

STORY
OF THE
KINGS OF JUDAH & ISRAEL

WRITTEN FOR CHILDREN
BY

A. D. B.

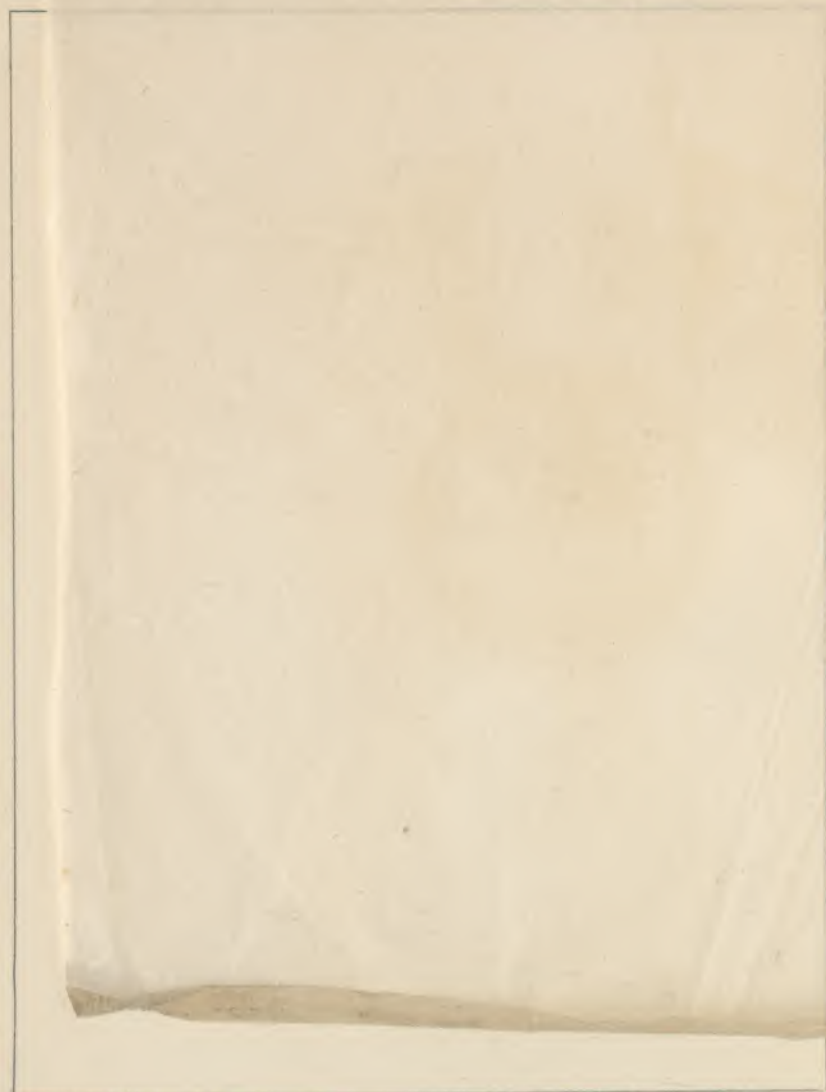
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Steuley, Charles For
from his affectionate
Papa,
wishing him many
happy returns of the
15th Feb^y 1873.

STORY
OF THE
KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.









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EDINBURGH
WILLIAM P. NIMMO.

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SECOND EDITION.

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WILLIAM P. NIMMO.
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PREFACE TO PARENTS

THIS book is written for Children, and, as far as possible, in just such simple language as a mother would employ.

In the first instance, it was drawn up for the benefit of my own little ones : they found it interesting ; and certainly do now understand the intertwined histories of Judah and of Israel better than they did before I read it to them. I therefore hope that it may prove useful to other children, perhaps even to some parents.

Throughout, two objects have been kept steadily in view :

I. To make the little ones understand and remember the various relations which existed between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel ; together with the leading events of each reign, and their dates.

II. To lead them to compare one part of Scripture with another, and so, practically to learn how wonderfully the Bible explains itself.

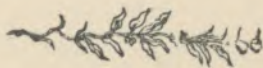
To get out of this book the intended good, gather the little ones round the table; one, with a copy of the Map of Palestine, each of the others with a Bible, open at some Book likely to be referred to. As the reading goes on, let each child be called upon to read some passage of Scripture noted in the margin, and proving what is stated in the text; or, to point out on the map this or that place which is mentioned.

The children will soon look upon the occupation as a sort of "Bible game," and will, without labour or weariness, gain a more life-like and accurate knowledge of those old times than many of their seniors possess.

I make no apology for the constant use and reiteration of various familiar phrases, which every one is in the habit of employing when "telling stories" *viva voce* to children; still less, if possible, for repeating over and over again particular expressions and epithets, which, by this very repetition, tend to impress certain important facts upon the memories of the young hearers.

A more detailed account of the objects sought to be attained, and of the manner in which the book ought to be read, will be found in the "Preface to Children," and in the introductory part of the work.

We all are, especially in reading the Old Testament, too apt to forget that Bible Characters were really men and women like ourselves—too apt to read chapter after chapter, even Book after Book, without tracing out the connections between them. It is my desire to assist in providing against this evil tendency. If I succeed, even to a very moderate extent, I shall feel quite satisfied, my labour will have been well bestowed.





PREFACE TO CHILDREN.

MY DEAR CHILDREN,—

This book is written for you, only for you ; and I hope that it will please you, and do you much good.

What I have tried to do, is to talk with you about the Kings of Judah and Israel, who lived long, long ago ; just as your Mamma would talk of them, on some fine summer afternoon, or, almost nicer, long winter evening, when you are all sitting in front of the bright fire.

Now and then you will come to a long word, because I could not think of a shorter one which meant exactly what I had to say ; however, I think that you will quite easily understand even these long words if you read carefully what goes before and what comes after them ; and if you cannot even then make them out, why, ask Mamma to tell you the meaning.

You have, I dare say, been told not to use the same word over and over again, if you can find other words to take its place: this is a very good rule, and you must keep it as you become older, and whenever you speak or write to grown-up people. But, just now, while you are all little, I mean to speak to you as you speak to each other, or as Mamma speaks when telling you one of Hans Andersen's or Kingsley's pretty Fairy Tales. I know very well that whenever my own children get me to tell them a story, I must use the same words over and over again, or else all the little ones shout out—"But, Papa, who is he?" or, "Which king was that?" or, "Which man do you mean?" So, if in this little book, I have to speak fifty times about Athaliah, I may, perhaps, fifty times repeat the words, "Athaliah, Queen of Judah, and daughter of Jezebel, of Israel," and then you will be quite sure to know whom I am talking about.

There are a number of words which Mamma uses very often when telling you stories—I mean such as "once upon a time," or "well then," or "and so." These words seem somehow to make stories clearer to children; so I think that Mamma is quite right about this, and I shall use these words just as she does.

I wrote this little book, exactly as you have it, for my own

children. They like it, and say that they now understand about the History of the Jews far better than they used to do; and, in writing it, I myself have learned a good deal which I did not before know. I hope, therefore, that you, too, will like it, and find it useful.

If it makes you read the Bible more carefully than you have yet done, this will do you much good, and will make me very happy.

Now, sit down around the table; one of you with a Bible open at Chronicles, another with a Bible open at Kings, and a third with some good Map of the Holy Land, and we shall begin the book itself.









S T O R Y
OF THE
KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

MY dear children, your mamma has so often read to you parts of the first Books of the Old Testament, that I think you know them pretty well, and may now go on to the later history of the Jews.

You know all about Adam and Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph; about the Israelites passing through the Red Sea, and about their long wanderings, for forty years, in the wilderness of Arabia; and you know that they at last reached Canaan, or the Holy Land, and fought against the wicked people who lived there, and took their country; and you know that at first all the Jews lived together like brothers, with no king or chief ruler

From Adam
to Saul.

The Judges.

over them, except God himself, and that from time to time (especially when they were attacked by enemies) God sent to them wise men or women who were called "Judges ;" because, besides guiding the people in war, they also "judged," that is, settled disputes among them.

Samuel sent
to make Saul
King.

Sometimes there were two or more judges at once in the land ; one in one part of it, and another in some other part of it : each having power only in his own and in the neighbouring tribes or clans. After a time when Samuel, the last of the judges, was an old man, the Jews, finding that all the heathen people about them had kings, wished to have one also. God did not like this, and told them that if He did what they asked they would afterwards be very sorry ; but they would have their own way, and so God sent Samuel to make Saul king over them ; and he did so. You will often find that, when people ask something from God, without adding, from their hearts, "if it be Thy will," God, to punish them, leaves them alone, gives them what they ask for, and then, when it is too late, they find out that they have brought misery upon themselves.

About Saul, also, your mamma has told you a great deal : you know that he was a very brave warrior, but that he was, especially towards the

end of his life, a bad man, and a great enemy of David ; and you know that, after Saul died fighting against the Philistines on the hills of Gilboa, David himself became king—at first over two tribes only, and then over all the twelve clans. You know, also, that after the long reign of David, the Sweet Singer, the next king was his son, Solomon the Great, who was very wise in many things, yet very foolish in this, that he let his wives worship idol gods, and even did so himself.

All this is not very difficult to remember, but the history of the Jews, after the time of Solomon, becomes rather puzzling ; and I have written this book, in the hope that, by reading it carefully two or three times, you may understand the history more easily than you could otherwise do. What makes it so difficult is this : after the death of Solomon, the Jews split into two parties or nations, each of which had its own kings ; as these two sometimes joined in wars against the heathen, and sometimes fought with each other, and as the histories of the two nations or parties are given together in the same books of the Old Testament, it is difficult to follow and to remember the story of each by itself. I wish to help you in doing this.

But before beginning the history itself, I wish you

C C.

The Jews
after
Solomon.

How dates
are written.

to understand how to use the letters and figures which you find down the sides of the pages.

First of all, then, remember that, in giving the time or year when things happened, we count each way from the birth of Jesus Christ: for instance, we call this 1868, which means, that this is the 1868th year since Jesus was born: thus, the farther you go on from the time of Christ's birth, the higher do the numbers become; last year was only 1867, this is 1868, and next year will be 1869. When using such numbers we write before them the letters A.D.; thus, A.D. 1868. These letters are the beginnings of two Latin words, meaning "in the year of our Lord," that is to say, "counting from the year of our Lord Jesus Christ's birth." In times before Christ, however, we count backwards from his birth, and, when writing of those old times, we put the letters B.C., which stands for "Before Christ," just in front of the figures, as B.C. 20, which means 20 years before the birth of Christ. So you see that B.C. 30 was not so long ago as B.C. 40; but that A.D. 30 was longer ago than A.D. 40, for we count each way, backwards and forwards, from the birth of Christ; thus:

B.C. 40—B.C. 30. [Christ.] A.D. 30—A.D. 40.
Down the sides of the pages, the names of kings

of Judah are printed in large letters, thus, JOASH : those of kings of Israel in small letters, thus, Jehu. This will help you when you read the book for yourselves.

As to the letters which you will find also in pairs at the sides of the pages, they are to help you to find places in the little map. Thus, opposite "Jerusalem" you will find at the side "*C E*;" now at the top of the map find the letter (*C*), then run your eye straight down till you come opposite the letter (*E*) in the cross-line,—in the square where these two lines meet you will find Jerusalem.

I need hardly explain to you the other marks, such as 2 Chron. xxviii. 1 : you know that this means that, in the first verse of the twenty-eighth chapter of the second book of Chronicles, you will find the same thing noticed as you find in this book opposite that mark.

And now we are, I think, ready to go on with the history of the Jews itself.

Solomon, son of David, was, in many things, a very wise man, and understood much which others found too difficult for them : he had few wars, he built a splendid Temple (or church) for the worship of God, besides several very fine palaces for him-

SOLOMON.
B.C. 1015.

self and his wives; and, in fact, he was what people call a great king.

1 Kings xi.
4-11.

Still, Solomon was not in all things a wise or a good man. To make friends among the heathen people around, he married wives from these various nations, and, as he became old, these women led him away from the worship of the True God, and so God told him that his son should rule over only two of the twelve tribes. Besides this, Solomon seems to have been very fond of show, and, like most people who are so, he was very greedy of money; and not quite wise or just in his way of getting it. So it was then that Solomon treated the Jews very hardly, making them pay heavy taxes; and, besides this, he seems to have kept the whole trade with foreign countries to himself, not allowing his people to become merchants, but forcing them to buy all the grain, wood, spices, and so on, which they needed, from him, and at prices fixed by himself. Many of these goods were brought from the far east by caravans, that is, by large parties of traders or merchants, having camels to bear their burdens. For the use of these caravans, Solomon built towns, and inns, and ports or harbours, all along the ways by which they used to come to Palestine. Your mamma will point out to you on

1 Kings x. 14.

a map Elath or Ezion-geber, from which harbour Solomon's ships used to sail to Persia, India, and probably even to Ceylon and China; and also Tadmor, a city which he built in the desert, as a resting-place for caravans coming from the Euphrates to Jerusalem, by way of Damascus, which, though a long road, was, on the whole, the easiest for them to take.

1 Kings ix. 26.

1 Kings ix. 18.

C E.
E A.

Solomon's bad, unjust conduct in these matters, of course made the Jews very discontented; still, they never rebelled against him, for God, according to His promises made to David, kept them quiet. When, however, Solomon died, a great change occurred.

B.C. 975.

His son, Rehoboam, the next king, was a very foolish man, for when the people came to him, and after telling him how hard his father Solomon had been to them, begged him to be more kind, he answered very roughly and crossly. This happened about a year after his father's death, when he went to Shechem to be crowned king over the whole twelve tribes: for up to this time he seems to have ruled only over the two friendly tribes of Judah and Benjamin. At first he told the people that he would think over the matter; and so he asked the wise old men who had been his father's

REHOBAM.

1 Kings xii.
2 Chron. x.

C D.

friends, what answer he should give to the people. They said, "Answer gently, and try to please them; then they will be faithful and obedient to you." He then put the same question to the young men who had been his playmates, and they said, "Do not give in to the people; show them that you are a great king, and that they must obey you whether they like it or not."

Rehoboam took the advice of these foolish young men; and when the people came back after three days to hear his answer, he said to them, that if they thought his father hard, they would find him much more hard, and that, instead of making the taxes smaller, he would force every man to pay even more money than in the days of Solomon. On hearing this, the people were, of course, very angry, and ten whole tribes or clans—raising the old war-cry of the Israelites in the desert, "To thy tents, oh Israel!"—said that they would not take Rehoboam for their king at all. Judah and Benjamin alone remained under him, and were called the kingdom of Judah; while the other ten tribes were called the kingdom of Israel, because it contained much the larger number of the descendants of Israel, that is to say, of Jacob.

It is only after this time that one should talk of

a nation of "Jews." This word means only that part of the people (Judah and Benjamin) which remained under Rehoboam and his sons. Up to this time the whole twelve tribes were called the children of Israel.

If you look at the map, you will see that the lands of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, meet almost exactly at Jerusalem; thus the capital city, and the Temple and palaces belonged, as it were, to both of them. So, when the others rebelled, they remained faithful to the son of their old king, who himself belonged to the clan Judah.

The Ten Tribes at once chose as king over themselves a man called Jeroboam; and of his history I must now tell you something.

Jeroboam, a man of Ephraim, had been employed by Solomon at some of the great buildings which he was always carrying on, and, being clever and active, rose to be a favourite at the court, and was appointed chief of his own tribe, which always disliked that other strong tribe, Judah, to which Solomon belonged.

After he had become a high officer, he was one day surprised by a prophet, called Ahijah, telling him that, as Solomon had turned to idols, God had determined that his son should reign over only

C E.

Jeroboam.
1 Kings xi. 28.

1 Kings xi. 29.
2 Chron. x. 15.

two tribes, and that over all the other ten clans Jeroboam himself should be king. No doubt this prophecy was talked about, and Jeroboam seems even to have tried to take the crown at once. At any rate, Solomon wished to kill him; so he fled to Egypt, and stayed there till the death of Solomon. Soon after this he came back to his own tribe, and was, as I have already told you, chosen king of Israel. When Rehoboam saw that the Ten Tribes wished to leave him, he told Adoram to speak with them, and try to bring them back to him; but this man had unfortunately been chief tax-gatherer under Solomon, and was so much hated that the people, instead of listening to what he wished to say, killed him, and were more than ever determined to have a king for themselves. Then Rehoboam fled back to Jerusalem, and got together a large army of his own people to fight with the Ten Tribes; but a prophet ordered him to send his soldiers to their homes, for all which had happened was according to the will of God himself. Rehoboam obeyed; but being, I suppose, afraid that the people of Israel would attack him, he at once set to work, and, making several of the towns round Jerusalem very strong, put into them soldiers and plenty of arms.

1 Kings xi. 26.

1 Kings xii.
18; 2 Chron.
x. 18.

1 Kings xii.
21; 2 Chron.
xi. 1.

2 Chron. xi. 5.

Rehoboam reigned seventeen years, and though he knew how angry God had been with his father Solomon for turning to idols, yet he himself did the same, and was altogether so wicked that God allowed Shishak, King of Egypt, to spread his army all over the country of Judah, and even to take the city of Jerusalem ; so that Rehoboam had to give him all the beautiful golden shields which Solomon had put into the Temple, to get him to go away. Not many years ago, a gentleman found in Egypt, amidst the ruins of a very old temple, a stone on which is cut what seems to be a likeness of Rehoboam, and below it is some writing saying that the King of Judah was taken prisoner by Shishak. Is it not curious thus finding a stone which had not been heard of for thousands of years, but which, when found, shows how true that is which we read in the Bible, about those old times?

You remember that Jeroboam, now King of Israel, had lived for a long time in Egypt, and had married a sister of the queen ; and I suppose that it was he who got Shishak to attack Rehoboam.

When Rehoboam died, his son Abijah or Abijam became king, and reigned three years. We do not know much about him, except that he was a

2 Chron. xii.
13.

2 Chron. xii.
9.

ABIJAH.
B. C. 958.
1 Kings xv. 1.
2 Chron. xiii. 1

Chron. xiii. 4.

very bad man. He tried hard to get the Ten Tribes to come back and join Judah, telling them that they had done wrong in rebelling against their old kings, and very wrong in turning away the priests of the true God, and then worshipping idols ; but the people of Israel would not listen to him. Abijah also got up a large army to force the Ten Tribes to take him for their king, and there was a battle, and God gave him the victory, and he took Bethel and other towns belonging to the people of Israel ; yet they would not have him for their king.

Chron. xiii. 3.

C E.

Jeroboam.
B. C. 974.

Now, let us see what Jeroboam, King of the Ten Tribes, did. He knew well God's hatred of all idolatry, yet he was himself so very wicked, that often when a bad king is mentioned in the Old Testament, it is said that he was "as wicked as Jeroboam : " just as if nothing worse could be said of him. Do you not think it would be dreadful to be spoken of through hundreds, and even thousands of years, as having been all that is bad? So soon as Jeroboam became King of Israel, he began to think that, if his people went up every year to the feasts at the Temple in Jerusalem, as God had ordered them to do, they might be so pleased with all the glory of the Temple and of the palaces, they might again join the kingdom of Judah. To pre-

1 Kings xii.
26.

vent this, he put up a golden calf at Dan, and another at Bethel—that is at the north and at the south ends of his kingdom—and then, telling the people that the frequent journeys to Jerusalem would be too troublesome and too long, got them to worship these images, and to keep the feasts before them.

Many of the priests and Levites living in the land of Israel were so sorry about this, that they went back at once to the kingdom of Judah, and stayed there ; so that the Ten Tribes had few people, except now and then a prophet, to teach them the laws of God, and became worse and worse. I suppose Jeroboam made the images in the form of calves (just as Aaron did five hundred years before), because, in the land of Egypt, where the fathers of the Jews, and where he himself had lived so long, the people worshipped cattle as gods. Even now, there are in England mummies of calves, which have been brought from Egypt. These mummies are simply the dead bodies of cattle, which the people, looking upon as gods, wrapped up with spices and other things, so that they could be kept for a very long time without spoiling. Thus Israel gave up the pure worship of God, and brought much evil upon themselves,

D B.

C E.

2 Chron. xi.
13.

Exod. xxxii.
4.

as you shall hear. In reading the Old Testament you will, however, find that God was not so angry at the people for worshipping these calves, as He was when they worshipped the idols of the heathen. The reason of this seems to have been that these calves were in some way intended to represent (or be a kind of likeness of) the One True God : the worship of them was, therefore, not exactly heathen idolatry ; it was not the setting up of false gods ; but still it was very wrong, for God had told His chosen people not to bow down to any images whatever.

1 Kings xiii. 1.

You recollect that both David and Solomon used sometimes to lead the worship at the Temple, almost as if they had been priests. Well, one day Jeroboam, doing as they did, was standing before the golden calf at Bethel, and making offerings, when suddenly a prophet from Judah appeared and told him that, long afterwards, there would come a good king called Josiah, who would bring back the people to the worship of the true God ; and that, to prove that this message really came from God, the altar at which they were then standing would break to pieces without being touched by any one. This really happened ; and Jeroboam was so angry, that he stretched out his

hand to lay hold of the prophet. God at once made the king's arm become quite stiff and useless ; but afterwards, when the prophet prayed for him, healed it again. In the 13th chapter of 1st Kings, you will find an interesting story about this very prophet, who, having soon afterwards disobeyed God, was killed by a lion. In the 14th chapter of that Book you can also read how Ahijah (the very prophet who long before had told Jeroboam that he should become king of Israel) now told him that, because of his great wickedness, his whole family should be destroyed.

After a reign of twenty-two years, Jeroboam died, and was succeeded by his son Nadab, a wicked man, who reigned only two years, and was then, with all his children, killed by Baasha. Thus soon was fulfilled the prophecy that all the family of Jeroboam should perish. Baasha now made himself king of Israel, but was as bad as those who went before him ; in fact, you will find that the Ten Tribes who had left the kings of the house and family of David (the man after God's own heart), and who gave up obeying God as to worshipping at the Temple, fell year after year into greater idolatry and misery, and never had one really good king. Baasha was a great warrior ;

Nadab.
1 Kings xiv.
20.
B.C. 954

Baasha.
1 Kings xv
27.
B.C. 953

1 Kings xv
33.

ASA.
B.C. 955.

1 Kings xv.
2-13.

1 Kings xv
17; 2 Chron.
xvi. 1.
C E.

E A.
1 Kings xv.
19.

1 Kings xv.
20; 2 Chron.
xvi. 5.

and, during his reign of twenty-four years, was always fighting with Judah, where Asa, son of Abijah, was now king.

Asa was a good man, and did much to put down idolatry among the people, and even punished his own grandmother for worshipping heathen gods. Asa reigned no less than forty-one years; and, when he died, was buried near David, an honour given by the people only to very good kings. At one time Baasha, to annoy the people of Judah, put his soldiers into Ramah, a strong town, which really belonged to Judah, and was only five or six miles from Jerusalem. Asa, instead of trusting that God would give him power and bravery enough to defend his country, sent people all the way to Damascus, the capital of Syria, to ask Benhadad, the king of that country, to help him. Benhadad, though he had up to this time been a friend of Baasha, agreed to do so, but said that he must be paid for his trouble. Then Asa, who was not nearly so rich as Solomon, got together as much money as he could, and even took the few treasures which were still left in the Temple, and sent them to Damascus. Benhadad then attacked the land of Israel, and took several towns; so Baasha had to give up strengthening the walls of Ramah,

and go away to defend his own country. Then Asa, King of Judah, went to Ramah, pulled down the walls which Baasha had built there, and with the stones and timber made some of his own towns strong. Asa had before this, by the help of God, defeated a very great army of heathen ; and God was so angry with him for now making friends with the king of Syria, that He sent the prophet Hanani to tell him that, because of this, he should now have many wars ; and that, if he had only trusted in God, he could have beaten both the King of Israel and also Benhadad.

At last Asa died, and was buried with honour, and after him his son Jehoshaphat reigned.

Baasha, King of Israel, also died ; but not until he had been told that, on account of his wickedness, all his family should be killed. This really happened very soon afterwards ; for though his son Elah became king, he reigned less than two years, and was then, with all his relations, murdered by Zimri, one of his own generals. When the soldiers heard what Zimri had done, they refused to have him for their king, and attacked him in the town of Tirzah, which he had made the capital city of Israel. When Zimri saw that so many of the people were against him, and that he could not

2 Chron. xiv.
9.

2 Chron. xvi.
7.

2 Chron. xvi.
13.
B.C. 914.

1 Kings xvi.
3.

Elah.
B.C. 930.

Zimri.
B.C. 929.
1 Kings xvi.
8-10.

1 Kings xvi.
18.
C D.

escape, he went into the palace, and, setting fire to it, perished in the flames.

Then the soldiers, after some more fighting with other people who wished to get the throne, made their general, Omri, King of Israel. He reigned six years, and, being a wicked man, formed friendships with the heathen round about. It was Omri who first made Samaria—of which we read so much in both the Old and New Testaments—the capital of the Ten Tribes.

After Omri, his son Ahab, about whom there are very many interesting stories, became King of Israel. This was while good Asa was still reigning over Judah. Ahab was a very weak man, and his wicked wife, Jezebel (daughter of the heathen king of Sidon), made him almost as bad as herself. During his reign lived those brave prophets, Elijah and Elisha, of whom you will find long accounts in the books of Kings and Chronicles. There are a great many nice stories about them; but of these I shall tell you only a few, which have to do with the after-history of the Israelites. In the Bible itself you will find them all told much better than I could tell them; and besides, this book is written merely to help you to remember the order in which the kings followed each other, and when

Omri.
B.C. 929.
1 Kings xvi.
23.

1 Kings xx.
34; xvi. 24.
C.D.

Ahab.
B.C. 918.

1 Kings xvi.
29.

C.A.

this or that took place. I wish to give you, in one little book, the history of the Jews while they had kings. When you once remember that, you will easily fit into their proper places all the pretty Bible stories about the different kings and prophets. This book is to be like the thread upon which the beautiful beads of a necklace are strung : it keeps them all in their proper places, preventing a large one from getting where a small one ought to be ; and in the same way, this book, if carefully read, will prevent you from thinking that Elijah lived in the reign of Solomon, or that Asa reigned before Rehoboam, and so on.

Now, after this little talk, let us go back to our work.

Though Ahab was so weak and so wicked that he even allowed his wife, Jezebel of Sidon, to kill a great many of the priests and prophets, yet he sometimes repented ; and then God, from the love He had to the Jews, helped him, and saved him out of great dangers. Ahab had three wars with Benhadad, the great king of Syria. In one, God sent a prophet, who told Ahab to make a sudden attack on the enemy, while Benhadad and all the kings who were with him were at dinner. Ahab did this, and gained a great victory. A year later,

E A.

1 Kings xx.

1 Kings xx.
26.

Benhadad came back with a very large army, but was again beaten, and taken prisoner ; but Ahab, thinking, perhaps, that it would be wise to make friends with so great a king, let him go free. God did not like this ; and, by a prophet, told him that as a punishment he himself should be killed.

I shall now tell you one of the many stories about this Ahab, King of Israel, which you will find in the Bible.

Ahab did not generally live at Samaria, the capital city of his father Omri, but had built a beautiful palace just inside the walls of Jezreel. Near it was a nice piece of ground which he wished very much to make into a garden, but it belonged to a man, Naboth, who said that he would not sell it, even to the king. Ahab was so vexed at this, that he became quite ill. His wife Jezebel asked him what was the matter, and he told her that Naboth would not sell his vineyard. Then wicked Jezebel said, "What! are you a king, and yet unable to get that piece of ground? I will get it for you." Then Jezebel wrote to some of her friends, the great men of Jezreel, telling them to accuse Naboth of having spoken against God and the king, and then to kill him. The wicked rulers of Jezreel obeyed ; they got bad men to bear

false witness against Naboth, and, having caused him to be stoned with stones till he died, sent a message to Jezebel, telling her what they had done. As Naboth had been accused of treason—that is, of being unfaithful to the king—all his land became the property of the king; so, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was dead, she told Ahab that the land which he had wished for was now his own. You see how weak and wicked Ahab was. Like a little spoiled child, he sulked on a sofa when he could not get what he wanted; then, though he knew quite well that Jezebel had no right to promise him Naboth's land, he yet allowed her to do so; and then, when she had murdered Naboth, instead of punishing her for this, he was simply glad to hear that the ground was at last his own, and at once, with all the eagerness of a child, ordering his chariot, drove off in haste to lay out his new garden, taking with him two of his generals, Jehu and Bidkar. As they hurried across the beautiful plain of Esdraelon or Jezreel, there suddenly appeared before the king's chariot the great prophet Elijah, who had often reproved Ahab for his wickedness; and the king trembled as the prophet (with his long hair streaming down his back, and his sheepskin cloak girded about his waist with a

2 Kings ix
25.

Kings i. 8;
Kings xviii.
46.

1 Kings xxii.
2 Chron.
xviii. 2.

D D.

1 Kings xxii.
4; 2 Chron.
xviii.

2 Chron.
xxi. 6.

2 Chron.
xviii. 4.

leathern belt) went on to tell him that at the very place where the dogs had lapped up the blood of Naboth, dogs should lick up his blood, and that in Jezreel, where Jezebel had taken Naboth's land after murdering him, dogs should tear and eat her own body.

Some time after this, Ahab and Benhadad were again enemies. Ahab said that Benhadad was keeping the town of Ramoth-gilead, which had belonged to Israel; and so Ahab asked Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and son of Asa, to help him. This Jehoshaphat was a good man, and it is difficult to understand how he was such a friend of Ahab—yet so it was. Perhaps Jehoshaphat did not really like Ahab, but thought it wise to join him, so as to be more able to keep off the heathen, who were always attacking them. The two kings, therefore, were friends, and Jehoshaphat's own son Jehoram was married to Ahab's daughter Athaliah. Well, the Kings of Judah and Israel marched towards Ramoth-gilead. Before starting, Jehoshaphat said that it would be right to ask the advice of God. Then Ahab called together four hundred prophets,—all of whom, however, were false prophets,—and they said that God would bless the kings. Jehoshaphat, for some reason,

did not believe what these men said ; so at last a true prophet, called Micaiah, was sent for ; and he said that the war was quite against the will of God, that the kings would be beaten, and that Ahab would be killed. This warning did not make Ahab stop the war ; but I think he was a little frightened by the prophecy that he himself should be killed, and he actually tried to cheat God and to live, when God said that he should die ; for before the battle began, he said to Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah, " I will dress myself like a common soldier and fight ; but do you go in your royal robes." I dare say he hoped that he himself would not be noticed, and would escape, while the enemy would be sure to attack the man whom they saw in the dress of a king, and the chariot of a king. At first, it really seemed as if Ahab's cunning was to succeed, for the Syrians did make a fierce attack upon Jehoshaphat, thinking that he was Ahab ; with whom Benhadad, his old friend, was so angry, that he had ordered his soldiers to attack him (Ahab) only. But when Jehoshaphat called out, the Syrian soldiers saw their mistake and left him alone. Soon after this, an arrow wounded Ahab, so that he died in the evening : but Jehoshaphat got back safely to Jerusalem.

2 Chron.
xviii. 29.

2 Chron.
xviii. 30.

In the Bible it is said that it was a "chance arrow" which killed Ahab, but this only means that the man who shot it did not aim particularly at Ahab ; yet God directed that arrow, as He directs every thing that happens.

This story, as told in the Bible, is so interesting, that you should read it carefully before going further in this Book. When Ahab died in the evening (like a brave man, he remained all day in his chariot, that so his soldiers might be cheered on to fight), his people carried him back to Samaria in his chariot ; and when it was washed there the dogs licked up the blood, as had been prophesied long before by Elijah.

Now, I must tell you more about Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, who reigned twenty-five years, and was, on the whole, a good man. He was the son of Asa, and his own son Jehoram was married to Athaliah the daughter of Ahab. He did much good, by going about the country pulling down idol-altars, and by sending out priests and Levites to teach the people the worship of the true God. He also made some of his towns strong, and put soldiers into them ; so he became very great, and the heathen round about had to pay him tribute, that is, tax, every year. He also, with the help of

1 Kings xxi.
19.

JEHOSHA-
PHAT.
B.C. 914.

1 Kings xxii.
41 ;
2 Chron.
xvii. 1.

2 Chron.
xvii. 6, 7.

2 Chron.
xvii. 2.

2 Chron.
xvii. 11.

the King of Israel, built a number of ships at Ezion-geber, the harbour which, as you recollect, Solomon made on the Arabian Gulf. God did not like him to have so much to do with the wicked Kings of Israel, and so the ships were all broken to pieces by the sea, before they had made even one voyage. The King of Israel (Ahaziah, son of Ahab) wanted to try again, but Jehoshaphat now saw that God was against the plan, and refused. Now, I must tell you about some of Jehoshaphat's wars. You remember that his son Jehoram was married to Ahab's daughter Athaliah; so, about this time, the kingdoms of Judah and of Israel used to help each other. Well, the Kings of Israel had beaten the Moabites, and ordered them to pay to them every year a great many sheep and a great quantity of wool. At last, Mesha, king of Moab, would not pay this any longer; so Jehoram, son of Ahab, asked Jehoshaphat to help him to beat the Moabites. He agreed, and they went forth to war, the king of Edom going with them. When they got near the enemy, the Jewish army was in great want of water, the whole country being parched up. Then Jehoshaphat sent for Elisha, who came and said that God, for the sake of Jehoshaphat, would save the

2 Chron.
xx. 36.

1 Kings xxii.
49.

E F.

2 Kings iii. 4

2 Kings iii. 9

2 Kings iii. 11.

army from dying of thirst, and would also give them the victory over the Syrians; and this was brought about in a very wonderful way.

2 Kings iii. 16.

The Prophet told the Jews to dig a number of ditches in the dry low ground which lay between them and the Moabites; and this was done, though I dare say the Jews wondered what could be the use of them. Then God caused very heavy rain to fall in a distant part of the country, and the water flowed down into the ditches and filled them, so that the Jews had plenty to drink. But this was not all; for next morning God caused the sun to shine brightly on the water, which had flowed down from the red soil of Edom, so that to the Moabites, it looked red, like blood. They knew that there had not been any water there the night before, and that there had not been any rain near them, so they thought it really was blood. Then the Moabites said, "The people of Judah and of Israel and of Edom have been quarrelling among themselves, and that is their blood upon the ground;" so in a great crowd, they ran towards the camp of the Jews. Then Jehoshaphat and Jehoram attacked them before they could get into order, and beat them.

2 Kings iii. 22.

2 Chron.
xx. 1.

Another time the kings of Moab and Ammon, joining with other nations, attacked Judah. Then

Jehoshaphat prayed to God to help him ; and God did so ; and again, in a wonderful way. He made a great fear to fall upon the enemy ; each nation among them thought that the others were going to attack it ; so they began to fight with each other, and then it was easy for the people of Judah to beat them, and take away their beautiful armour and other things. Then Jehoshaphat and his army went back to Jerusalem, and praised God for this great victory.

2 Chron.
xx. 26.

Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah for twenty-five years, and during several of these was helped in governing the country by his son Jehoram, who was afterwards king, and reigned eight years. He was a very bad man ; and, to make himself safe on the throne, killed all his own brothers, and also many of the nobles of the land ; and he married Athaliah, the daughter of wicked Ahab, and of the still more wicked Jezebel. In his time, God allowed the Edomites, who had before this been under the power of Judah, to make themselves free. The Philistines also, and the Arabs, were permitted by God to take Jerusalem, and carry away not only the treasures in the Temple, but also even the king's wives, and all his sons, except the youngest. As Jehoram had been a bad king,

1 Kings xxii.
42-50.

JEHORAM.
B.C. 892.
2 Chron.
xxi. 1.

2 Chron.
xxi. 4.

C. G.
2 Chron.
xxi. 8.
2 Kings viii.
20.

2 Chron.
xxi. 16.

2 Chron.
xxii. 1.
2 Kings viii.
25.
AHAZIAH.
B.C. 885.

Ahaziah.
B.C. 898.

1 Kings xxii.
51.

2 Kings i. 3.

2 Kings i. 1.
Jehoram.
B.C. 896.
2 Kings iii. 6.

2 Kings iii. 2

when he died, the people would not allow him to be buried near David. However, they made his youngest son, Ahaziah (who had not been carried away by the Philistines), king in his stead.

Now, we must see what the people of Israel have been doing all this time. As you remember, when Ahab was killed at Ramoth-gilead, his son Ahaziah became king. He reigned only two years. We know little of him, except that he was an idol-worshipper; that Elijah told him that, as he had asked advice from false gods about a sickness which had come upon him, he should die; and that, in his time, the Moabites made themselves free. When this man, Ahaziah, died, he left no son; so his brother Jehoram, another son of Ahab, became King of Israel. This is that Jehoram with whom Jehoshaphat went to fight against the Syrians, when the water was made to look red like blood, and you remember that Elisha had prophesied that God would cause the Jews to beat the great army of the enemy. Well, when Jehoram saw that all which Elisha had said really happened, he seems to have become ashamed of his wickedness and unbelief, so when he got back to his capital city, Samaria, he really put away the idols which his father Ahab had put up, and became rather a friend of Elisha.

God is always ready to forgive those who are truly sorry for their sins, so when Jehoram was attacked by the army of the great king of Syria, God, by Elisha, told him all that the enemy were going to do, and so the Jews always escaped. At first, Benhadad thought it was some of his own people who told the Jews what he was about to do, but at last found out that it was Elisha ; so he sent an army to Dothan, where the prophet was, and quite shut the town in. But God never forgets those who worship Him, so all at once He made all the Syrian soldiers to become blind. Then Elisha went to them, and said : "I will guide you to the man for whom you have been seeking ;" so he led them into the middle of the city of Samaria ; and then God opened their eyes, and they saw that they were all surrounded by the soldiers of the Israelites, the very people they had come to attack. Jehoram, the King of Israel, finding the Syrians in his power, wished to kill them all, but Elisha told him that, instead of this, he must give them plenty to eat and drink, and then let them go free. The Israelites did this, and the king of Syria was so pleased that for some time he left the Jews alone. I dare say you think that, as God had helped Jehoram in this wonderful way,

2 Kings vi. 6.

C D.

C D.

2 Kings vi. 23.

2 Kings vi. 24.

2 Kings vi. 28

he now became a good man. It should have been so ; but, instead of this, he allowed the people to worship Baal and other idols. Elisha seems to have told him that, if he did not repent, God would send the Syrians back again ; and soon afterwards Benhadad, king of Syria, did return, and putting his soldiers all round the city of Samaria, would not allow any one to go out or in. After a time, there was very little food in the town ; and then again after a time, the people became so hungry, that women ate up even their own little babies. Was not that dreadful ? I dare say you think that you would rather die of hunger than eat up your little brother or sister. But do not think too proudly of yourself. You do not know what you yourself might do if you were tried as hardly as those poor Israelites during the siege of Samaria. It is only by God's help and blessing that we can remain strong and good when sorely tried by temptation. When Jehoram the King saw how miserable his people were, instead of honestly feeling that all this had come upon him and them as a punishment for their sins, he said that it was all the fault of Elisha, who had prophesied that the Syrians would come again unless the people of Israel repented, and who had now, in mere spite,

to make his prophecy true, brought the enemy to Samaria. He therefore sent a soldier to cut off the prophet's head : but God told Elisha ; so the door was shut, and the man could not get into the house. Elisha, then, I suppose, made the man promise to take him alive to the King ; or else got his friends to guard him to the palace, or else, it may be, that Jehoram himself had followed the executioner, either to see that his orders were carried out, or because he was sorry for what he had said in a passion, and went after the executioner to stop him. We cannot tell exactly how all this happened, but we do know that Elisha was not killed, and that, speaking in the name of God, he immediately prophesied that, on the very next day, there should be plenty of food in Samaria. No doubt you wonder where the food was to come from, for the Syrians lay all round the city, and would not allow corn, or flour, or meat, to be brought in. Jehoram, too, wondered, but he knew Elisha to be a true prophet, and said nothing. There stood, however, beside the King, a great lord, who did not believe the prophecy, and said : " Why, if God were to rain down food from heaven, it would be impossible that there should be so much food here as you have promised." The prophet turned, and looking so sadly on the nobleman, an-

2 Kings vii. 1.

swered: "What I have said is quite true—you yourself shall see that food, but shall not eat any of it." Was not that a strange prophecy? for, surely, if there were plenty of bread, this great lord would get some of it. Yet it was all quite true; and now I shall tell you how God brought it to pass. There were four men of Samaria who had that dreadful disease called leprosy, and as it is easily given to others by the touch, they were never allowed to live with other people. So, when the Syrians surrounded the city, these poor creatures found themselves between the Syrians and the Jews, neither of whom would come near them; and as the gates of the town were shut, of course their friends could not come out and lay down food where these men might find it; and besides this, these friends themselves were starving. At first, the four lepers lived upon such food as they happened to have by them when the siege began. This was, however, soon finished, and they became more and more hungry. At last they said one to another, "There is no use of our waiting any longer here, under the walls of the city; we shall only starve to death. The people in the town have no food to give us, and will not open the gates. Let us go to the camp of the Syrians, perhaps they

will help us ; and even if they do kill us, why, after all, it is better to die quickly than slowly." Now, while the lepers were so talking, God had caused the Syrians to hear a great confused noise as of soldiers, and of horses, and of war chariots ; and they thought that the Israelites must have got some other nations to help them ; so they became very frightened, and without even sending out spies, to see what was the matter, they at once fled, ran away, leaving almost everything behind them. They had not been long gone, when the four lepers reached the tents which were nearest to the town, and, I suppose, they stood at some distance, and called out loudly, begging the Syrians to give them food ; but no one answered, and the whole camp was quiet, quite quiet : so the lepers came nearer and nearer, and at last came quite up to the first tent, and looked in ; but no one was there. Then they went to the second, but it also was empty ; and so they found it with many others. The lepers could not understand this, and wondered what had become of the Syrians ; but without troubling themselves about that, they began to steal, and carry away the gold, and the silver, and the beautiful cloths, and other things from the tents. After a little, they began to think that they ought to go

and tell their king what they had seen. They did this, but at first Jehoram would not believe them ; at least, he thought that the Syrians were trying to play a trick, and that, knowing how hungry he and his people must be, they had pretended to run away, but had really hidden themselves where they might attack the starving Jews, when they came out to get the food left in the camp. So Jehoram, very wisely, sent out two spies, riding on horses. These men went first of all to the Syrian camp, but they found it quite quiet ; not one man was to be seen in the tents. Then they saw a great many footprints, all going one way, and so they followed these footsteps for a long distance, and as they cantered along, they saw, lying beside the road, beautiful gold and silver bowls, and fine dresses, and many other things, which the Syrians had thrown away in their hurry to escape. The spies now knew that it was no trick, so they went back quickly to Samaria, and told the king what they had seen ; and then he and all his people gladly came out of the town, and went in haste to the Syrian camp. There they found, not only much treasure, but also a great quantity of food ; and, to prevent the hungry people from wasting this, Jehoram set a nobleman to divide it, that so each

man should get just so much as he really needed and no more. The nobleman who was put to this work was the very same who, on the day before, did not believe what Elisha said ; and as he sat at the gate of the city, dividing the corn, the starving people, in their haste to get food, crushed together so much that this great lord, the king's favourite, was trampled to death. So he did see plenty of food in the city of Samaria, but he did not eat of it.

After this, Jehoram, King of Israel, had another war with the Syrians, under their new king Hazael who had just succeeded his master Benhadad. This war began about that place, Ramoth-gilead, which, as you remember, the people of Israel were always trying to take from the Syrians. Well, when the fight began, Jehoram was badly wounded, and went away to Jezreel to be cured, leaving his general, Jehu, to go on with the siege of Ramoth-gilead. While Jehoram was lying sick and wounded at Jezreel, his nephew (sister's son) Ahaziah, King of Judah, came to see him. But the King of Israel was never cured of those wounds, and the King of Judah never left that town till the very day of his death. They were both killed by Jehu, of whom you will hear much hereafter.

Before going on further, I think we had better

D D.

2 Kings
viii. 28.
2 Chron.
xxii. 5.

go shortly over all that we have already read together.

From the death of Solomon to the death of these two kings, Ahaziah of Judah and Jehoram of Israel, who were killed in one day by Jehu, was about ninety years, stretching from B.C. 975 to B.C. 884.

As yet we have read together the stories of six Kings of Judah, and nine Kings of Israel.

The Kings of Judah were—

- (1.) Rehoboam, son of Solomon.
- (2.) Abijah.
- (3.) Good Asa, who reigned so long.
- (4.) Jehoshaphat, who built ships at Ezion-geber, and was saved from the Moabites when the water in the ditches looked red like blood.
- (5.) Jehoram, the husband of Athaliah, and who murdered all his own brothers.
- (6.) Ahaziah, who reigned only about a year, and was then killed by Jehu.

The Kings of Israel were—

- (1.) Jeroboam, who rebelled against Rehoboam.
- (2.) Nadab his son.
- (3.) Baasha.
- (4.) Elah his son.

(5.) Zimri, who burned himself in his palace.

(6.) Omri, the fierce general.

(7.) Ahab, the husband of Jezebel, who murdered Naboth, and was killed by an arrow at Ramoth-gilead.

(8.) Ahaziah, son of Ahab.

(9.) Jehoram, brother of Ahaziah, in whose days God suddenly drove away the Syrians from the siege of Samaria, and who was killed by Jehu.

It is rather easy to remember this part of the history of the Jews. It begins when the Ten Tribes rebelled against Rehoboam, and made Jeroboam their king: and it ends when Ahaziah, King of Judah, and Jehoram, King of Israel, were killed on the same day by Jehu.

B.C. 884.

You see that, in this time, there were not nearly so many kings of Judah as of Israel: that is, each king of Judah, taking one with another, reigned much longer than each king of Israel. The people of Judah, were, on the whole, better than the people of Israel, who never came up to the Temple at Jerusalem, and who used to worship the golden calves at Dan and Bethel. So God blessed the people of Judah, and gave them several good kings, and allowed their kings to have long reigns. Among the

Ten Tribes there were, on the other hand, frequent rebellions, in which one soldier after another made himself king. Thus, in the two years B.C. 930 and B.C. 929, there were no less than three kings of Israel. If you look carefully over the list of kings given at the end of this book, you will, with very little trouble, understand all about this. There you will see that, in the forty-four years during which Asa was King of Judah, there were no less than seven kings of Israel; and that Asa's son, Jehoshaphat, reigned during the times of three kings of Israel. If you will only go over that list, often and carefully, you will, I think, more easily than in any other way, remember which kings of Judah and of Israel lived at the same time.

Jehu.
B.C. 884.

Now we can go on with the history of the two kingdoms.

You remember that Ahaziah, King of Judah, and Jehoram, King of Israel, were killed on the same day by Jehu, general in the army of the Ten Tribes; and now I must tell you about Jehu himself.

1 Kings xxi.

You cannot have forgotten the story about Naboth being killed for the sake of his vineyard, and how that, as Ahab was driving from Samaria to Jezreel, to see the land, he was met by the prophet Elijah, who told him that, because of this

murder, the dogs should lick up his blood, and that his whole family should be cut off. Well, one of the officers who was riding behind the chariot of Ahab, was Jehu, and he never forgot what he heard the prophet say, though he then little thought he himself should, after many years, carry out the will of God in this matter. It appears that, even before this ride to Jezreel, God had chosen out Jehu to be king, and had told Elijah, but that, for some reason, Elijah did not tell him. Well, Jehu remained an officer in the army during the times of Ahab, and of his sons, Ahaziah and Jehoram, and at last became commander-in-chief, that is, head captain, or general of the whole army of Israel. When Jehoram went to attack Ramoth-gilead, his general, Jehu, was of course with him ; and when the king went back to his summer palace at Jezreel to be cured of his wounds, he left Jehu to go on with the siege. Well, Jehu was one day sitting at dinner with all his officers round him, when suddenly there stood at the door a wild-looking man in a rough dress, who said, " I have something to say to thee, O Captain ! " Jehu asked, " To which of us ? " and the roughly-dressed man, who was a young prophet, sent by Elisha, answered, " To thee, O Captain ! " At first, Jehu thought that some of the officers had

2 Kings ix. 25.
1 Kings xxi.
19.

1 Kings xix.
16.

2 Kings ix.

sent this wild, mad-looking man to him for the sake of a joke or fun ; but when they all said that they really did not know anything about the matter, he went into another room with the prophet, who there anointed him to be King of Israel, ordered him to kill all the wicked house of Ahab, and then went away. When the officers heard what had happened, they all agreed to help Jehu ; and, blowing trumpets, they with loud shouts chose him for their king. Jehu then saw that he had many friends, and he remembered those two prophecies : one, that the whole family of Ahab should be killed ; and the other, that he himself should become King of the Ten Tribes. So, without losing time, he got into his chariot and drove quickly to Jezreel, where his master Jehoram, son of Ahab, lay wounded, and where Ahaziah, King of Judah, was also then living, on a visit to his uncle Jehoram.

1 Kings ix. 16.

Jehu kills the
two kings.

As Jehu came near to the town, the sentries on the walls saw him, and told the two kings. They thought, of course, that he had come to tell them something about the siege of Ramoth-gilead, and sent out several messengers to ask what news he brought. Jehu would not allow these messengers to go back to the city ; so at last the two kings (thinking, perhaps, that he had some very good

news, which he wished to be the first to tell) themselves drove across the plain to meet him. When they had come pretty near, Jehoram of Israel called out, asking whether the war was over? Jehu, without paying attention to the question, at once reminded the king of all the sins which he and his father Ahab, and his mother Jezebel, and his brother Ahaziah had done. Jehoram from this knew that Jehu had come as an enemy—a rebel—and turned to escape; but Jehu shot an arrow through his heart, and killed him; and then the soldiers threw his dead body out of the chariot, on to the very piece of ground which his father Ahab had so wickedly taken from Naboth; thus making true Elijah's prophecy about this.

2 Kings ix. 22

2 Kings ix. 25

When Ahaziah, King of Judah, saw what happened, he also turned to flee; but Jehu sent soldiers after him, and they wounded him, so that he died at Megiddo. Then his servants carried him to Jerusalem; and, as he had been a good king, he was buried near David.

2 Kings ix. 27.

Jehu had now killed Jehoram, King of Israel, and also his nephew Ahaziah, King of Judah; but there was more work for him yet.

In Jezreel there was at that time Jezebel, widow of Ahab, and mother of Jehoram. She, of course,

2 Kings ix. 30.
C C.

Death of
Jezebel.

as wife of one king and mother of two others, had a great deal of power ; she was also a very bold, bad woman. She was then living at the beautiful summer palace which Ahab had built for her, and which was close to the city walls, overlooking a piece of waste ground, such as one usually finds outside Eastern towns, where rubbish is thrown, and where pariah (that is, half-wild) dogs prowl about in search of food. When Jezebel heard the people calling out that her son Jehoram, and also her grandson Ahaziah, King of Judah, had been killed, and that Jehu was quite close to the town, she dressed herself in beautiful clothes, and put on a very fine head-dress ; and then, as women do even now in the East, she with a kind of black powder painted the edges of her eyelids to make her eyes look bright and deep. In fact, she did all she could to make herself as pretty as could be. It is not easy to find out why Jezebel did all this. It would seem more likely that she should have closed the city gates, and got soldiers to fight for her and for the house of Ahab ; or that she should have tried to escape ; or that she should have gone humbly to beg her life from Jehu. But she did none of these. She seems to have said to herself : "A queen I have lived, and a queen I



will die. I will not beg my life of the man who has slain my son and my grandson. I will die proudly, with all my beautiful ornaments upon me, as is fitting for a great queen—fitting for Jezebel!”

And now Jezebel is ready, and seats herself upon a sofa in the jutting out window which overlooks the walls of the city. And there is Jehu driving as quickly as he can towards the town—for he has long been known as a bold rider, and a swift driver of horses. Now Jehu is close to the town; and Jezebel, looking down from the high window, says, in a mocking, teasing voice—“Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?” You recollect that Zimri killed his master Elah, King of Israel, son of Baasha, and became king in his place. Here, again, it is difficult to understand why Jezebel behaved in this way to Jehu, who could kill her or spare her as he pleased; but I suppose she was now quite desperate, had given up all hope of life, and, full of rage and hatred, thought only of dying bravely. Jehu hears the voice, looks up, and seeing the proud queen, calls out, “Who is on my side?” Then some servants look out, and Jehu says, “Throw her down!” These servants had, I dare say, long been fed and paid by Jezebel; but they know that Jehu is now

1 Kings xvi. 9.

stronger than she, their mistress, and so (cowards and traitors as they are) they throw her down, and she falls from that high window and is killed, close to the chariot of Jehu; and as he drives on into the town, the wheels roll over her body, and are reddened with her blood. Such was the dreadful death of wicked Jezebel. After Jehu had taken his dinner, he said to some of his people, "Go and bury that woman who was cursed by God; for, after all, she was the daughter of a king!" The servants went; but when they came to the place, they found that the pariah dogs, of which there are great numbers about every Eastern city and village, had already torn her body to pieces and eaten it up, leaving scarcely any part of it except her head and her hands. So true turned out to be what Elijah had long before prophesied of this great queen, that the dogs should eat her flesh, so that no one should be able to point to her dead body and say, "This is the corpse of Jezebel."

¹ Kings xxi.
23.

² Kings x. 11.

Murder of the
70 princes.

After this, Jehu killed every other friend of the house of Ahab whom he could find in Jezreel; but still there was much to be done before he could feel himself quite safe upon the throne of Israel. There were in the town of Samaria no fewer than seventy princes of the house of Ahab; so Jehu

wrote a letter to the old noblemen who had charge of them, and in the letter he said, "If you are going to be true and faithful to the house of your master Ahab, then choose one of these princes to be your King, and come out and fight with me. But if you will not do this, then kill every one of these princes." When the old men got this letter, they were very much puzzled what to do ; for, on the one hand, they thought it shameful to kill all the young princes of whom they had taken charge, and on the other hand, they knew that Jehu was a brave and wise soldier, and that a great many people had joined him. In the end, these wicked old men thought that the safest plan for themselves would be to kill the seventy princes ; and they really did this, and sent all their heads to Jezreel, where Jehu ordered them to be piled up in two heaps, one at each side of the gate of the city. What wicked old men these were ! To save themselves from Jehu's anger, they broke their word, betrayed the very men of whom they had promised to take care, were faithless to the house of their king, and killed seventy princes who had not done them any harm.

Jehu was, however, very glad when he saw the heads, for now he had got rid of a great many princes, any one of whom might have gathered

2 Kings x. 8

soldiers to fight against him ; and he had also got those old noblemen, who, of course, had much power in the country, to do something which prevented them from ever again being friends with any of the house of Ahab.

2 Kings x. 12.

C D.

Jehu had now got rid of almost all of the house of Ahab ; so he started to go to the capital city, Samaria. On the road he met a party of about forty princes, who were sons or very near relations of Ahaziah, and who, perhaps, had not heard what Jehu had done. They were on their way from Jerusalem to visit their cousins, the family of Jehoram, King of Israel. When Jehu heard who these noblemen were, he killed them all. Perhaps he thought that they would try to punish him for killing their father and uncle ; or, perhaps, he thought that, as God had told him to destroy all the house of Ahab, he must slay these young lords who were related to Ahab ; for, as you remember, Jehoram, King of Judah, was married to Ahab's daughter Athaliah.

2 Chron. xxi.
6.

Jehu now drove on to Samaria, and, without further trouble, made himself King of Israel.

2 Kings x. 17.

But there remained for Jehu yet one great work, and as he was an active man, never losing time about finishing anything he had to do, he set about it at once.

Jehu was a bad man, and does not seem to have cared much about religion at all : still he knew that the misery which had come upon the house of Ahab was the punishment of sin, and he knew that he himself had been chosen by God to carry out His will in this matter ; and so he thought it would be the safest plan for him to act as if he really loved God, especially as in this way all the worshippers of the true God would be brought over to his side.

2 Kings x. 16.

You know that Ahab and his sons had led the people of the Ten Tribes to worship the idols of Jezebel's country, Sidon : well, Jehu thought he must now put down this heathenism. However, he did not tell any one what he was going to do ; and the plan he took was very cunning and very cruel, as you shall now hear.

Slaughter of
the priests of
Baal.

C A.

When Jehu had made himself King of Israel, he sent letters and messengers all through the land, saying, " Ahab and his family used to worship Baal much, but Jehu will serve him more. There is to be a great feast at the temple, and all the worshippers of Baal must come to it ; not one is to keep away, for it is to be a very great feast." The idol worshippers were, of course, very glad to hear this, and came in such numbers that the great temple of Baal was full from one end to the other.

2 Kings x. 18

2 Kings x. 23.

Then Jehu said to the people : “ As I, the king, worship Baal, perhaps some men who are not really worshippers of him have come to this feast, merely lest I should be angry with them if they stayed away. I will not allow such men to keep this feast with us.” Then he sent people into the temple to turn out every man whom they knew to worship the true God ; and then—what then?—Why, he first of all put guards at every door, and then he sent soldiers inside, who killed every man they found there. Thus were the idolaters all slain, and the idols burned, and the temple pulled down, and the place where it had stood was used for throwing rubbish on. Besides this, Jehu, in one day, got rid of a great many people who, being idolaters, were friends of the house of Ahab, and might at any moment have turned against him.

2 Kings x. 26.

B.C. 884.

Jehu was now quite firmly seated on the throne of Israel. He had beaten all his enemies ; he had, as it is said, waded through blood to the crown ; and he had been helped wonderfully by God. He had, with his own eyes, seen the carrying out of many prophecies, and knew well that Ahab's family had been destroyed because of its wickedness. Yet, in spite of all this, Jehu did not become a good man. He was a mere tool in God's hands for

the rooting out of idolaters ; but he himself was a wicked man, and worshipped the golden calves, just as the kings of Israel before him had done. In this, he was somewhat like Balaam, who was indeed a true prophet, but yet a very weak, selfish man. God, to punish Jehu, allowed Hazael, king of Syria, to do a great deal of mischief in that part of the Holy Land which lies to the right, that is to say, to the east, of the river Jordan. It is curious that, though Jehu had been so brave and active before he became king, we hear very little about him after that time, though we know that he reigned twenty-eight years. When he died, he was buried in Samaria, and then his son Jehoahaz became king.

But there is one more interesting thing known about Jehu, though it is not mentioned in the Bible.

About twenty years ago, an English gentleman went to Nineveh, the old capital of the kings of Assyria, and, getting men to dig in the sand, found ruins of beautiful temples and palaces. He brought away, and placed in a museum in London, a great many very large and very fine statues or figures of kings and idols, and also huge flat stones, on which are cut long lines of writing. In one of these writings in stone, it is said that Jehu had, at such and

2 Kings x. 32.

2 Kings x. 36.

C D.
Jehoahaz.
B. C. 856.

such a time, brought presents to the king of Assyria. As you grow older, you will find that, day after day, new proofs are found out that what is written in the Bible is quite true. The Bible said that, nearly three thousand years ago there lived a king of Israel named Jehu. Well, there is no other book written about those old times ; but now, after these three thousand years have passed away, there is dug up out of the deep sand and clay of Nineveh a block of stone, and on it is found written by the heathen Assyrians, that, at that very time, there was a King of the Jews called Jehu. A great many other interesting writings of this sort have been found at Nineveh, and in Egypt, and prove the truth of much that is told us in the Bible about times long before the birth of Christ.

Now, we will go back to the history of Judah.'

Though Jehu killed Ahaziah the King, and many of his relations (because they were kinsfolk of Ahab), yet he had no wish to make himself king of Judah ; he thought it enough to reign over Israel. When Ahaziah went to Jezreel, to visit his wounded uncle Jehoram, he left at Jerusalem his mother Athaliah, who was, as you remember, the daughter of Ahab. She seems to have been nearly as wicked as her mother Jezebel ; so, when she heard that Jehu had

ATHALIAH.
B.C. 884.



killed her son Ahaziah, and forty of his sons and nearest relations, she began to think that she might make herself Queen of Judah. Without losing time, she therefore killed all her own grandchildren (that is, the children of her son Ahaziah) whom she could find; and, when she thought that she had killed every one of them, she made herself queen, and reigned about six years; doing no good, but much harm, for she was a great worshipper of the false gods of her mother's country, Sidon. Athaliah, however, was mistaken in thinking that she had killed every one of whom it was likely that he might try to become king. One of them, the youngest son of Ahaziah, was saved by Jehosheba, his aunt (that is, the sister of his father Ahaziah), and hidden with his nurse in some of the many rooms about the Temple. While there, the prince was taken care of by Jehosheba's husband, the high priest Jehoiada. At last, when little Joash, or Jehoash (that was the young prince's name) was about seven years old, Jehoiada thought that he would not be able to hide him from the queen much longer, and that the best plan would be to make him king at once. This was not easily managed, for Athaliah's palace was quite close to the Temple. However, Jehoiada did do it, as

2 Chron. xxii.
10; 2 Kings
xi. 1.

C A.

2 Chron. xxii.
xi.

² Kings xi. 9;
² Chron. xxiii.
8.

JOASH.
² Chron. xxiii.
11-13; ² Kings
xi. 14.
B.C. 878.

people can do many things which are difficult, if they will but try, and go on trying. Though Athaliah and a great many of the people of Judah served idols, yet the Temple of the true God was kept up as before, and the priests went about their work. It was the custom to have, all day and all night, guards both at the Temple and at the palace; and these guards were changed once a day. Now, you see that, every day, just when the old guard was going home, and the new guard was coming, there were present both sets. So, on a particular day, when the new guard came, Jehoiada did not send away the old one, but kept both; and then he told them how that a son of their old king was yet alive, and was hidden in the Temple, and that he was now about to make the little prince king. All the people were glad when they heard this, and the soldiers took their places; and then Jehoiada brought in little Joash, and going with him to the pillar of the Temple, where each King of Judah used to promise to rule according to the laws of the country, he crowned him; and then all the people shouted, "God save the King!" When Athaliah heard the noise, she came to find out what was the matter. When she saw all the priests in their beautiful robes, and both sets of soldiers all



JOASH CROWNED.—Page 64.

along the halls and passages of the Temple, and when she saw the little child standing at the "Kings' Pillar," with the golden crown upon his head, she knew that the people had risen against her. So she turned, and tried to escape; but Jehoiada sent men after her, who killed her so soon as she got beyond the sacred grounds of the Temple.

Thus little Joash became king, and reigned forty years. He was not exactly a bad man, but he was a weak man—one of those poor creatures who cannot bravely say "no," even when they feel that it would be right to do so. So long, then, as his uncle Jehoiada, the high priest, lived, Joash behaved very well; and though he could not quite stop idolatry, yet he himself did worship the true God. He also killed Mattan, the high priest of Baal; and he got the people to give willingly large sums of money, and with these he paid workmen to put the Temple into good order again; for, of course, during the reign of Athaliah, very little care had been taken of it, and it was broken down in many places. But when Jehoiada died, then Joash, I suppose, got some bad companions, for he left off doing that which was right; and, in spite of having been hidden in the Temple of God, by the priest of God, and thus saved from death, he became an idol-

2 Chron. xxiii.
14; 2 Kings
xi. 15.

2 Kings xii. 1;
2 Chron. xxiv.

2 Kings xi. 18;
2 Chron. xxiii.
17.

2 Chron. xxiv.
4; 2 Kings
xii. 4.

2 Chron.
xxiv. 20.

2 Kings xii.
17; 2 Chron
xxiv. 23.

2 Chron.
xxiv. 25.

Jehoahaz.
B. C. 856.
Kings xiii. 1.
Kings xiii. 3.

Jehoash.
B. C. 841.
2 Kings xiii.
10.

worshipper, like the people of Israel. His cousin Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, told him that all this was very sinful; but Joash, instead of turning to God, caused Zechariah to be stoned to death. This wickedness was soon punished; for in that very year, Hazael, king of Syria, attacked the land with a small army. Joash, instead of trusting in God, gathered all the gold and silver things which were in the palace and Temple, and sent them to Hazael, as a bribe or present, to get him not to besiege Jerusalem. Hazael took the money, and went away for a time. Joash, after ruling Judah for forty years, was killed by some of his own servants for having slain his cousin Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, the high priest. During the first twenty-two years of his reign, Jehu was King of Israel. When Jehu died, his son Jehoahaz came to the throne, and reigned seventeen years. He was a very bad man, and was quite under the power of Hazael, king of Syria, who would not even allow him to keep more than a few soldiers. When Jehoahaz died, his son Jehoash reigned over Israel for sixteen years: this was while Joash, nephew of the high priest Jehoiada, was still ruling at Jerusalem.

About this time the Kings of Judah and of Israel



JEHOASH AND ELISHA. — Page 67.

were related to each other, and several of the names in the two families are the same, or almost the same, which makes it difficult to remember "who is who:" however, take a little trouble about it now, and you will understand it nicely for all your lives.

Well, Jehoash of Israel (son of Jehoahaz, and grandson of Jehu) found his country in a dreadful state, owing to the cruel way in which Hazael of Syria treated the people; and though he was an idol-worshipper, God had pity upon him, and enabled him to beat the Syrians, and to take back several cities from them; and about this there is a very pretty story, which I shall now tell you.

2 Kings xiii.
25.

Though Jehoash was not a good man, he was, in a way, a friend of Elisha. At last the time came when this prophet, now very old, was about to die, and the king went to see him, and wept over him. Elisha said, "Put an arrow to your bow." The king did this; then, when the window facing towards Syria had been opened, the old prophet, laying his hands on the hands of Jehoash (as if to help in pulling the bow), said, "Shoot!" and as the arrow darted through the window, he said, "So will God shoot against the Syrians, and you shall gain a great battle over them at Aphek." He then said, "Take

2 Kings xiii.
14.

2 Kings xiii.
25.

2 Chron.
xxv. 6.

C G.

2 Chron.
xxv. 13.

Chron. xxv.
17; 2 Kings
xiv. 8.

Chron. xxv.
23; 2 Kings
xiv. 13.
C E.

the other arrows, and beat the ground with them." The king did so; and, having given three strokes, stopped. The prophet was angry, and said, "Why did you not give many blows? for then you would have beaten the Syrians many times; but now you shall beat them only three times." And so it was. Jehoash did beat the Syrians three times, and took back many towns from them. So quiet, indeed, was the land, so safe from enemies, that Jehoash once lent (for payment) a great many soldiers to Amaziah, King of Judah, who was then fighting with the Edomites. God did not wish Amaziah to use these men, so they were sent back to Jehoash. The soldiers were very angry at this; I suppose, because they had hoped to take much treasure from the Edomites; and so, on their way home, they killed a great many of the people of Judah, who were living quietly in their towns and villages. When Amaziah heard what these soldiers had done, he sent to tell Jehoash that he was coming to fight him. Jehoash behaved well in this matter, and told Amaziah, in a curious parable, not to come to fight, for he was not so strong as the people of Israel. However, Amaziah would fight; and so, at Bethshemish, he was beaten by Jehoash, who then took Jerusalem, and broke down a great part of

the walls, and carried away much treasure. Besides this, Jehoash, King of Israel, made Amaziah give hostages; that is, give up a number of his noblemen and friends to be kept as prisoners, and who would be killed if Amaziah did not remain at peace.

Now, I must tell you more about this Amaziah, King of Judah. He was son of Joash, who was so long hidden in the Temple. He began to reign just two years after his enemy, Jehoash of Israel, began, and he sat upon the throne for twenty-nine years. He was rather a good man, but not so good as David. As soon as he became king, he killed his father's murderers, but did not put any of their children to death, though at that time it would not have been thought strange if he had done so.

He had, after this, a great war with the Edomites of Mount Seir, and not only killed about ten thousand of them in battle; but, having made about the same number prisoners, cruelly ordered them all to be thrown down from a very high rock. It was for this war that Amaziah hired soldiers from Jehoash, King of Israel, but sent them all back again, when ordered by God so to do. As you remember, these men of Israel, on their way home, killed many of the people of Judah, and this brought on the war

AMAZIAH.
B. C. 839.
2 Kings xiv.
1; 2 Chron.
xxv. 1.

2 Kings xiv.
5; 2 Chron.
xxv. 3.

2 Kings xiv.
7; 2 Chron.
xxv. 11.
D G.

Chron. xxv.
14.

2 Chron. xxv.
27 ; 2 Kings
xiv. 19.

UZZIAH.
H.C. 825.
2 Kings xiv.
21 ; 2 Chron.
xxvi. 1.

between the two kingdoms, in which Jerusalem was taken by the army of Israel. The prophet had told Amaziah that, if he would trust in God, he could beat the Edomites without the help of Jehoash. And so it was ; for as you have just heard, he gained a great battle over them. But Amaziah, though God had just given him this great victory, was so wicked as to worship the gods of those Edomites whom he had beaten ; and when a prophet told him how wrong this was, he drove the prophet away, but not until it had been prophesied that God would punish him for worshipping idols ; and, as you know, he was very soon afterwards defeated, and his capital city, Jerusalem, was taken by Jehoash, King of Israel. Besides this, in the end, after Amaziah had reigned twenty-nine years, his own people rose up against him, because he worshipped idols ; and though he fled to Lachish, he was caught there and killed. Thus, as had been prophesied, he saw his own capital city taken, and then lost his life as a punishment for his wickedness.

After Amaziah, his son Uzziah (or Azariah) became King of Judah, and reigned fifty-two years.

But fifteen years before Uzziah began, Jehoash, King of Israel (who, as you recollect, had beaten

Uzziah's father, Amaziah, and taken Jerusalem) died, and after him, Jeroboam II. ruled for forty-one years. In the time of his father Jehoash, it had been prophesied that God would send a man who would drive away the Syrians: Jeroboam II. was that man. He was an idol worshipper, but a great and brave king. He quite got rid of the Syrians, and took their capital city, Damascus. He also beat the Moabites and Ammonites; and he made the country as large and strong as it had been, long before, in the days of Solomon. But as he remained wicked, it was again prophesied that his house—that is, the house of Jehu—should be cut off. In his reign lived the prophets Jonah, Amos, and Hosea, whose writings you will find in the Old Testament.

When Jeroboam II. died, he was, after some years of troubles (during which there does not appear to have been any real king), succeeded, that is, followed on the throne, by his son Zachariah, who reigned over Israel for only six months, and was then murdered by a man, Shallum, who made himself king.

More than a hundred years before, it had been prophesied that four of Jehu's house should be Kings of Israel; and now this had been fulfilled. Jehu

Jeroboam II.
B.C. 825.
2 Kings xiv.
23.
2 Kings xiii.
4, 5.

2 Kings xiv.
28; Amos i., ii.

Amos vii.

Zachariah.
B.C. 773.
2 Kings xv. 8.
Shallum.
2 Kings xv. 10.

2 Kings x. 30.

had been followed by four sons, and sons' sons; thus, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II., and lastly, Zachariah. Nothing more had been promised; and, with the murder of Zachariah, the house of Jehu was cut off.

Shallum himself was killed in about a month by Menahem, who reigned ten years.

This rough soldier was very cruel to those who did not like to take him for their king; but when he himself was attacked by Pul, the king of Assyria, instead of fighting, he made every one of his people pay a large sum of money, and sent it all to Pul, who took it and went away. Remember that this is the first time that the great kingdom of Assyria attacked the Jews, and that what I have just told you about Menahem sending money to Pul is mentioned in a writing upon stone which was found lately at Nineveh.

When Menahem died, his son Pekahiah, who was also an idolater, reigned over Israel; but, in less than two years, was murdered by one of his own officers called Pekah. This was in the last year of Uzziah, or Azariah, king of Judah. Uzziah was, you know, son of Amaziah, who was murdered at Lachish. He reigned over Judah no less than fifty-two years; while there reigned in Israel five

Menahem.
B.C. 772.
2 Kings xv.
13, 14.

Pekahiah.
B.C. 761.
2 Kings xv.
19-23.

Pekah.
B.C. 795.
UZZIAH.
B.C. 810.

kings, namely, Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah. The first war which Uzziah had was with the Edomites, who had once been under the people of Judah, but had revolted or rebelled (that is, made themselves free) about eighty years before, in the time of Jehoram. Uzziah marched quite through Edom, till he reached Elath, close to Ezion-geber, on the Arabian Gulf. You remember that Solomon made a harbour there, and that Jehoshaphat built ships there. Well, Uzziah repaired the harbour, and, I suppose, had vessels which sailed from it to India and other Eastern countries. These Edomites were the children of Esau, the brother of Jacob, and lived among the mountains of Seir, which run straight south from the Dead Sea to Ezion-geber. Edom is a fine country, with many grand mountains, and, between these, pretty valleys and glens. It had been prophesied, about nine hundred years before this, that the Edomites should live in a fertile land; that they should be a brave, warlike people; and that, though they might now and then be beaten by the sons of Jacob, still they would, in the end, make themselves free. Well, I dare say you recollect that, when the Jews were wandering to the Holy Land, God would not allow them to take any of

2 Chron.
xxi. 8.

D G.
2 Kings xiv.
22; 2 Chron.
xxvi. 2.

Gen. xxxvi. 8.

D F.

Gen. xxvii. 39.
Deut. ii. 4.

Cave Houses
in
Mount Seir.

the land of Edom ; and long after the time of Uz-
ziah, these sons of Esau took almost the whole of
Palestine ; and again, about the time of Christ,
several of these Edomites (then called Idumeans)
were governors of Judea, under the Romans. These
governors belonged to a family about which you
have heard much ; I mean, the family of Herod.
There is something else which I must tell you
about these Edomites. The people who, before
them, lived in Mount Seir, and who were called
Horites (which means, "livers in caves"), finding
that the sandstone rock of the country was soft, cut
out in it large caves, which they used as houses.
These caves were much cooler than tents would
have been ; it also takes less time and trouble
merely to dig out a cave, than first of all to quarry
a large quantity of stones, and then to build them
up into a house : and, besides this, these caves were
safer than either tents or houses, in case enemies
made a sudden attack. So it was then that the
Edomites, like the Horites, lived in caves of this
sort ; and though there is no longer a nation called
Edom, yet these, their old rock houses, remain, just
as they were long, long ago, and have been visited
by many travellers. The capital city, Petra, is one
of the most interesting places in the world : it is in

a very rough steep glen, into which it is very difficult for a stranger to find any path, and on every side, whether low down or high up, are great numbers of these cave-houses, with regular doors and windows, and the whole much in the same state as it was three thousand years ago.

This long talk about Edom began, you remember, when I had told you about the glorious march of good Uzziah, king of Judah, down the mountains of Seir, from the Dead Sea to Elath or Ezion-geber.

After this Uzziah, turning to the west, towards the Mediterranean Sea, attacked the Philistines, and not only beat them in many battles, but also took many of their strong towns, such as Gath and Ashdod, and built castles for himself in their country: he also made the Ammonites, and other nations round about, bring him presents every year. Uzziah also repaired the walls of Jerusalem, and put large numbers of soldiers in towns all over the land of Judah: and he also did a great deal of good to the farmers by digging wells, and in many other ways.

Thus, serving God and his country, he was blessed, and saw the kingdom of Judah become more great than it had been since the days of Solomon.

2 Chron.
xxvi. 6.

B E.

2 Chron.
xxvi. 8-11.

We do not read of more than one wrong act done by Uzziah. Of course, he did a great many; for every man sins every day. I only mean that, in the Bible, we read of only one great open act of sin done by him; and I shall now tell you about this.

You recollect that David and Solomon used, in the Temple, to lead the prayers and praises of the people. Perhaps Uzziah was misled by this, and thought that he, the anointed king of God's chosen people, might do anything which a priest had a right to do. Be this as it may, he did go up to the Temple, to offer incense upon the altar.

The priests, knowing this to be very wrong, because against the will of God, told him not to do so; for God likes obedience better even than sacrifice (1 Sam. xv. 22). Then Uzziah (good man though he was) became very angry, and would not stop, when, see!—just as he got close to the altar, carrying in his hand the golden bowl with incense, God, whom he was wilfully disobeying, struck him with leprosy; just as, three hundred years before, He had at another altar made the arm of Jeroboam become stiff.

Cannot you almost fancy you see what happened? At one moment, the great King Uzziah, who has

2 Chron.
xxv. 16.
2 Kings xv. 5.

beaten so many strong nations, is stepping forward to the altar : between him and it stand only some unarmed priests in their long white robes : they, in the name of God, order him to stop—the king presses on—and, at the next moment, the punishment of God has come down upon him. He sees the pale, glistening spots of leprosy spreading over his skin ; he knows that he is now an outcast from whom every one will shrink ; then, feeling how strong God is, and how weak he is—feeling also that he has brought this dreadful disease upon himself by his own sin—he turns and slinks away, shunned by all ; and then, leaving his palaces, his family, his riches, and his power, he goes to some quiet house outside the city, and there remains all alone till the day of his death.

As Uzziah had thus to live apart from other people, he at once set his son Jotham to manage the country for him. The prophets Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah lived about this time ; and in their books you will find a great deal about the state of Judea, in the days of Uzziah the Great.

At last he died, and then his son Jotham became really King of Judah.

About a year before this, Pekah, who killed his master Pekahiah, became ruler of Israel. He

2 Kings xv. 5.

JOTHAM.
B.C. 758.
2 Kings xv.
7-32.
2 Chron.
xxvii.
Pekah.
B.C. 759.

2 Kings xv.
27.

2 Kings xvi. 5.

2 Chron.
xxviii. 5, 6.

Kings xvi. 7.

2 Kings xv.
20.
Chron. v. 26.

2 Kings xv. 30.

2 Kings xv. 30.
JOTHAM.
B. C. 758.

2 Kings xv.
32.
2 Chron.
xxvii. 1.

reigned twenty years, and though he had a wish to make his country great, yet the way he took to do this was very wicked, for he was a bad, cruel man. He once made a plot with Rezin, king of Syria, to attack the kingdom of Judah ; but of that I will tell you more when we go back to talk about Judah itself.

Here I only mention that Pekah killed a great many of the people of Judah, and that Isaiah prophesied often against him. This war was finished by Ahaz, son of Jotham and King of Judah, getting Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, to help him ; for Rezin had to go back to defend his own country. Then Tiglath-Pileser took to himself all the northern parts of the kingdom of Israel, besides all that lay to the east of the Jordan ; and, carrying away the people who lived there, put them into parts of his own country, very far from their own homes, so that few, if any, of these poor Jews ever came back to the Holy Land. At last, this wicked man Pekah, who had plotted with Rezin, the king of Syria, against the people of Judah, was, after a reign of twenty years, murdered by a man called Hoshea. This was when Jotham, son of Uzziah the leper, had also reigned about twenty years.

This Jotham was himself a good man, though he

could not quite stop the people from worshipping idols. He also repaired the walls of Jerusalem and of the Temple, and he forced the Ammonites to pay him much tax every year. It was about the end of his reign that Pekah, King of Israel, and Rezin, King of Syria, joined to attack Judah ; but when they saw how strong he was, they seem to have been afraid ; and so they waited till Jotham died, and his son Ahaz came to the throne, upon which he sat for sixteen years.

Of course, Ahaz was a good deal frightened when he heard about the plot which Pekah and Rezin had made against him ; but he was much cheered by Isaiah, who not only often gave him very good advice, but also prophesied that he should be saved, if only he would trust in God. The allies, that is, the friends, Pekah and Rezin, however, did a great deal of mischief, for they took from Judah Ezion-geber, that port on the Arabian Gulf of which we have so often heard ; and besides this, they not only killed the king's son, but also made a very great number of the people of Judah prisoners, and took them away as far as Samaria, the capital of the Ten Tribes, intending, perhaps, to make slaves of the poor creatures. However, when they had got as far as Samaria, they were met by

2 Chron.
xxvii. 5.

AHAZ.
B. C. 742.
2 Kings xvi. 1.

Isa. vii., viii.,
ix.

2 Kings xvi. 6.
2 Chron.
xxviii. 7.

C D.

2 Chron.
xxviii. 9.

C E.

2 Chron.
xxviii. 5.

a prophet called Oded, who told the men of Israel that it was a great shame to make prisoners of their own brethren, the people of Judah. He also said that if God had punished so hardly the men of Judah on account of sin, they themselves, who were still more sinful, might look for still greater punishment. When the soldiers heard these words of the prophet Oded, they felt how true it was that they themselves were more wicked than the people of Judah, and that they had no right to make slaves of their own brethren. Then the brave Highlanders of the great clan Ephraim started up and said, "We have taken these prisoners in war, but they are our brethren: do with them what you will. As for us, we will have nothing more to do with the matter." Then the other soldiers all said the same, and Pekah, King of Israel, saw that he must let all his prisoners go; and, in the end, these poor people were not only fed and clothed by those who had beaten them in war, but were even taken back carefully as far as Jericho (twenty miles from Jerusalem), and then allowed to go to their homes in peace. Rezin did not, however, let go the prisoners he had made in Judah, but carried them in great numbers to Damascus, the capital of Syria.

In spite of this great deliverance, Ahaz remained wicked ; so God allowed him to be attacked by the Edomites on the east, and the Philistines on the west, and these enemies took a number of his towns, and made the people of Judah very miserable.

2 Chron.
xxviii. 17, 18.
B E.

Though Pekah had been obliged to send back those prisoners of Judah, he still was a great friend of Rezin, the king of Syria. Ahaz was, therefore, much afraid ; and taking all the money he could find in the Temple and palace, sent it to Tiglath-Pileser, the great king of Assyria, and asked him for help. Tiglath-Pileser took the gold, and also made Ahaz promise to him tribute, or tax, every year ; and then, though he did not come to Judah itself, he did attack the Syrians in their own country, and took their capital city, Damascus ; so Rezin had to go home to defend his own land, and was soon afterwards killed. Tiglath-Pileser also took from Pekah, King of Israel, all the northern parts of the country of the Ten Tribes, and also such of their lands as lay to the east of Jordan. Ahaz, King of Judah, went now to Damascus, to meet Tiglath-Pileser, who had just taken that city from the Syrians. I suppose he went to thank him for having helped him, and also to agree about the

2 Kings xvi.
7 ; 2 Chron.
xxviii. 16.

E A.

2 Kings xvi. 9

2 Kings xv. 29.

2 Kings xvi.
10.

2 Chron.
xxviii. 24.

1 Kings xx. 11.

money he was to pay the Assyrians every year. While at Damascus, Ahaz saw a very beautiful altar, and having measured it carefully, told the priests at Jerusalem about it, and they made one just like it; and when Ahaz returned to Judah, he offered incense upon it, and would not allow the proper altar to be used, and, indeed, took it away from the place where God had said that it ought to stand. Not contented with this, he destroyed some of the beautiful ornaments of the Temple, and at last he shut up the Temple altogether; and the priests themselves helped him in all this, for they, too, had become wicked. After this, Ahaz became worse and worse, and built altars to idols all over the country, saying, "The Syrians are stronger than I am; perhaps if I worship their gods, I, too, shall become very strong." The Assyrians, to whom Ahaz was now a mere servant, were great worshippers of the sun, moon, and stars, and he seems from them to have learned this wickedness. From them he appears also to have learned some useful things, such as how to build towers, from which could be observed easily the movements of the stars by night; and also how to make sun-dials. These are a sort of clock, from which you can learn the hour of day by marking the length of a shadow, for you know

that your own shadow is long in the morning, gets shorter as the sun rises higher in the heavens, then longer again towards evening.

After reigning sixteen years, Ahaz died, and was succeeded by his son, Hezekiah, who was King of Judah for twenty-nine years.

About three years before this, Hoshea, who had murdered Pekah, King of Israel, began to reign there ; and, on the whole, was not quite so bad as most of those who had gone before him. Perhaps one thing that did both him and his people good was, that the golden calf at Dan had been carried away by Tiglath-Pileser ; while that at Bethel was carried off, soon after, by Shalmaneser. Perhaps the people, not having these images before their eyes, began to forget their heathenism, and to come back to the pure worship of the true God.

Hoshea had reigned about three years when Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, who had succeeded Tiglath-Pileser, attacked and overcame him, treated very cruelly those who fought against him, and ordered the people of Israel to pay him a large sum of money every year. The golden calf of Bethel seems also to have been carried away at this time.

Not long afterwards, however, Shalmaneser found

HEZEKIAH.
B.C. 726.
2 Kings xviii.
2 ; 2 Chron.
xxix. 1.

Hoshea.
B.C. 730.
2 Kings xv.
30.

D B.

C E.

2 Kings xvii.
3.

Hos. x. 14.

2 Kings xvii.
4.

2 Kings xvii.
5.

out that Hoshea had stopped sending the money which he had promised to pay to the Assyrians, and that he was plotting against them with the king of Egypt, whose name was "So." As soon as Shalmaneser found out all this, he came back, attacked Hoshea again, besieged the capital town, Samaria, and, at the end of three years, took it. It seems that, in some way, he made Hoshea prisoner before the siege began, and that before it was over he himself was chased from the throne of Assyria by Sargon, who became king after him, and who, therefore, did really take the city of Samaria.

We do not learn all this from the Bible, but partly from old writings on rock, made by order of Sargon himself, who was father of the great Assyrian king Sennacherib. Whatever may have been the name of the Assyrian king who took Samaria, it certainly was taken at that time by the Assyrians.

And now the kingdom of Israel has come to an end. God was, as it were, weary of their long-continued wickedness. One bad king had followed another; idols had been set up over the whole country; the worship of the true God was almost altogether given up; His Temple was never attended; His priests and His prophets were driven away or killed, because they spoke the truth and

warned the people ; and friendships were formed with heathen nations all round. So at last God would not have patience any more, and would no longer give the people of the Ten Tribes a chance of becoming better, at least in their own land. Was not this a dreadful state into which the kingdom of Israel had brought itself by sin ? And yet we know from the Bible that God acts in just the same way to every one of us. He wishes all to be holy and happy, and tries to draw us to Himself by warning and advice. But He does not force us to be good ; and if we will not listen, then at last He may say, " Leave them alone, they wish to be wicked ; there is no use in trying any more to make them good ; let them be wicked still."

Thus, after the kingdom of Israel had lasted two hundred and fifty years, and been governed by nineteen kings, it fell, crushed under the weight of its own sins—fell, never to rise again ! The Assyrians took the whole country, and, carrying off the people, put them in the upper parts of Mesopotamia, that is, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates, two rivers which run between Arabia and Persia, and which your Mamma will point out to you on a map. What became of these unhappy Israelites is not known, even now ;

B.C. 721.

they are still the "Lost Ten Tribes." They had sinned greatly against the God of their fathers. He had for hundreds of years had much patience with them; but it was all in vain. He, in His perfect wisdom, knew that they would not turn to Him; so He scattered them among the heathen.

Now, I wish you to look at the map of Palestine for a few minutes, that you may know something about the size of the Holy Land.

E C.

You see that, towards the north, there is a great bulge out, formed by the land given to Manasseh; but as none of the land east of the Jordan was ever altogether taken by the Jews, we may say that Palestine is merely that strip which has on the west the Mediterranean Sea, and on the east the Jordan and Dead Sea. This strip is about a hundred and sixty miles long; and, taking one place with another, about forty miles wide. In fact, it is about as long as from London to York, or from Edinburgh to Caithness; and, taking one part of it with another—that is, supposing it to be of the same breadth everywhere—it is as broad as from London to the Nore, or from Edinburgh to Glasgow; and its whole size is about equal to Wales, or to that part of Scotland which has the

Forth and Clyde to its south, and the Caledonian Canal to its north.

So you see that this land, the most interesting that ever was or will be—this land which had the oldest and the finest poetry in the world—this land about which thousands of writers have written books, which thousands of travellers have, in spite of great dangers, visited, and which every one would like to visit—was, after all, a very small country. What is it that makes us care so much about this little country, and even about its kings and its princes, who died more than three thousand years ago? I have asked this question, but leave you to think over it, and to find out the answer.

Now go back to the map. You see that by far the larger part of the Holy Land was filled up by the kingdom of Israel, for the kingdom of Judah had only that part of the country in which lived the people of the two clans or tribes of Judah and Benjamin. This is the way in which the land was at first divided between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. But remember that, in many parts of the country, the old Canaanites were never altogether driven out. For instance, the Philistines, though often beaten, never were destroyed; then again, the people of Manasseh never filled up that great

1 Chron. v.
26: 2 Kings
xv. 29.

C D.

2 Kings xvii.
6.

2 Kings xvii.
24.

2 Kings xvii
26.

country which was given to them on the east of Jordan; and from time to time the people of Judah had taken away much land from the people of Israel; and both Pul and Tiglath-Pileser had done the same. So you see that when Sargon carried away the people of Israel, it is probable that he only took those who lived in or near the town of Samaria. However this may be, the kingdom of Israel was altogether broken up, and no Jew can say that he belongs to this or that one of the Ten Tribes. Sargon having thus carried to Babylon the people of Samaria, brought other people from Babylon, and put them to live at Samaria. These people were, of course, Assyrians, or belonged to nations already conquered by the Assyrians; but, after a time, were called Samaritans. When they first came to the land of Israel, they found that the whole country, having been wasted during the wars, was full of wild beasts, which killed many of them. You know that the heathen think that there are a great many gods, each of whom has power only in one country, or in one part of a country,—so these Samaritans said to their king, “We do not know about the God of this land where you have put us, and as we do not worship Him, He has sent lions amongst us.” Then the king of Assyria sent back

one of the Israelitish priests whom he had carried away, and this priest taught the people the worship and laws of the true God. But these heathen people had so long been in the habit of serving many gods, that they did not think it safe now to worship only the one God of the Jews. They quite believed that, in Samaria, the God of the Jews was stronger than any other god, but still they thought that the other gods might have some power also; and so these foolish people went on praying both to the true God and to idols. In the Bible you will find the names of the different nations to which these Samaritans had at first belonged. Try to find out on a map the countries they came from: we shall hear more of them when we go back to the history of Judah.

Now that we have read together all the story of the Jews during the time when there were two kingdoms, and before going further, it will be well to go over what we have already done.

From the time when the people of Israel under Jeroboam rebelled against Rehoboam, King of Judah, down to the time when the Ten Tribes were carried away by the Assyrians, was about two hundred and fifty-four years, reaching from B.C. 975 to B.C. 721. During this time there

2 Kings xvii.
24.

reigned over Israel nineteen kings. Of these, every one was an idolater ; but the last of them, Hoshea, was the least bad.

Eight kings of Israel were murdered, namely :

- (1.) Nadab was killed by Baasha.
- (2.) Elah was killed by Zimri.
- (3.) Zimri was killed by Omri.
- (4.) Jehoram was killed by Jehu.
- (5.) Zachariah was killed by Shallum.
- (6.) Shallum was killed by Menahem.
- (7.) Pekahiah was killed by Pekah.
- (8.) Pekah was killed by Hoshea.

And besides this, Ahab was killed in battle at Ramoth-gilead ; and what became of Hohsea after he was thrown into prison by the king of Assyria, we do not know.

These nineteen kings of Israel belonged to nine different families, thus :

- | | | |
|-----|---------|-----------------------------------|
| 1st | Family, | Jeroboam and his son Nadab. |
| 2d | „ | Baasha and his son Elah. |
| 3d | „ | Zimri. |
| 4th | „ | Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram. |

5th Family, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II., and Zachariah.

6th ,, Shallum.

7th ,, Menahem and Pekahiah.

8th ,, Pekah.

9th ,, Hoshea.

If you will go over this two or three times carefully, you will, I think, easily remember the order in which these kings followed each other ; and if you also carefully go over the table given at the end of the book, you will easily remember which kings of Judah and of Israel lived at the same time.

Now we must go on with the History of Judah.

Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, had become king there six years before the Ten Tribes were carried away to Babylon by Sargon. Hezekiah was a very good king, and reigned for about twenty-nine years. He at once caused the Temple to be properly cleaned and repaired ; he pulled down the heathen altars, and he even broke to pieces the brazen serpent which Moses had made, because he found that the foolish Jews used to worship it. He then opened the Temple again for the worship of the true God, and offered many sacrifices, while

HEZEKIAH.

B. C. 726.

2 Chron. xxix

1 ; 2 Kings

xviii. 2.

2 Kings xviii.

4.

- the priests and people sang psalms and hymns. He then sent messengers through what had been the land of the Ten Tribes, asking the people to come to the Temple, and again worship the true God—telling them that if they would do this God would pity and bless them. Most of the people of Israel only laughed at the message. A few, however (chiefly belonging to the tribes of Ephraim, Asher, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulon), did come to Jerusalem, and then the Passover was kept very grandly, almost as in the days of Solomon. Hezekiah next divided the priests into sets, giving to each some particular work to do; and then he settled how all the presents brought to the Temple by the people were to be fairly divided among the priests and Levites. God therefore blessed Hezekiah, so that he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and would not obey him any longer. He also fought with and beat the Philistines, those old enemies of the Jews. It was good for Hezekiah that he lived at the same time as the prophet Isaiah, who often gave him good advice, though constantly opposed by some of the chief people of the land, especially by a man called Shebna, who seems to have been the highest officer in the king's palace.
- 2 Chron. xxx.
1-6.
- 2 Chron. xxx.
10.
- 2 Chron. xxx.
13.
- 2 Chron. xxxi.
14.
- 2 Kings xviii.
7.
- 2 Kings xviii.
8.
- Isa. xxviii.
14.
- Isa. xxii. 15.

Here I must tell you that it is very difficult to make out what happened in each year of Hezekiah's reign, for the chapters in the books of Kings and Chronicles, and also in Isaiah, are not placed at all in proper order. However, by comparing one part with another (the only way really to understand the Bible), and by reading the old rock writings found at Nineveh and other places, it becomes nearly certain that things happened much as you will find them told in this book.

When Hezekiah had reigned fourteen years, Sennacherib (son of Sargon), king of Assyria, attacked Judah ; and I think the reason why he did so was because the Jews had stopped sending the money which Ahaz, father of Hezekiah, when he went to Damascus, had promised to pay. Sennacherib took the strong towns of Judah, but still does not seem at that time to have done much mischief, as Hezekiah got together all the silver that was in the Temple, and sent it to him as a present. But though Hezekiah had thus got the king of Assyria to go away, he did not feel quite safe against him ; so he made the walls of Jerusalem as strong as he could, and also made a sort of tunnel or underground pipe to lead water into Jerusalem, so that the people might have plenty

2 Kings xviii.
13.
B.C. 810.

2 Kings xviii.
7.

2 Kings xvi. 8.

2 Kings xviii.
13-16.

2 Chron. xxxii.
3-5.

of water to drink, even if an enemy lay all round the city.

² Kings xx. i.

A short time before this, Hezekiah was very ill, and nearly died; but about that sickness I will tell you more afterwards.

² Chron.
xxxii. 23.

² Kings xx.
12.

When Hezekiah got well again, some of the kings round about sent kind messages and presents to show how glad they were that he was no longer ill. One of the rulers who did this was Merodach-baladan. He was governor of Babylon, but wished to be a real king, and no longer to be under the king of Assyria, his master, who had made him governor. Merodach-baladan knew very well that Hezekiah also hated the Assyrians, so he made a pretence of sending messengers to ask about Hezekiah's health; but what he really wished was to get Hezekiah to join him in a plot against the Assyrians. Hezekiah agreed to this gladly, and was so happy in thinking that he would now have some help against the Assyrians, that he took the messengers all about Jerusalem, and showed them the beautiful things in the Temple, and in his palaces, and in the large storehouses where he kept his treasures,—for he wanted these men to tell their master that Hezekiah was a very great king indeed. Of course, there would not have

² Kings xx.
13; ² Chron.
xxxii. 31.

been any harm in showing all these things to the strangers, if it had been done merely to give them pleasure, and if he had told them that it was the true God who had given him all this power and these treasures. But, unfortunately, good King Hezekiah, as he went about showing all his glory to these people from Babylon, had his heart filled with pride, as if he had got all these things by his own strength, or because of his own goodness. You may think that this was not a very great sin, but God's thoughts are not like our thoughts. He does not judge of things as we too often do—He is as angry at bad thoughts as at bad deeds—and so He looks upon thoughts or looks of hatred, or pride, or envy, or revenge, or spite, as very great sins, though we perhaps think them small ones. So it was, then, that to punish Hezekiah for his pride, Isaiah was sent to tell him that all those beautiful things which he had shown to the people of Babylon should be carried away to that very place, and that his own children should be slaves there. It is quite clear that Hezekiah knew that he was doing wrong in making friendship with the heathen governor of Babylon ; for, when Isaiah asked him plainly what the messengers had said, he did not answer the question, but went on to talk of other

2 Kings xx
14.

2 Kings xviii.
14

2 Kings xviii.
21; Isa. xxx
1-7.

Isa. xxx.,
xxxi.

2 Kings xviii.
14; 2 Chron.
xxxii. 9; Isa.
xxxvi. 2.

things. Afterwards, however, Hezekiah was sorry for what he had done, and then God promised that all these evils should not come upon Judah so long as Hezekiah himself lived; but, as you remember, Hezekiah had very soon after this to give much of his treasure to Sennacherib, who had found out about the plot. But the Babylonians were not the only people whom Hezekiah tried to get to join him against the Assyrians, for he also made friends with the king of Egypt, from whom he hoped to get many horses and chariots, of which he had very few, while the Egyptians had plenty. Isaiah warned Hezekiah to have nothing to do with the Egyptians; and in fact the Assyrians did beat the king of Egypt, so that he could not give any help to Judah; and Hezekiah had to pay, as you have heard, all the treasures he could get together from the Temple and palaces. After this, Sennacherib, passing Palestine, marched away to Egypt itself, but was there beaten by Tirhakah, the brave king of that country. On his way back to Nineveh, Sennacherib, though he had already got so much money from Hezekiah, again attacked him, and took the strong town of Lachish, and other cities. If you go to London, you may see in the Museum there a large stone figure of Sen-

nacherib as he was at Lachish. It was brought from Nineveh by the same gentleman who found so many old Assyrian ruins there.

B E.

When Sennacherib got to Lachish, he sent messengers, who, standing at the foot of the high walls of Jerusalem, called out loudly to the Jews, telling them not to fight against the great king of Assyria. These messengers spoke very proudly, saying—“Our king is very strong; he has beaten many kings far more powerful than the King of Judah. You have few soldiers;—what can you do? You have no horses, and if you had, would not know how to manage them. Why, if you like, we will give you thousands of horses, if you can find soldiers to ride upon them, and we will beat you after all. Remember, also, that Hezekiah has made your God angry by pulling down His altars [I suppose that they had heard about Hezekiah breaking the idol-altars]; but all the gods are upon our side; so give up the city, and our king will take you away to another country, much better than this. We know that you have been plotting against us with Tirhakah, king of Egypt; but he is far too weak to help you, and your best plan is at once to give yourselves up to our master, the great king of Assyria.”

2 Kings xix.
2 ; Isa. xxxvii.
2 ; 2 Chron.
xxxii. 20.

These were proud and wicked words ; and when Hezekiah heard them, he at once sent to Isaiah, and asked his advice. This prophet, who was a brave man, and loved his country (all good and brave men do so), told Hezekiah not to be afraid, for God would save him by calling the Assyrians away. And so it was ; for very soon afterwards Sennacherib heard that Tirhakah, the king of Egypt, by whom he had already been beaten, was marching towards him as fast as he could. Then Sennacherib thought it would be well immediately to take the strong town of Jerusalem, in which he might defend himself against Tirhakah ; so he again tried to frighten Hezekiah. He therefore sent to him a very proud, impertinent letter, telling him not to fancy that he was safe, for the Assyrians were far stronger than he, and his best plan would be to give up the city to them. Hezekiah took the letter, and, going to the Temple, spread it out before the altar as if to let God read it, and prayed for help, that so all the heathen might know that the God of the Jews was the only True God. Then Isaiah came to Hezekiah and said to him, “Be not afraid of Sennacherib. He is indeed a great king ; but God is the King of kings. Sennacherib shall not take Jerusalem—he shall

not even attack it. And this was a true prophecy, for, during the night, God, in some way which is not clearly explained in the Bible (but very probably by some disease like cholera), killed very many thousands of the Assyrian soldiers. Your Mamma will, if you ask her, read to you a very beautiful little poem about this, written by the great poet Lord Byron. Sennacherib was now afraid—he saw that he was not strong enough to take Jerusalem quickly, and he knew that Tirhakah was coming nearer; so he fled to his own capital, Nineveh, where some years afterwards he was killed by two of his own sons.

Thus God saved good King Hezekiah and the people of Judah; and when the nations all round heard of this, and knew that Hezekiah was blessed of God, they sent him many presents, and he became a rich and great king. But he lived only about a year after this. He had reigned twenty-nine years, and, when he died, was buried with great honour, and was succeeded by his son Manasseh.

But before we go on, I shall tell you about that great sickness which Hezekiah had, long before, and from which God cured him so wonderfully, and after which Merodach-baladan, governor of

2 Kings xix.
35; 2 Chron.
xxxii. 21;
Isa. xxxvii. 36.

2 Kings xix.
37; 2 Chron.
xxxii. 21;
Isa. xxxvii. 38.

2 Kings xx.
21; 2 Chron.
xxxii. 33.
B. C. 698.

2 Kings xx. 1;
2 Chron. xxxii.
24.
Isa. xxxviii. 1.

² Kings xx. 6 ;
² Kings xxi. 1.

Babylon, sent messengers to wish him joy upon being again well. Hezekiah's illness was caused by a very dangerous kind of boil ; and at last he became so weak that every one thought that he must soon die. Hezekiah was very sorry, partly because, like most people, he wished to live longer and partly because he had not at that time any son to follow him upon the throne, and was afraid that, if he died then, there might be quarrels and wars as to who should be the next king. Well, Isaiah was sent to tell Hezekiah that he was about to die. Then the poor king wept, and prayed that he might live ; and God listened to the prayer, and sent back Isaiah, who had not yet left the palace, to tell him that God would not only quite cure him within three days, but would even allow him to live fifteen years longer. See how quickly God answers the prayers of those who really trust in Him ! Before Isaiah had time to leave the palace, this prayer had gone up to heaven, had been heard, and was answered. When Hezekiah heard that he was to get well again, and so quickly, he could not at first help thinking that it was almost impossible. Then God said : " I will give you a sign as a proof that what Isaiah says is quite true. You see where that shadow from the

sun now is ;—would you like to see the shadow go backward or forward ? ” Hezekiah answered that he should like to see it go back a great way, and it did so immediately ; and then he felt sure that the message of Isaiah had really come from God, and that he would very soon be quite well.

Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, was only twelve years old when he became King of Judah. He reigned fifty-five years, and was, unfortunately, the very worst king that ever ruled in either kingdom. Hezekiah, his father, was, as you know, a good man, and worshipped the true God, but still he had, during the last years of his life, too much to do with heathen nations, and all through his reign many of the people and of the nobles worshipped idols. Manasseh, who was a mere boy when he began to reign, seems to have taken advice only from the idol-worshippers, and these noblemen told him to keep up the friendships with heathen kings which his father had begun ; and Manasseh did so, and became more and more wicked. Then altars to all sorts of idols were set up in Jerusalem, and heathen worship was carried on in the very Temple of God, and the whole city and country was filled with the blood of prophets and holy men, and worshippers of the true God.

MANASSEH.
B. C. 698.
2 Kings xxi. 1.
2 Chron.
xxxiii. 1.



2 Chron.
xxxv. 3.

Kings xxi. 6;
2 Chron.
xxxiii. 6.

Ezek. xx.
23-29;
Jer. vii. 17-26.

So wicked was Manasseh, that he took the Ark of God out of its place; and then the very "Books of the Law" (that is, so much of the Bible as had been written down up to that time), were destroyed by his orders; so that, when the next king came to the throne, every one had almost forgotten that God had ever given them a written law at all. Manasseh even made his children pass through the fire to Moloch, the favourite god of the Ammonites, and whom the Jews seem to have worshipped even in the wilderness. This does not, I think, mean that he really offered up his children as burnt-sacrifices—though, indeed, it was, and still is, not uncommon among the heathen to sacrifice their own little ones, in the hope of thereby getting blessings, and keeping away evils. What is meant is probably that he caused his children to be carried through large fires, as a sign that they should be brought up to worship the cruel idols. In fact it was, to those heathen, somewhat the same as baptism is to Christians; for, as you know, in baptism children are brought to God, and He is asked to receive them, and promise is made that they shall be taught to serve Him. This custom of making children pass through the fire is even now in use in some parts of the world, and I have seen it in

the East. The people dug a round shallow hollow in the ground, about as wide as a common dining-room. In this they piled up great quantities of wood, which they kept burning for three days and three nights, until the hollow was quite full of glowing ashes and embers, the heat from which was so great that I could scarcely go within several feet of the place. At last, on the evening of the third day, all the natives came together, wearing their finest dresses; and then, after much beating of drums, and blowing of trumpets made of large shells, one man after another walked barefoot through the red-hot embers—not quickly, but quite slowly, and not once, but many times—and some of them carried little children in their arms each time. None of the people seemed to feel the least pain; faith in their false gods made them bear or forget the pain. See what faith in a mere idol can do! Should not faith in the One True God give us strength to do much more? Of course, the feet of the men were much scorched, and the air was filled with the smell of burning flesh, but still they went on and on, till a late hour at night.

God, by his prophets, told Manasseh that dreadful punishments would come upon the country because of these sins; but he cared not, and is be-

2 Kings xxi.
10.

2 Kings
xxiv. 4.

Zeph. ii.
Jer. xlvii.,
xlviii., xlix.

2 Chron.
xxxiii. 11.

lieved to have killed the prophets Isaiah and Habakkuk. In fact, his wickedness was so great, that the people thought it quite impossible that even God, who "is love," could forgive it. Punishment soon came. The Philistines, Moabites, and Ammonites, who used to bring yearly presents to Hezekiah, now rebelled; then the Assyrians, under their king Esar-haddon (son of Sennacherib), came again, and appear to have taken the city of Jerusalem; at any rate, Manasseh himself was made prisoner, and carried away to Babylon. You recollect that Hezekiah had plotted with Merodach-baladan, governor of Babylon, against the kings of Assyria. Well, the Assyrians soon beat the Babylonians, and for some time made Babylon their own capital; and it was to punish the Jews for having joined the rebel Merodach-baladan that Esar-haddon now attacked Judah. It was a great misfortune for the Jews that they lay just between three strong nations—the Syrians, the Assyrians, and the Egyptians—who were always quarrelling among themselves. For whenever one of these nations went to attack another, its armies were almost sure to march through Palestine, and to conquer it, that so the Jews might not attack them during the war. The Jews, in the hope of making

themselves safe during all these fightings and troubles, formed friendships, now with one, now with some other of these heathen nations, and so they were led away into idolatry, and brought much misery upon themselves.

Manasseh, you remember, had been carried away to Babylon. When he found himself a wretched prisoner there, he repented of his sins; and then, in spite of all his wickedness, God had pity on him, and made the king of Assyria let him go free. So he went back to Jerusalem, and again became king.

Manasseh now did much good: he built up the broken walls of Jerusalem, and got together a large army; and he took away the idol altars, which he had before put into the Temple, and did really worship the true God. But the people, to whom he himself had taught heathenism, still went on worshipping idols. It is always far easier to lead people astray than it is afterwards to undo this mischief. The prophets Isaiah and Habakkuk (both of whom he is said to have killed) lived about the beginning of Manasseh's reign, while Jeremiah and Zephaniah lived about the end of it; but during all the middle part of his long reign, God seems to have left the people alone in their sins,

2 Chron.
xxxiii. 12.

2 Chron.
xxxiii. 14.

2 Chron.
xxxiii. 17.

not sending, so far as we know, even one prophet to warn and to teach the Jews.

At last Manasseh died ; but, of course, was not buried near David.

The next king was his son Amon, who reigned only two years, and was then murdered by his own servants. He was almost worse than his father, for he did not repent at all.

And now we come again to a good king of Judah, Josiah, son of Amon, who was only eight years old when his father was murdered. I hope you remember the story I told you long ago about Jeroboam, the first King of Israel—I mean about the altar of Bethel, at which he was offering sacrifices to the golden calf, breaking to pieces, and about his arm drying up when he tried to lay hold of the prophet, who told him how wicked it was to worship any but the True God. That prophet also said that, long afterwards, there should come a child-king, called Josiah, who, on that very place, would burn the bones of the heathen priests. And now, after more than three hundred years, the child-king, Josiah, did come, and did go to Bethel, and break down the idol altar there, and all the buildings round about it ; and caused the bones of the priests, who had before this

AMON.
B.C. 643.
2 Kings xxi.
19.
2 Chron.
xxxiii. 21 ;
Zeph. i. 3.

JOSIAH.
2 Kings
xxiii. 1 ;
2 Chron.
xxxiv. 1.
B.C. 641.
1 Kings xlii. 2

2 Kings xxiii.
15.

offered sacrifices there, to be dug up and burned on their own altars, that so the people might no longer look on that place as holy. Josiah also went all about the country, even into parts which had once belonged to the Ten Tribes, and broke down the idols and their altars, and killed their priests, and did all he could to bring the people back to the worship of the true God. Josiah also caused the Temple to be put into order, and to be repaired where it had become broken down during the reigns of Amon and Manasseh. He then brought the Ark of God back to its place, and, when all was ready, sent messengers throughout the whole land to call the people to the Temple; and they came in great numbers, and kept the feast of the Passover with joy and gladness, and they sang praises to God, and promised that they would no longer worship idols. And Josiah himself, standing at the King's Pillar, where the child-king Joash had stood long before, made the same promise.

When the priests were cleaning out the Temple, a very curious thing happened; they found a copy of the "Law of God," that is, a copy of the "Five Books of Moses," or else, as some think, of "Deuteronomy" alone. Manasseh had, you remember,

2 Kings xxiii.
16; 2 Chron.
xxxiv. 5.

2 Kings xxiii.
19, 20.

2 Kings xxiii.
21; 2 Chron.
xxxiv. 32.

2 Kings xxii.
8; 2 Chron.
xxxiv. 14.

Finding of
the Book of
the Law.

destroyed as many of these books as he could find, and the people had, when Josiah become king, almost forgotten that there were such books at all.

I dare say you think that it would be impossible for any king, however wicked he might be, or however long he might reign, to destroy all the Bibles in England; and this is quite true. But in England things go on very differently from what they did in Judah 2500 years ago, in the time of Manasseh. In those days people did not know how to print books, and they had no such paper as we have. All books had to be written with the hand, and generally upon skins of sheep and goats, which it was very difficult to prepare nicely, and to make so smooth that one could write neatly on them. Then, again, the Jews, in writing out copies of the Word of God, were so careful to do so quite correctly, that, if they made the slightest mistake, they threw away the whole skin, or else washed and rubbed away all that they had written upon it, and began again. So you see why there could be but few books of any kind, and still fewer "Books of the Law of God," in the days of Manasseh. Then, again, as there were few books, there were also few readers. Thus it appears that when this very "Book of the Law" was found in the Temple,

neither the high-priest nor the king could read it, but had to give it to a man Shaphan, who, being better educated than either, read it to them. As books then were rare, and readers few, you can see that it would be easy for Manasseh to find out wherever there was a copy of the Law, and also how little difference it would make to most of the people whether there were or were not any book. Besides this, most of the Jews had become idolaters, and would not take the trouble of hiding any "Books of the Law" which they happened to have. Perhaps they even thought it would please the idols if they gave up these holy books to be destroyed; just as, in the days of the Apostles, those men of Ephesus who had become Christians gave up and burned their heathen books.

When Hilkiah the high-priest found the "Book of the Law" in the Temple (where it had perhaps been hidden from Manasseh by some good priest, who had then been killed before he could tell others where it was), he showed it to Shaphan, who read it to him; and when they knew what it was, they went together to the king, and read it to him. Josiah felt great distress and sorrow when he heard the words of the Book, for he now knew that in many things he and his people had not obeyed the

Acts xix. 19.

2 Kings xxii.
14; 2 Chron.
xxxiv. 22.

law of God; and was very frightened when he heard what God had said should happen to the Jews, if they worshipped idols. So Josiah sent Hilkiah and others to a prophetess called Huldah, and she was told to say to them: "This people must on account of its great wickedness, be punished during many years; but as Josiah, as soon as he heard the words of the Book, was willing to obey God, he shall be blessed." And this happened; for Josiah brought his people back to the worship of the True God. Was not that enough to make him happy, whatever else might happen to him?

2 Kings xxiii.
29; 2 Chron.
xxxv. 20.

After this Pharaoh-nechoh, king of Egypt, marched towards Carchemish, on the Euphrates, to fight against the Assyrians in their own country. The kingdom of Judah was, at this time, under the power of Assyria, or at any rate friendly with it, because of the Assyrians allowing Manasseh to go free after he had been carried to Babylon. When Josiah therefore heard that the Egyptians were going to attack his friends the Assyrians, he at once marched against them. Pharaoh told him not to mix himself up in a quarrel with which he had nothing to do; but Josiah thought that it was his duty to fight for the Assyrians; and he went to battle with the Egyptians at Megiddo (where

Ahaziah died after being wounded by Jehu); and there good Josiah was shot by the archers, and, being carried to Jerusalem, died there; and all the people mourned greatly, and buried him with much honour.

The next King of Judah was Josiah's younger son, Jehoahaz. We do not know why he was chosen rather than either of his elder brothers. However, he had reigned only three months, when Pharaoh-nechoh sent him away prisoner to Egypt, where he died.

Pharaoh-nechoh had now got the kingdom of Judah quite into his power, and put on to the throne Jehoiakim, whose Jewish name was Eliakim, and who was an elder brother of Jehoahaz.

Very soon after this, Pharaoh-nechoh was himself defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Assyria, in a great battle at Carchemish on the Euphrates; so that, during the eleven years of Jehoiakim's reign, the Jews were not troubled by the Egyptians. But they had no sooner got out of the power of one enemy, than they fell into that of another; for Nebuchadnezzar, when he had beaten Pharaoh-nechoh at Carchemish, followed him towards Egypt; and, in doing so, of course came to Palestine. He then took the city of Jerusalem; and, having

JEHOAHAZ.

B. C. 610.

2 Kings xxiii.

31; 2 Chron.

xxxvi. 2-5.

2 Kings xxiii.

34.

JEHOIAKIM.

B. C. 610.

2 Kings xxiii

34; 2 Chron.

xxxvi. 4.

1 Kings xxiv.

7; Jer. xlv.

2.

2 Kings xxiv.

1; 2 Chron.

xxxvi. 6.

made Jehoiakim prisoner, tied him, and was going to carry him away, but for some reason (perhaps because his father Josiah had been killed fighting for the Assyrians), he let him go free, and even allowed him to be king again. It was at this time that Daniel, and others of whom you will read much in the Bible, were carried to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the ornaments of the Temple to put them in his own idol-temple at Babylon. For three years Jehoiakim was faithful to Nebuchadnezzar; but after that time foolishly rebelled. The Assyrian king was then busy with other wars, but he sent parties of his people, and of the Syrians and Moabites, who wandered about the country, robbing the Jews. After Jehoiakim had reigned eleven years, he died, apparently killed in war, or killed by some of his own people. He had been a bad man, so, instead of being buried like a king, his body was thrown out into the fields as the carcass of an ass might have been thrown. In the thirty-sixth chapter of Jeremiah, you will find a curious story, showing how obstinate Jehoiakim was about refusing to listen to God's warnings, sent by his prophets.

The next king was Jehoiachin (sometimes called Jechoniah or Coniah), the son of Jehoiakim. He

2 Chron.
xxxvi. 7.

2 Kings xxiv.
1.

2 Kings xxiv.
8.

Jer. xxii. 18 ;
xxxvi. 30.

JEHOIACHIN.
B.C. 599.
2 Kings xxiv.
6 ; 2 Chron.
xxxvi. 9.

had reigned only three months when Nebuchadnezzar arrived with his army. At this time, as you know, the king of Egypt was quite weak, having been beaten by the Assyrians at the great battle of Carchemish; so Jehoiachin could not look to him for help. And, besides this, the land of Judah had for some years been overrun by bands of Syrians and Moabites; so when the king of Assyria came to Jerusalem, Jehoiachin did not even try to defend himself at all. Then Nebuchadnezzar carried away to Babylon the King of Judah, and his wives, and his nobles, and his soldiers, and all the good workmen, and, indeed, all but the very poorest of the people. He also took away from the Temple and palace all that was worth taking. Poor Jehoiachin was kept a prisoner at Babylon no less than thirty-six years, at the end of which time, Evil-Merodach, who had succeeded Nebuchadnezzar, treated him kindly, took him out of the jail, and ordered his people to take great care of him.

When Nebuchadnezzar carried off Jehoiachin, he put in as king, or rather as governor, of Jerusalem, Zedekiah, who is called son of good Josiah; therefore the brother of Jehoahaz and of Jehoiakim, and uncle of the last king, Jehoiachin.

2 Chron. xxvi.
17.

2 Kings xxiv.
14; Jer. xxix.
2; Ezek. xvii.
12.

2 Kings xxv.
27; Jer. lii.
31.

ZEDEKIAH.
B.C. 599.
2 Chron.
xxxvi. 10;
2 Kings xxiv.
17.

Zedekiah was the last King of Judah, and, unfortunately, like Hoshea, the last King of Israel, he was a very weak man—not very bad in himself, but easily led by others, and unable to say “No.” You will, as you grow older, find that weak, silly people, who always look to others for help and advice, do nearly as much mischief to themselves and others as do those who are altogether wicked, and do not even pretend to obey God. Zedekiah had the prophet Jeremiah to tell him what to do, and at times really seemed willing to obey him; but then, unfortunately, he was so terribly afraid of his own princes and nobles, that he even confessed to them that he did not dare to say a word to save the life of his true friend, Jeremiah. These princes and nobles day after day told Zedekiah to get up a plot against the Assyrians; and poor Zedekiah, though he knew he was far too weak to fight against Nebuchadnezzar, was yet too great a coward to say “No.” So, very soon, messengers came from Tyre, Sidon, Edom, and Moab, to say that all these people were eager to be free from the Assyrians; and then Zedekiah sent to ask the king of Egypt to lend him soldiers and horses, for, as you know, the Jews always had very few cavalry—that is, soldiers riding on horses. Jeremiah warned Zede-

Jer. xxxviii.
5-26.

2 Kings xxiv.
20; 2 Chron.
xxxvi. 13.

Ez. xvii. 15.

Jer. xxxvii. 7.

kiah not to have anything to do with these plots, and particularly not to trust to Egypt for help. However, all his warnings were in vain—the princes were too strong for him, and several times the king had great trouble in saving the prophet from being killed by them. Of course, as soon as the Assyrians knew what Zedekiah was doing, they attacked him, and took many of his strong towns. This so frightened the Jews, and made them think so much about their sins, that the princes and nobles set free all of their own people whom they had made slaves, and even promised to obey all the laws of Moses about such matters. Just at this time the king of Egypt did really march towards Judah to help Zedekiah; so the Assyrians had to go away to fight with him.

You remember that Jeremiah had always told Zedekiah not to make friendship with the king of Egypt. Well, when the princes of Judah saw the Assyrians march away from Jerusalem to fight the Egyptians, they said to the king, "O king! the Egyptians, against whom Jeremiah is always talking, have really sent an army to help us, and so have drawn away all the Assyrians from the very walls of Jerusalem. Jeremiah is a traitor; he is not true to his king and country; he has spoken lies: let

Jer. xxxvii.
5-11; xxxiv.
21; Ezek xvii.
15-21.

Jer. xxxiv.
8-11.

Jer. xxxvii.
11.

Jer. xxxviii. 4.

Jer. xxxiv. 11.

2 Kings xxv.
1; 2 Chron.
xxxvi. 17.
Jer. lii. 4;
xxxix.Jer. xxxviii.
17.Jer. xxxviii.
9; Lam. iv.

B.C. 588.

him be put to death." The king was very much afraid when he heard his princes speak in this way: however, he did manage again to save the life of the prophet. But this is not all that these wicked princes did: for so soon as they saw the Assyrian army march off to fight with the Egyptians, they thought that they were now quite safe, and that God had "forgotten to punish;" so they broke all the promises which, in their days of fear, they had made to God, and took back their slaves, even those who were Jews. When Zedekiah had reigned about ten years, the Assyrians once more stood before the walls of Jerusalem. Jeremiah still told the king to trust the Assyrians and give himself up to them; and, of course, made the princes more angry than ever, so that the poor king had again great difficulty in saving the prophet's life. The Assyrians went on with the siege: no one was allowed to go out or to come in, and food became more and more scarce, till at last, as in the time of Jehoram, the son of Ahab, ladies ate their own children. At the end of a year and a-half, Jerusalem was taken by the Assyrians: they got in about the middle of a dark night, and were in the very heart of the city before the Jews knew of it. Zedekiah, his family, and a few soldiers, fled out of the town,

and went as fast as they could towards the Jordan, hoping to hide themselves in the woods and hills there. They were, however, caught near Jericho. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Assyria, was then at Riblah (a town which lies a long way north of Palestine, near the mountains of Lebanon), and ordered the prisoners to be sent to him. When they arrived, the cruel Assyrian spoke to Zedekiah very roughly for having fought against him ; then killed his sons before the poor man's face ; then put out his eyes, loaded him with chains, and sent him a prisoner to Babylon. A part of what I have just told you is not to be found in the Bible, but in a very interesting book, written by Josephus, a Jew, who lived about the time of Christ. When Zedekiah was sent a blind prisoner to Babylon, two prophecies were carried out. Long before the city was taken, Jeremiah had prophesied that Zedekiah should see the king of Assyria, and that he should be led away captive to Babylon ; but Ezekiel had prophesied that Zedekiah should never see Babylon, though he should die there. I dare say Zedekiah and his princes thought that it was quite impossible that both these prophecies could be true, and even thought that both were false, as they seemed to say opposite things. But, as you see,

2 Kings xxv.
6.

Jer. xxxii. 4.

Ezek. xii. 13.

both prophecies were quite true : Zedekiah did see Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah ; his eyes were then put out ; and, after this, he was taken a prisoner to Babylon, where he died.

And now the kingdom of Judah has also come to an end. The people of Israel had been carried away by Sargon about a hundred and thirty years before ; and now the people of Judah were carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, and scattered among the heathen.

Before we go on to the little which I have to tell you about what happened to the Jews after this, let us go over what we have already read together about Judah ; just as we did when we came to the last king of Israel.

The kingdom of Judah, from the beginning of Rehoboam's reign till Zedekiah was carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, lasted three hundred and eighty-seven years—that is, from B.C. 975 to B.C. 588. To remember it more easily, say that the kingdom of Israel lasted two hundred and fifty years, that the kingdom of Judah lasted four hundred years, and that they both began about a thousand years before the birth of Christ. There were in all nineteen kings of Judah, and one queen. Every king was the son or brother of a king who went before ; and even

Athaliah, who unjustly made herself queen, was wife of one and mother of the next. Thus, while the people of Israel had nineteen kings, belonging to nine different families, every king of Judah was of the family of David and Solomon. Again, all the kings of Israel were wicked idolaters, while of the kings of Judah about half were good men. Again, as the whole time during which the nineteen kings of Israel reigned was only about two hundred and fifty years, while the twenty sovereigns of Judah take up nearly four hundred years, it is clear that, taking one with another, each king of Judah reigned longer than a king of Israel. Lastly, seven of the kings over the Ten Tribes were murdered, while as to Judah, only four were murdered (namely, Ahaziah, who was killed by Jehu; and Joash, Amaziah, and Amon, who were killed by their own people). As to Athaliah, she was justly put to death for taking the throne instead of letting her grandson, little Joash, become king. Josiah died fighting against the Egyptians at Megiddo; and perhaps Jehoiakim was killed either in battle or by his people. All the others seem to have died quietly in their beds. Thus you see that the people of Judah, who, on the whole, worshipped the True God more than did the Ten Tribes, were

more blessed by God ; they had more good kings ; all these kings were of the family of David ; and the country was quieter.

I have now done what I at first promised to do ; for we have read together the History of the Jews from the time of Solomon till there was no longer a king either in Judah or Israel.

I shall now very shortly tell you what happened to the Jews after this time, and before the coming of Christ.

When Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, he not only made Zedekiah prisoner and sent him to Babylon, after having put out his eyes, but he killed a great many of the people, and sent away a great many more to Babylon ; and he carried off the treasures from the House of the Lord, and from the palaces, and from the city, and broke down the walls, and even burned the Temple of Solomon with fire. Nebuchadnezzar left an officer of his, called Nebuzar-adan, to do all this ; but as the king knew that Jeremiah had all along advised the people not to fight against the Assyrians, he told Nebuzar-adan to take great care of the prophet, and to give him his choice of staying in Jerusalem or going with the rest to Babylon. Jeremiah therefore came to Jerusalem, where the Assyrian

2 Chron.
xxxvi. 17 ;
Jer. xxxix. 8.

Jer. xxxix. 11.

Jer. xl. 4.

governor, Gedaliah, was very kind to him. If Zedekiah had done what Jeremiah had told him to do, about not fighting against the Assyrians, he and his people would also have been kindly treated by Nebuchadnezzar.

Jer. xl. 6.

Soon after the fall of Jerusalem, the Assyrians were quite conquered by the Persians, a nation who lived further towards the east; and about fifty years after Zedekiah had been carried to Babylon, the Persian king Cyrus told all the Jews that they might, if they pleased, go back to their own country. If you look at the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, you will find that, nearly one hundred and fifty years before, this prophet had foretold the coming of Cyrus, and even mentioned his name. But Cyrus, whose heart was, of course, in all this led by God, not only gave the Jews leave to go home, but also returned to them a great many of the treasures which had been carried away from the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar; and he told his people to help them in every way they could. All the Jews who really loved God, and did not like to live among heathen, heard the words of the king with great joy; and very soon about fifty thousand of them started for Jerusalem. They had two chiefs,—one was Zerubbabel, grandson

B.C. 538.
2 Chron.
xxxvi. 22;
Ezra i. 1.

Ez. i. 6, 7.

Zerubbabel.

Ez. iii. 8-13.

Ez. iv.

Ez. iv. 6.
B.C. 529.

of Jehoiachin, and the other was Jeshua, grandson of the last high-priest. When the Jews reached Jerusalem, they settled down in the neighbourhood, and worked so busily that, at the beginning of the second year, they laid the foundation of a new Temple with great joy; though, indeed, some of the old men who had seen the first Temple, that which Solomon built, wept when they thought how weak their nation had become, and how much less beautiful this Temple would be than the one which had been burned by Nebuchadnezzar. The Samaritans, who, as you know, were people of different nations who had been brought to the land of Israel by Sargon, king of Assyria, wished to join the Jews in their work, but were not allowed to do so, because they were not really Jews, and did not worship the True God alone. This made the Samaritans so angry, that, for a long time, they did all they could to stop the work, and wrote lying words to the king about it, saying that the Jews had always been troublesome, and that, if they were allowed to make Jerusalem strong, they would be sure to rebel.

The king to whom they first wrote was Ahasuerus (also called Cambyses II.), the son of Cyrus, but he appears not to have taken any notice of

their letter. They then wrote to Artaxerxes, who had driven Ahasuerus from the throne, and he believed what the Samaritans said, and ordered the work to be stopped. It appears, however, that Zerubbabel and his companions had not done all they could to prevent this mischief, and that, in fact, they had thought more about making fine houses for themselves than about finishing the Temple. Thus about sixteen years slipped away, during which scarcely any work was done, when there suddenly appeared among the Jews, Haggai and Zechariah. These prophets told the people how wickedly they were behaving, and so got them again to go on actively with the work. When the Assyrian governor, Tatnai, heard of this, he wrote to the king for orders about it. The Jews, however, did not stop the work, but said they would go on with it till they heard what the king said. At last, there came a letter from Darius Hystaspis, who had killed and succeeded Ahasuerus, telling Tatnai not to trouble the Jews, but to help them as much as he could. So the work went on quickly; and in about three years, the Temple was quite finished, and the people offered many sacrifices, and were very joyful.

About sixty years after this, Ezra the priest was

B.C. 522.

Ez. iv. 7-17.

Hag. i. 4.

Hag. i.
Zech. i.

Ez. v. 3.

Ez. vi.

Ez. vi. 15.

B.C. 516.

Ez. vii.
B.C. 458.
Ezra.

Ez. ix. 2.

allowed by "Artaxerxes of the long hands," king of Persia, to go with a large number of priests and Levites to Jerusalem. The king also gave Ezra letters to the governors of the country round about Jerusalem, ordering them to give him all that he might require for the service at the Temple. On reaching Jerusalem, Ezra found that the Jews there had taken many foolish and wicked customs from the people about them, and had married heathen women. He was very sorry about this, and, calling the people together, showed them how wicked all this was; so the people obeyed him, and put away those heathen wives.

Ez. x. 17.

We are not told what Ezra did during the next few years; perhaps, as the king had sent him merely to see how things were going on at Jerusalem, he went back to Babylon.

B.C. 445.
Nehemiah.
Neh. i. 3.

Neh. ii. 2.

About thirteen years after this, Nehemiah, who was a high officer at the court of Persia, heard that the Jews at Jerusalem were again in great misery, and that the walls of the city were still broken down. This made him so sad, that when he came before the king, "Ahasuerus of the long hands," to whom he was cup-bearer (like the High Stewards or Stuarts of Scotland, who afterwards became its kings), the king asked him what was the matter.



NEHEMIAH AT JERUSALEM.—Page 125.

Then Nehemiah told all his sorrows, and asked leave to go to Jerusalem, and begged the king to give him letters to the governors. So the king not only gave the leave and the letters, but even made Nehemiah himself governor of Jerusalem ; however, the king made him promise to come back by a certain time.

Neh. v. 14.

So Nehemiah and his friends started, and the king sent soldiers to take care of them in the wild countries through which they would have to pass. The first thing that Nehemiah did, after coming to Jerusalem, was to get up quietly one night, when perhaps, there was bright moonlight, and to go carefully right round the town, to know exactly what parts of the wall were in good order, and what parts were broken : he then called the Jews together, and dividing them into parties, gave to each set some piece of the work to do.

Neh. ii. 9.

Neh. ii. 12.

Neh. iii.

When the people of the country heard that a Jew had been made governor of Jerusalem they were very angry, and laughed at the work, and did what they could to stop it ; but the Jews went on with it as fast as they could. Then their enemies came up to fight with them, and some of the Jews themselves began to lose faith and hope. But Nehemiah was a brave man who trusted in God and loved his country, so he divided the people

Neh. ii. 10-19.
Neh. iv.

Neh. iv. 10.

Neh. vi. 15.

Neh. iv. 23.

Neh. vi. 18.

Neh. v. 5-12.

Neh. viii.

into two sets, and while the one set was working, the other stood beside them ready armed to fight with any enemy that might come. The workmen, too, had their weapons close by them; and Nehemiah told them all what to do in case of a sudden attack. So the work went on, and in about two months the walls of Jerusalem were quite finished. Sanballat, Tobiah, and the other leaders of the enemies, tried all this time to stop the Jews from making Jerusalem strong, and often sent messages to Nehemiah, asking him to meet them in the country and talk with them about all these things; but Nehemiah knew that they would kill him if he went out of the town, so he remained in Jerusalem, working so hard, that he had seldom time to change his clothes. One thing which troubled Nehemiah very much was, that many of the Jews themselves were more friendly to the enemy than to himself, though he was doing so much for them.

But Nehemiah also attended to other matters beside strengthening the walls: he found out that many Jews had slaves of their own nation, and he got them to give up this wicked custom. He also called the people together, and Ezra, standing up in a pulpit of wood, read out to them the "Word of God," and they all kept a great feast for eight days,

and then was offered up a beautiful prayer, and after it he and all the people promised that they would obey the laws of God.

Neh. ix. x.

At this time Ezra was again in Jerusalem: whether he had come with or after Nehemiah is not known.

Neh. viii. 1.

While all this was going on, Nehemiah returned to Babylon, and then the Jews began to forget God once more, and even the priest who had charge of the Temple prepared a large room in it for Tobiah, the great enemy of Nehemiah and of the Jews.

Neh. xiii. 4.

Some years later the king allowed Nehemiah once more to visit Jerusalem, and he again did much to bring the Jews back to the worship of the True God, making them keep the Sabbath holy, and give up their heathen wives.

Neh. xiii. 6.

Neh. xiii.
15-23.

And here the Old Testament stops, so that we do not, from the Bible, learn anything more about the Jews until the coming of Christ; and in the little which I have still to say, we must be guided by what we find in other books, especially in that one written by Josephus, of which I spoke before.

From the time of Nehemiah to that of Christ, which was about four hundred years, Jews lived in Jerusalem, and their numbers increased much, but they had ceased to be a great nation, and became

Maccabees.

the servants of Persians, and Greeks, and Syrians, and Parthians, and Romans. Each nation which conquered them sent some one to be their governor, and, speaking generally, the only real chief whom the Jews had from among their own people was the high-priest for the time being.

About a hundred and sixty years before the birth of Christ, arose some very brave Jews, of a family known as the Maccabees. They stirred up the people against the Syrians, and succeeded in making the country, or at any rate the city of Jerusalem, free. After this time, the Jews were more or less free till the coming of Christ, and had their own high-priests, and sometimes their own kings, who were of the house of the Maccabees. In the time of Christ, the Jews were, as you know, under the power of the Romans, who, however, had appointed as governor Herod, an Edomite, or, as his nation was then called, an Idumean. He was married to a lady of the Maccabean family; for the Idumeans had been conquered by the first Maccabees, and had taken the religion of the Jews.

Having, from the time of Nehemiah, lost all power, the Jews after that were known in the world only, or at least chiefly, on account of their religion being so different from that of all other


nations. You remember that, in the kingdom of Israel, the people, from beginning to end, were given to idols, and that the people of Judah were not much better. You remember also that, long before this, in fact, from the time when the Jews left Egypt, they constantly worshipped golden calves, or the heathen gods of the nations round about them. God sent many prophets to tell them what was right, and he often punished them greatly for doing what was wrong. Still, nothing seemed to do them the slightest good, for again and again they went back to the worship of idols.

At last God gave them into the hands of the heathen; their beautiful city was broken down, their Temple was burned with fire, and they themselves, their wives and children, were carried to Babylon. This was a dreadful punishment. They had, as it were, forced God to put it upon them. They would not be drawn to Him by love, so God was, as it were, obliged to use hardship, and it made a greater change upon the Jews than any of which I have read as happening in such a way among any other people. From that time till the birth of Christ, the Jews were the only people in the world who worshipped but one God, and that the True God. For this they have often been

cruelly treated, thousands have been killed, and many thousands have been carried away prisoners; but never again from that time to this have they taken to the worship of idols. Other faults they have had, but never the serving of false gods; and the world has known them as those who worship "the One True God, who made heaven and earth and all things." In fact, it is this which makes it so very difficult to get Jews to become Christians—they have heard that we believe in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and so they think that we worship three Gods; and they have heard that Christ walked upon earth as a man, and was crucified, and so they think that we have made a God out of a mere man like ourselves, and are therefore idolaters. It is therefore very difficult to get a Jew even to listen to a word about Christianity; but we hope that some day, by the blessing of God, the Jews will see that the Old and New Testaments are simply parts of the same "Word of God;" that the Old Testament prophesied of the coming of Christ, while the New Testament shows that the very Christ Messiah, promised in old times to Adam, to Abraham, and to Jacob, has really come, and was the Man Jesus. When the Jews once believe this, we may hope that they whom God

chose for himself so many thousands of years ago, will be even more active than other people in trying to teach those who do not know the truth to believe in the "One True God."

Good-bye, my dear little ones. I have read the whole of this book to you : you must now read it to yourselves and to each other—not once only, but several times, till you recollect quite well all about the kingdoms of Judah and Israel ; and, in doing this, you must find out all the texts which I have marked, and also find out on the map all the towns and countries which are mentioned. The notes down the sides of the pages will help you much in following the stories, if you find out in the Bible the texts which I have marked, and read them, and also the verses which go before, or come after them. If you do this, you will be quite surprised to find how much there is in the Bible which you had not before observed ; and how one text makes you understand some other verse better than you would otherwise think possible.



LIST OF KINGS.



LENGTH OF REIGN.	JUDAH.	DATE B.C.	ISRAEL.	LENGTH OF REIGN.
17	REHOBOAM, . .	975	Jeroboam, . .	22
3	ABIJAH, . . .	958		
41	ASA, . . .	955		
		954	Nadab, . . .	2
			<i>New Family.</i>	
		953	Baasha, . . .	24
		930	Elah, . . .	2
			<i>New Family.</i>	
		929	Zimri, . . .	0
			<i>New Family.</i>	
		929	Omri, . . .	12
		918	Ahab, . . .	22
25	JEHOSHAPHAT, .	914		
		898	Ahaziah, . . .	2
		896	Jehoram, . . .	12
8	JEHORAM, . .	892		
1	AHAZIAH, . .	885	<i>New Family.</i>	
6	ATHALIAH, . .	884	Jehu, . . .	28
40	JEHOASH, . .	878		
		856	Jehoahaz, . . .	17
		841	Jehoash, . . .	16
29	AMAZIAH, . .	839		

LIST OF KINGS.

LENGTH OF REIGN.	JUDAH.	DATE B. C.	ISRAEL.	LENGTH OF REIGN.
52	UZZIAH, . . .	825 810 773	Jeroboam II., . . No King. Zachariah, . . .	41 0
			<i>New Family.</i>	
		772	Shallum, . . .	0
			<i>New Family.</i>	
		772	Menahem, . . .	10
		761	Pekahiah, . . .	2
			<i>New Family.</i>	
16	JOTHAM, . . .	759	Pekah, . . .	20
16	AHAZ, . . .	758 742	No King.	9
			<i>New Family.</i>	
29	HEZEKIAH, . .	730 726 721	Hoshea, . . . Samaria taken.	9
55	MANASSEH, . .	698		
2	AMON, . . .	643		
31	JOSIAH, . . .	641		
0	JEHOAHAZ, . .	610		
11	JEHOIAKIM, . .	610		
0	JEHOIACHIN, . .	599		
11	ZEDEKIAH, . .	599		
	Jerusalem destroyed,	588		

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