fn. 27: dash and 2nd sentence added to the 2nd ed.]  
 402 [fn. 28:] See Note 1, p. 197. [; in the 2nd ed.:] See Note <sup>3</sup>, p. 177. [ref. to fn. 38, p.  
 190 of this critical ed.]

While the Chronicler's accounts of Jehoshaphat are not admissible, we yet cannot doubt that, except towards the end of his reign, he was a prosperous prince, and that the wisdom with which he followed up the measures of his father was crowned with high success. One or other of the two had reduced the southern cities of Philistia, and gained access to the sea, with facilities for Mediterranean navigation and commerce, which afterwards suggested to renew the southern voyages of Solomon. The neighbouring Arabians felt the benefits of traffic with him, and willingly paid him homage, and his sway, as we have said, became real and vigorous over the Edomites. In about the fifteenth or sixteenth year of his reign, a definite proposal was made to him by Ahab to unite in rescuing Ramoth in Gilead from the grasp of king Benhadad. Jehoshaphat acceded to Ahab's request with a cordiality which shows that he looked on all Israel as one people, and sincerely desired its entire union and joint prosperity. Nevertheless, it might be wrong to think his conduct disinterested, which might indeed lessen our idea of his prudence; rather, for the sake of his own kingdom, it was inevitable for him to feel the greatest anxiety from the position of the Syrian monarch in Gilead. From Ramoth as his rallying-post, Benhadad was almost certain, sooner or later, to subdue the eastern tribes; and by crossing the Jordan he might invade Judah almost as easily as Israel. Against a force so superior and so near, if once allowed to root itself there, neither kingdom could hope permanently to stand; and it might seem the part of wisdom to act with an enterprise bordering on rashness, before the eastern tribes of Israel had learned submission to a Damascene master.

The two kings accordingly marched in company against Ramoth, and found the Syrians assembled round it in force so great, as may even imply that they were on the point of invading Israel, and that the sole question had been, whether to meet them across the Jordan, or to receive their attack in the heart of Ephraim. The force more particularly specified now, as on other occasions, is that of chariots, over which the king of Syria had set thirty-two captains. An obstinate battle was fought, and lasted till the sun went down; in the course of which Ahab received a mortal wound with an arrow. He died in the evening; and so confessed was the defeat of the Hebrews, that a general order was sent through their bands for each man to save himself by night, as he best could.<sup>29</sup> After so entire a failure, we might have imagined that the whole

29. The Chronicler dissembles the disgraceful rout of the army, as indecorous to Jehoshaphat; 2 Chron. xix. 1.

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[paragraph begins:] Yet we cannot doubt . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]  
disinterested, and would indeed . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]

403-4  
417

territory of the eastern tribes would at once have been lost to the dominion of Samaria. The Syrians however must themselves have suffered severely in so hardly-contested a field; and they may have found that they had no longer  
 440 strength to spare for encountering any new enterprise.

Such an overthrow, in the first battle fought by the united kings of Israel and Judah, was in itself memorable and disastrous. The moral effect on the surrounding nations,—Edom, Moab, Philistia,—was a severe wound to the Hebrew supremacy, which now appeared finally to be sinking before  
 445 the star of Damascus. It was made still more impressive on the imagination by the death of Ahab, the first Hebrew monarch since Saul who had been slain in war. In consequence, the event has been transmitted to us with details which must be received with caution and a measure of distrust. Benhadad is said to have ordered his men to neglect all other objects in comparison with  
 450 that of killing Ahab; which, since Ahab is not reported to us to be anything as a general, savours of personal enmity, not military policy. But by a strange coincidence, Ahab, without knowing of this order, disguises himself in a common garb, but persuades Jehoshaphat to appear in his usual royal robes; for which no reason whatever is assigned. Hence Jehoshaphat narrowly escapes  
 455 being slain, as the Syrians mistake him for Ahab. The death of Ahab is imputed to a *chance-shot*, which perhaps only means<sup>30</sup> that the archer was supposed not to know that it was Ahab at whom he was aiming. While this account contains nothing impossible, the coincidences are odd, and certainly not easy to receive from an unknown compiler distant in time from the events.

But this is not all. That so pious a king as Jehoshaphat, and one previously so successful, should fall into such a calamity, needed to be accounted for. Had he gone forth without consulting Jehovah by Urim? or without encouragement from Jehovah's prophets? or had he even disobeyed them? Our narrative undertakes to reply to these questions, and yet in fact leaves  
 465 them unsolved. Jehoshaphat, after promising to join Ahab, is seized with scruples, and suggests to inquire of Jehovah. Ahab produces 400 prophets, who reply that Jehovah shall deliver Ramoth into the hands of the two kings. But the king of Judah is still uneasy, and inquires whether there is not yet, *besides* these, some prophet of Jehovah. Ahab confesses that there is one  
 470 more,—whom he does not like,—Micaiah, son of Imlah; and at Jehoshaphat's request, sends for him. Micaiah strongly forbids the expedition, and predicts the worst results: Ahab is incensed, and throws him into prison. Yet

30. If we interpret it, that the archer *shot at random*, how was the writer to know that?



Jehoshaphat goes up with Ahab against Ramoth, as if uncertain whether the single prophet or the four hundred spoke the true word of Jehovah.<sup>31</sup>

There are nevertheless in this account some points of theological interest, which must not be passed over. Micaiah is the only prophet of Israel (except Hosea, who wrote much later, when that branch of the nation was near to its final ruin,) of whose doctrine we have any characteristic specimen. When asked whether the two kings shall go up against Ramoth, he first replies, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that have not a shepherd: and Jehovah said, *These have no master*: let them return every man to his house in peace." When Ahab expressed displeasure at this rebuke of his indecisive character, Micaiah resumed his address: "I saw Jehovah sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him at his right hand and on his left. And Jehovah said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth of Gilead. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before Jehovah, and said, I will persuade him. And Jehovah said, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and by a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And Jehovah said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and so do."

It is quite a secondary question with us whether these words were so spoken, then and there, and whether such a prediction damped the hearts of the Hebrew soldiers and contributed to their defeat: all historical reality in the address may be doubted, and it will remain not the less certain that we have here a faithful view of the belief and forms of imagination then current concerning Jehovah's throne and court. These are quite in harmony with the representations of Isaiah and of the later prophets, in the general analogy presumed between the externals of divine and human sovereignty. That which is here peculiar and instructive is the agency of *lying spirits* under Jehovah's immediate mission. The false prophets who mislead Ahab are conceived of, probably, as in some sense guilty; yet they are not the less Jehovah's prophets, speaking by the direct dictation of the spirit which he has sent. The Persian doctrine of an Evil Spirit in avowed conflict with the Good God, does not seem yet to have found its way into Israel. The times were rude enough

31. Among the earlier Romans we see distinctly how any great defeat is apt to be imputed to a neglect of the auspices. Even so late as in the invasion by the Cimbri and Teutones, they ascribe some of their severest losses to the incontinence of the Vestal Virgins, who are tried and cruelly killed as guilty of the public disasters.

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Jehovah. Among the earlier Romans . . . public disasters. [*The end two sentences of this paragraph are transferred to a fn.; rev. 2nd ed.*]

*lying spirits* to work out Jehovah's ends by Jehovah's immediate mission. [*rev. 2nd ed.*]

to feel no impropriety in the God of Truth working out his own ends by lying  
 505 ministers; and the ingenious methods by which a later philosophy sought to  
 disentangle its own web were unknown and unwished for. At the same time,  
 it becomes apparent that in Israel (as at a later time in Judah), when the pro-  
 phets were admitted to give political counsel, their influence was apt to be  
 neutralized by one another, and by this doctrine of "lying spirits."

510 But to return to the history. The position of the Syrians in Gilead gave them  
 the undisputed command of the plains of Moab along the east bank of the  
 Jordan, down to its junction with the Dead Sea; and by thus intercepting all  
 communication between Israel and the Moabites, led the latter to disown their  
 homage to the former. The annual tribute which they had paid is estimated as  
 515 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams, with the wool, which was of course with-  
 held, now that the king of Israel could not fulfil a single duty of a sovereign.  
 AHAZIAH, eldest son of Ahab, succeeded to his father<sup>32</sup> on a weakened and  
 unenviable throne.

One circumstance alone, of political interest, is casually named as hap-  
 520 pening in his reign. Jehoshaphat had recently been making his great experiment  
 of renewing the navigation to Ophir; but, perhaps through want of skill in his  
 shipwrights or sailors (for he was shut up to the narrow coast of Philistia for  
 his supply), the enterprise failed, the fleet being shattered by a tempest almost  
 before quitting its harbour. Ahaziah appears to have imputed the misfortune  
 525 to want of seamanship; for he immediately proposed to send on the next voy-  
 age subjects of his own, who occupied a sea-coast of five times the length, and  
 had a far greater maritime experience than any Hebrews of the kingdom of  
 Judah. But Jehoshaphat was too much discouraged to repeat the experiment.  
 It must have been exceedingly costly, and he was no doubt already convinced  
 530 that he was grasping at what was beyond his powers; he therefore positively  
 declined the friendly offer.<sup>33</sup>

In a few short months Ahaziah met with an accident fatal in its result: he  
 fell out of an upper window in his room at Samaria. Sympathising with his

32. B.C. 877.

33. 1 Kings xxii. 49. It is extraordinary to see how broadly the Chronicler contra-  
 dicts this account. He represents that Ahaziah's men *had been* on board the ships, and  
 that *to punish this alliance* with so wicked a man as Ahaziah, Jehovah destroyed the  
 fleet by a tempest (2 Chron. xx. 35-37).

The writer likewise commits the blunder of supposing that ships could sail down  
 the Red Sea to *Tarshish*, or Tartessus, in Spain. Tarshish was a port much frequented  
 by the Tyrians; Jonah i. 3; Ezek. xxvii. 12.

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504-5 by lying agents; and . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]

508-9 their influence was neutralized . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]

mother's religion, he sent to the Philistine town of Ekron to inquire of their god<sup>34</sup> whether he should recover. For this impiety he was believed by the prophets of Jehovah to have died shortly after. As he had no son, his brother JEHORAM succeeded him in the next year.<sup>35</sup> 535

The calamities which seemed still to beset Israel were not without their effect on the new king. Jehoram could hardly avoid imputing them to the evil influence of Baal, whose worship Ahab had introduced; and (possibly not without the instigation of the monotheistic Jehoshaphat) he took the decisive measure of removing the image of Baal which his father had made. We may probably infer that in other matters also he refrained from encouraging heathen ceremonies, although respect for his mother Jezebel forbade his taking active measures against them. After this he engaged Jehoshaphat to aid him in enforcing from the Moabites the tribute which they had been accustomed to pay to Ahab; and as it was no longer possible to conduct their armies across the Jordan because of the Syrians, it was determined to lead them through the land of Edom, which was now entirely subject to Jehoshaphat. The particulars of the campaign form a part of the wonderful deeds of Elisha, and it is difficult to elicit substantial facts. The viceroy (here called *king*<sup>36</sup> of Edom) accompanies them; their army suffers from want of water; Elisha calls for a minstrel,—begins to prophesy,—orders them to dig ditches. They obey, and find water in abundance: the Moabites, when the sun shines on the water, mistake it for blood, and fancying that the two armies have massacred each other, make a rush for the Hebrew camp to despoil it. The Israelites meet and slaughter them with ease; then (as eager not for future tribute, but for present vengeance) they beat down the cities, cut down all the good trees, stop up all the wells, and cast each man his stone on every good piece of land. The king of Moab is filled with chief rage against the king of Edom, and with 700 chosen swordsmen makes a fierce, but vain attack on him. He then sacrifices his eldest son on the wall of some city: but with no result, except that the Moabites<sup>37</sup> “feel great 540 545 550 555 560

34. Whom the Hebrews name Baalzebub (*lord of flies*).

35. B.C. 876.

36. As we are distinctly informed that at this time *there was no king in Edom* (1 Kings xxii. 47), the title is here indicative of vague knowledge in the original writer of this account.

37. Mr. Robert Mackay, in his able and remarkable work, “Progress of the Intellect,”

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he at once took the decisive . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]	541
made. This, we must suppose, indicates that in other matters. . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]	542-3
enforcing of the Moabites . . . . [rev. 3rd ed.]	545-6
[fn. added, 2nd ed.]	562

indignation against Israel.” The armies return home, and Moab is left neither subject nor tributary.<sup>38</sup> As no effect whatever of this campaign is pretended, and we cannot imagine a miracle wrought solely to enable the Hebrews to inflict misery on an innocent population, it is most probable that the want of water, which is mentioned as a difficulty encountered by them, really caused the failure of the whole expedition.

We now enter on a yet more perplexing narrative, in which the unhistorical tone is far too manifest<sup>39</sup> to allow of our easy belief in it; although it is impossible to doubt that there was a real event at bottom which deeply affected the national feelings. This event is the siege of Samaria by the king of Syria. The invasion had only been delayed for some years by the spirited attack made on his forces at Ramoth by the allied kings; and now, under Jehoram son of Ahab, the Israelitish army with their king was hemmed in at Samaria. So successfully did the Syrian forces cut off their communications, that a dreadful famine arose in the town; and not only were the vilest substances sold at a great price for human food, but a woman was believed to have boiled and eaten her son.<sup>40</sup> Yet when the suffering was becoming unendurable, and a little more

which seldom agrees with the views of this volume, says (vol. ii. p. 407) that it was not the *Moabites* who felt indignation, but *Jehovah*, who was fancied to be affected by the charm of the sacrifice.

38. The Chronicler appears to have thought this campaign not honourable enough to Jehoshaphat, for he has dropt it out and put into its place, in nearly the same point of time, a different war, which he tells as follows (2 Chron. xx). The Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, a great multitude, invade the land of Judah, entering along the west shore of the Dead Sea. Jehoshaphat prays a public prayer: a Levite becomes inspired and encourages the nation: Jehoshaphat marches out with religious singers in front of his army to praise Jehovah. As soon as they begin to sing, Jehovah sends mutual fury into the adverse host, who, before the Hebrews can come up to them, kill one another, “so that not one escaped.” Abundance of spoil,—riches and precious jewels,—are found with the dead bodies, so much that the favoured army is employed three days in gathering it. On the fourth day they publicly bless Jehovah in the valley of Berachah, and return to Jerusalem with psalteries, harps, and trumpets to the house of Jehovah.

As to the date intended for this fable, it is distinctly declared to be after the death of Ahab (xix. 1, xx. 1); and it might seem by xx. 35 to be during the life of Ahab’s successor. But at v. 31 of this chapter the connexion is broken, and the writer loses all chronological clue.

39. The siege of Jerusalem by Titus is described by Josephus in perhaps a still more overwrought and romantic style; yet Josephus was a contemporary, with excellent means of information.

40. Dramatic pungency is added to this by representing *two* women *contracting* that each in turn shall contribute a boiled child to their common meal: one of them eats the

would have led to unconditional surrender, the Syrian army withdrew, and vanished of itself in the night. 580

Such a catastrophe is *à priori* very improbable, but is by no means impossible. Many conjectural causes might be assigned, far from absurd. The besieger may himself have suffered want of supplies, or he may have been drawn off by the attack of some enemy at home when the siege lingered beyond expectation,—as the Gauls, while blockading the Roman Capitol. Large and luxurious armies are likewise liable to unaccountable panics; and there were in this case circumstances which may have conduced to such a thing. It has been observed by a Greek writer,<sup>41</sup> that the Persians so dreaded a night-attack on their cavalry, that that species of force never passed the night at a shorter distance than six or seven miles from the enemy. Every horse need to be pegged to the ground by each of his four feet. If the army was surprised by night, the time required to get the horses free and accoutre them for action was so great, that a total defeat might be first sustained. A force of chariots must have been still more liable to this disaster. Moreover, as king Benhadad had once before fallen into the hands of the Israelites, he may the more easily have taken alarm on the occurrence of a tumult which was supposed to be a hostile attack. Noises in the night are heard to a great distance, and are easily misinterpreted; and the host was probably dispersed, so as to block up all the critical approaches to Samaria, without venturing on the rough ground. 585  
590  
595  
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other's child, and evades to give her own; and she who has fulfilled her part of the contract appeals to the king against the other's injustice.

41. Xenophon in his *Anabasis*, iii. He elsewhere, in the same work, mentions that even the Greek army, under the veteran officer Clearchus, suffered a rather dangerous night-panic, which was stilled by Clearchus bidding his loud-voiced crier proclaim a reward of a silver talent to whoever *would tell who it was that let the ass loose into the camp*; *Anab.* ii. 2, 20. They had themselves, just before, unawares inflicted a panic on the king of Persia, which made him decamp in the night.

42. The Syrians are stated to dread an attack from the king of the Hittites and of the Egyptians. No Hittite kings can have compared in power with the king of Judah, the real and nearer ally, who is not named at all; and the kings of Egypt (if there were really more than one) were at a weary distance, with a desert between.

In the whole narrative, from 2 Kings vi. 8 to vii. 6, the title "king of Israel" occurs twenty-two times, yet his name never slips out, nor that of the lord who is trampled to death; nor is there a single mark of acquaintance with the contemporaneous history.

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Such an event is *à priori* . . . [rev. 2nd ed.] 582  
 [fn. 41, 1st line:] his *Anabasis*. He elsewhere, . . . [rev. 2nd ed.] 589  
 than twelve miles . . . [rev. 2nd ed.] 591

The authority from which we draw our whole information says, therefore, nothing incredible in assigning a *night-panic* as the reason for the sudden disappearance of the Syrians; but the particular ground of alarm<sup>42</sup> attributed to them does not exhibit the writer's acquaintance with the times in a very  
 605 favourable light. It goes on to represent the Syrians as leaving their entire camp, with abundance of food and every sort of wealth, to be plundered by the Israelites; and such, it declares, was the profusion of the supply of fine flour and of barley (the horse-food of those parts), that the dearth in Samaria was suddenly converted into cheapness.<sup>43</sup> A lord who had disbelieved the  
 610 possibility of this, when predicted by Elisha, was trodden to death in the crowd, in fulfilment of the prophet's denunciation upon him.

The general result remains clear: Samaria, after great suffering, escaped for the present; but the power of Syria continued to threaten it with force most disproportionate. Jehoshaphat (if still alive)<sup>44</sup> was getting old, and possibly  
 615 was daunted by the ill-success of his two expeditions in company with kings of Israel; but age had stolen over Benhadad also. He was shortly laid up with a painful sickness, and (after an interval perhaps of a few years) died. It is not stated whether he left any natural representatives, and we only know that he was succeeded on the throne of Damascus by Hazael,<sup>45</sup> one of his great officers.

43. The liveliness of the narrative is here quite equal to poetry. *Four leprous men* venture out into the Syrian camp, and enjoy all its good things before any of the rest have discovered the flight of the huge host. Considering the height of the hill of Samaria, it might have seemed that the state of the enemy's camp would be seen (at least in most parts) from the town itself.

44. We cannot tell whether Jehoshaphat or Jehoram sate on the throne of Judah during the siege of Samaria, so little has it of real connexion with the history; yet judging from the affairs of Syria, we should suppose it to be while the two Jehorams were reigning.

45. Hazael is stated to have murdered the poor old man in his sick bed, by spreading a wet cloth on his face. But when a man is so near to death that this will kill him, he may so easily have died of himself, that we need good evidence to show that such a story is not vulgar scandal. *How* the Israelitish writer got so accurate information of what went on in the king of Syria's bedchamber is not apparent.

In order, it seems, to give honour to Elisha, this prophet is made to utter a prediction which in a just view was highly disgraceful. Hazael brings him a present of *forty camels* -load of all the precious things of Damascus, to inquire, in Benhadad's name, whether he is to recover of his malady. Elisha replies that he *will not* recover, although he *might* recover; but Hazael will become king of Syria, and will perpetrate every kind of cruelty on the Israelites. Hazael is shocked at the prophecy, yet on reaching home murders his master. If Elisha had wished to incite him to the murder, he could not have tempted him more diabolically. But the whole tale is apocryphal.

Jehoshaphat, under growing infirmity, had recourse to the method, hitherto unpractised except by king David, of raising his son to the throne during his own lifetime. Some doubt rests on the date of this; we have followed the opinion that it was B.C. 872, about three years before the old king's death. It was not to be questioned that he felt the calamities which were befalling the northern kingdom to be severe shocks given to the whole Hebrew sovereignty. Now that the tribe of Reuben, with Ammon and Moab, were lost to the throne of Israel, it was impossible that the Edomites should very peacefully submit to the yoke of Judah. A strong and vigorous hand was wanted, and age must have now disabled Jehoshaphat for the active exertion of warfare. These reasons will account for his taking so unusual a step.

That the name of his son, JEHORAM, was the very same as that of the king of Israel, is generally ascribed to the matrimonial alliance between the two families; an opinion which is confirmed by the circumstance that *this* Jehoram's son and the *other* Jehoram's brother were both named Ahaziah. Yet as both Jehorams appear to have been born in Omri's reign, it is remarkable to find such intimacy between the fathers already commenced, as to lead to their giving the same names to their sons.<sup>46</sup> No event at all is recorded as occurring during the joint reign of Jehoram and his father. Jehoshaphat died<sup>47</sup> at the age of sixty, leaving his kingdom in an anxious position, through no fault of his own, but through the irresistible growth of Damascus, which he had so long foreboded, and in vain struggled to check.

The great event of his son's reign was the revolt of the Edomites, who now set over themselves an independent king. The king of Judah did not yield up his sovereignty without a conflict; and going out with a force of chariots, he made a night-attack on the Edomite army with much slaughter. Nevertheless, though he might win a battle, he could not recover his dominion; and Edom was lost to the house of Judah about a century and a half after its conquest by David. A revolt of the strongly fortified town of Libnah in Judæa is mentioned as happening about the same time; and it is possible that the necessity imposed on Jehoram of returning from Edom to put down rebellion in his own dominions, helped to shorten the Edomite war. We should seem to know the reasons of this internal rebellion, if we could give unhesitating credit to the details which our second authority has added to the reign of this king. His

46. Some may conjecture that the system of taking *royal* names was already acted on.

47. B.C. 869.

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exertions of warfare. [rev. 2nd ed.]

[fn. added, 2nd ed.]

629

637

655 father Jehoshaphat, we are told, had seven sons, whom he established as princes in various fenced cities of Judah; but no sooner did Jehoram find himself sole master of the kingdom, than, in the jealousy of power, he slew all his brothers, and with them many other noble persons. Such a massacre would necessarily produce discontents, which might well break out into rebellion at Libnah.

660 The Edomites had now learned their strength; and the hope of revenge kindled a clear memory of the bloody deeds wrought upon their nation by Joab and Abishai. Although they could have no thought of conquering Judah, they from this time forth, with little intermission, harassed it by inroads, in which they carried off the population to sell into slavery. Allusions to the suffering  
665 thus caused are frequent in the earliest extant prophets; yet no incursions were on a sufficiently large scale to be entitled *a war*, or to find a place in the general history.

A notice however has been preserved to us of a very daring inroad of *Philistines*, aided by tribes from the Arabian peninsula; who surprised Jerusalem itself, and carried off (it is even said) the wives of the king. The general  
670 fact is in perfect agreement with the course of the history and the references made by the prophets;<sup>48</sup> but we find mingled up with the narrative much that is erroneous or justly suspected,<sup>49</sup> so as to inspire the belief, that an undue

48. See especially Joel iii. 4, 5, which at first sight seems to say that the Philistines (with the help of Tyre and Sidon?) pillaged the temple.

49. It states (2 Chr. xxi. 20) that as a stigma on his wickedness he was buried in the city of David, but *not in the sepulchres of the kings*; while in our better authority we read, that "he was buried *with his fathers* in the city of David." The Chronicler brings up against him Philistines, and Arabians *that were near the Ethiopians*, who plunder his palace, carry off his wives (although Athaliah, his chief or only wife, was not carried off), and slay all his sons, except his youngest son Jehoahaz—for so Ahaziah is called in ch. xxi. 17. (The name Ahaziah reappears in xxii. 2, and, in another form, Azariah, in v. 6.) The Chronicler makes Ahaziah 42 years old when his father dies at the age of 40. This *forty-two* might indeed be a corrupt reading for *twenty-two*, as we read in 2 Kings xviii. 26; but even so, it is absurd to imagine Ahaziah to be only 18 years younger than his father, and yet to be the youngest son born from many wives. Again, as the Chronicler represents all the *brethren* of Ahaziah to have been killed by the freebooters, he turns those who are called "forty-two men, *brethren* of Ahaziah" (in 2 Kings x. 13, 14,) into *sons* of the brethren of Ahaziah; so that Jehoram, dying at the age of 40, left 42 grandsons who are called *men*. That Elijah the prophet wrote a letter to Jehoram, as stated in 2 Chr. xxi. 12, is irreconcilable with the chronology of the book of Kings. *Both* these records are prejudiced against the son and grandson of Jehoshaphat, because



prejudice against the son of Jehoshaphat had biased the Chronicler, by whom this king is depicted in far blacker colours than by the earlier compiler. Jehoram died in the prime of life, of an acute attack in the bowels, which, coupled with the depressing events of his reign, in contrast to his father's greatness, led to the idea that a judgment from God had overtaken him, and that he was a sinner above other men. 675

His son AHAZIAH<sup>50</sup> had already reached the age of twenty-two, and lost no time in following up his grandfather's policy of withstanding the power of Damascus. No circumstances survive to us that might explain the only fact of which we are informed. Hazael had succeeded Benhadad on the throne of Syria. Had his accession been accompanied with any internal disorders? Had Benhadad left sons, against whom Hazael had had to contend? or had Jehoram of Israel, after the retreat of Benhadad from Samaria, obtained any fresh successes during the last illness of the old king? We cannot tell what emboldened the two Hebrew princes anew; we only know that Ahaziah, in the first and last year of his reign, joined Jehoram in another attempt to recover Ramoth in Gilead from the Syrians. King Hazael fought a battle against them, in which Jehoram was severely wounded; but the Hebrew armies kept the field, and continued in the neighbourhood of Ramoth. The Israelitish king had returned to his palace at Jezreel to tend his wounds, when a dreadful calamity exploded on the heads of both the royal houses. But before detailing this miserable event, we must cast a retrospect on the life of queen JEZEBEL. 680 685 690 695

We have seen that the palace of Tirzah found no favour with king Omri, the founder of Samaria. As the arduous work of erecting a new capital is likely to have fully occupied him, we may probably ascribe to his son Ahab<sup>51</sup> the building of the new palace at Jezreel for his wife Jezebel. Jezreel is identified with the modern village of Zerin, on the elevated part of the table-land called Esdraelon<sup>52</sup> by the Greeks. To the north-west the brook Kishon runs down 700

of their relation to the house of Ahab, in whose sins (they vaguely say) both walked. But when they go into details of irreligion, we find no imputation worse than "the high places," 2 Chr. xxi. 11. The son of Ahab had in fact renounced the worship of Baal.

50. B.C. 865.

51. We hear also of an *ivory house* which Ahab made (1 Kings xxii. 39), which may be compared to the *ivory palaces* of Ps. xlv. It is credible that all its *ornamental* part was executed in ivory. The "houses of ivory" in Hosea iii. 15 are named in company with real dwelling-houses.

52. Esdrael is a mere corruption of Jezreel, a word which in Hebrew means *seed of God* (or, sowing-place of God?), as indicating the great fruitfulness of the plain.

into the bay of Carmel. Horne (in his Illustrations) describes the plain of Jezreel as “surrounded by hills on all sides; by the hills of Nazareth to the north, those of Samaria to the south, the mountains of Tabor and Hermon to the east, and by Carmel to the south-west.” By general agreement, the site was worthy of a palace. It has been carefully recorded that David, when he needed the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, paid fifty shekels of silver<sup>53</sup> as the price of it with the oxen. Omri bought the hill of Samaria of its own Shemer with two talents of silver; Ahab likewise was under a necessity of purchasing such land as he needed in the neighbourhood of Jezreel. It so happened that a man named Naboth had a vineyard which was wanted as a kitchen-garden to the palace; but although the king offered him whatever equivalent in money he thought reasonable, Naboth positively refused to sell it on any terms. The narrative is of interest, as showing us, that the despotism apparently vested in these kings was never understood to supersede private and social rights. In time of war they exercised so arbitrary an authority, that Saul could threaten his son Jonathan with death for disobeying a capricious order; and over their own officials, especially those under military rule, the public feeling seems to have permitted them a very unlimited sway. But their power over private men, although the constitution had not invented any mode of controlling it, was not to be exerted with wild or selfish wilfulness: usage, and respect for

53. 2 Sam. xxiv. 24.

702-6 bay of Carmel, parallel to high hills which form an amphitheatre behind Jezreel on the west and south. The the east, but inclining to south, another brook runs sharply down to the town of Bethshean, with the mountains of Gilboa rising steep along its southern side. But to the east and north-east the eye surveys a beautiful expanse of the valley of Jordan; to the north the land of Isaachar lies open, though broken by the lofty hill of Shunem; while between the north-west and west the mountains of Carmel bound the prospect over the broad and fertile slope of Esdraelon. Such was the magnificent site of Jezebel’s palace. It has been carefully recorded . . . [in the 2nd ed., a revision is made to lines 4-5 of this passage:] the eye is carried right across the valley of Jordan; . . . [also, a fn. is added to the 2nd ed., omitted in the 3rd ed.:] Jezebel’s palace.\*

\*The accuracy of this description has been questioned by a traveller, who saw *no* extensive prospect from Zerin. I did not compile it from Kitto’s Biblical Cyclopædia, but I find his article (Jezreel) in general to confirm what I have written. A dim day, or an ill choice of the road, often defrauds travellers of fine prospects.

707 [fn. 53: the following (the second sentence of this fn. in the 1st ed.) is omitted in the 2nd and 3rd eds.:] The Chronicler thought this too small a sum for a king like David on a religious occasion, and makes him pay *six hundred shekels of gold by weight*, 1 Chr. xxi. 25.

public opinion, demanded the observance of certain forms of justice, in a case which involved private interests. On the present occasion the refusal of Naboth greatly annoyed Ahab, who neither dared to use violence, nor conceived the idea of it. But his wife Jezebel, enraged that any one should thwart and mortify her royal consort, immediately took on herself to arrange the matter of Naboth. Having written letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, she accused Naboth of the undefinable offence of "blasphemy" against God and the king,<sup>54</sup> and by suborning false witness, effected his condemnation; upon which he was put to death by the cruel method of public stoning. At her instance, Ahab then took possession of Naboth's vineyard, although with a bad conscience and without enjoyment of it; for when severely reproved by Elijah the prophet, he humbled himself, —rent his clothes and wore sack-cloth,—and showed no resentment against his faithful rebuker. Such is the account, as we have it; and even if it be not wholly correct, it is of value, as showing a very early belief current in Israel. If we reject it, we can put nothing into its place, as we cannot hope to amend it in detail. It certainly gives us a blacker view of Jezebel's character than any other facts which are stated; and the thought may occur, whether this is anything but a story to which her murderer, in self-justification, gave currency. That is possible; and yet the crime imputed to her is only too consistent with the mother of Athaliah.

In her palace of Jezreel the queen of Ahab was still residing, and here too lay her royal son, now almost convalescent from the wounds he received at Ramoth. It does not appear that any violence on Jezebel's part had been renewed against the Hebrew national religion since the great drought which had afflicted Israel. We read that prophets of Jehovah moved freely in the camp and in the court during the Syrian invasions, and used great liberty with Ahab and his son, without encountering danger; and when Ahab joined with Jehoshaphat to go against Ramoth, we have seen that about 400 men

54. The Hebrew phrase is, "Naboth did *bless* God and the king." The word *bless* is expounded to mean *say adieu*, and hence, *curse*. It may seem strange to find *God*, and not *Jehovah*, in this formula; and since in days when various idolatries were established in Israel, a purely theological punishment seems impossible, the suspicion might intrude, that this *stoning for blasphemy* is a sacerdotal notion of later days here imputed to the times of Ahab. Yet it may be that the phrase only imports *treason*, and that the word *God* inserted before *king* is mere verbiage, like the malice and wickedness which our legal formulas so liberally ascribe to defendants. That stoning was practiced in Israel, we saw in the case of Rehoboam's luckless tax-collector.

[fn. ref. repositioned from after "blasphemy", 2nd ed.]  
wounds he had received . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]

728-9

743

750 are spoken of as prophesying in the name of Jehovah before both the kings. Jehoram, son of Ahab, had renounced the worship of Baal, and might personally have seemed to deserve some consideration and some mercy from those who dreaded or hated his mother. He was barely recovered from wounds received against the public enemy. But Jehoram's zeal, or perceptions of public  
 755 duty, did not, like Asa's, mount so high as to steel him to forbid his mother's religion: the priests of Baal remained in Samaria. Elisha (if we can trust our narrative) waited his time to strike a blow against Jezebel, far more ferocious in conception, and proportionably more deadly in its result, than the address of Ahijah to Jeroboam had been. He sent a young prophet with secret orders  
 760 to Ramoth, where JEHU, son of Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi, one of the chief captains of the host of Israel, was abiding with the army to watch the Syrians. Having asked a private interview with Jehu, the youth took out a box of oil and poured it over his head, declaring that Jehovah anointed Jehu king over Israel, that he might cut off every male of the house of Ahab and avenge the blood  
 765 of the prophets at the hand of Jezebel. After thus delivering his message, he fled and disappeared. Jehu was not slow to announce what had been done; and the other captains accepted it as a voice from heaven. He was at once proclaimed king by the army, and before the tidings should reach Jezreel by any other messenger, he hastened to carry it himself. It so happened that Ahaziah  
 770 king of Judah was come to visit his wounded uncle; and when the watchman announced from his height that a man was seen rapidly driving towards the palace, who apparently must be Jehu, captain of the host, the two princes, moved by an inexplicable impulse, at once drove forth in their chariots to meet him. But on their coming near, Jehu shot Jehoram with an arrow through the  
 775 heart; and overdoing the prophet's commission, sent his servants to slay Ahaziah also, who fled on discovering the treason. He was chased so closely as to receive a mortal wound,<sup>55</sup> though his chariot bore him off to Megiddo, west of Jezreel, beneath the mountains of Carmel. Here he died<sup>56</sup> in the second

55. The wound is specified as received "at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam" (2 Kings ix. 27). But the Chronicler gives a different and irreconcilable tale (2 Chr. xxii. 8, 9). After slaying the princes of Judah, Jehu seeks for Ahaziah, and *catches him hid in Samaria*. He is slain and carefully buried by Jehu's people, "because, said they, he is the son [grandson] of Jehoshaphat, who sought Jehovah with all his heart."

56. B.C. 864.

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753-4 He was still weak with wounds received . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]  
 756 the priests of Baal were still supported by her, and the temple of Baal still stood at Samaria. Elisha . . . [2nd ed.: "still stood at" rev. as "remained in"; 3rd ed.: middle 10 words of this passage omitted.]  
 777 his chariot carried him off . . . [rev. 3rd ed.]

year of his reign and twenty-third of his age. He was carried by his servants in his own chariot to Jerusalem, and buried in the royal sepulchres. 780

But this was the mere beginning of a great and historical tragedy. Jehu continued his course to Jezreel; but the news of his murderous enterprise arrived there before him, and Jezebel had full notice of her danger. With masculine spirit, she prepared to meet him boldly, showing herself out of a window which overlooked the gate of the palace. As he drove in through the gate, she called aloud to him with the significant question, "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?" but Jehu, without deigning to reply, commanded the eunuchs who stood at her side to throw her out of window. They did not dare to disobey so fierce and relentless a man, and hurled her down in front of him. All mangled as she lay and bespattered with her gore, Jehu, as if glorying in cruelty, drove his horses and chariot over her body, and left her to live or die, as chance might determine. Those who handed down the account were careful to remark, that the corpse of Jehoram had been cast out by Jehu on the vineyard of Naboth, and that while Jehu was dining in the palace of Jezreel, the dogs devoured the flesh off the body of Jezebel. 785 790 795

From Jezreel, Jehu wrote letters to Samaria (where Ahab had seventy male descendants, many of them children under tutors), and commanded the elders and authorities<sup>57</sup> of the city to behead them all, and send the heads to him forthwith at Jezreel. The knowledge that the army was with him and that both kings were dead, terrified them into submission; and the seventy heads of the innocent men and children were sent to him in baskets, and placed in two heaps by the palace-gate. After this he massacred all persons of distinction whom he regarded as the partisans of Ahab,—“all his great men, and his kinsfolk, and the priests, until he left none remaining.” These things must have been done with a rapidity almost miraculous, if the next tale of horror has been accurately reported. Journeying, it is said, to Samaria, he fell in with forty-two princes of Judah, brothers<sup>58</sup> of the late king Ahaziah, who, having 800 805

57. There is an obscurity in the phrase: “he wrote to Samaria unto the rulers of Jezreel.” In fact, vv. 11 and 17 of 2 Kings x. do not well harmonize with 1-10: for in 1-10 Jehu slays Ahab’s sons in *Samaria*, in v. 11 they are called “those of the house of Ahab in *Jezreel*,” and afterwards, in v. 17, he still has to slay “all who remained to Ahab in Samaria.” The original narrative appears to have been interpolated; but it is perhaps impossible to separate the newer parts from the older.

58. It has been already noted that these are called by the Chronicler “*sons* of the brethren of Ahaziah;” because he has said that the *brothers* of Ahaziah were all slain by the Philistines. But as the father of Ahaziah, if still alive, would only have been forty-one years old, there is no room to doubt that the other record is right; except that the word *brothers* may include first-cousins, and even uncles, if we reject the account

heard nothing of these events, were on their way to visit the young princes of the house of Ahab. The taste of blood had only whetted the appetite of this tiger of a man, who at once gave orders, which were too faithfully executed, to slay them all on the spot. Truly he understood, that having treacherously murdered two unoffending kings, it was not wise to leave any one alive who had a family interest in becoming their avenger: nor have we reason to doubt of the main fact of his massacre, however questionable the circumstantial may seem.

Continuing his progress, he took into his chariot a man whose name had become proverbial in the days of Jeremiah the prophet, for the singular law<sup>59</sup> which he imposed on his descendants—Jonadab the son of Rechab. Entering Samaria with him, he assumed the character of a devout votary of Baal; proclaimed a great sacrifice on a certain day, and ordered, under pain of death, that every priest and every worshipper of Baal should assemble to celebrate it. Having thus filled the temple, and made all requisite arrangements by the help of Jonadab, at an appointed moment he gave the signal for killing all that were within. When this order had been executed, he joined his guards in the temple of Baal, had all the images<sup>60</sup> broken and burned, the temple itself pulled down, and its site converted to the vilest purposes. Thus were the prophets of Jehovah at last avenged and gratified.

But the Fury of murder, who rioted thus perfidiously in profane Samaria, spread her contagion to holy Jerusalem. Jehu's example stimulated the daughter of Jezebel to deeds still more unnatural, if not more ferocious. In the court of Jehoshaphat, ATHALIAH from her earliest youth had seen no images to Baal or Astarte. For twenty-four years she had lived in a monotheistic atmosphere; and, but for Jehu, she might perhaps have passed without crime and without reproach to her life's end. But her mother's blood was in her veins, and now

that Jehoram slew his own brothers, sons of Jehoshaphat. Ahaziah was probably the eldest son of Jehoram. But 2 Chr. xxii. 1-7 appears to be a fragment of different origin from xxi., and follows a different chronology. It is no accident that at once makes Ahaziah forty-two years old, and gives him so many nephews.

59. The Rechabites were a tribe or family who lived in Arab fashion, being under oath not to build houses nor plant the ground. This is identical with a Nabathæan principle, and is evidently a barbarous endeavour to uphold liberty by avoiding to root oneself in the soil. The Rechabites were supposed to be descended from this Jonadab, and to have adopted their institutions at his command.

60. It was before stated that Jehoram "put away the image of Baal which his father had made;" but not that he actually destroyed it.

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817 the day of Jeremiah . . . [rev. 3rd ed.]

824-5 executed, he proceeded with his guards to the temple of Baal, . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]

that her son and all his brothers were slain, she saw the throne of Judah within her grasp, if only she removed the young children,—the sons of her son,—who stood in her way. As mother of the king, she enjoyed high privileges, and had many servants at her bidding: at this moment there was none but she to administer the supreme government in Judah. Seizing the opportunity, she put all her grandchildren to death, and occupied the throne as QUEEN in her own title and without a rival. 835 840

Such is the train of atrocities which Elisha's message entailed on both the Hebrew kingdoms. A third time was the royal house of Israel extirpated, and now likewise that of Judah. That the Jewish writers can gloat over such funereal events, so deadly to their own people, is sufficiently wonderful. That men called Christians can read them with calm approbation, is still more melancholy, for this is the training of mind which steeled all Europe to cruelty under the name of religion. This has lit up hell-fires in Christendom; this has perpetrated treacherous massacres unknown<sup>61</sup> to Paganism; this has bequeathed, even to the present age, a confusion of mind which too often leads those who are naturally mild and equitable, to inflict hardship, vexation, degradation, and loss on the professors of a rival creed. Until men learn that Jehovah neither 845 850

61. The slaughter of the Magians at the accession of Darius son of Hystaspes, is the only event of antiquity which might seem analogous to St. Bartholomew's eve. The more spiritual the forces of a religion, the more deadly is their perversion; and precisely because the old Persian belief is too pure to be called Paganism, it is credible that its persecutions may have shared in Christian atrocity. But in truth we do not know the details of the Magophonia sufficiently to reason minutely about it. Certainly it was not a contest of pure opinion, but also a contest which of two races should possess imperial power.

In reply to the gross attacks on my good faith by a reviewer, I affirm that nothing in antiquity, known to me, approaches the Inquisition in conception or in consequences, as an organized, treacherous, cruel system of punishing secret conscientious opinion. Paganism has abounded with atrocities; and certainly I have nowhere disguised them: but no Pagan teachers *could* have infused into Christianity the horrible mischiefs which the consecrating of Jewish history has superinduced. As for the persecutions by Pagan Rome, they were totally different in character;—the earlier ones being the arrogant cruelties of mere despotism, while those from Trajan downwards were open attempts, increasing in violence, to dissolve an *organized* society, which was sincerely believed (and as the result showed, most justly believed) to be dangerous to the State.

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That Jewish writers . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]	844
has perpetrated perfidious massacres . . . [rev. 2nd ed.]	848-9
[fn. added, 2nd ed.]	849

does, nor ever did, sanction such enormities as Elisha commanded and Jehu executed, they will never have a true insight into the heart of Him who is the  
855 God of the Pagan as well as of the Jew.