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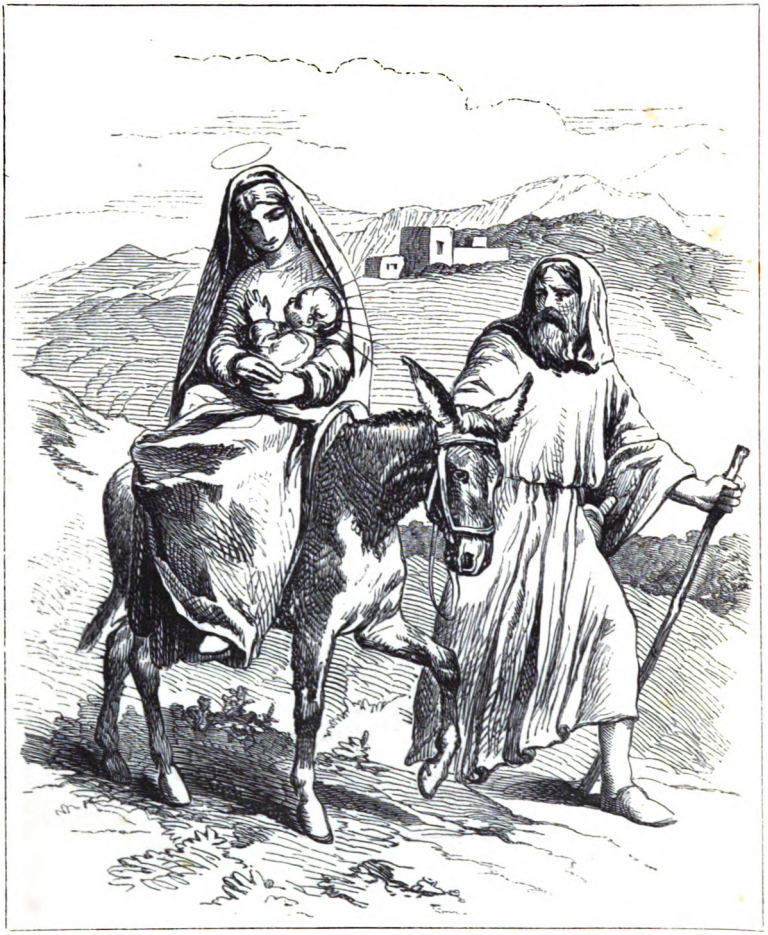

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

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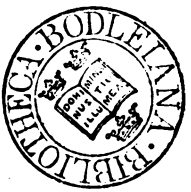

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THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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ADAM AND EVE IN PARADISE.

God is a Being, powerful, wise, and good above every other. He made the heavens, and the earth, and all things that are in them.

There were no people upon this earth at first: neither did anything grow upon it. It was not even shaped into its present form; and darkness was all around it. But God created the light, and the blue sky overhead. He made the seas and the dry land, the sun, the moon, and the stars. And in the seas He made great whales, and every kind of fish that swims in the waters. And He commanded the earth to bring forth grass, and trees bearing fruit, and plants yielding all manner of seed; and it

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ADAM AND EVE IN PARADISE.

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did so. Then He created the birds, and the beasts; and everything that He had made was very good. Last of all, He made man in His own image, and blessed him, and gave to him all the whole earth, with its fruits and living creatures for him to use and enjoy.

All these things God did in six days; and on the seventh day He rested from His work. So He blessed the seventh day, and called it a holy day.

The first man and woman whom God created were called Adam and Eve. The name Adam signifies *earth*, for he was formed out of the dust of the ground. Eve means *life*, and she was so called because she was the *mother of all living*. And God placed the man and the woman in a beautiful garden which He had made for them in Eden; bidding them cultivate it, and keep it in good order. In this garden

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were all kinds of trees; not only those that were lovely to look at, but others bearing fruit for them to eat. But there was one tree in the midst of the garden called the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, of whose fruit God commanded them not to eat; because if they did so they should die. Of every other fruit He gave them leave to eat freely.

Then God brought together all the birds and beasts that He had created, that Adam might give names to them. And whatever Adam called each one, that was its name.

So these two, Adam and Eve, lived happily in this garden of Eden, or Paradise, as it is also called; for they did what God commanded them, and He loved them.

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ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN OUT OF PARADISE.

BUT Adam and Eve did not remain long in the garden of Eden. They sinned against the good God, who had given them, not only it, but so many other beautiful things. And then, as God had said, death came upon them, and their children after them. They were also punished by being put out of the garden. The manner of it was this:

The Serpent one day spoke to Eve, asking her whether God had indeed forbidden them to eat the fruit of some of the trees in the garden. She answered him that they might eat of every one, save that of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which grew in the midst of the garden. Of that God had said, they must not eat, nor even touch

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ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN OUT OF PARADISE.

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it; for if they did, they should die. But the Serpent told her that was not true; they would not die if they ate of it, for God had forbidden it, only because He knew that if they did eat of it, they should become equal to Himself, knowing good and evil.

Eve listened to the Serpent while he told her this lie; for such it was. She saw how beautiful the fruit was, and she wanted to become wise, as the Serpent had told her she should; so at length, heedless of God's having forbidden it, she plucked and ate it; and Adam, who was with her, did the same.

But no sooner had they eaten it, than they knew how wrong they had done; and in the cool of the day when they heard the voice of the Lord God in the garden, they hid themselves among the trees that He might not see them. But God called them, and, afraid though they were, they were obliged to come before Him. And when

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He asked them why they were afraid, and had hidden themselves, they had to confess what they had done: that they had allowed the Serpent to persuade them to eat of the fruit, which God had forbidden.

God was greatly displeased with them for their disobedience. And after telling them what sad things should happen to them through it, he drove them out of the garden, into the rough, rugged world, where thorns and thistles were to grow because of their sin: and where with toil and difficulty they should procure their own sustenance, in place of eating the fruit which He had given them in Eden. Then He clothed them with the skins of beasts; for though angry with them He had pity on their forlorn condition: and putting them out of the garden, a wonderful guard of angels was placed there that none should approach the Tree of Life.

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CAIN AND ABEL.

AFTER they left the garden of Eden Adam and Eve had two sons, called Cain and Abel. Cain, the elder, was a husbandman; that is, one who cultivates the ground; Abel, the younger, was a shepherd.

In those days it was the will of God that men should offer sacrifices to Him; and these two brought each his offering: Cain brought of the fruits of the earth, while Abel offered the best of his flocks. With Abel's offering God was pleased, because it was one which He Himself had commanded. But He was not pleased with the offering that Cain brought, because it was one which He had not commanded; and because Cain had brought it in place of that which he knew was required

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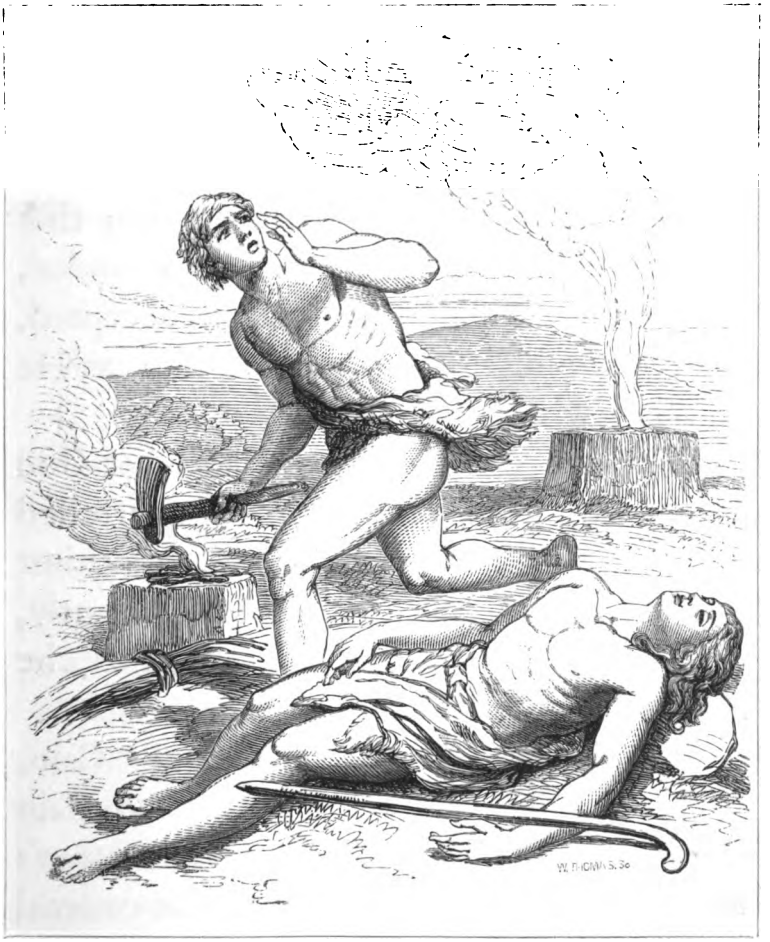

CAIN AND ABEL.

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of him. In this he was disobedient to God, as his parents had been in the garden; and he was angry, when he saw that his offering was not accepted. God, however, was patient with him; and told him that if he brought that which was commanded, his offering should even then be accepted, and He would be pleased with him, as He had been with Abel.

But instead of giving heed to what God said to him, Cain went away and quarrelled with his brother; and his anger against him rose to such a height, that presently, when they were in the field together, he fell upon him, and killed him!

Then God Himself called unto Cain, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" and Cain answered, "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" But his lying could not conceal his wicked deed from God. He had seen all that passed in the field when Cain had

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killed his brother; and now He told him that he was accursed for this cruel murder; that from that time his labour in cultivating the ground should be in vain, for it should yield nothing to him; that he should be driven out from his family and his country; and that for the rest of his life he should be a wanderer on the face of the earth. Cain did not express any sorrow for what he had done when God pronounced this curse upon him. He only cried out that his punishment was greater than he could bear; and he feared lest any one who knew why he was condemned to wander about in that wretched manner should kill him for having killed his brother.

But God told him that his life should be spared. And he set a certain mark upon Cain, that all who saw it should know that God had appointed him, not to be killed, but to live—a miserable murderer!

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NOAH LEAVING THE ARK.

ADAM and Eve had other sons beside Cain and Abel. They had daughters also; and, as time passed on, many hundreds of years, their descendants peopled the earth. But men then became exceedingly wicked; so much so, that God was sorry that He had ever made them. And at length, seeing they would not amend their ill-doings, though He gave them opportunity for amendment, He determined to destroy them, together with all the living creatures that were upon the earth.

There was, however, one good man, named Noah, among these wicked people; and it was God's will to save him from the flood of waters with which He was about to drown the whole world, with its inhabi-

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NOAH LEAVING THE ARK.

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tants. So He told Noah to prepare an Ark, that is a kind of boat, large enough to contain himself and his family, together with two of every kind of living creatures, birds, beasts, and even creeping things; besides food for them to eat till the waters should have passed away from off the earth. God told him precisely how he was to build the Ark, what size it was to be, how it was to be shaped, how many stories there were to be in it, where the door was to be placed; and that he must cover it with pitch, inside and out, to keep out the water. And Noah did all as God commanded him.

So great a vessel was long in building; and day after day, as Noah and his sons worked at it, their neighbours saw what they were doing, and Noah warned them of their danger. But they heeded him not. So at length, when the time came beyond which God would not wait for their repent-

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ance, the Ark was finished. Noah and his family, and all the creatures that were to be kept alive with him, went into it, and God shut them in.

Then, for forty days and forty nights, God poured out rain from heaven, the waves of the great deep were dashed violently upon the dry land, and the waters rose till it was all one vast sea. Still they kept rising, higher and higher, so that at last even the tops of the loftiest mountains were covered; and every living creature that was left upon the earth perished in that dreadful flood.

But Noah, and all that were shut up with him, escaped, as God had appointed; for the Ark sailed safely along upon the waters.

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NOAH'S SACRIFICE.

FOR a hundred and fifty days the waters of the deluge covered the earth. Then God caused them to abate; for He stopped the rain and quieted the great waves of the sea, and sent a strong wind upon the earth, and at length the Ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat in Armenia.

But though the tops of the high mountains appeared above the waters, the land around was still like a sea, so that Noah could not yet leave the Ark. Then, after waiting forty days, seeing the flood continue to abate, he opened the window of the Ark, and sent out a raven and a dove, that he might know whether the waters had dried up or not. The poor dove flew hither and thither; but finding no resting-place, for

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NOAH'S SACRIFICE.

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the waters were still all abroad, returned to Noah, who put out his hand and drew her in to him. Seven days after he sent her forth again, and in the evening she flew back, having in her mouth an olive-leaf newly plucked off; by which Noah knew that the dry land had at last appeared. Again he waited seven days, and then again sent out the dove. But this time she did not come back; and Noah removed the covering of the Ark and saw that the ground was quite dry.

Then, after they had been shut up in it a whole year, God commanded him and his family, and all the living creatures that were with him, to come out of the Ark; and when they did so, Noah built an altar, and offered upon it such a sacrifice as God had appointed. And God was pleased with it, and blessed Noah, and all human beings that should come after him; saying, that

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He would not again curse the ground, as He had done before, for Adam's sin in Eden; neither would He any more destroy the world by a flood. And again He gave the earth, and all that it contains, to man; as He had in the beginning given it to Adam in Paradise.

The rainbow which is seen in the clouds after rain, was appointed by God Himself, as a token, or sign, of His promise that He would never again destroy the world by a flood. For He told Noah that, whenever it should appear in the cloud, He would look upon it, and remember that He had made this promise to His creatures.

Noah was six hundred years old when the deluge came upon the earth, and he lived three hundred and fifty years after it: so he was nine hundred and fifty years old when he died.

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LOT'S WIFE.

In the land of Canaan, which is in the eastern part of the world, where God first placed human beings, lived a man whose name was Lot. He was the nephew of Abram, whom God Himself had bidden to go and live there; telling him that he should become the founder of a great nation, and that through him blessing should come upon the whole race of man.

Abram and Lot were both so very rich, not only in gold and silver, but in flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, that the country where they dwelt was not large enough for them to live in comfortably; and owing to this, their servants, who tended the cattle, quarrelled. Abram was very wishful that there should be peace between himself

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LOT'S WIFE.

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and his nephew; so he proposed that they should separate, one going in this direction, the other in that: offering to Lot the first choice of land, while he himself would take what was left. Accordingly Lot chose the plain of the river Jordan, a rich, well-watered country, and went away to it, pitching his tent near the city of Sodom.

But the people who lived there were wicked beyond expression, and when God could no longer endure their wickedness He determined to destroy both them and their city by fire from heaven. Lot, however, was a good man, and that he might not perish among the wicked people of Sodom, two angels were sent to him, to bid him and all his household leave that place. Lot did not know that they were angels: he thought they were two travellers on their way; so when he saw them, as he sat, in the evening, at the gate of Sodom, he rose

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to meet them, and begged them to come into his house for food and rest that night, and the next day they should continue their journey. The angels came in, and after they had eaten, they told him that he must immediately get out of the city, for God was about to destroy it for its wickedness. And as Lot lingered, unwilling to leave his home, they laid hold of him, with his wife and daughters, and compelled them to flee for their lives; bidding them neither look behind them nor loiter in the plain, but escape at once to the mountain. Then God rained down fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and utterly destroyed them, with all their inhabitants.

But as they were fleeing, Lot's wife disregarded the command of the angels; and looking behind her, as if to return to the city she had left, she was, for her disobedience, turned into a pillar of salt.

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HAGAR AND ISHMAEL.

WHEN Abram, the uncle of Lot, was ninety-nine years old (for men lived much longer then than they do now) God appeared to him, and told him, as He had done before, that great multitudes of people should descend from him, and that He would give to him, and his children after him, the whole land of Canaan, in which he was then living. And He changed his name to Abraham, which means the *Father of many nations.*

Abraham had at this time one son, named Ishmael, and he thought that he should inherit the things that God had promised. But God revealed to him that his son Isaac, who was not then born, should be his heir. Ishmael, however, was to be-

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HAGAR AND ISHMAEL.

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come a great prince, and God pronounced a blessing upon him.

Isaac was born about a year afterwards. When he was weaned, Abraham made a great entertainment for his friends; and on this occasion, Ishmael, who was about fourteen years old, behaved in a very improper and disrespectful manner. Very likely, as the elder, he thought rather too much was made of the little child, on whose account the entertainment was given. Sarah, Isaac's mother, saw his ill conduct, and was so angry, that she desired Abraham to send both Ishmael and his mother Hagar from home. Abraham was unwilling to do so, for he loved Ishmael; but God told him to send them away, as Sarah had said, for He would take care of Ishmael. So, early in the morning, he gave Hagar some food and water, and sent her and the boy away.

Poor Hagar wandered about in the wil-

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derness of Beersheba. Very soon the water was all done, and, thinking her son must perish with thirst, she laid him down in the shade of some bushes, going herself a little distance off, that she might not see him die. There she sat weeping. But an angel called to her out of heaven, asking her why she wept; and, bidding her not fear, told her that God had heard the voice of the forsaken Ishmael, and would save him.

Then Hagar, looking up, saw she was near a well of water; so she filled her empty bottle, and took drink to the lad, whose life was thus saved.

Ishmael grew up stout and strong, and became a great archer, living in the wilderness of Arabia, where his descendants were afterwards a numerous people.

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ABRAHAM AND ISAAC.

ABRAHAM loved his son Isaac very much: now that Ishmael was gone, he was his only child. And then he loved Isaac the more, because he looked forward to the time when the covenant (that is, a solemn promise) that God had made with him of greatness to his descendants, and good to all mankind, should be fulfilled in Isaac.

When Isaac was grown up to be a young man, the love and obedience which Abraham professed to God were put to a strange and terrible proof. God himself commanded him to take this only son, whom he loved, to a distant country, and there offer him up as a burnt-offering! It was indeed a strange and terrible command. But Abraham knew that God must

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ABRAHAM AND ISAAC.

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be obeyed, and he did not for a moment delay doing as he was told, bitter though it was to him. So he rose early the next morning, prepared the wood for the burnt-offering, and, taking two of his servants with him, set out with Isaac on his journey to the land of Moriah, the place to which God had directed him.

For three days they travelled onwards, and at last the mountain on which the sacrifice was to be offered was seen in the distance. Abraham then bade his servants stay behind, while he and Isaac went to the mountain to worship God; and, giving Isaac the wood to carry, he himself taking fire and a knife, they went on together.

As they went, Isaac, who did not know the command which his father had received, asked Abraham what all these preparations meant. "Father," he said, "here is fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for

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a burnt-offering?" Abraham could not tell him that *he* was to be the sacrifice. So he answered, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."

When they reached the place to which God had sent them, Abraham built an altar and laid Isaac his son bound upon it. But just when he was about to kill him, an angel called to Abraham out of heaven, bidding him not slay his son, for God had given him the command only to see whether he would obey Him, when obedience was a hard and painful thing to him. And, in reward for his willingness to obey, God again blessed him, as He had done before.

Then, looking up, Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. And he took that, and offered it for a sacrifice instead of his son.

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REBEKAH AT THE WELL.

WHEN Isaac was about forty years of age, Abraham, who was then a very old man, wished that his son, who was to inherit all his possessions, should be married. But, as he was unwilling that Isaac should marry any one of the families of Canaan, where he lived, he bade his chief servant, or steward, go into Mesopotamia, the country whence Abraham had come into Canaan, and there, according to the custom of those times, choose a wife for Isaac from among his own relations, and bring her back with him.

The servant was afraid that she whom he chose might not be willing to return with him to a strange country; and he asked Abraham whether, in that case, he

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REBEKAH AT THE WELL.

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must take Isaac to her. Abraham replied to him, that he believed God would give him success in his errand; but, even if it were not so, Isaac must on no account go thither himself. So the servant took ten camels, which were the usual beasts of burden in that country, and at once set out on his journey, carrying with him presents, —ornaments of gold, and other precious things, for her whom he should choose for Isaac's wife.

When he came into Mesopotamia, to the city where Nahor, Abraham's brother, lived, he stopped to water his camels at a well outside the city. Now in those lands it was the custom even for women of rank to go to the wells to draw water; and on that evening, just as the camels had kneeled down to drink, Rebekah, Nahor's granddaughter, came to the well with her pitcher on her shoulder. The servant went to meet

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her, and asked her to let him drink from the pitcher. She answered him courteously, and, letting down the pitcher from her shoulder, bade him drink, saying she would also draw water for the camels. Then, emptying the pitcher into the trough, she ran again to the well, and drew till the camels had all had enough. The man stood wondering at this, for before she came up he had prayed to God that the woman whom he ought to choose for Isaac's wife might do as Rebekah had done. Then he put upon her some of the jewels he had brought with him, asking her whose daughter she was, and whether there was room in her father's house for him to lodge. And when he heard that she was the daughter of Bethuel, Abraham's nephew, he gave thanks to God for having brought him to his master's family, and for the kindness with which he had been treated.

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ISAAC AND REBEKAH.

REBEKAH bade the servant welcome to her father's house, and then she hastened home and told all that had befallen her at the well. Her brother Laban, seeing the jewels which the man had given to her, immediately went out and brought him and the men that were with him into the house. Then, when the camels had been ungirthed and fed, and water had been brought to wash the feet of the travellers, as is the custom in the East, food was set before them.

But the servant would not eat till he had told who he was and on what business he came. He said that he was servant to Abraham, whom God had greatly blessed, giving him many flocks, and herds, and servants, with much gold and silver; and

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Isaac and Rebekah.

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that he had been sent to that country to choose a wife for his master's son, Isaac, who was to inherit all his father's riches. He told also how he had prayed to God at the well that He would point out to him whom he should choose for Isaac's wife; and that Rebekah had done all that he had asked in his prayer. And then he bade them say at once whether they would let Rebekah go to be Isaac's wife; for, if not, he must seek one for him elsewhere.

They answered him that they would willingly consent to let her go; so in the morning, when he and his cattle were rested and refreshed, the servant was anxious to set out immediately. Her mother and her brother, however, objected to this, they did not like to part with her so soon. But the man was in haste to return to his master; so Rebekah was sent for, and as she was willing, they at once

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began their journey; she and her nurse, and women-servants, riding upon the camels that Abraham's servant had brought with him.

One evening, as they travelled on, Rebekah, raising her eyes, saw a man coming to meet them. She asked who it was; and, when Abraham's servant told her it was his master's son, Isaac, she alighted from her camel, to receive him, wrapped closely in her veil, or mantle, according to the custom of Eastern women. When they met, the servant told Isaac all that had happened to him on his journey. And then Isaac took Rebekah home to his mother's tent, and married her; and the love that he had for her comforted him for his mother's death.

Abraham lived till nearly forty years after this; and when he died, his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him in the cave of Machpelah with Sarah his wife.

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ISAAC BLESSING JACOB.

ISAAC had two sons, twin brothers, called Esau and Jacob. Esau, the elder, passed his life in the wild, open country, hunting. He was his father's favourite. Jacob lived quietly in tents, tending his flocks and herds; and his mother loved him best.

As they grew up, the brothers did not agree very well. On two occasions Jacob treated Esau with great injustice, and even cruelty. One day Esau came in from hunting, faint with hunger, and seeing Jacob with food before him, begged him to give him some. This Jacob refused to do, unless all those rights belonging to Esau as the eldest son were given up to him. Esau, seeing he could not get food on any other terms, yielded, and gave up his

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Isaac Blessing Jacob.

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birthright; and then his unloving brother allowed him to eat with him.

Years after this Jacob acted still more wickedly, not only to his brother Esau, but to his father also.

Isaac had grown old and blind; and not knowing how soon he might die, he desired Esau to go out hunting for venison, that he might eat of it, and then give him his last solemn blessing. But while Esau was away, Rebekah, who had heard what was said, bade Jacob fetch a tender kid from the flock, which she cooked to taste like venison; and then dressing him in Esau's clothes, she told him to take it to his father, and pretend that he was Esau, in order that he might obtain the blessing designed for his brother. Jacob was afraid of being found out in this attempt to deceive his father; but at last he agreed to do as his mother had said; and when Isaac

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asked him who he was, he replied that he was Esau, and he begged his father to eat of the venison that he had taken for him. Isaac perceived that the voice was not that of Esau; but when Jacob assured him that he was really Esau, the poor blind old man believed him, and gave him the blessing which he had lied to obtain. It was a needless lie; for God had before ordained that Jacob should receive this blessing in place of Esau, and He would have brought it about in a righteous manner, had not Jacob sinned in order to gain it.

Presently afterwards, Esau, who had really been for venison, brought it to his father, that he might receive his promised blessing. And then, to his great distress, Isaac discovered that his younger son had deceived him, and cunningly secured for himself that which had been intended for his elder brother.

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JACOB'S DREAM.

ESAU was so angry with Jacob for having twice supplanted him, first in taking away his birthright, and now in having deprived him of his father's blessing, that he threatened to kill him after Isaac's death; and Rebekah, fearing he would do so, sent Jacob away to her brother Laban at Padan-Aram.

Before he went thither Isaac confirmed to him the blessing he had already received; for though Jacob had obtained it wickedly by deceit, his father knew that it was God's purpose that he should have it. Isaac also desired him to take a wife of Laban's family, and then he sent him on his way.

While Jacob was on this journey, as he rested one night at a certain place, he had a wonderful dream. In it he saw a ladder

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JACOB'S DREAM.

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set upon the earth, the top of which reached to heaven; and on this ladder the angels of God were ascending and descending. Above it stood the Lord God Himself, who spoke to Jacob, saying that He was the God of Abraham and Isaac, and that He would give the ground whereon he lay to him and to his children after him. He also told him that his descendants should be like the dust of the earth for number, and that in him all families of the earth should be blessed. And He promised to be with him, and to take care of him wherever he went, and that at last He would bring him back again to the land which He had given him.

Then, when Jacob awaked out of sleep, he knew that God Himself had been speaking with him. And he was afraid, exclaiming, "How dreadful is this place! Surely the Lord is here, and I knew it not."

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In the morning he arose early, and, taking the stone on which his head had rested while he slept, he set it up for a pillar. And the name of the place, which was called Luz, he changed to Bethel, which means the *House of God.* And he made a solemn vow, that if God would indeed take care of him, and bring him safe back to his father's house, he would henceforth serve Him faithfully.

Then he went on his journey till he came to a well of water, where were three flocks of sheep. Here he met Rachel, Laban's daughter, who was bringing her father's sheep to the watering. Then Jacob rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, to water Rachel's flock for her. And he kissed her, and told her that he was her cousin; and her father, when he knew who he was, came out to him, and received him very kindly.

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JACOB AND ESAU.

JACOB remained twenty years with Laban, whose daughter Rachel he married.

In those days men's chief riches consisted in flocks and herds; and Jacob had the care of those belonging to Laban. His uncle tried to deprive him of the wages which he had promised to give him; but notwithstanding this, Jacob himself grew rich in cattle, and beasts of burden, and numerous servants.

At the end of the twenty years that Jacob had been with Laban, God bade him return to his own land; so he gathered together all his possessions, and set out on his way thither.

As Jacob still feared the anger of his brother Esau, whom he had so cruelly

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THE RECONCILIATION OF ESAU AND JACOB.

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treated, he sent messengers before him into Edom, where Esau lived, to say that he, and all his family with him, were coming, and that he hoped his brother would be friendly with him. But when his messengers returned, bringing word that Esau, with four hundred men, was advancing to meet him, he was much afraid, thinking that now his brother was going to kill him. So he divided his people and his flocks into two companies, that if the one were attacked, the other might escape away; and when he had done all that he could for self-defence, he prayed to God that Esau might not kill him, with his children, and servants. Then he took a great number of his cattle, his sheep and camels, and sent them on before him in separate droves; bidding the men who were with them, tell Esau, when they met him, that they were a present from his servant Jacob.

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It was not long before Esau and his four hundred men came in sight; and then Jacob, putting his children in a place of safety, went forwards to meet him, bowing himself down to the ground, to do honour to his brother. But Esau, who had forgiven his brother's ill deeds, ran to him in the most loving manner, kissing him, and weeping for joy that they had at last met. And he asked him kindly about all the people with him, and what was the meaning of the droves of cattle he had seen on the road. Jacob told him that the people were his family, and that the cattle were for a present to himself. And when Esau refused to take it, he urged him, that he might be sure his brother had forgiven him. Then Esau returned to his own country, and Jacob, in time, came back to the land of Canaan, as God had promised that he should do.

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JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.

JACOB, whose name God had now changed to Israel, had twelve sons. Their names were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Dan, Napthali, Joseph, and Benjamin. Of these, Joseph the son of Rachel, was the one whom Jacob best loved. But his other sons, who were violent men, and had brought great sorrow upon him by their ill deeds, hated Joseph, and treated him unkindly; not only because he was his father's favourite, and had told him of their wrong doings, but on account of some dreams that he had had, which made them think he fancied himself superior to them all.

On one occasion, when Joseph was about seventeen years old, he dreamed that he was binding sheaves in the corn-fields

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JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.

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with his brothers, and that his sheaf stood upright, while all his brothers' sheaves bowed down to it. Another time he dreamed that the sun, and the moon, and eleven stars, bowed down to him. And when he told these dreams to his father and brothers, they were all angry with him, asking him whether he expected that he should be the chief person in the family.

Joseph's father sent him one day to Shechem, where his brothers were feeding their flocks, to see if all was well with them. When they saw him coming, they said to one another, "See, here is this dreamer! Let us kill him, and throw him into a pit, and say that a wild beast has eaten him. Then we shall see what will become of his dreams."

But Reuben, his eldest brother, was not quite so wicked as the rest: he begged them not to kill Joseph, but to throw him

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into the pit alive; and he did it in order that, when the others were gone, he might rescue him, and send him back to his father. So they stripped off Joseph's many-coloured coat, which his father had given him because he was his favourite, and threw him into the pit. But no sooner had they done this, than, seeing a company of merchants coming out of Gilead, on their way to Egypt, they determined to sell him to them for a slave. So they drew him out, and sold him for twenty pieces of silver. Then they were cruel enough to dip his coat in the blood of a kid that they killed, and to send it to their father, saying they had found it, and asking whether or not it was Joseph's coat. His father knew it at once; and, crying out that a wild beast had devoured Joseph, wept and tore his garments for sorrow; and refused to be comforted, because Joseph, his son, was dead.

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PHARAOH'S DREAM.

THE merchants who bought Joseph, sold him to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, who treated him very favourably, and put all his affairs under Joseph's care. But after he had served his master faithfully for some time, Joseph was falsely accused of some wrong doing; and his master, without inquiring into the matter, shut him up in prison.

But God was with him in the prison, as He had been while Joseph was ruling over Potiphar's household; and He caused the keeper of the prison to put trust in him, so that he had the whole care of the other prisoners, and of all that was done there. Two of these prisoners, chief servants of Pharaoh, dreamed strange dreams, and God

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JOSEPH INTERPRETING PHARAOH'S DREAM.

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gave Joseph wisdom to interpret them. He told one of them, that his dream signified that in three days he should be taken out of prison and hanged; the other prisoner's dream signified that in three days he should be released and restored to favour. And he begged this one, after he should be set at liberty, to try to get him also out of prison. But when the man got out of prison, he thought no more about Joseph for two whole years. At the end of that time Pharaoh, to whose service he was restored, had two dreams that made him unhappy, and whose meaning none of his wise men could tell him.

He dreamed that seven fat cattle were feeding in a meadow, and that seven lean ones came and ate them up. Again he dreamed of seven ears of good corn on one stalk, and that seven blighted ones sprang up and devoured them. And when no one

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could tell him what these dreams meant, the chief butler remembered how Joseph had explained to him his dream in the prison. So he told the king, who immediately sent for Joseph out of prison, related his dreams to him, and asked him what they signified. Joseph answered the king that in these dreams God had showed him what He was about to do: that He was going to give Egypt seven years of plenty, and after them seven years of famine. And he advised Pharaoh to seek out some discreet person whom he might set over the land of Egypt, with officers under him, to store up during the years of plenty, corn enough to supply them in the years of famine. Pharaoh thought the advice was good, and that no one was so fit as Joseph to do all this: so he made him ruler. And Joseph stored up the corn, so that when the famine came, other countries sent to Egypt to buy food.

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JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

THE land of Canaan, where Joseph's father and brothers were living, was one of the countries afflicted by famine; so, when they heard that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob sent his sons there to buy some. They did not know, when they came to the governor, and bowed down before him, that he was their brother whom they had sold for a slave. But Joseph knew them, and treated them roughly; telling them they were spies come to see in what a miserable state Egypt was. They answered him, that they were no spies, but honest men—twelve brothers, one of whom, Benjamin, the youngest, was with their father in Canaan; and another, Joseph, was dead. But he said that the only way of proving themselves honest men

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JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

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was for one of them to go and fetch their youngest brother, while he kept the others in Egypt. And having said this, he put them all in prison for three days.

On the third day they were brought before Joseph again, and then he told them that one of them must be left in prison, while the others carried corn to their father, and brought back their youngest brother. When they heard this they were greatly distressed; and they said to each other that now punishment was coming upon them for their cruelty, a long time ago, to their brother Joseph.

Joseph wept when he heard his brothers speaking in this way, for he understood what they said, though they did not know it, as he spoke in a different language from theirs. Then he sent them away with corn, keeping Simeon till they returned with Benjamin. Jacob was very unwilling

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to let him go; but their corn was soon done, there was none to be had anywhere save in Egypt, and Joseph had said they should not have any more unless Benjamin were with them. So he was obliged to send him.

When his brothers came again, Joseph entertained them very kindly at first, but presently he made as though he would keep Benjamin for his slave. Upon this Judah, who had promised to take care of Benjamin, pleaded so earnestly for him, offering to stay to be a slave in his place, that Joseph could no longer forbear telling them that he was indeed their own brother whom they had sold into Egypt. And he forgave them; saying, that God had permitted them to sell him, that he might be the means of saving all their lives in that dreadful famine. Then he sent for his father, and made them all live with him in the land of Egypt.

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MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES.

JOSEPH died in Egypt when he was a hundred and ten years old; and all the people mourned for him.

Some time after this, when the descendants of Jacob had become very numerous, there was a king of Egypt who treated them in a harsh manner. He tried to make slaves of them, setting them to all kinds of hard labour. But the more he oppressed them, the more they increased in number; and the Egyptians were afraid lest, in time of war, the Israelites might turn against them, and make their escape out of the land. So the king commanded that all the sons of the children of Israel, or Hebrews as they are also called, should be put to death as soon as they were born.

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MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES.

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But the Hebrews to whom he gave this wicked command, did not obey him; at which the king was so angry that he ordered his own people to throw all these poor little children into the river.

At this time a Hebrew named Amram, had a son born: he was a beautiful child, and for three months his mother, Jochebed, succeeded in saving him from the Egyptians. But at last she found she could no longer conceal him. So she made an ark, that is a sort of cradle, of bulrushes coated over with pitch; laid him in it, and then placed the ark among the reeds that grew by the river-side, while his sister stood watching in the distance to see what would become of him.

Presently the king's daughter, attended by her women, came down to the river; and perceiving the ark among the reeds, she sent one of her servants to bring it to

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her. It was accordingly brought; and when she saw the poor little child crying, she was sorry for it, for she knew it must be one of the Hebrew children whom the king had commanded to be killed, and whose mother had laid it there, hoping that some one would have compassion on it. The child's sister seeing how the princess pitied him, then came forward, and asked whether she should fetch a Hebrew woman to nurse it for her. The princess bade her do so. So she fetched his own mother, and the king's daughter told her to take the child away and nurse it for her. Then his mother joyfully carried her little one home again, and nursed him. When he was old enough to be taken to Pharaoh's daughter, she called him her son, named him Moses, which means *drawn out of the water*, and had him taught all that was known to the Egypt
who were a very learned people.

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THE ISRAELITES' BURDENS.

MOSES was brought up in the court of Egypt. But when he was about forty years old, he went among his own people again, and was grieved to find how sadly they were oppressed by the Egyptians. Once he saw an Egyptian ill-treating a Hebrew; so he killed the man and buried his body in the sand. The king would have put him to death for this, but Moses escaped into the land of Midian, and dwelt there.

One day, when he was feeding his flock near Horeb, God called to him out of a bush that flamed with fire, and yet was not burned. And He told Moses that He had seen the sufferings of the people of Israel, and would deliver them, and bring them into the good land of Canaan, as He had

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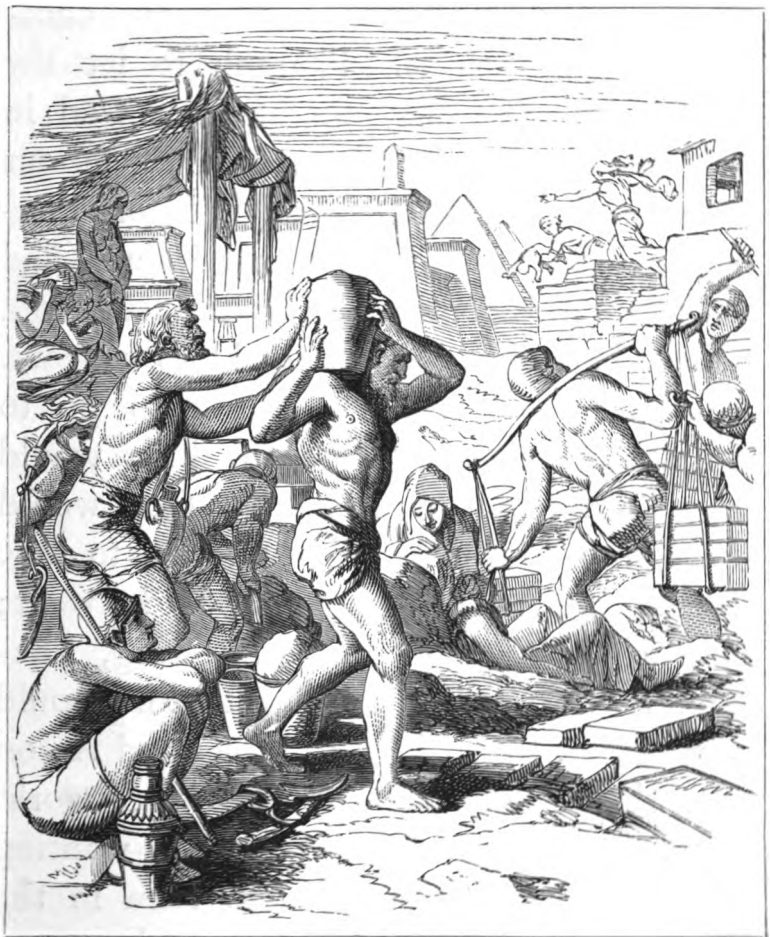

THE ISRAELITES' BURDENS.

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promised to Abraham. And He commanded him to tell Pharaoh to let the people go, that they might serve God in the wilderness. He also appointed various wonderful things to be wrought before Pharaoh, that he might know that He who had sent him this command was the true God, whom he and his people ought to worship.

Moses was very unwilling to go to Pharaoh, for he thought the king would not heed what he said; but God would have him do it, and also told him to take his brother Aaron with him. So he went; and when he came before the king, Pharaoh asked who the Lord was that he should obey Him. And he told Moses and Aaron that they hindered the people in their work, by telling them about their God wanting them to go and sacrifice to Him in the wilderness. It was only because they were idle that they wished to do so. They

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should not go. And he ordered that more work should be given them than before.

The Hebrews had been making bricks of clay mixed with straw. So Pharaoh commanded that no more straw should be given them, but that they should get it for themselves where they could; while, at the same time, they were obliged to make as much brick as when straw was found for them. But, instead of making bricks, their time was now spent in seeking straw; and they were beaten because the usual quantity of work was not done.

The poor Hebrews were very sad, and bitterly reproached Moses and Aaron for making their condition so much worse than it had been. And though God assured them, by Moses, that He would certainly deliver them out of Egypt, they were so unhappy and faint-hearted, that they would not believe it.

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PHARAOH'S OVERTHROW.

AFTER this, by God's command, Moses and Aaron went many times to Pharaoh, to bid him let the people go. But Pharaoh would not, though God sent strange and terrible plagues upon him and his people to punish them for their wickedness, and make them obey Him. At length, as Pharaoh had commanded all the sons of the Hebrews to be slain, God in one night destroyed all the first-born in Egypt; and then, fearing for their own lives, the Egyptians hastily drove out the Israelites, men, women, children, and cattle, with their household goods, hurriedly gathered together. There were six hundred thousand men, beside women and children. God caused a pillar of cloud to go before them in the daytime, to shew

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THE OVERTHROW OF PHARAOH'S HOST.

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them the way they were to take; and at night He led them by a pillar of fire.

After the children of Israel had left Egypt, Pharaoh, though his kingdom had been nearly destroyed for his disobedience to God, was angry with himself for having let them go. So he gathered together a great army and pursued them to where they were encamped, in the wilderness by the Red Sea. When the people saw they were pursued, they were much afraid, and reproached Moses for bringing them there; for they thought it would have been better to be slaves in Egypt, than to be killed in the Wilderness. But Moses bade them not fear, God would deliver them. Then the pillar of cloud and of fire that had gone before to guide them, removed, and went behind the camp, so that it stood between the Egyptians and the children of Israel. To the Egyptians it was cloud and dark-

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ness, so that they could not continue their pursuit; but to the Israelites it gave light.

Then Moses, as God had commanded him, stretched out his rod, or staff, over the sea; and the waters divided, standing like a wall on the right hand and on the left, leaving dry land between them, so that the whole multitude passed through the very middle of the sea, to the opposite shore. The Egyptians seeing this, hastened to follow, but God sent a violent storm upon them, which threw them all into confusion. And when they were in the middle of the sea, where the Israelites had gone safely, God bade Moses again stretch out his hand over it; and when he did so, the waters came back again to their place, and drowned Pharaoh, and all the Egyptians: there was not one of them left alive.

So God delivered the children of Israel as He had said.

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MOSES SMITES THE ROCK.

AFTER the Egyptians had been all destroyed, the Israelites went forward into the wilderness; and when they had been travelling three days, they were in distress for want of water. They did indeed find some at a place called Marah, but it was so bitter, they could not drink it. So again they reproached Moses, as they had done when the Egyptians pursued them to the Red Sea, asking him what they were to do for drink. Then God bade him throw into the water a certain tree which He showed to him; and when Moses had done this, it became quite good to drink.

In a few days after, the people were in want of food; and again they were angry with Moses and his brother Aaron, who

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Moses Smiting the Rock.

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was with him taking care of the Israelites. They said they wished they had stayed in Egypt where they had enough to eat, for they had been brought into the wilderness only that they might die of hunger. Then Moses asked them why they murmured against him and Aaron, when it was God Himself who had brought them out of Egypt; their murmuring was really against God. And yet, though He was displeased at their conduct, He would supply them with food, that they might know that He was indeed their God. So in the evening, great flocks of quails came about the camp, for the Israelites to eat; and in the morning when the dew was dried up from the ground, there lay upon it a small round thing, like coriander seeds. The people did not know what it was; but Moses told them that was bread that God had sent them. There it was, fresh every morning,

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except on the seventh day, which God had, in the beginning, made a day of rest. On that day He would not have them gather it; giving them twice as much on the sixth day, that they might have enough for the seventh. This was called *manna*, and when it was ground, like grain, they made bread of it. God gave it them for forty years, till they came to the land of Canaan.

But though God had done so much for them, the children of Israel were a most ungrateful people. The very next time they wanted water, they were so angry with Moses, that they were ready to kill him. Then Moses prayed to God to tell him what to do. And God bade him take some of the chiefs of the people, and go to a certain rock in Horeb, and strike it with his rod, and water should come out of it. So he took the men with him, and struck the rock, and water flowed abundantly.

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AARON'S GOLDEN CALF.

WHILE the children of Israel were encamped in the wilderness, Moses' wife and his two sons, together with Jethro his father-in-law, came to him there. And Jethro seeing how Moses was overburdened with the care of so many people, advised him to appoint officers over them, under himself, who might attend to all their smaller concerns. But God Himself had the chief government of the people; and on Mount Sinai, where Moses spoke to Him and saw His great glory, He gave to them, not only the Ten Commandments, but many other laws and directions, for all they should do in worshipping Him.

That was an awful sight when God spoke to Moses on Sinai! For there were

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AARON'S GOLDEN CALF.

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thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud like the smoke of a furnace, about the mountain; and from out of it came a great voice of a trumpet, sounding louder and louder: and then Moses went up and spoke with the Lord God.

Moses was forty days in the mount, and the people began to wonder what had become of him. So they asked Aaron to make them some images which they might worship, and that might guide them out of the wilderness. Aaron knew there was only one God, yet he did as the people desired. He bade them bring their golden ornaments to him; and then he melted them, shaped the metal into the form of a calf (one of the false gods of the Egyptians), built an altar before it, on which the people might lay their offerings, and told them, that was their god that had brought them up out of the land of Egypt. The next day the

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people offered sacrifice to this calf, with songs and dances; just as the heathen, who did not know God, worshipped their idols, or false gods.

But God saw this; and He was so displeased at their wickedness, that He would have destroyed them all, had not Moses interceded for them. Then Moses came down from the mount to the camp, and asked Aaron how it was that he and the people had committed so great a sin. Aaron tried to excuse himself by laying the blame on the unruly Israelites. But there was no excuse for him. And after Moses had burned the calf, he ground it to powder, and threw it into the water that supplied the camp. God also, though he had granted Moses' prayer, commanded that great numbers of the people should be put to death for their sin.

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THE TABLES OF STONE.

THE Ten Commandments which God gave on Mount Sinai, were written by Himself on stone tablets. And when Moses came down from the mount, and saw the people worshipping the golden calf, in his anger he threw them down, and they were broken.

But after God, at Moses' prayer, had so far forgiven the sin of the Israelites, as not to destroy them all, He bade Moses hew two tables of stone, like the first, and bring them to Him on Mount Sinai, that He might again give them His commandments. Moses did so, and went up early in the morning to the mount. He was in the mount with God forty days and nights, neither eating nor drinking; and when he came down with the stone tables, on which

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THE TABLES OF STONE.

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the Commandments had been again written, his face was so bright, that the people could not look at him. He had to cover himself with a veil whilst he talked to them.

God had bidden him tell the people of Israel that if they kept His commandments, He would bless them, and make them prosperous; but if they did not keep them, He would give them into the power of their enemies, and afflict them with all kinds of troubles. God also would have them prepare a place in which He might be worshipped; and, as the people were travelling onwards to the promised land, He bade them make it like a tent, which might be carried along with them, and set up when they rested on their march. This tent was called the Tabernacle; and God gave exact directions how it was to be made, and also how they were to make the altar on which sacrifice was to be offered, and the ark,

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which was a chest, to hold the tables of stone. The people were glad to do what God desired them in this matter; and brought such large quantities of precious materials to construct the Tabernacle, and those other things that were to be in it, that at last Moses was obliged to bid them bring no more.

When all was completed, God commanded that the Tabernacle should be set up in the wilderness of Sinai. And when it was set up, His glory filled it; a cloud also rested upon it by day, and at night a light like fire. As long as God would have the children of Israel remain in their camp in the wilderness, this cloud remained on the Tabernacle; when He would have them go on their journey, the cloud was taken up from it, and went before them. In this way the people knew whether God would have them travel on, or stay where they were.

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THE RETURN OF THE SPIES.

WHEN the children of Israel were encamped in the wilderness of Paran, Moses, by God's command, sent twelve men, one from each of the twelve tribes, or families into which they were divided, into the land of Canaan, that they might bring him word what sort of country it was, and what kind of people lived in it. He also told the men to bring back with them some of its fruits.

So the twelve men, who are called spies because they went to see the country, went, and were out forty days. When they returned, as it was the time when grapes were ripening, they brought with them, from Eshcol, a bunch of grapes, so large and ripe that two of them carried it between them. This, and other fruits that they had gathered,

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THE RETURN OF THE SPIES.

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they showed to the Israelites, and told them that the country whence they came was very fertile, but that the people in it were so powerful and warlike that it would be impossible to drive them out, as God had said they should. They were giants, and lived in large cities, defended by walls. And though Caleb, a brave man, one of the spies, wished that the people should at once march forward and take it, the other spies repeated that it was impossible. Then the people began to reproach Moses and Aaron for bringing them into that wilderness to be slain by their enemies; and they threatened to put Moses away from them, and choose, in his place, a captain who might lead them back into Egypt. Caleb and Joshua, another of the spies, entreated them not to rebel against God, for if they obeyed Him, He would certainly, as He had promised, give them that rich country. But the multitude

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only clamoured the more, and were even for stoning Moses and those with him. Then suddenly the glory of the Lord was seen in the Tabernacle; and God Himself, in His displeasure, declared that as the people would not believe Him, they should no longer be His people, nor have the good land He had promised them.

But Moses again prayed earnestly for the rebellious Israelites; begging God to pardon them. And God heard his prayer, and said that He would not entirely cast them off. But that none of those men, for whom He had done such great things, in delivering them out of Egypt, and feeding them in the wilderness, and who had yet constantly rebelled against Him, should enter into the promised land: they should all die in the wilderness. Only their children, together with Joshua and Caleb, should be brought into Canaan.

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THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

THE people were at first very sorry for having so displeased God. But they soon forgot it all; and the next time that they were without water in their encampment, they murmured, as usual, against Moses and Aaron.

Then God commanded Moses to take the rod with which he had struck the rock in Horeb, and before all the people to speak to a certain rock, which He pointed out, and it should give water for them and their cattle.

But now both Moses and Aaron, who was to go with him, did wrong. They thought that speaking to the rock, as God had said, would not be sufficient; so Moses struck it twice with his rod; angrily

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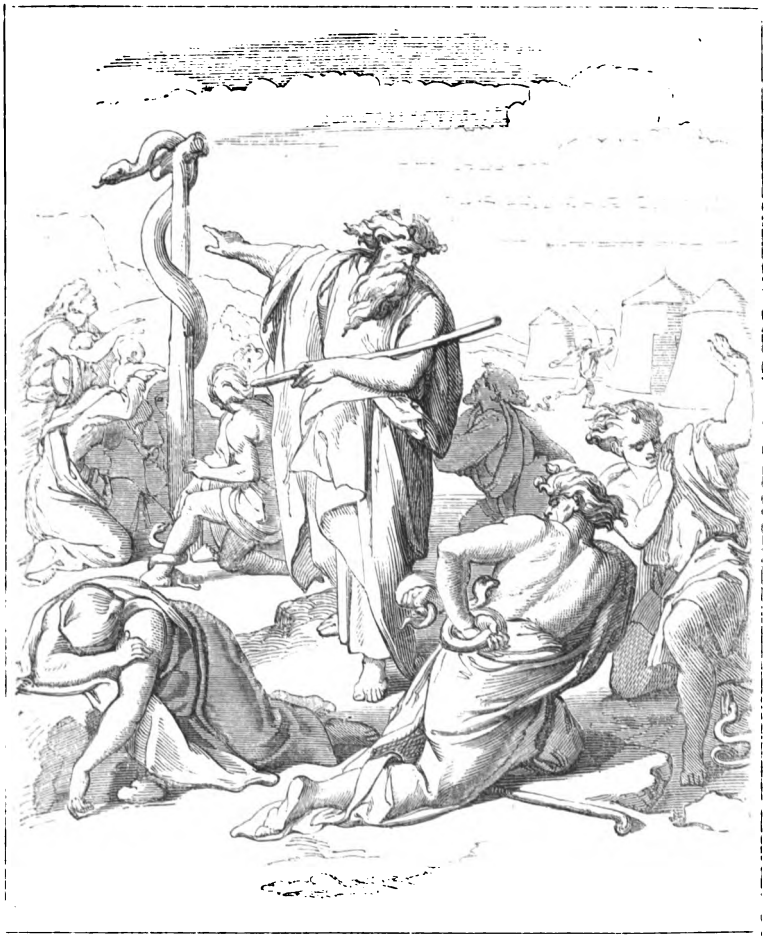

THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

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asking the multitude, whether he and Aaron must fetch them water out of the rock. And though, notwithstanding their disobedience, the water, when the rock was struck, flowed out in such abundance that all had enough, God told Moses and Aaron that because they had not obeyed Him when He bade them speak to it only, they should neither of them enter into the promised land. Aaron, whom God had appointed chief priest, died very soon afterwards, on Mount Hor, and Eleazer his son was chosen by God as priest in his place.

The land of Edom, which God had given to Esau, now lay between the Israelites and the way by which they were to go to Canaan. So Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom, asking leave to pass through. But the king not only refused to let them pass through, but threatened to lead out his army against the Israelites; so

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they were obliged to turn aside and go round Edom. There they met with so many difficulties, that they got quite dispirited, and, as before, murmured against God.

Then God, to punish them, sent among them, fiery serpents which stung great numbers of the people, so that they died. The fear of death made the Israelites repent, and confess their sin in speaking against God. So they asked Moses to pray for them, that God would take away those dreadful serpents. And when Moses prayed, God told him to make an image in brass in the likeness of one of the serpents, and to set it up on a pole, and He promised that every one who was stung should be cured when he looked up to it.

Moses did as he was commanded. And every one who looked upon the brazen serpent was healed.

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BALAAM AND THE ASS.

THE Israelites had to fight their way to the promised land, and God so often gave them victory in battle, that the nations around were afraid of them.

Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan, both came out with armies against them; but the Israelites overcame them, and took possession of their territories. The victorious army afterwards pitched their tents in the plains of Moab; and Balak, king of that country, fearing he and his people should also be destroyed, sent to Balaam, who was a prophet (that is one to whom God shows things that are going to happen), to come and pronounce a curse upon the Israelites, which might prevent their taking his kingdom from him. Balaam

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Balaam and his Ass.

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at first refused to curse the Israelites, for he knew that God had blessed them. But Balak entreated him, promising him honours and riches; and at last Balaam consented.

So in the morning he saddled his ass and went with them. But God was angry with him for desiring Balak's riches and honours, and sent an angel to stand in the way and oppose him. God, who can do whatever He will, enabled the ass, upon which Balaam rode, to see the angel; and she turned aside to avoid him. For this her master struck her. But again the angel stood before him in a path where there was a wall on each side; and the ass seeing him, and trying to turn aside as before, crushed Balaam's foot against the wall. Then Balaam struck her again. But a little further on the angel stood before them a third time; and the ass, seeing him, fell down under Balaam, who angrily struck

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her with his staff. God now wonderfully caused the ass to speak; and she asked Balaam why he had beaten her. Then God made Balaam himself see the angel standing with his drawn sword in his hand; and Balaam bowed down before him to the very ground. And the angel reproved Balaam for striking his ass; telling him that because he had wished to do what God did not will, God had sent His angel to oppose him in the way; and had not the ass turned aside, he would have been slain. Balaam then confessed that he had done wrong, and offered to go back. The angel, however, bade him go on to Balak, but to be careful to speak only what God should bid him say.

So Balaam went on; and when he saw all the encampment of the children of Israel stretching far before him, by God's command he blessed the people whom Balak had sent for him to curse.

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JOSHUA AT JERICHO.

THE children of Israel had now only to cross the river Jordan, to enter the promised land of Canaan. Moses, for his sin at Meribah, or the waters of strife, where he struck the rock instead of speaking to it as he was told, had been forbidden to enter it with them. He was only allowed to see it at a distance, from the top of Mount Nebo. So, by God's command, he appointed Joshua to be their guide and leader into it. After Moses had done this, he died, a hundred and twenty years old.

Then God bade Joshua prepare to pass over the Jordan, into the land He had promised to the Israelites. But before they did so, Joshua sent two spies to the city of Jericho, which was fortified against them

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JOSHUA BEFORE JERICHO.

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on the other side of the river. The people of the city were very much afraid of the Israelites, for they had heard what God had done for them, from the time they left Egypt. So when the king of Jericho sent men to take these spies prisoners, a woman of the city, in whose house they had lodged, hid them; and then begged, as her reward, that when the city should be taken, her life, and the lives of all her family, might be saved. The spies promised this; so then, as she lived on the town wall, she let them down by a cord, through the window, and they returned to the camp.

When the people were about to pass over Jordan, the ark, in which were the two tables of stone, was carried before them by twelve priests; and, as soon as they entered the river, its waters were divided, and all the multitude went over on dry ground. Then they encamped at Gilgal, before Je-

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richo; and there God commanded that the armed men of the Israelites, with the priests carrying the ark, should on seven days go round the city, with trumpets sounding; and He told them, that on the seventh day the walls should fall down before them. So each day, for six days, as they had been bidden, they went once round the city. But on the seventh day, they went round it seven times, as God had said; and, at the seventh time, when the priests blew a loud blast with the trumpets, Joshua bade the people shout, for the city was theirs. Then they gave a great shout, and the walls of the city fell down flat before them, so that they marched straight into it, and burned it to the ground.

But Joshua remembered the woman, Rahab, who had hidden the spies, and he brought her and her family in safety out of Jericho into the camp of the Israelites.

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SAMSON AND THE LION.

THE children of Israel made many other conquests after the fall of Jericho. On one occasion God caused both the sun and the moon to stand still in the heavens, that the day might be long enough for them to complete the defeat of their enemies. At length they had possession of almost the whole land of Canaan, and they divided it by lot among their twelve tribes, the descendants of Israel's twelve sons. Then God gave them rest from the attacks of their enemies round about them; and for a while they served him faithfully.

But after the death of Joshua, and those who had come with him into the promised land, the people began to forget God, and to worship false gods. So, to

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SAMSON KILLING THE LION.

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punish them, God allowed their enemies to distress them on every hand. Yet, from time to time, He took pity upon them, and gave them rulers, called Judges, under whom they were victorious in war. But, as soon as the judge was dead, they returned to their evil ways; and then God again let them fall under the power of their enemies.

The Philistines were the most powerful of the nations that oppressed the Israelites; and to help them against these, God gave to them a judge named Samson.

Before he was born an angel appeared to his mother, and told her that her son should begin the deliverance of the people from the Philistines. She did not know it was really an angel, but told her husband that a man, who looked like an angel of God, had said these things to her. Then Manoah, her husband, prayed to God that the man might come again, and tell them

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how they should bring up their child. So God sent the angel again, and they still thought he was a man. But when they began to dress food for him, the angel bade them offer it to God as a burnt-offering; and when they did so, he went up, as it were to heaven, in the flame that rose from the altar. Then they knew it was God's angel with whom they had been speaking.

When their child was born they called him Samson, and did all that the angel had said they should do with him. And God blessed Samson, and made him the strongest man that ever lived. One day when he was going with his father and mother into the country of the Philistines, a lion sprang out roaring against him; and God suddenly gave him such strength, that he seized it with his hands, and tore it to pieces.

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SAMSON AND THE GATES OF GAZA.

SAMSON married the daughter of one of the Philistines; but afterwards her father took her away from him; and in revenge he killed great numbers of them, and destroyed their crops and vineyards.

The Philistines then came out in great force against the men of Judah, and demanded that Samson should be given up to them. The men accordingly came to Samson, and said they must give him up to the enemy. So Samson let them bind him with strong cords, and take him to the Philistines. But at that moment God gave him strength to snap the cords asunder, as though they had been burned; and, snatching up the jawbone of an ass, he fell

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SAMSON CARRYING OFF THE GATES OF GAZA.

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upon his enemies, and killed a thousand of them. Then, faint with fatigue and thirst, he prayed to God that, having given him so great a deliverance, he would not let him die of thirst. And God heard his prayer and caused water to spring up in a hollow of the rock close by, at which Samson drank and was revived.

After this, Samson went to Gaza, a city of the Philistines, and at night the people shut him in, saying to each other that they would kill him in the morning. But in the middle of the night he got up, tore down the gates of the city, and throwing them upon his shoulders, carried them to the top of a hill in the neighbourhood. His enemies now saw that they could not overcome him by force; so they bribed a woman to get from him the secret of his strength. Samson deceived both her and them several times, but at last told her the truth, that he

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was a Nazarite; that is, one who had made a vow to God, in token of which his hair was suffered to grow uncut; and that if his hair were cut off, he should be no stronger than any other man. So when he was asleep, she cut it off; and then, calling the Philistines, they took him, put out his eyes, and set him to grind corn. But as he toiled in prison, God gave his strength to him again. So one day, when the great men of the Philistines were going to worship their false god Dagon, and would have Samson make sport for them, he begged the boy who led him in, to let him rest against the pillars of the building where they were assembled. Then, praying to God that He would once more enable him to destroy his enemies, he laid hold of the pillars, and bending forward with all his might, pulled the building down; crushing both himself and thousands of the Philistines.

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NAOMI AND HER DAUGHTERS.

In the days when the Judges ruled over Israel, there was a famine in the land. And a man named Elimelech, who lived at Bethlehem-Judah, together with his wife Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, left their home on account of it, and went to live in the country of the Moabites.

While they were there Elimelech died, leaving Naomi and her sons, who married two women of the country named Orpah and Ruth. In about ten years the sons died also; and then Naomi, hearing that the famine which had driven them from home had passed away, resolved to return thither with her daughters-in-law. But they had not gone far before Naomi, remember-

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NAOMI AND HER DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW.

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ing that she was now poor, as well as a widow, thought it would be better for her daughters-in-law to stay among their own people, than to go with her to what was to them a strange land. So she kissed them, and bade them return to their mother's house; praying God to bless them for their kindness to her and her sons. Her daughters wept, and refused to leave her; but she urged them to do so: till at last Orpah yielded, and bidding Naomi a loving farewell, went back to her own home in Moab. Ruth, however, still clung to her mother-in-law; and when Naomi would have had her follow her sister-in-law, who was gone to her own people, and the gods of her country, (for the Moabites were heathens, and worshipped the idol Baal), she answered her,—"Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I

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will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried—nought but death shall part thee and me." So when Naomi saw how steadfastly Ruth loved her, she ceased urging her, and they went on together to Bethlehem-Judah.

When they arrived there all the people of the place were surprised to see them; asking, "Is not this Naomi?" But Naomi, full of sorrow for her dead husband and sons, and the poverty that had now fallen upon her, answered them, "Call me not Naomi (which signifies *Pleasant*), but Mara (that is *Bitterness*), for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me."

It was the time of barley-harvest when Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem; and they were so very poor that Ruth went out into the fields to glean after the reapers.

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BOAZ AND RUTH.

ONE of the chief men of Bethlehem was named Boaz, a very rich man, who was a near relation to Elimelech, Naomi's husband. Ruth happened to go and glean in a field belonging to him; and Boaz seeing her, asked the man who was over the reapers, who she was. The man answered that she was Ruth the Moabitess, who had come to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law Naomi, and that she had asked him to let her glean in the field. Boaz then spoke kindly to Ruth, and bade her not go to any other fields to glean; and he told her when she was thirsty, to help herself to the drink that was brought to refresh his servants.

Ruth felt grateful to Boaz, and asked him how it was that he showed so much

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BOAZ AND RUTH.

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kindness to a stranger. He told her that he had heard how good a daughter she had been to Naomi; and that she had left her own father, and mother, and country, to come with her into a strange land. And he prayed that the God of Israel would bless and reward her. Then at meal-time he bade her eat and drink with the reapers. So she sat beside them; and Boaz himself set food before her. And when she returned to her gleaning, he desired the reapers to let fall some handfuls of grain on purpose for her, that she might gather the more.

When Ruth went home in the evening, she gave her mother-in-law some of her own dinner, which she had kept for her; and then she beat out the barley she had gleaned. There was so large a quantity of it, that Naomi asked her where she had gleaned that day. Ruth answered, in the

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field of Boaz. Naomi was glad when she heard this; and, telling Ruth that he was their near kinsman, she said she must contrive to see the great man again, and make him understand that the poor gleaner was nearly related to him. So Ruth did as Naomi desired her. And when Boaz knew who she was, he blessed her, and said that he would do for her all that the law of the Israelites required from him as her nearest kinsman.

Then he called together the chief men of the city; and before them, as witnesses, bought back the piece of land that had belonged to Elimelech, and to which Ruth, as the widow of his son, was the next heir. After that he took Ruth for his wife: and their son Obed was the grandfather of David, who was afterwards the great king of Israel.

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HANNAH DEDICATES SAMUEL.

FIFTEEN Judges ruled the people of Israel during a period of four hundred and fifty years; that is, from the death of Joshua, till Saul was chosen as their first king. Samuel was the last of these Judges; and he was a priest and a great prophet as well as a ruler of the people. His father and mother were named Elkanah and Hannah. They were very good people; and year by year went up from the place where they lived, to Shiloh, where the Tabernacle had been set up, to worship and offer sacrifice to God. This all the Israelites were obliged to do, after they were settled in the promised land. Hannah had no children; and as she was grieved that she had none, she prayed to God, when worshipping at Shiloh,

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HANNAH DEDICATES SAMUEL.

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to give her a son; promising that if He would, she would dedicate him (that is, give him up), to the Lord God, in the service of the Tabernacle, from his childhood. God granted her request; and when the child was born she called him Samuel (which means, *Asked of God*), because he had been given to her in answer to her prayer.

The first time after his birth that Elkanah and his family went up, as usual, to worship at Shiloh, Hannah did not go with them. She told her husband she would not do so till Samuel was weaned; and then she would take him with her, and leave him with the priests, who might train him to serve God in the Tabernacle. Elkanah bade her do as she thought best in the matter. So when Samuel was weaned, she took him with her to Shiloh. And when she had offered sacrifice to God, she told Eli the high-priest, who was also at that

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time Judge in Israel, that she was the woman whom, some time before, he had seen praying in the Temple (as the Tabernacle was also called), and that Samuel was the child she had prayed for. And now, as she had promised, she was come to give him to God, that he might be His priest.

Then when Eli had given his blessing to Hannah and her husband, they returned home, leaving Samuel with him. And the child served in the ministry of the Temple, clad in a white linen garment that the priests wore, which was called an ephod. And every year that his mother came up to worship at Shiloh, she brought him a little coat, that she had herself made for him.

And as Samuel grew, God blessed him; and Eli, who was very old, and nearly blind, was fond of this good little child, whom everybody loved because he was good.

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LITTLE SAMUEL.

THE high-priest Eli had two sons, named Hophni and Phinehas, who were both priests. But they were exceedingly wicked men; and when the people who came to worship complained to Eli of the wickedness of the young men, he reproved them so gently that they gave no heed to what he said. And God was displeased with him for not using his authority to make them do better.

One night when Samuel was laid down to sleep, he heard a voice calling him; and thinking it was Eli, he got up and ran to him, to know what he wanted with him. But Eli bade him lie down again, for he had not called him. Again the voice called "Samuel," and again Samuel ran to Eli,

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LITTLE SAMUEL.

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who told him he had not called. But the third time that Samuel heard the voice, and ran to Eli thinking it was he, Eli became aware that it was God Himself who was calling to the child. So he bade him go and lie down again, and if the voice called him once more, to answer, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Then when he was laid down again, the voice called as before, "Samuel, Samuel." And when Samuel answered as Eli had bidden him, God told him that he was going to punish Eli and his sons in a fearful manner; because the sons had made themselves hated for their wickedness and profanity, and Eli had not prevented it as he ought to have done.

In the morning Samuel rose, and, as was his office, opened the doors of the Temple. But he did not tell Eli what God had said to him in the night: he was afraid of doing so, it was so very sad. Eli, however, bade

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him come to him and tell him all. And when the poor old man knew that it was God's will to destroy him and his family, he would not murmur at it: he only said, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."

Very soon after this, the Israelites were fighting against the Philistines; and, thinking they should be sure of victory if the ark of God were with them, they fetched it into their camp from Shiloh. But for their sins God suffered them to be defeated; the ark was taken, and Hophni and Phinehas, together with thirty thousand of the Israelites, were slain. Poor old Eli meanwhile sat by the wayside, waiting for tidings of the battle. And when word was brought him that his sons were killed, and the ark taken, he fell off his seat backwards, and broke his neck.

Some time after Eli's death, Samuel judged Israel in his place.

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DAVID ANOINTED KING.

WHEN Samuel was very old, he made his sons judges, with himself, over Israel. But his sons took bribes, and did other things that they ought not to have done: and the people of Israel became so discontented, that they came to Samuel and desired him to give them a king in place of him and his sons. Samuel was grieved at this request; so he prayed to God to know what he should do. And God was displeased with the people for wishing to be governed by a king, like other nations, when He Himself was their king. Nevertheless, He gave them leave to have one, and told Samuel whom he should choose. This was Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin.

So Samuel anointed Saul king over Is-

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DAVID ANOINTED KING.

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rael; and when he was brought before them all the people shouted, "God save the king!"

At first Saul was a good king, and did all that God commanded him. But he soon became disobedient; and as he persisted in ill-doing, God, who was patient with him for a while, at last determined that one more worthy than he should be chosen to be king after him, and whose children should succeed to the throne in place of Saul's children. So God bade Samuel take a horn of oil, and go to Jesse, an Israelite who lived at Bethlehem, and anoint one of his sons, whom He would point out to him, as the future king over Israel. Samuel was afraid of doing this, for he thought Saul, if he knew it, would put him to death. But God bade him go and offer a sacrifice at Bethlehem, and He would show him what to do.

So he went and called the chief men of the town, together with Jesse and his

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family, to the sacrifice. Then Jesse made his sons pass before Samuel; who, when he saw the eldest son, Eliab, a tall, fine-looking man, thought he must be the one whom God would choose to be anointed king. But God said He would not have Eliab; for He looked at the heart of man, not at his outward appearance. So seven of Jesse's sons, one after another, came before Samuel, and none of them did God choose. Then Samuel asked if all Jesse's children were there. Jesse answered he had one more son, David, the youngest, who was away keeping sheep. So David was sent for. He was a beautiful youth, with golden hair; and as soon as he came, God bade Samuel anoint him, for he was the one whom He had chosen.

So Samuel anointed him king. And the Spirit of God then came upon David, and remained with him from that day.

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DAVID AND GOLIATH.

THE Israelites and the Philistines were now at war together; and the two armies were posted on two mountains, with a valley between them. And while they were drawn up in sight of each other, a giant, named Goliath of Gath, came out of the camp of the Philistines, and challenged any one of the Israelites to come and fight with him. If he killed the Israelite, then the Israelites were to yield to the Philistines; but if the Israelite killed him, then the Philistines would serve them. He was a huge giant, nine or ten feet high, clad from head to foot in heavy, brazen armour. The staff of his spear was as thick as a weaver's beam. And for forty days this terrible giant came out, defying all the Israelites. Even Saul

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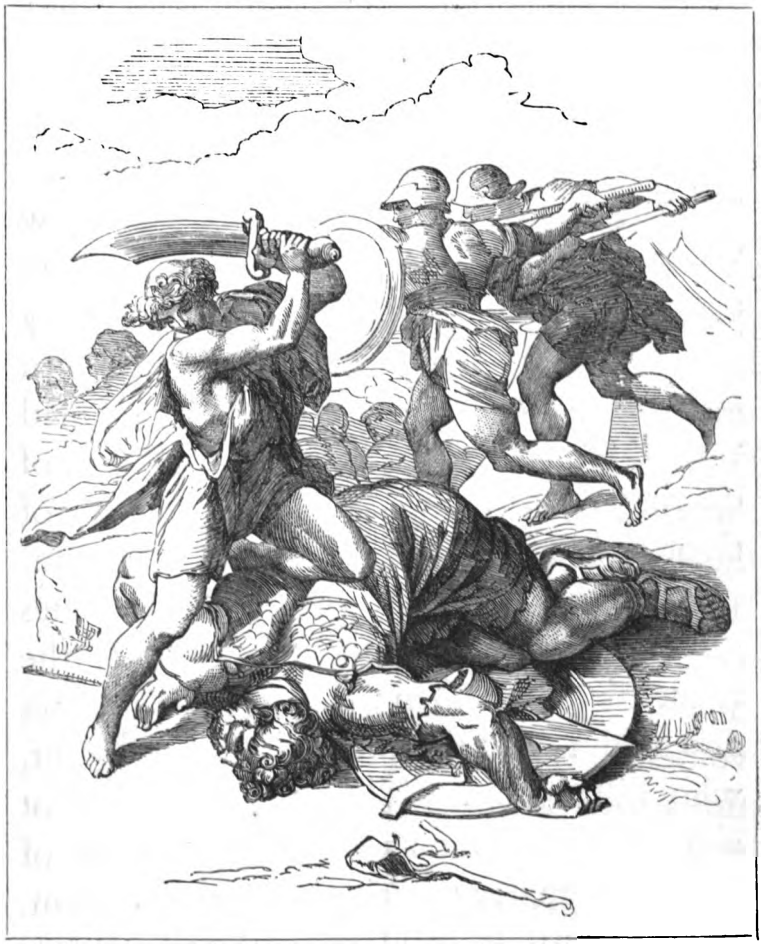

DAVID AND GOLIATH.

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himself, the king, who was a brave man, was afraid of him.

Now at this time the three eldest sons of Jesse were in Saul's army; and their father bade David, who was tending his sheep at Bethlehem, go to the camp with some parched corn, and bread for his brothers. He arrived there just as the two armies were advancing to battle; and as he talked to his brothers, out came the giant, defying the Israelites, who fled at the very sight of him.

David was indignant at seeing the armies of God's chosen people so contemptuously treated by a heathen; and he asked those about him what should be done for the man who killed him. They told him that he should have honours and riches, and that he should marry the king's daughter. Then Saul, hearing what David had said, sent for him; and David told the king that he

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would go and fight the giant. Saul reminded him that he was but a youth, and the Philistine had been a soldier all his life. But David answered that he had killed a lion and a bear that had attacked his flock, and he knew that God would also help him to kill this great giant.

Then Saul would have given him armour and a sword, but David would not have them. He took only his staff and sling, with five smooth stones in his shepherd's bag, and went to meet the giant, who came on cursing and taunting him. But David running forward took a stone from his bag, and slang it at the giant, whom it struck in the forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground, and David cut off his head with his own sword. Then the Philistines took to flight, when they saw that the giant was dead.

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DAVID PLAYING BEFORE SAUL.

WHEN Saul, and David, and the whole army were coming home in triumph, after the defeat of the Philistines, the women of Israel, as they passed along, came out of all their cities to meet them with dances and songs of joy. And as they danced and played on instruments of music, they said, "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands!" And Saul was so much displeased at their thus giving more honour to David than they did to their king, that from that day he began to regard him with jealousy and distrust.

From the time that he had so sinned against God as to cause Him to give the kingdom of Israel after his death to another, Saul had become liable to fits

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DAVID PLAYING BEFORE SAUL.

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of sadness, and severe gloom. God had withdrawn His Spirit from him, and he was miserable, almost mad. His servants, who were anxious to comfort him, thought that music would soothe the distressed mind of the king; and, as David played skilfully upon the harp, they would have him play before Saul. And, whenever he did so, Saul was refreshed, and became cheerful again. But after he had grown envious of David's renown, twice, when David was playing before him, he threw a spear at him to kill him. David, however, escaped unhurt. Saul then tried in various ways to destroy him, by means of his enemies the Philistines; setting him on duties that seemed as if they must cost him his life. Still God preserved David alike from the Philistines, and from Saul's own servants, whom the wicked king had commanded to put him to death. Then Jonathan, Saul's son,

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having sent David, whom he loved, to a place of safety, pleaded with his father for him; reminding Saul how faithful David had been to him, and what good service he had done the kingdom by killing the Philistine who had so frightened them all. And Saul yielded to the pleading of his son, and promised that he would do David no harm. So he was brought back, and served Saul as before.

War, however, soon broke out again between the Israelites and the Philistines, and David again defeated them with great slaughter. This roused all Saul's ill-will against him; so that, when in one of his fits of gloom, David, as was his custom, was trying to cheer him with his harp, Saul rose and threw a spear at him with such force, that, as David slipped aside, it stuck fast in the wall. That night David made his escape, and never returned.

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DAVID TAKES SAUL'S SPEAR.

SAUL sent messengers hither and thither to take David; but they failed to find him. Jonathan meanwhile kept trying to save his friend; but when at last Saul threw his spear at *him*, in his anger at his continuing to plead for David, he perceived that all his efforts were useless. So he and David took leave of each other lovingly; the latter retiring to the wilderness, where he soon gathered together a band of followers.

While Saul continued his fierce pursuit of David, his life was twice in David's power, who refused to hurt Saul, though his followers urged him to kill the king.

On one of these occasions, David, to prove how easily he might have killed Saul if he would, cut off a piece of his robe when

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DAVID TAKES SAUL'S SPEAR.

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he was asleep. And then, when the king awoke, showing it to him, he besought him not to believe those who had told him that David desired to take his life. Saul's hard heart was softened by this appeal, and he said to David, "Thou art more righteous than I;" for David had returned him good for evil. Saul added that he knew David should be king after him; and he entreated that his sons might not be put to death when David came to the throne. David solemnly promised this, and then Saul returned from pursuing him. But David, not daring to trust himself with him, went back to his stronghold in En-gedi.

Saul's reconciliation with David did not last long. He was soon hunting him again with a force of three thousand men. He had pitched his camp in the wilderness; and David with Abishai, one of his followers, came down to it at night. The

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people were all asleep, and Saul's tent was set up in the midst of the encampment. The two stole in among them, and came silently to the place where Saul lay sleeping, with his spear stuck into the ground by his pillow, surrounded by his guard, with Abner their captain, all fast asleep. Abishai wished to kill Saul, but David would not suffer him. Only to show Saul once more how completely he had been in his power, he carried the spear, and water-bottle, that stood by it, away with him to his own camp. When he got there he called out tauntingly to Abner, and the king's guard, asking whether they were not pretty defenders of their master; and bidding them send some one to fetch back the king's spear. Saul knew the voice; and when David complained to him of his merciless pursuit of one who had so often spared his life, he relented and said he would do David no more harm.

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THE DEATH OF ABSALOM.

SAUL having been defeated and severely wounded in his last battle with the Philistines, killed himself for fear of falling alive into the hands of the enemy. After his death, the tribe of Judah chose David for their king, and he reigned in Hebron between seven and eight years. At the end of that time he became king over the whole of Israel; and, having taken Jerusalem from the Jebusites, who had got possession of it, he made it his capital city, and lived there in a fine palace which he built for himself. He greatly desired also to build a temple, in which the ark of God might be placed, and in which God might be worshipped with more splendour than He had been in the Tabernacle. God was pleased that

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THE DEATH OF ABSALOM.

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David desired to do this, but told him that not he, but his son Solomon, who was to succeed him, should build the temple.

David had many children, and among these his son Absalom was his favourite. He was very beautiful, and not only his father, but all the people of Israel, loved him. But he was a vain, worthless young man, and caused his father much sorrow by his wicked conduct. He murdered one of his half-brothers; and then when, after long banishment, he was permitted to come again into the king's presence, he very soon raised a rebellion against him, in order to seize the crown for himself; and such numbers of the people joined with him that David was obliged to make his escape from Jerusalem into the wilderness. The good king was sorely grieved that his own favourite son should seek his life; but he trusted that God, who had so often delivered him,

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would do so now. He soon drew round him forces enough to meet those of his rebellious son, and a pitched battle was fought between them in the wood of Ephraim. The troops of Absalom were defeated with great slaughter; and as he himself was flying from the field of battle, his mule carried him under a large oak-tree; his head got caught between the branches, and the animal, galloping off, left him hanging there. One of David's army, who saw this, instead of releasing him, ran and told Joab, David's chief captain; who, though he had received a strict charge from the king to save the life of his son, hastened to him, and cruelly killed him by thrusting three darts through his very heart.

When word was brought to David that Absalom was slain, he wept and lamented for him, exclaiming, "Oh, my son Absalom, my son! would God I had died for thee!"

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SOLOMON CROWNED KING.

WHEN Absalom was dead, the people were eager to fetch the king home again: so eager, that they quarrelled among themselves because the men of Judah, David's own tribe, were the first to bring him on his way to Jerusalem. And the quarrel ended in all the men of Israel again revolting from the king. Joab, however, who was a skilful soldier, though he was a very bad man, succeeded in putting down the insurrection.

But David's troubles were not yet at an end. First famine, and then pestilence, in which seventy thousand of the people died, afflicted his kingdom. And then, when he was old and feeble, apparently near death, his son Adonijah set himself up to be king, after his father, instead of Solomon, whom

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SOLOMON CROWNED KING.

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God had appointed to succeed David. By way of making his claim sure, Adonijah had taken upon himself royal state. Joab and other officers of the kingdom were with him, and the people acknowledged him as king.

News of this was brought to David, who at once determined to prevent disputes about the succession after his death, by having Solomon crowned during his own lifetime. So he called Nathan the priest, Zadok the prophet, and Benaiah the captain of his guard; and bade them, with a number of his officers, take Solomon, and placing him upon the king's own mule (which it was death for any subject to ride), bring him down to Gihon, a fountain near Jerusalem; and there, with sound of trumpet, anoint, and proclaim him king over Israel. So they took him thither, and proclaimed him king: multitudes following

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and shouting, "God save King Solomon!" till the city rang again.

Adonijah and his friends were at this time rejoicing together; and while they were yet feasting, in came one of their party to tell them that David had actually made Solomon king of Israel. When they heard this they were so frightened that each one stole away as quietly as he could. And Adonijah, fearing that his life might be forfeited for attempting to seize the kingdom, fled to the altar for protection: for he who laid hold of the horns of the altar was considered under God's protection, and therefore safe from his enemies.

But Solomon sent for him, promising him safety if he submitted to him. So Adonijah came, and did homage to his brother, who let him go home peaceably.

Soon after this David died, and was buried at Jerusalem.

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THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.

SOLOMON was the greatest king that ever reigned in Israel; he was also one of the wisest men that ever lived. When he first came to the throne God appeared to him one night in a dream, and asked what gift He should bestow upon him. Solomon prayed that He would give him wisdom to govern his people. God was pleased that he had asked wisdom instead of riches, or conquests, or long life; and He told Solomon that because he had done so, not only would He make him wiser than any man who ever lived, but that he should be rich and famous above all kings of the earth. And if he would obey Him in all things, long life should also be added to the other good gifts which were to be his.

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THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.

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In those days it was the custom for kings to sit in some public place, where such of their subjects as had wrongs to complain of, might plead their cause before them, and obtain justice. One day two women came before Solomon. One of them told him that she and the other woman both lived in one house, and each had a very young child: that in the night the child belonging to the other woman died, and its mother exchanged it for the living one; putting her own dead child in her neighbour's bed as she lay sleeping, and taking the living child to herself. In the morning, the mother of the living child found out the cheat; but she whose child was dead, would not give up the one that she had stolen, for she said it was her own. And the two women stood there before the king, each one contending that the living child was hers, and that the dead child

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belonged to the other. Then Solomon desired his people to bring him a sword; and, when it was brought, he bade them divide the living child in two, and give half of him to each of the women. The woman who had falsely claimed the child made no objection to this decision. But the real mother could not bear it. Rather than have her son killed, she was willing to lose him altogether; and she cried out in an agony, "O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it!" Then the king saw at once to which of them the child belonged; and he said, "Give her the living child, for she is its mother."

And all the people of Israel, when they heard of this judgment of Solomon, knew that God had indeed given him wisdom to do justice among his subjects; and they held him in great awe and reverence.

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THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S VISIT TO SOLOMON.

SOLOMON had vast treasures of gold, and silver, and precious things of every kind. His people also were rich and happy. Solomon worshipped and served God faithfully; and God, as He had promised, blessed him greatly.

When David had desired to build a house, or temple, for God's worship at Jerusalem, God had told him that his son Solomon should build it. So when he came to the throne, Solomon built this temple of the richest materials, and in the most costly manner. Hewn stone, cedar, olive-tree wood, fine brass, pure gold, silver, and precious stones, were there in abundance; and artificers from Tyre, who were

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THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S VISIT TO SOLOMON.

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famous for their skill, wrought them for him. The Temple, which was placed on Mount Moriah, was seven years in building. When it was finished, Solomon dedicated it to God, in a solemn assembly of the people; and the Lord God filled it with His glory, as He had done the Tabernacle in the wilderness.

The wisdom of Solomon was celebrated not only among his own people, but in all parts of the East; whose kings sent messengers to him, that they might hear it for themselves. The queen of Sheba came herself to Jerusalem, with a great train of people, and camels carrying gold, precious stones, and spices, as presents for the great king, that she might know, by conversing with Solomon, whether he was so wise as had been told her. And when she heard his wisdom, and had seen the splendour of his court and palace, she was so overpowered

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that she fainted. And she said to the king, that before she came, she did not believe what had been told her, in her own land, of his wisdom and greatness; but now she saw that not even the half of it had been made known to her. Happy were they who served before him, and continually heard his wisdom. And she gave thanks to God for having given such a king to His people Israel. Then, when Solomon had also given her costly presents, she and her train returned to their own country.

But as Solomon grew older, instead of serving and worshipping God as he had done, he began to worship false gods. And then God, as He had threatened, let trouble come upon him and his kingdom, so that, after his death, ten of the tribes were taken away from his son, and set up into a separate kingdom, that of Israel; which was never again united to the kingdom of Judah.

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ELIJAH FED BY RAVENS.

VERY soon after the separation of the twelve tribes, the kingdom of Israel fell into idolatry. Jeroboam, its first king, set up golden calves in Dan and Bethel, the two extremities of his dominions, to prevent his people going up to Jerusalem (which belonged to the kingdom of Judah) to worship God. But though they worshipped these images, they had not entirely rejected the true God. It was under Ahab, the sixth king, a weak and wicked man, whose wife Jezebel, was even worse than himself, that the worship of the true God was put down, and that of Baal established in its place.

God was angry both with Ahab and his people for their idolatry and persecution of His priests, who were put to death in

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ELIJAH FED BY RAVENS.

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great numbers; and, as a punishment for these sins, He sent Elijah to tell Ahab that, for three years and a half neither dew nor rain should fall in the land of Israel. As soon as Elijah had foretold this great evil, God bade him hide himself from the rage of Ahab in a certain place near the brook Cherith, where He had commanded the ravens to feed him. So he went and dwelt by the brook, which afforded him water to drink, while the ravens, as God had said, brought him food morning and evening. But, as no rain had fallen, in time the brook dried up, and then God bade him leave his present hiding-place, and go to Zarephath, near Sidon; for He had commanded a widow, who lived there, to provide for him. Elijah immediately went to Zarephath; and when he came to the gate of the city, he saw the woman gathering sticks. He called to her, and asked

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her to give him some water to drink; and as she was going for it, he begged her also to bring him a morsel of bread. The poor woman turned round, and told him she had no bread. All that she had was a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a bottle, and she had just been gathering wood to cook it for herself and her son; after they had eaten it, they must lie down to die, for she knew not where to get more. Elijah bade her do as she had said, but to make him a little cake first, and afterwards for herself; for God, he assured her, would cause her meal and oil to last till the famine should be at an end. So the woman made him the little cake first; and he, and she, with her family, were fed out of that handful of meal, and vessel of oil, for many days. Neither of them failed till the day when God sent rain upon the earth, and so took away the famine.

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ELIJAH RESTORES THE WIDOW'S SON.

WHILE Elijah was with the widow of Zarephath, her son fell ill and died. His mother feared it was for some sin of hers that her child was taken from her; and that it was the prophet who had caused his illness. In her distress she said this to Elijah, reproachfully. But he only bade her bring her son to him; and then, lying down with the child, on his own bed, he prayed earnestly that God would let its soul come into it again. God heard his prayer, and brought the child to life again; and Elijah carried him down to his mother.

When the three years and six months were past, God bade Elijah go again to Ahab, for He was now about to send rain

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ELIJAH RESTORING THE WIDOW'S SON.

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upon the earth. At this time Ahab, and Obadiah, the governor of his household, a man who worshipped God, had gone in different directions to seek grass, for the king's horses and mules. As Obadiah went on his way, Elijah met him, and bade him tell his master, where he might find Elijah; for Ahab, thinking it was he that had brought famine upon the kingdom, had angrily sought him in all countries. Obadiah was unwilling to carry Elijah's message, for he feared that as soon as he had left him, God might command him to go to some other place, and then when Ahab came and found no prophet there, he himself might be put to death for having misled the king. But Elijah replied that he would assuredly show himself to Ahab that day; and then Obadiah went to tell him.

When Ahab met Elijah, he haughtily asked, whether he were not the man that

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troubled Israel. But Elijah answered that it was not he, but Ahab and his family that had brought affliction upon the nation by their wickedness. And he desired that the king would gather together all the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, where he would offer sacrifice to God, and they to Baal; and the god whose sacrifice was consumed by fire from heaven, should be acknowledged to be the true God. Ahab did this. The priests of Baal built their altar, and from morning to evening kept crying, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no answer; their false god could do nothing for them. Then Elijah prepared his sacrifice; and when he called upon the Lord God, fire came down from heaven, that burnt up the sacrifice, and the wood, and even the stones of the altar. And then all the people bowed to the earth exclaiming, "The Lord He is the God! The Lord He is the God!"

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ELIJAH TAKEN TO HEAVEN.

ELIJAH returned with Ahab to Jezreel, a beautiful place where the king had a palace. But Jezebel threatened to kill the prophet; so he fled for his life out of Israel, into the kingdom of Judah, to Beersheba. There he left his servant, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. Here, weary and worn out with his troubles, he lay down to sleep under a juniper tree, and begged God to let him die. But while he slept, an angel touched him, bidding him rise and eat; and when he looked, he saw a cake baked on the coals, and a bottle of water by his side. So he ate and drank, and then lay down again. A second time the angel touched him, and bade him rise and eat: and that food which God had sent

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ELIJAH TAKEN TO HEAVEN.

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him, sustained him for forty days and nights, while he travelled through the wilderness to Mount Horeb. And there, after storm, and earthquake, and fire, God appeared to him in a wonderful manner.

At length the time came when God would take Elijah to heaven, without dying like other men. And as he and Elisha, who was to succeed him as prophet, went on their way from Gilgal to the river Jordan, Elijah, knowing what God was about to do for him, tried to persuade Elisha to leave him to go on alone. But Elisha clung lovingly to his master, and would not leave him. Then at Bethel and Jericho, scholars of the prophets who lived there, came out to them, asking Elisha if he knew that God would that day take away his master from him. Elisha answered them, "Yea, I know it;" and again Elijah would have sent him away, but he would not go. So they tra-

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velled together till they reached the river, where Elijah wrapped his mantle together, struck the waters, and they were divided, standing on each hand, so that he and Elisha passed over on dry ground. And as they still went on, suddenly there appeared in the air a chariot of fire, with horses of fire, which, parting the two asunder, carried up Elijah in a whirlwind to heaven. And when Elisha saw it, he cried after him, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" Then he took the mantle that fell from Elijah as he went up, and turned back to the Jordan; and as he stood on its bank, he struck the waters, exclaiming, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" Then the waters were divided as they had been before, and Elisha went over on dry land.

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ELISHA'S DEATH.

WHEN the young men who were in the schools of the prophets, saw Elisha divide the waters of Jordan, they knew that God was with him, as He had been with Elijah; and they came and bowed down to the ground before him, to do him honour. They, as well as Elisha, had seen Elijah taken up by the fiery chariot; but they thought that God might perhaps have carried him, in that way, to some other part of the country. So they begged Elisha to let fifty of them go and seek him. Elisha at first forbade their doing so, but at last he gave them leave. So they sought Elijah for three days. But they did not find him, for he was with God, in heaven.

Then the people of Jericho came to

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ELISHA ON HIS DEATH-BED.

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Elisha, complaining that, though the situation of their city was beautiful, as he saw, the water was almost poisonous, and the soil was barren. So he told them to bring him a new cruse, or bottle, with a little salt in it. And when it was brought, he went to the spring, whence the water that supplied the neighbourhood rose. And throwing the salt into it, he declared that God had taken away the unwholesomeness of the water, so that from that time, neither men nor cattle should be injured by drinking it; nor should it any longer render the soil unproductive, as it had done.

After this, Elisha went to Bethel; and when he was near the city, some young men came out ridiculing and insulting him; and they mockingly bade him "go up" as his master had done. This was a shocking sin, for it was turning into jest that great miracle that God had just done, of carry-

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ing Elijah, living as he was, into heaven. Elisha knew that God's anger would fall upon them for such wickedness; and, turning back towards the young men, he told them that they would be punished. And immediately two fierce she-bears rushed out of the wood, and killed forty-two of them.

God enabled Elisha to do many miracles. He brought a dead child to life again. He healed the Syrian general, Naaman, of an incurable disease; fed a hundred of the prophets with a small quantity of bread; and did many other wonderful works.

When Elisha lay dying, Joash, king of Israel, came, and wept over him. Then Elisha bade the king shoot an arrow out of the window, and afterwards strike the ground with the whole quiver-full, to show the king that he should overcome his enemies, the Syrians.

When he had done this, Elisha died.

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JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS.

In the land of Uz, a country of Arabia, lived a man named Job. He was one of the greatest and richest men in that country; he had sheep, camels, oxen to cultivate his land, and asses, and servants, almost without number. He was also a very good man; he worshipped and obeyed God, and did no wrong to any one. But God thought fit to send him great losses and afflictions, to see whether, when he was poor and miserable, Job would still love and serve Him.

One day a man came in haste to Job, telling him that as his oxen were ploughing, a company of armed robbers had fallen upon them, killed all the ploughmen and herdsmen but himself, and had then carried

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JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS.

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off the cattle. While this man was speaking in came another, saying that lightning had burned up all the sheep, and the shepherds with them. Before this one had done came yet another messenger, bringing word that robbers had seized Job's camels, and killed the servants that were with them. And then a fourth rushed in, with worse news than all the rest; for a violent storm had arisen, which, catching the house where Job's children were assembled, had blown it down, crushing them all in the ruins. Then Job rent his garments for very grief, but he did not murmur against God. He said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!"

But the next thing was that Job himself was seized with a most painful and loathsome disease; while his wife, instead of comforting him, cruelly taunted him with

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his patience under such sore evils, wickedly bidding him "Curse God and die!" Yet then he only said, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Then three of his friends came to him, and weeping over his sad condition, sat silent upon the ground with him. But, though they were very sorry for him, they unjustly thought that his sufferings were in punishment for some wickedness that he had done. And when Job knew this, his wonderful patience failed him for a time; and he broke out in bitter lamentations and complaints of their cruelty. Yet he forgave them, and prayed God to forgive what they had said amiss about Him.

But Job was not quite faultless, as he had imagined. And when he confessed this to God, his trial came to an end; and God gave him back, not only all that he had lost, but twice as much as he had before.

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JEREMIAH WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM.

THE people, both of Israel and Judah, fell into every kind of wickedness; and though God's prophets often reproved them, they continued in their sin. So at length God punished them by letting their enemies entirely overpower them, and carry them away captive to other countries.

The Assyrians destroyed the kingdom of Israel; and in about one hundred years after, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, put an end to that of Judah.

Jeremiah was one of the last prophets who tried to save the people of Judah from the punishment that was coming upon them for their sins. He was very young when he first began to warn them of their danger;

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JEREMIAH WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM.

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and at that time a very good king, named Josiah, reigned in Judah, who did all that he could to turn his people from the worship of their false gods. But they were little, if any, the better for either his laws or Jeremiah's teaching; and when the king died, they began to ill-treat the prophet for his endeavours to do them good. They imprisoned him, put him in the stocks, and even threatened to kill him. At last God's judgments really came upon them. The Chaldeans, under Nebuchadnezzar their king, laid siege to Jerusalem. At first they were driven back; and then the people thought Jeremiah had not spoken the truth when he said that they should be carried prisoners to Babylon. But Jeremiah assured them that it would certainly be so in the end, and that they should remain captives in Babylon seventy years, after which God would bring them back to their own land.

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Then some of the chief men of the city went to Zedekiah, the king, and begged him to put Jeremiah to death for disheartening the people. Zedekiah bade them do what they would with Jeremiah; so these men took him and threw him into a deep, filthy dungeon, where they left him to die of hunger. But when one of the king's officers heard what they had done, he went in haste to the king, and told him how cruelly Jeremiah had been treated. Then the king commanded him to bring up Jeremiah out of the dungeon. So the officer went to the dungeon and drew him up.

When the city was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, he gave Jeremiah leave either to go with him to Babylon, or to stay among his countrymen. Jeremiah chose to remain with his own people; weeping, and lamenting sore, over the destruction of the Holy City.

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DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN.

For some time before Nebuchadnezzar quite destroyed the kingdom of Judah, it had been in subjection to him. And he carried away to Babylon a number of young men of the chief families of Judah, who were instructed in all the learning of the Chaldeans, and then appointed to places in Nebuchadnezzar's court. Daniel, one of them, by his wisdom, rose to great favour with the king, who made him governor of the provinces of Babylon; and when the kingdom of the Chaldeans was taken by the Medes and Persians, the conquerors made him one of the chief rulers of the country.

Seeing him preferred to themselves, the other officers and princes who were placed over the kingdom became so envious of

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DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN.

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Daniel that they sought how they might ruin him. And finding that they could not accuse him of any wrong-doing in his government, they determined to make his continuing to worship the true God the means of his destruction. So these idolaters persuaded Darius the king to make a law, that if any one, during thirty days, should offer a petition or prayer, either to God or man, except to the king, he should be thrown into a den of lions.

Daniel knew this; but still, as formerly, three times a-day, he kneeled to pray and give thanks to the Lord God. His enemies found him praying, and immediately accused him before the king of breaking the law. Darius, when he saw Daniel in danger, was grieved with himself for what he had done. But as he had no power to alter the law, he was obliged to condemn him to be thrown into the den;

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the mouth of which was afterwards secured with a large stone, sealed with the king's seal. Then the king returned to his palace with a heavy heart; though he had told Daniel that his God would deliver him. And in the morning, he rose, hastened to the den, and, with a troubled voice, called to Daniel to know whether God had preserved him. Daniel answered him from the den, that God had sent His angel, and shut the mouths of the lions, so that they had done him no hurt. Immediately the king commanded his people to raise the stone; and when Daniel was brought up out of the den, they saw that the fierce creatures had not even touched him. Then Darius in his anger ordered that the men who had accused Daniel should themselves be thrown to the lions. But they had no God to protect them. So the lions tore these wicked men in pieces instantly.

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JONAH CAST INTO THE SEA.

In the days of Jeroboam the Second there was a prophet named Jonah. And God bade him go to Nineveh, and tell its inhabitants that He was going to destroy it for their great wickedness. But Jonah was not willing to go; and, thinking that he could escape God's notice, he hastened to Joppa, and took ship for Tarshish.

God was displeased with Jonah for all this, and caused so violent a storm to arise, that the ship was in danger of being wrecked. Then the seamen drew lots to find out for whose wickedness this storm had come upon them, and the lot fell upon Jonah. So he told them all: that he was a Hebrew, a prophet of the great God, who had bidden him warn the people of Nineveh

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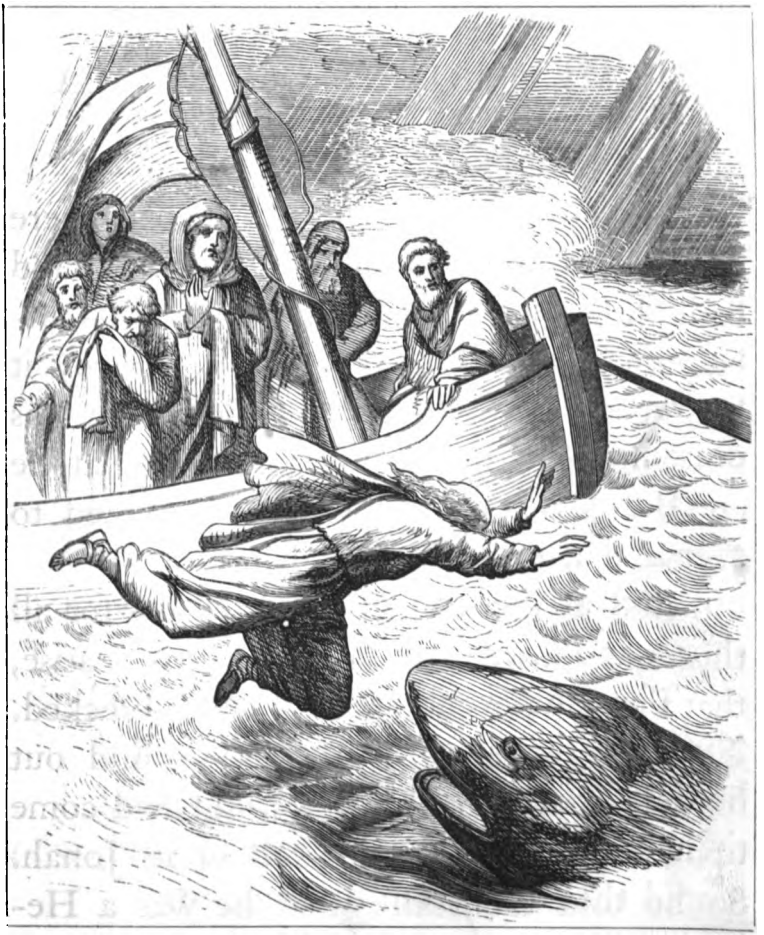

JONAH CAST INTO THE SEA.

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of their danger; and that he was trying to escape from His presence. And Jonah told them they must take him and throw him into the sea. The sailors were unwilling to do this. So they rowed hard, in hopes of getting to land. But it was of no use, the sea ran so high, with the wind against them. Then they took Jonah, and threw him over; and immediately the storm ceased.

But Jonah was not drowned. God had prepared a great fish, that swallowed him up, and at the end of three days swam to shore, and brought him up unhurt.

Then he went at once, and told the Ninevites that in three days Nineveh should be destroyed. And the people repented of their sins, and made prayers to God, who spared their city from destruction.

The End of the Old Testament.

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THE NEW TESTAMENT.

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ANGELS APPEARING TO THE SHEPHERDS.

BEFORE God created Adam and Eve, He knew that they would disobey Him, and so ruin themselves. But the love that He had both for them, and for all human beings who should come after them, was so great, that He determined to save them from their miserable condition. The way in which God chose to do so was this:—that His own Son should become a human being like ourselves; and, after having shown us how God's commands ought to be obeyed by His creatures, should die for us, that we might live for ever with God in heaven.

The birth into the world of our Lord Jesus Christ, took place in this way.

There was a woman named Mary living

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ANGELS APPEARING TO THE SHEPHERDS.

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at Nazareth in Galilee. And the angel Gabriel appeared to her, saying, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women."

Mary was afraid when she saw the angel. But he bade her not be afraid; for God had sent him to tell her that she should have a son, who should indeed be the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, who had been so long expected by His people.

After this Mary went, with Joseph her husband, to Bethlehem, near Jerusalem; and here our Lord was born. There were so many people in the city at that time, that there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the inn. So they had to be in the place where the cattle were put up. And she wrapped up her little baby, and laid him there in the manger.

Now there were shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem, keeping watch over their

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flocks by night. And the angel of the Lord appeared to them in great glory, amid a bright light shining from heaven. And they were much afraid. But he bade them fear not, for he had brought them good tidings of a Saviour, Christ the Lord, who was that day born in Bethlehem. And he told the shepherds that they should find the babe wrapped up in the manger, where his mother had laid him.

Then suddenly, there was with him a multitude of other angels, praising God, and singing aloud, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

When the angels had ascended up again into heaven, the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem, and there found Joseph and Mary, and the babe lying in a manger.

And they spread abroad the good news they had heard; and returned to their flocks giving thanks to God.

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THE OFFERINGS OF THE WISE MEN.

OTHER nations as well as the Jews, had long been expecting the birth of a great and wonderful king, who should reign over all people upon the earth. The prophet Balaam, whom Balak sent for, to curse the Israelites, and whom God caused to bless them instead, had spoken of Him as a Star rising out of Jacob; and owing to this, the appearance of a star had been looked for to show the time of His birth.

Now, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wise men, living in a distant country of the East, saw a remarkable star in the heavens, which seemed to point out the way to Jerusalem. So they came there, and inquired where He was, who was born

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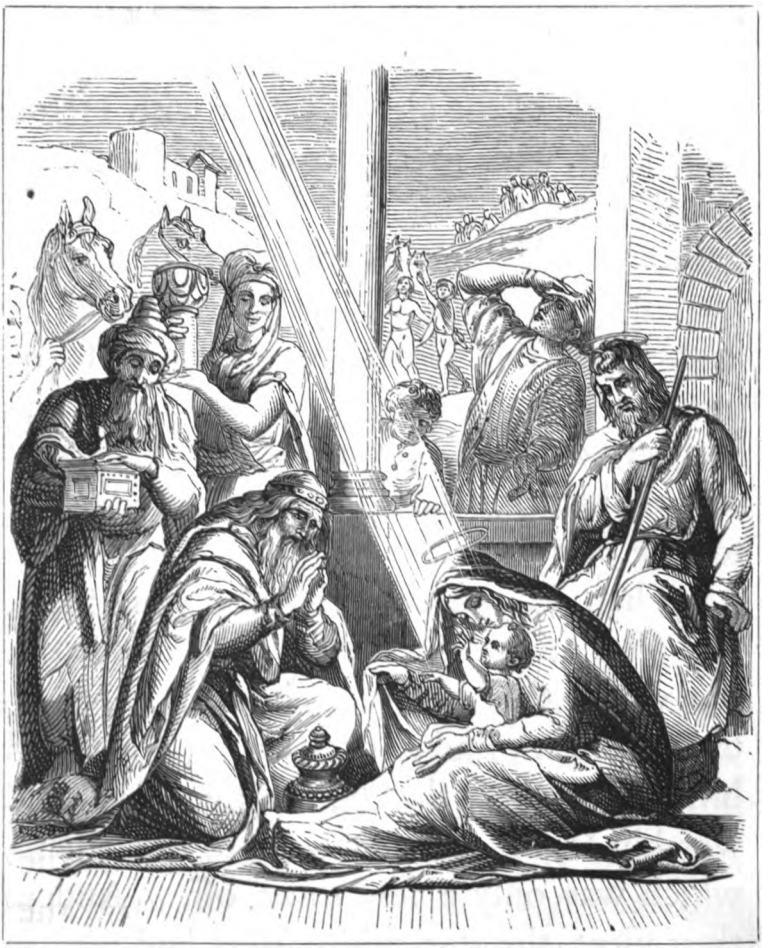

THE OFFERINGS OF THE WISE MEN.

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king of the Jews; for they had seen His star in the East, and were come to worship Him. The people of the city, together with Herod their king, were greatly troubled when they heard these words. So Herod called together the chief priests, and the most learned men in Jerusalem, and asked them where it was that the Christ was expected to be born. They told him in Bethlehem of Judea; for there was an old prophecy that out of that city should come one who was to rule over Israel.

Then Herod sent for the wise men; and after he had questioned them about this star which they had seen, he bade them go to Bethlehem, find out the young child, and bring him word, that he too might go and worship Him. So they went to Bethlehem, which was only a few miles off. And as they went, the star, which they had seen in their own far-off country in the East, moved

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on before them, till it stood over where the young child was. And when they came to Him, they kneeled down before Him, and gave Him rich gifts of gold and silver, and other precious things, in token of their duty and subjection to Him.

Now when Herod had desired the wise men to bring him word where the young child was, that he might go and worship Him, he had deceived them: he did not want to worship Him, but to kill Him; for as Jesus was called king of the Jews, Herod feared that He might some day take his kingdom from him. God, who knows everything, even the very thoughts that men imagine they are hiding in their hearts, knew how wickedly Herod was intending to act. So in a dream He told the wise men, not to return to him. And they therefore went back again to their own country another way.

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THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

HEROD waited anxiously for the return of the wise men. But when he found they had gone home again without coming to him as he had told them, he was in a furious rage. And, in order to make sure that the child Jesus should not escape him, he sent out his soldiers to kill all the young children under two years old, not only in Bethlehem itself, but in all the country round about it. Oh, what weeping and lamenting were there, when the cruel king killed all their little ones!

But God had provided for the safety of Him who was indeed the Son of God, though He was thought to be the son of Joseph, Mary's husband. After the wise men had left Bethlehem, God sent an angel to Joseph,

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THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

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to bid him take the young child and His mother, and escape with them into the land of Egypt, because Herod sought Jesus on purpose to kill Him. The angel told him this in a dream. But Joseph knew that God had sent him; so they immediately fled for their lives into Egypt. Nor did they return to their own country, till the angel, as he had said he would, again came to Joseph, in a dream, and told him that as the wicked king was dead, they might now go back to their own home.

Then they joyfully set out on their journey to the land of Israel. But when they got there and found that one of Herod's sons, who was as wicked and cruel as his father, reigned over Judea in his place, Joseph was afraid of going thither. God, however, directed him, in a dream, to go to another part of the country of the Jews, called Galilee, which was many miles from

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Jerusalem, where Archelaus, the king that Joseph feared, was reigning. Galilee also was governed by a milder ruler than Judea was. His name was Antipas; and though he was brother to Archelaus, there was no friendship between them. So there was everything to make it safe for the Holy Family to go and live there.

When Joseph and Mary, with their child, whom they had named Jesus, came by God's direction into Galilee, they took up their abode in a city called Nazareth, which was henceforth the home of our blessed Lord.

And the child Jesus grew up in health and strength, with understanding far above that of a common child. And God His Father blessed Him exceedingly.

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CHRIST DISPUTING WITH THE DOCTORS.

JOSEPH and Mary, the parents of our Lord, were in the habit of going to Jerusalem, every year at the Feast of the Passover.

This Feast, or Festival, was observed by the Jews in order to keep in mind their deliverance, by Moses, out of bondage in the land of Egypt, and to give thanks to God for it. God Himself had commanded them to keep this Feast at Jerusalem; and however toilsome or inconvenient the journey thither might be, still they went because He had bidden it. It lasted eight days; for it was a time, not only to worship God with great solemnity, but for friends and families to rejoice together when they met from all parts of the country, at Jerusalem.

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When our Lord was twelve years old, His parents took Him with them when they went, as usual, to Jerusalem. But when all was over, and they were returning home in company with great numbers of other Jews, travelling together for safety in the wild parts of the country, they suddenly missed the child Jesus. They had not got far from Jerusalem when they missed Him; so, supposing Him to be with some of their friends, they went on several miles further without feeling uneasy. But when they at last came to seek Him, He was nowhere to be found; and then, in great alarm, they hastened back to the city, to look for Him. For three whole days they did not know what had become of Him. At length when they did find Him, it was in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, or learned men of the Jews; who were all wondering at the way in which this child of twelve years old

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talked with them, concerning the law of God, which they were there to teach, and of which He knew so much more than they did. His mother told Him in what sorrow they had been about Him; and asked Him why He had thus distressed them, by staying behind without their knowledge. But His answer amazed her still more; for He asked her why they had sought Him; did they not know that He must be about His Father's business? Mary did not know what He meant. But He spoke of God, who was His real Father; and who had sent Him into the world to teach, as well as to save it.

Nevertheless, when He had thus spoken, He followed her, and went back again with them to Nazareth, where He was obedient to them, like any other son; working at His father's trade, which was that of a carpenter.

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JOHN BAPTIZING CHRIST.

ABOUT thirty years after the birth of our Lord, an extraordinary prophet, or teacher, appeared among the Jews. His name was John, and he was the son of Elizabeth, Mary's cousin. His father, Zacharias, was a priest.

One day, as Zacharias was ministering in the Temple, an angel of the Lord appeared to him. Zacharias was a very good man; still he was afraid when he saw this glorious being before him. But the angel bade him not fear; for he was come to tell him that God had heard his prayer, and would give him a son, who would not only make him happy, but be a cause of joy to many whom he should turn from their ill-doings, to righteous ways. Zacharias was so amazed,

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JOHN BAPTIZING CHRIST.

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that he could scarcely believe what the angel said to him. But the angel told him that he was Gabriel, sent by God Himself to tell him this; and because Zacharias had not believed him, he should be dumb, and unable to speak till the birth of his child.

The people who were praying in another part of the Temple, were surprised that Zacharias was so long in coming to them. When he did come, they perceived that something strange had happened to him; for he could only make signs to them, instead of speaking. Afterwards he returned to his own home; where he remained dumb till the birth of the son that had been promised to him. Then, when they came to name the child, and Zacharias had written that he must be called John (for so the angel had said); suddenly his dumbness left him, and he gave thanks aloud to God.

When John grew up, God sent him to

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tell the Jews that they must repent, and amend their lives. Great numbers thronged to the wilderness of Judea; where he dwelt, clad in coarse garments, and living on locusts and wild honey. And when he bade them repent, for the kingdom of heaven was at hand, they confessed their sins, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan. Jesus Himself came to John to be baptized. But John, knowing that He was indeed the Son of God, earnestly forbade Him. Jesus, however, told him that it was the will of God that it should be so; and then John baptized Him in the river Jordan.

When Jesus came up from the river and was praying, John saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God, in shape like a dove, descending, and resting upon Jesus. And there was heard a voice from heaven, of God Himself, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

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WATER TURNED INTO WINE.

WHEN John baptized the multitudes who came to him in the wilderness of Judea, he told them there was One coming after him, mightier than he, and who should give them a better baptism than his. He spoke of Jesus, the Christ; for God had sent John, not only to bid the Jews repent, but to tell them that He, who had so long been spoken of by their prophets as the Messiah, was about to appear among them.

Some thought John himself was this Messiah. But he denied it earnestly when they asked him; and pointing out to them Jesus, told them He was the Son of God who was to take away the sins of the world.

Then from one to another it began to be talked of, that the Messiah was actually

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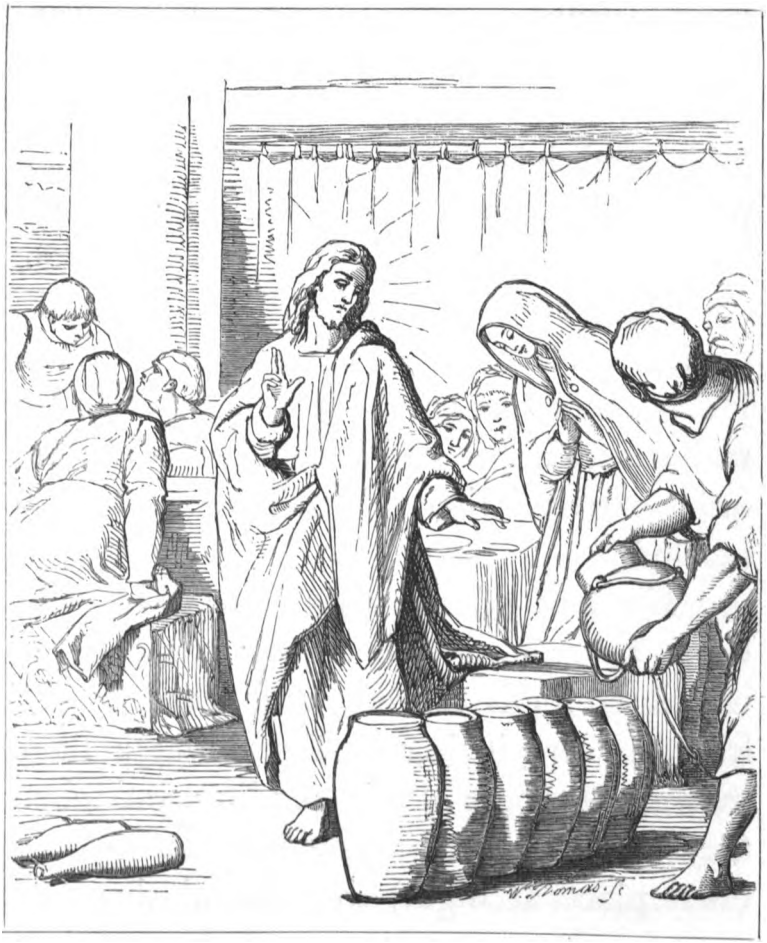

WATER TURNED INTO WINE.

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come. Some of those who heard this, went to Jesus Himself, to make quite sure that it was true. And when they had seen Him, and heard Him explain what their prophets had said concerning Him, they believed that He was indeed their Messiah.

After His baptism by John, Jesus returned to His own country Galilee. And He began to teach the people, and to do many wonderful works, called miracles, in order to show them that He was the Son of God.

The first miracle that Jesus did was at Cana, a town in Galilee, at a wedding, to which He, His mother, and some of His friends, were invited. There was a large number of guests at this wedding, and when they were at supper (for an Eastern wedding takes place at night) they found they had not wine enough. Mary told this to Jesus; and, judging from His answer, that He would

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in some wonderful way supply their want, she bade the servants do whatever He might command them. Presently Jesus told the servants to fill with water the large stone water-pots that were standing by. So they filled them quite full. Then He bade them draw it out, and carry it to the governor of the feast; that is, the one who had the care of providing for the guests. And when he tasted it (not knowing what Jesus had done), he found it such excellent wine, that he called to the bridegroom, telling him that people generally brought out their best wine first, and afterwards that which was worse; but he had kept his best wine till the last.

Then those who saw this miracle that Christ had done, of turning water into wine, felt still more convinced than they had been before, that this was indeed the Messiah.

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CHRIST DRIVING OUT THE MONEY-CHANGERS.

AFTER this miracle at Cana, Jesus, with His mother, His relations, and many of those who believed Him to be the Messiah, or Christ, went up to Jerusalem, to keep the feast of the Passover.

The Temple in Jerusalem was a most magnificent building, erected by king Herod; for the Temple that Solomon built, had long been destroyed, as well as the one raised by Ezra, after the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon. It was built in courts, one within another, each inner court rising above the next outer one, like a terrace; so that the Temple itself, which was the innermost, was the highest of all, and could be seen from all parts of the city.

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CHRIST DRIVING OUT THE MONEY-CHANGERS.

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The whole of these buildings belonging to the Temple covered a great space; for the outer court was nearly half a mile round.

When Christ went to the Temple, He found sad misdoings in this outer court; for it had been turned into a sort of market-place. Dealers in oxen, and sheep, and doves, were selling their beasts and birds there. And money-changers; that is, those whose business was to supply strangers in Jerusalem with coin that was used there in exchange for their foreign money; carried on their trade within it. This was a profane thing; that is, it was not treating the place where God had appointed that He should be worshipped, with the reverence with which it ought to be treated. And Jesus when he saw it, was so angry, that, making a scourge, or whip of small cords, He drove all these people away, together with their oxen, and sheep, and doves; bidding them

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not make His Father's house a house of merchandise. And He overthrew the tables at which the money-changers were sitting, scattering their money all abroad.

The Jews, who looked on, were astonished to see Jesus turning these merchants out of the place where they had been accustomed to carry on their business; for He did it like one who had a right to drive them away. And they asked Him what miracle He could do, in order to show that God had sent Him, He answered, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews, not understanding this, treated Him with contempt; saying that the Temple had been forty-six years in building: did He think He could rear it up again in three days? But He spoke of His own body; for He was to be put to death for the sins of the world, and brought to life again in three days after.

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CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

FROM Jerusalem, Jesus went into the country round about, teaching and baptizing the people. Afterwards He returned to Galilee again.

To go thither, Jesus had to pass through Samaria, which was another part of Palestine. As He travelled on in Samaria He came to a city called Sychar, near to the piece of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and where there was a well that Jacob himself had digged. In that hot country the digging a well was so great a service to all the people round about it, that it was often called by the name of him who had dug it; and so this one was called Jacob's well. It was about the middle of the day,

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CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

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and Jesus, being wearied with his journey, sat down by the well to rest, while His disciples went into the city to buy food. As He sat there, a woman came to draw water, and He asked her to let Him drink. The woman, perceiving that He was a Jew, was surprised at His asking her for water; for the Jews so hated the Samaritans, that they would neither eat, drink, nor sit down with them. And she asked Jesus how it was, that He asked her, a Samaritan, for water. Jesus answered her, that if she knew who it was that had begged her to give Him water, she would rather have asked it of Him, and He would have given her living water. By *living water* He meant those great blessings which He had come into the world to bestow upon all people in it. But the woman, not knowing what He meant, told Him that the well was very deep, and He had no bucket to draw

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with, so that He could not give her drink of the fresh, springing water. Jesus answered her, that those who drank of that well would be thirsty again, but those who drank of the living water that He should give them should thirst no more. The woman still did not understand Him; but thinking it was some very excellent water, begged that He would give it to her, that she might not have the trouble of coming, day by day, to the well to draw.

Then Jesus talked with her, to teach her what He meant; and He told her that He was the Messiah, whom the Samaritans were expecting as well as the Jews. And the woman believed Him; and leaving her water-pot, went to the city to bid the people there, come and see Him who was surely the Christ. And many in that place, when they had seen and heard Jesus, believed on Him as the Saviour of the world.

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THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

THEN Jesus went again to Cana in Galilee, where He had changed water into wine.

Now there was a certain nobleman at Capernaum, whose son had been ill, and was now dying. And when his father heard that Jesus was at Cana, he went thither to beg Him to come and cure his son. Jesus at first seemed unwilling to grant his request; but the nobleman only the more earnestly entreated Him to come with him at once, lest his son should be dead before they reached Capernaum. Then Jesus bade him return home, for his son was already restored to health. The nobleman, believing that it was as Jesus said, immediately set out to go to Capernaum; and on the way he met

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THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

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his servants coming to tell him that his son was well. He asked them at what time he had begun to amend. They answered, that the fever had left him at a certain hour the day before. So his father knew that was just the time when Jesus had told him that his son was well. And he and all his household, seeing this great miracle, believed on Jesus as the Saviour whom God had sent into the world.

When Jesus returned to His own city Nazareth, He went on the Sabbath day into the synagogue (a place where the Jews worshipped God); and, as His custom was, stood up to read the Scriptures to the people. He read to them in the book of Isaiah; and when He had done reading, and closed the book, He spoke to them of Himself as the Messiah, of whom the prophet Isaiah wrote. The people heard Him gladly at first; but when He went on to speak to

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them of their misdoings, they rose up against Him in a rage, drove Him violently out of the city, and would have killed Him by throwing Him down from a steep part of the hill on which Nazareth stood. But He, by His wonderful power, quietly withdrew Himself from their fury, and came to Capernaum, where He afterwards lived.

Then Jesus went about through Galilee; teaching the people, and working great miracles. And vast numbers from every part of Palestine came to hear Him, and to be cured of all kinds of diseases.

Then seeing the multitude thronging around Him, He sat down on the hill-side near Capernaum; and taught them holy teaching, such as they had never before heard. And they were filled with astonishment; for He taught them like one whom God had indeed sent to them, and who must be obeyed.

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CHRIST STILLING THE TEMPEST.

WHEN our Lord came down from the rising ground, from which He had been speaking to the people, great numbers followed Him. Among them was a man afflicted with a most dreadful disease, that no one in that country had ever been able to cure; and of which the Jews were so much afraid, that they would not touch the person suffering from it. This man came and worshipped Jesus, entreating Him to cure him. And Jesus laid His hand upon him; and the disease left him in that very moment.

Jesus bade the man not tell any one how he had been cured. But the man went about telling every one; so that Jesus dared not show Himself in the city for fear of the hief people. So He remained in the open

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CHRIST STILLING THE TEMPEST.

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country, where people from every part, came to Him to be cured of their diseases.

Capernaum, which was now the home of our Lord, was a town standing on the borders of the Lake of Gennesareth. This lake was a very large one; indeed quite a sea, abounding with fish, and having many towns and villages on its coast. Our Lord was one day teaching the people by the side of this lake; and they pressed so close upon Him, that He got into one of the fishing-boats that lay on the shore, and told Simon, to whom it belonged, to push out a little from the land. And then He spoke to the people from the boat, as they crowded to the water's edge.

After He had done speaking, He told Simon to launch out into deep water, and let down his net to catch fish. Simon thought it was of no use to do so, for they had been hard at work all night, and had

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caught nothing; yet, as Jesus bade him, he would let down the net once more. So they cast their net into the sea; and, to their astonishment, caught so much fish, that they were obliged to call fishermen from another boat to help them. And when they had got their boat to land, they left everything, that they might be always with Christ.

Then Jesus took boat with His disciples to go to the other side of the lake. But after they had put out to sea, a storm arose, so violent, that the vessel was filled with the waves dashing over it. And, in great terror, thinking they should be lost, the disciples came and awoke Jesus, who was asleep. And they cried out, "Master, Master, save us!" Then He arose, and by a word stilled the winds and the waves, so that there was a great calm. And He asked His disciples how they could think that He would leave them to perish!

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CHRIST RAISING JAIRUS' DAUGHTER.

When Jesus was at Capernaum again, one day, when He was teaching the people, there came to Him the ruler, or chief man, of one of the Jewish synagogues. And he entreated Jesus to come and save his little daughter, who was dying. Jesus went with him immediately, followed by many of the people, who crowded around Him. But while He stopped by the way, to cure one who was in this crowd, the servants of the ruler came to meet him, and tell him that his daughter was dead; so that it was in vain for Jesus to come to her. When Jesus heard this, He comforted Jairus (that was the name of the ruler), bidding him not fear, but trust to Him. Then, taking

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CHRIST RAISING JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

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with Him Peter, James, and John, His disciples, they went into the ruler's house, where all was grief and confusion; friends and neighbours weeping and lamenting over the poor dead child. Jesus asked them why they wept and lamented so sadly; for the child was not dead, she was only sleeping. But as they did not understand what Jesus meant, and as they saw the poor child was dead, they only laughed at Him.

Then Jesus sent all these people away; and having with Him only the little girl's father and mother, and the three disciples, He went with them into the room where the child lay dead. Then He took her by the hand, and bade her arise. And immediately her spirit, which had left her body, came to it again, and she arose and walked about, well and strong; and He told them to give her something to eat. But though He strictly commanded them not to tell any

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one what He had done, this wonderful work was heard of far and wide.

Jesus did not only teach, and work miracles himself, throughout the country of the Jews, but He gave power to do so to twelve of His disciples. These are called Apostles; and they were chosen to be always with Christ, that they might, after His death, be able to assure all men that He was indeed the Son of God.

Their names were, Simon, who is also called Peter; Andrew, his brother; and James and John, the sons of an old man named Zebedee. These four had been fishermen; and, while they were busy with their boats and nets, had been called by Christ to follow Him. Then there were Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas; Matthew; James, the uncle of our Lord; Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus; another Simon, brother to James; and Judas Iscariot.

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CHRIST WALKING ON THE SEA.

JOHN, who was called the Baptist, had now been put to death, because he told King Herod of his misdoings. But when the king heard of the wonderful works done by Christ, he was alarmed, and said that this must be John risen from the dead. So Jesus then left Capernaum, lest Herod should try to kill Him also, and went into the desert parts of Bethsaida, where multitudes followed to hear Him, and to be cured of their diseases.

Then in the evening the disciples came to Jesus, begging Him to send the people away, that they might go into the neighbouring villages and buy food; for they had nothing to eat, and that was a desert place. Jesus answered the disciples that

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CHRIST WALKING ON THE SEA

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the people need not go away: they must give them food. The disciples said they could not do so, for they had only five loaves and two small fishes, and what were they among so many? But Jesus told them to make the people sit down on the grass, fifty together; and when they had done so, He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, gave thanks to God. Then, breaking the loaves and the fishes, He gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude. And they all ate, and had enough; and twelve baskets were filled with what was left. There were about five thousand men, besides women and children, whom Jesus fed in this way.

When they had done eating, Jesus desired His disciples to sail over to the other side of the lake, while He sent the people away.

But in the night a storm arose; and

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the disciples, who were at sea, were sadly tossed about, and almost spent with rowing against wind and waves. Then, as morning broke, they saw Jesus coming towards them, walking upon the sea. But they did not know that it was He; seeing Him move along upon the water, they thought it must be a spirit; and they cried out for fear. Jesus, however, immediately spoke, and comforted them, saying, "It is I, be not afraid." Then Peter answered, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the water." Jesus bade him come: so Peter also walked upon the water. But when he saw how stormy it was, he was afraid, and, beginning to sink, cried out to Jesus to save him. And Jesus caught him, and held him up, asking him why he had doubted His power.

Then, as soon as they were both in the ship, the storm ceased.

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THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

JESUS often taught the people by means of what are called parables. A parable is a kind of story, or fable; and the Jewish people, as well as those of other Eastern countries, were very fond of them.

One day when Jesus was with His disciples, a lawyer, that is, a teacher of the law which Moses gave to the Jews, asked Him what he must do in order that he might live for ever with God in heaven. He asked this, not because he wanted to know, but just to see what kind of answer Christ would give him. Jesus in reply asked him what was written in the law which God had given to them. The lawyer answered, that the law told him that he must love God with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and

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THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

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strength; and that he must love his neighbour as well as he loved himself. Jesus told him that he had answered rightly; if he did so, he should live for ever with God in heaven. But then the lawyer wanted to know who was his neighbour. And this Jesus taught him by means of a parable.

He said,—A certain man, as he went from Jerusalem to Jericho, was set upon by thieves, who stripped him even of his clothing, wounded him, and then went off, leaving him half dead.

And, as he lay there, a priest came along the same road; but, instead of stopping to help the wounded man as he ought to have done, he passed on, on the other side of the way. Next came a Levite; that is, an inferior kind of priest; who just looked at the poor man, and then went away without doing anything for him. Last of all, there was a Samaritan travelling on that road; but he,

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instead of passing on as the others had done, hastened to him, dressed, and bound up his wounds, and then, setting him on the beast that he was himself riding, took him to an inn, where he got him food and lodging. Then the next day, when he went on his journey again, he gave some money to the landlord of the inn, bidding him take care of the wounded Jew, and telling him that if he spent anything more, he would repay him when he came back.

When Jesus had told the lawyer this story, He asked him which of the three was really neighbour to him who had been set upon by thieves; his own countrymen, or the Samaritan? The lawyer answered, he was his neighbour who had showed him such kindness.

Then Jesus told him to consider every man his neighbour, who needed a kindness from him.

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THE PRODIGAL SON.

AMONG those who came to hear Christ, were heathens from various countries. A heathen is one who does not worship the true God. And these heathens Christ received as kindly as he did his own countrymen.

The chief men of the Jews were offended at this, for they thought themselves better than any other people in the world. So to reprove them for their unkindness to these, who were God's children as well as they, Christ told them a parable.

He said,—There was a man who had two sons; and the younger son demanded his share of his father's property. So his father divided all that he had between the two. The younger son then immediately took his share to a distant country, where he soon

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THE PRODIGAL SON.

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ruined himself by wasteful and riotous living. And when he had spent everything, there arose a great famine in that land; and he was in such want, that he hired himself to a countryman, who sent him into the fields to tend swine. Here he was so hungry that he would gladly have eaten what the swine were feeding upon, but no one gave him anything to eat. Then, when he saw to what a miserable condition he had brought himself, he envied even the servants in his father's house, for they had enough and to spare. And he determined that he would go home again to his father, confess how ill he had behaved, and though he could not expect to be forgiven, entreat him to let him stay with him as a servant.

So he set out on his journey home; but when he was a great way off, his father saw him, ran lovingly to meet him, and kissed him again and again. Then he told his

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father that he had sinned against God, and against him, and was not fit to be called his son any more. But his father was so glad to see him come back to him, that he bade his servants bring out clothing suitable to his rank; and prepare food that they might eat and rejoice together.

Now the elder son, who was in the field, was so angry when he heard the rejoicings, that he would not even go into the house. His father came out and tried to persuade him: but the young man reproached him for making so much more of his worthless son than he ever had done of himself, who had never done anything amiss.

But his father answered him, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was right that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found."

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CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

ONE day, after Christ had been teaching the people, little children were brought to Him that He might lay His hands on them and pray for them. His disciples, for some reason or other, found fault with those who brought them, and would have hindered them. But when Jesus knew what His disciples had done, He was much displeased with them for it. And He said to them, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Then He took the little children lovingly in His arms, laid His hands upon them and blessed them.

Our Lord had now been teaching, and working miracles among the Jewish people

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CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

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for nearly three years and a half. Thousands upon thousands had seen the wonderful things that He did, and heard what He had to tell them concerning God their Father; and also concerning Himself, who was the Son of God, come into the world to save them. They did not understand all that He said, but many believed Him to be the long-promised Messiah.

But there were many wicked men among the Jews who hated Christ; and their rulers and chief priests tried from time to time to lay hold of Him, that they might kill Him. God at last allowed them to have their own will in this; and Jesus was now on His last journey to Jerusalem, where He was to be put to death. He knew all that was to happen to Him there,—all the shame and suffering that were to be inflicted upon Him. But He knew that it was the will of His Father that He should bear it;

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and He knew that it should be for the deliverance of all human creatures from the sad consequences of their sins against God. So He did not seek to avoid it.

At the foot of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem, there was a village named Bethany, where Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, lived. They were a family whom Jesus loved; and not long before this, He had brought Lazarus to life again after he was dead and buried. Jesus stayed here a few days on His way to Jerusalem, to keep the Passover; and many came from the city, not only to see Him, but Lazarus also. The chief priests and rulers of the Jews knew that Christ was at Bethany; and they plotted to put Lazarus to death as well as Christ, because the miracle that had been performed on him, had caused many to believe Jesus to be the Son of God.

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CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

WHEN Christ was about to leave Bethany, He told two of His disciples to go into a neighbouring village, where they would find an ass tied up, with her colt by her, which they were to loose, and bring to Him. And if any one tried to prevent them, they were to say that the Lord had need of them.

So they went and found the ass tied up, with her young one, as Jesus had said. And when they were loosing them, some who were standing by, asked them why they did so. They answered, as they had been bidden, that the Lord had need of them. Then the people immediately let the beasts go, as Jesus had told His disciples that they

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CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

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would do; and they brought the colt and its mother to Him.

In Palestine, where there were very few horses, asses were used for riding upon, even by the greatest people.

So when the disciples had brought the beasts, they spread their own upper clothing upon the colt's back, and Jesus rode upon him towards Jerusalem. And multitudes came out to meet Him, laying their garments beneath His feet; while others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way, to show that they received Him as their king. Then, as the long train passed slowly round the foot of the Mount of Olives, the host of His disciples burst out in shouts of joy:—"Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." And the vast multitude that went before, and followed after, took up the

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cry,—"Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

Then as Jesus, with this rejoicing throng, drew near to Jerusalem, and looked upon its walls, and buildings, and its beautiful Temple, all lying before Him, He wept over it. For He thought of the destruction that should come upon it, for the wickedness of its people, whom He would have saved, but they would not let Him.

When He came into Jerusalem, the whole city was in a tumult; asking who it was who thus entered it like a king. And the multitudes answered that it was Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth and Galilee, their Messiah!

The chief men of the Jews were vexed that the multitude should acknowledge Christ to be their king. And it made them all the more eager to lay hold of Him, and kill Him.

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THE LAST SUPPER.

JESUS went back again to Bethany in the evening, returning to Jerusalem the next day to teach the people, and work miracles for their good. And this He did every day till His enemies seized Him, in order to put Him to death.

The chief priests and rulers of the Jews were planning among themselves how they might best take Jesus, when Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to them, and asked what they would give him if he would deliver up Jesus to them. They agreed to give him thirty pieces of silver,—that is, about five pounds of our money! And for this, Judas was willing to betray his Master, as soon as he could find a convenient opportunity of doing it.

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THE LAST SUPPER.

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Now when the Feast of the Passover was to be kept, the twelve disciples asked Jesus where they should prepare it. At this feast, the Jews solemnly ate together of a lamb, and bread made without leaven (or ferment), in memory of their deliverance out of the land of Egypt.

Jesus told His disciples to go into the city, where they would meet a man carrying a vessel of water. They were to follow this man, and ask the master of the house into which he entered, to show them a room where they might eat the Passover. So they went, and found it as Jesus had said; and they made ready the Passover.

In the evening Jesus came to the house, and sat down to supper with the twelve disciples. And He told them, how earnestly he had longed to eat that Passover with them, for it was the last that He should keep. Then, as they were eating,

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He said that one of them should betray Him to His enemies. They were very sorrowful when they heard this, each one asking anxiously if it should be he. Even Judas ventured to ask, as the others did, "Is it I?" As if his Lord did not know all his treachery! And Jesus told him, it was he.

Then Jesus took bread; and after He had given thanks to God, He brake it and gave it to the disciples, telling them that represented His body about to be slain for them. And He bade them eat it in remembrance of Him. He then took a cup of wine, and having given thanks, bade them all drink of it; for that wine represented His blood which was about to be shed, in order that the sins of all human beings might be forgiven.

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CHRIST WASHING HIS DISCIPLES' FEET.

WHEN He rose from supper, Jesus put off His upper garment; which was a loose, flowing robe, such as is worn in the East. Then taking a towel, He poured water into a bason, and began to wash the feet of His disciples, wiping them with the towel.

When He came to wash the feet of Peter, Peter would have prevented Him; for he was ashamed that his Lord should render him so mean a service. Jesus answered, that He would presently tell him why He did it; and at last Peter suffered Him to wash his feet.

Then, when our Lord had put on His garment, and sat down with them again, He asked the disciples if they knew why

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CHRIST WASHING HIS DISCIPLES' FEET.

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He had washed their feet. And He went on to tell them that He had done it in order to teach them that as He, whom they called Master and Lord, and who indeed was so, had not thought it beneath Him to act as though He were their servant, they ought to be willing to serve each other in any way, however mean.

Then Jesus comforted His disciples, who were very sorrowful, because He had said He was about to die. He bade them not let their hearts be troubled or afraid, for He was going to prepare a place for them in His Father's house, in heaven. And He promised that, when He was gone up into heaven, He would send to them God's Holy Spirit, who should be with them always, to comfort and teach them, and bring to their minds all that He had taught them, while He was Himself with them. And again He bade them not let their hearts be

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troubled. And many other loving words He said to them; and He prayed for them, and for all who should afterwards believe in Him as the Saviour of the world.

Then, when they had sung a hymn, they went out in the clear moonlight night, over the brook Cedron, to the Mount of Olives. And as they walked along, Jesus told His disciples that they would all forsake Him when His enemies had seized Him, as they were just about to do. Peter indignantly denied that he would forsake his Master: though all the others might do so, he would never leave Him. Christ answering, told him that that very night, even before the cock should crow twice, he would thrice deny that he knew anything of Jesus. But Peter warmly replied, that though he were to die with his Master, he would never deny Him. And so said all the rest of the disciples.

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JUDAS BETRAYING WITH A KISS.

THEN they all went into a garden called Gethsemane; and Jesus, taking with Him Peter, James, and John, bade the rest of the disciples stay there, while He went a little further and prayed.

And when He was alone with the three, they saw that though He had been speaking such loving, comforting words to them, He was Himself overwhelmed with sorrow. And He said to them that His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Then telling them to stay with Him while He prayed, He went to a little distance, and bending down to the very ground in His agony, He prayed that if it were possible God would spare Him the bitter sufferings which He must bear in

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JUDAS BETRAYING WITH A KISS.

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order to save the world. As He prayed, His agony of mind was so great, that the blood forced itself through His veins, falling in great drops to the ground; and God, in His pity, sent an angel to strengthen Him. Three times He went and prayed thus; and each time when He returned to the three disciples He found them asleep, instead of being ready to comfort Him, as they ought to have been, if they loved their Master. He reproved them very gently for their unkindness; but when He came to them the third time He bade them rise, for the hour was now come for Him to be given up to His enemies.

While Jesus was yet speaking, an unruly multitude, carrying lanterns and torches, and armed with swords, clubs, and other weapons, burst into the garden, with Judas at their head. Jesus went forward to meet them, asking whom they sought. They

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said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I am He." And when He said this they drew back, and fell to the ground as though they had been dead.

Now Judas had told the people who came with him, that the man whom he should kiss was he whom they were to take. So he stepped up to Jesus, and calling Him "Master!" kissed Him. Then Peter, seeing Jesus seized by these ruffians, drew his sword to defend his Master; and striking one of the servants of the high-priest, cut off his ear. But Jesus bade him sheathe his sword again, for if it were His will to escape, God would send legions of angels to protect Him. And He stretched out His hand, touched the man's ear, and it was whole again.

Then all His disciples forsook Him and fled, leaving Jesus alone in the hands of His enemies!

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THE CROWN OF THORNS.

THE high-priest and the rulers of the Jews, before whom Jesus was brought, were determined to put Him to death. But as He had never done anything wrong, it was hard work to find a pretence for doing so.

At length the high-priest solemnly bade Jesus tell them whether He was indeed the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus answered that He was the Christ; and that at the end of the world they should see Him, coming in the clouds of heaven, to judge all men. Then the high-priest rent his clothes (which was the way in which the Jews expressed grief and horror); and those who were with him exclaimed, that for Jesus to call Himself the Son of God was such wickedness that He ought to be put to death.

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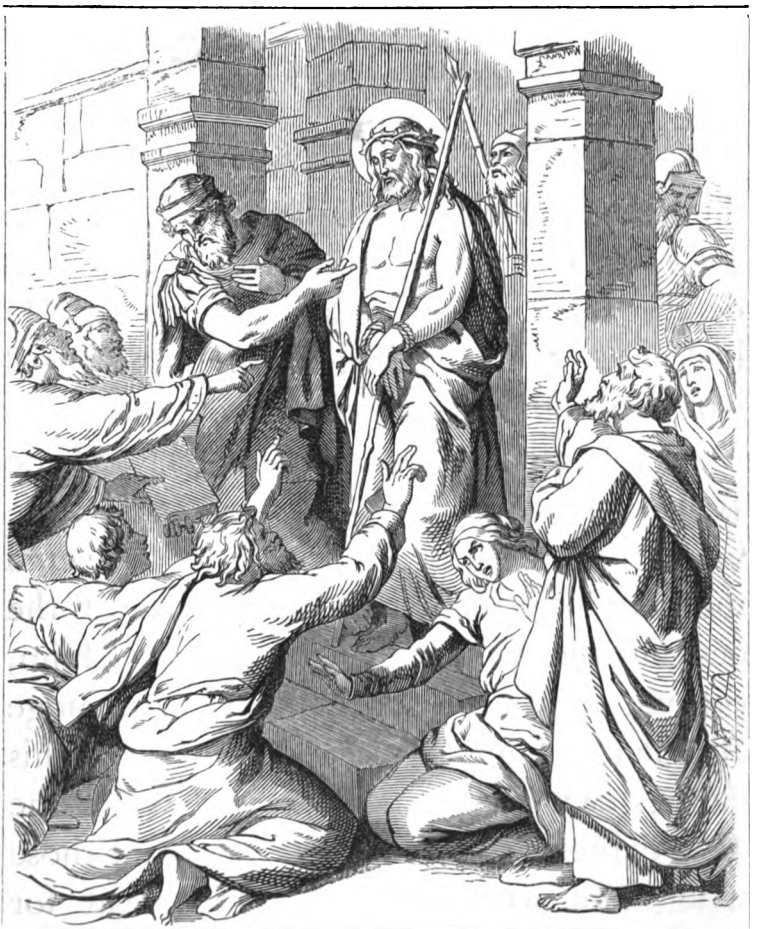

THE CROWN OF THORNS.

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Then his guards fell upon Jesus, and ill-treated Him in every possible way. They spat upon Him, they smote Him; and when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, bidding Him, as He was a prophet, tell them who it was that had struck Him. And many other cruelties they committed against Him.

Meanwhile Peter, who had turned back again to see what became of his Master, was waiting outside among the officers and servants of the palace. And as he stood warming himself by the fire, a maid-servant, looking earnestly at Peter, said that he was one who had been with Jesus of Nazareth. But Peter, declaring that he did not know Jesus, went away to another part of the palace. And immediately the cock crew. Then another servant said, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth." And again Peter denied that he knew anything

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of Him. In about an hour after, some of those who were standing about, said that Peter was certainly one of Christ's disciples, because he came from Galilee, where Jesus lived. Then Peter swore that he knew nothing of Jesus. And immediately the cock crew the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had told him that before the cock should crow twice, he would deny Him thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

After the chief-priests and rulers had condemned Jesus, they took Him before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Pilate ordered Jesus to be scourged; and then he gave Him into the hands of the soldiers, who platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, clothed Him in a purple robe, and then mocked Him, pretending to do Him reverence as the King of the Jews!

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CHRIST BEARING HIS CROSS.

THEN Judas, who had betrayed Jesus, repented of his wickedness. And he brought back to the chief-priests the money they had given him; and, exclaiming that he had sinned in betraying an innocent person, went out, and hanged himself!

Pilate had yielded to the clamour of the Jews, when he gave up Jesus to the soldiers. But he soon perceived that Jesus was innocent of the evil deeds laid to His charge, and he was very anxious to save Him. So when the soldiers had scourged Him, Jesus was brought out, faint, and wearing the crown and purple robe, with which he had been mocked. And Pilate said to the people, "Behold the man!"—hoping they would pity Jesus, and let him release Him. But

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CHRIST BEARING HIS CROSS.

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they only cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate indignantly bade them crucify Him themselves, for he found no fault in Him. Then the Jews, seeing how bent Pilate was on saving Jesus, told him, that if he let Jesus go, he would be guilty of treason to the Roman emperor; because Christ had called Himself a king. Pilate was afraid when he heard this. Still he tried again and again to persuade them to let him release Jesus; and as it was the custom that, at the Feast of the Passover, some one criminal, whom they chose, should be set at liberty, he wanted them to let Jesus be this one. But they chose a robber, named Barabbas, instead. And when Pilate asked them what he must then do with Jesus, they cried out, as before, "Let Him be crucified."

Then Pilate, finding that nothing but the death of Jesus would satisfy th

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at length shamefully gave way to them. But before he delivered Jesus to the soldiers to be crucified, he took water, and washing his hands before the multitude, as was the custom when any one wished to show his innocence of any crime, he told them that he was innocent of the death of that just person; they must bear the blame of it.

Then the soldiers took Jesus; and after they had grievously insulted Him, they led Him away to crucify Him, compelling Him Himself to carry the cross upon which He was to be put to death. But Jesus was so faint and worn out with the cruel treatment which He had received, that He could not carry the heavy cross they had laid upon Him. So they seized a countryman whom they met, and made him bear it after Jesus.

And great numbers followed Jesus, weeping and lamenting for Him.

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THE CRUCIFIXION.

WHEN they were come to a rising ground, named Calvary, they crucified Jesus there, along with two thieves, one on each side of Him. Upon the cross was written, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." And the soldiers, and many of the people who stood looking on, mocked Him; bidding Him save Himself, and come down from the cross, if He were indeed the Son of God. But Jesus prayed for His tormentors; saying, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

One of the thieves also that were crucified with Him spoke insultingly to Jesus. But the other thief rebuked his companion, saying that they were justly punished for their ill deeds, while Jesus had done nothing

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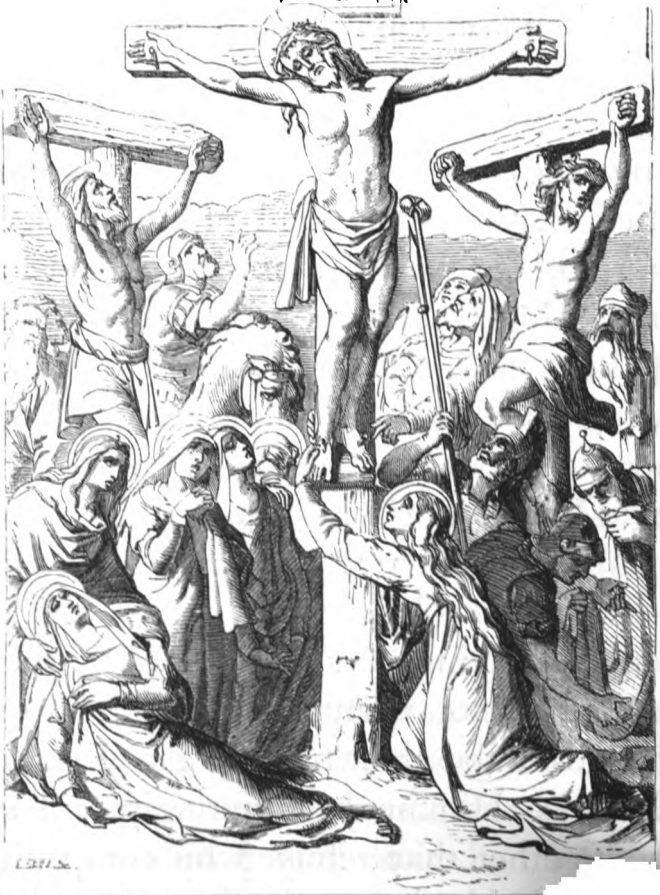

THE CRUCIFIXION.

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amiss. Then he prayed Jesus to remember him when He entered into His kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Then, though it was mid-day, it became dark over the whole land of Judea. And amid the darkness Jesus cried with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Some who stood there, pitying Him, ran and filled a sponge with wine, and putting it on a reed in order to reach His lips, gave Him drink. Then, when He had drunk, He again cried out with a loud voice, "It is finished!" His head sank down, and He died.

And immediately a great earthquake shook the ground, tearing the rocks in pieces, so that many graves were opened. And the bodies of holy people, who had been laid in them, came to life again after Christ's resurrection, and went into

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Jerusalem, where they were seen by many.

It was the custom of the Romans to break the legs of those who had been crucified, in order that they might die more speedily. But when the soldiers came to do this, they found Christ was already dead. So they did not break His legs, but one of them pierced His side with a spear, and blood and water flowed from the wound.

Then one of the Jewish rulers, named Joseph, came to Pilate, and begged that he might have the body of Jesus to bury it. Pilate gave him leave to have it. So he took Jesus down from the cross, wrapped Him in fine linen, and when he had laid Him in his own new tomb, which was cut in the rock, he closed it with a large stone.

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CHRIST APPEARS TO MARY.

THEN the chief priests and others came to Pilate. And they said to him that as Jesus, before His death, had told the people that in three days after He should rise from the dead and be alive again, it would be better that a guard should be placed over His tomb, lest His disciples should steal the body by night, and then say that He was risen from the dead. So Pilate told them to take a guard of Roman soldiers; and they placed a seal on the stone over the tomb, that they might make sure that no one had attempted to remove it.

Very early in the morning of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the sister of our Lord's mother, came to the tomb, that they might, according to

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CHRIST APPEARS TO MARY.

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custom in the East, wrap up the body of Christ with spices and gums, which would prevent its decay. As they went, they wondered who would roll away for them the great stone that closed the tomb. But when they reached the place, the stone was already rolled away; and an angel, in bright shining garments, sat there, who bade them not be afraid, for he knew that they sought Jesus of Nazareth, who was risen from the dead. And he said to the women that they must go and tell the disciples, and Peter, that they would find their Lord in Galilee, as before His death He had told them they should do.

Then the women went away quickly, trembling with fear and joy, to tell the disciples. Peter and John ran at once to the tomb, to see if what they had heard was indeed true; and finding it empty, returned again to their own homes, for they

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scarcely understood what had been said to them about Christ rising from the dead.

But Mary Magdalene, who was with them, stayed behind at the tomb, weeping. And as she wept some one stood by her, and asked her why she wept, and who it was that she was seeking. She, supposing it to be the gardener, begged him, if he had taken away the body of Jesus, to tell her where he had laid it, that she might take it away. Jesus (for it was He Himself) said to her, "Mary!" She instantly knew His voice, and answering, "Master!" clung to His feet for very joy, worshipping Him.

Then Jesus told her to go and tell His disciples that He was risen from the dead, and that He should very soon ascend to heaven to His Father and theirs.

So she went and told the disciples that she had seen Jesus. But they could not believe her.

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THE ASCENSION.

JESUS next appeared to two of the disciples, as they were going from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus, and were sorrowfully talking about the death of their Master. They did not know Him at first; but He joined them, and after explaining to them all that the Scriptures had said concerning Himself, went with them into the house where they were staying. There, as they sat at supper, he took bread, and blessing it, gave it to them. Then they knew their Lord; and when He vanished out of their sight, they hastened back again to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples that Jesus was indeed risen from the dead, for they had seen Him.

While they were telling what they had

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THE ASCENSION.

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seen, Jesus Himself stood among them, and blessed them. And they were afraid, thinking they had seen a spirit. But He bade them touch Him, that they might know it was not a spirit that they saw, but His own body. And He showed them, on His hands and His side, the marks of the cruel wounds that He had received. Then, as they still, for very joy, scarcely believed it was He, He took some broiled fish and a piece of honeycomb, and ate it before them, in order to convince them that it was indeed Himself in His own body. Then the disciples were glad when they felt sure it was Jesus Himself who was with them.

After this, Peter, and some other of the disciples, went fishing on the Sea of Tiberias, in Galilee. They caught nothing that night; but at daybreak they saw some one standing on the shore, who asked them kindly if they had any fish. They said no. He bade

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them cast their net on the right side of the boat; and when they had done so, they caught so many fishes that they could not draw the net to land. Then John exclaimed, that it was the Lord! Peter, hearing that, immediately threw on his fisher's coat, and sprang into the water, that he might go to his Master. Then when they were all come to land, Jesus bade them come and dine; for He had a fire there, on which fish was broiling; and bread also.

And they all now knew that Jesus, who had been crucified, and who had risen from the dead, was their Lord and God!

Vast numbers of people saw Jesus after His resurrection from the dead. Then, at the end of forty days, He went out to Bethany with the eleven Apostles. There He gave them His last blessing; and while He was blessing them, He ascended from the earth, and was taken up into heaven.

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THE LAME MAN CURED BY PETER.

BEFORE our Lord was taken up into heaven He told His Apostles that they must teach all men that He was the Saviour of the world, and that they must be baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And He commanded the Apostles to begin this teaching in Jerusalem.

And when they did as He had bidden them, a wonderful thing took place; for God gave them power to speak many languages which they had never before known, so that men from all countries understood what was told them about Jesus. And, with sorrow for their past misdeeds, they earnestly asked the Apostles what they must do. Peter answered that they must

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THE LAME MAN CURED BY PETER.

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repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to obtain forgiveness. So they gladly did as he bade them, and that first day three thousand people became Christians,—that is, they believed Jesus to be the Saviour of the world, and they were baptized.

One day after this, Peter and John went into the Temple, as was their custom, to worship God. And as they entered at the gate called Beautiful, they saw a man who had been lame from his birth, and who was every day laid at that gate to ask alms from those who were going into the Temple. As Peter and John passed him, the poor man asked an alms of them. Peter bade him look steadfastly at them. And when he did so, expecting they would give him money, Peter told him that he had neither silver nor gold, for they were poor men; and yet there was something

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that he would give him. Then, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, he bade him rise up and walk. As he did so, he took him by the hand to help him to rise. And immediately the man's feet and ankle-bones were strengthened, so that he sprang up, and stood, and walked; and, leaping for joy, he went with the Apostles into the Temple, to give thanks to God for his cure.

Then all the people that were about, and who knew that it was he who had been lame from his birth, were amazed when they saw him walking. And when they crowded after the Apostles into the porch of the Temple, Peter told them that it was Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had put to death, and who was truly God, who had made the lame man able to walk; and that He would forgive their sins, if they would only believe Him to be the Saviour of the world.

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THE DEATH OF ANANIAS.

Now when Peter and John told the people that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was the Saviour of the world, the chief priests and rulers of the Jews were so angry, that they laid hold of the Apostles and shut them up in prison.

The next day, being brought before a number of the chief people, they were asked by what means they had cured the lame man. Peter told them that it was Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, and whom God had raised from the dead, who had done this miracle. Then they commanded the Apostles not to tell the people any more that Jesus was the Saviour of the world; threatening to punish them if they did so. But Peter answered that God Himself had

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THE DEATH OF ANANI.

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bidden them tell this to every one, so they must do it.

Many thousands of the people believed what the Apostles told them of Jesus. And they were so kind and loving to each other, that those of them who were rich sold their lands and houses, and brought the money to the Apostles, that they might give it to the poor.

But there was a man named Ananias, who, when he had sold his land, brought to the Apostles only a part of the price of it, pretending that it was the whole. Then Peter asked him how it was that he had let Satan lead him to tell a lie about this money. The money was his own, and he might have kept the whole of it, instead of a part, if he had wished. But to tell a lie about it was a grievous sin against God.

Then when Ananias heard Peter say this, he fell down and died. And they

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took up his dead body, carried it out, and buried him.

About three hours afterwards, Sapphira, the wife of Ananias, came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter asked her whether the money that Ananias had brought to the Apostles was all that they had received for the land. She answered, Yes, it was. Then Peter asked her how it was that both she and her husband had agreed to tell a lie, in order to deceive them. And he told her that those who had just buried her husband were at the door, and they would also carry her out and bury her. Then she immediately fell down, and died at Peter's feet. And the young men carried her out, and buried her by her husband.

And all the disciples were afraid, when they saw how God had punished Ananias and Sapphira for telling lies.

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THE DEATH OF STEPHEN.

THE Apostles did so many miracles in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, that the chief-priests again shut them up in prison.

But at night the angel of the Lord came, and opening the prison-doors, brought out the Apostles, and bade them teach, in the Temple itself, that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of all men. So, early in the morning, they went into the Temple, and taught the people about Jesus.

Then, when the chief-priests and rulers were met together, they ordered the Apostles to be brought before them. But when the officers went to the prison to fetch them, they found that they were not there. So they returned, saying that they had found the prison shut up safely, and the keepers

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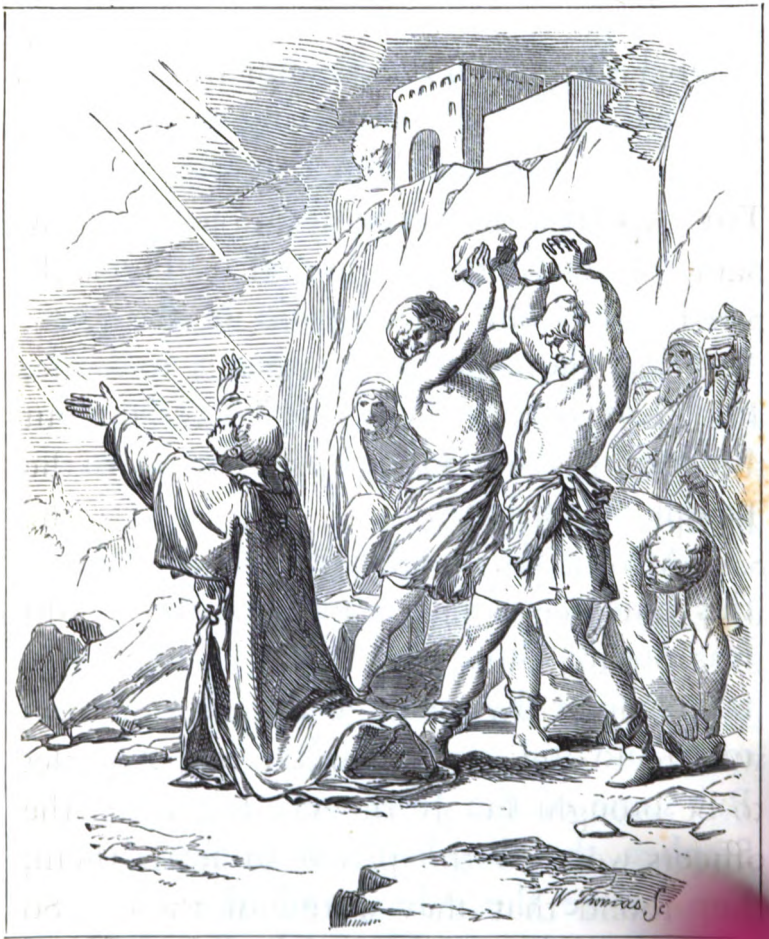

THE DEATH OF STEPHEN.

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watching outside as usual; but when they opened the doors, the prisoners were gone. While they were all wondering at this, some one came in to tell them that the prisoners whom they could not find, were in the Temple teaching the people. Then the chief-priests sent the captain of the guard to bring the Apostles to them; and after they had beaten them, they let them go, forbidding them to speak any more to the people about Jesus.

Among the number of the disciples at this time was a man named Stephen; who was one of those who had been chosen to take care of the poor. He was a very good man, and did great wonders and miracles. But some of the Jews were so angry with Stephen, that they laid hold of him, dragged him before the rulers, and there accused him of having spoken wickedly of Moses, and even of God Himself.

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Then, out of those books that Moses and others of their own prophets had written, Stephen showed how wickedly the Jews had acted, and how grievously they had sinned against God in killing those whom He had sent to teach them; and at last, in having put to death even God's own Son. And when he had spoken to them in this way, he looked up steadfastly to heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on His right hand. And he told the people that he saw the heavens opened, and the Son of Man, that is, Jesus Christ, standing at the right hand of God.

Then they cried out against him, hurried him out of the city, and put him cruelly to death, by stoning. And as they stoned him, he exclaimed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And praying God to forgive his murderers, he died, as though he had been falling asleep.

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CONVERSION OF SAUL.

AMONG those who put Stephen to death was a young man named Saul. He was a bitter persecutor of those who believed in Jesus; and the high-priest sent him to Damascus, to bring any Christians whom he found there, back with him to Jerusalem.

Damascus is a city in Syria, more than a hundred miles from Jerusalem. And when Saul had been travelling some days, as he came near the city, suddenly there shone round him a light of such dazzling brightness, that he fell, bewildered, to the ground. Amid the light a glorious form was seen, and he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Then Saul asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" And the voice answered, "I am

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CONVERSION OF SAUL.

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Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." Then Saul, amazed and trembling, asked what he must do. And the Lord bade him arise, and go to Damascus, and there it should be told him what he must do.

Now the men who were travelling with Saul, stood by, speechless with astonishment and fear; for they saw the light, and heard the awful voice, though they did not see Him whom Saul saw.

Then Saul arose from the earth. But he was quite blinded by the dazzling light, so that his followers had to lead him till they reached Damascus. There he remained blind for three days; and in such distress of mind for his wickedness in persecuting the disciples, that he could neither eat nor drink.

Now there was at Damascus a disciple named Ananias, to whom the Lord spoke in a dream, bidding him go to a certain

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street in the city, where he would find Saul of Tarsus, who was repenting of his past misdeeds. Ananias was afraid to go; for he knew how cruelly Saul had treated the Christians at Jerusalem, and also that he was come to Damascus on purpose to seize the Christians there. But the Lord bade him not fear to go; because He had chosen Saul to be one of His Apostles to teach the Gentiles—that is, those who were not Jews—that Jesus was their Saviour.

Then Ananias went, and, putting his hands upon Saul, told him that the Lord Jesus, whom he had seen on his journey, had sent him to cure him of his blindness, and that he might receive God's Holy Spirit.

And immediately Saul's sight was restored to him. And when he had been baptized, he taught in the synagogue that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, who had died to save all men.

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PETER DELIVERED OUT OF PRISON.

HEROD AGRIPPA, king of Judea, persecuted the Christians. James, the brother of John, he beheaded; and then he shut up Peter in prison, intending to put him to death also.

The disciples were greatly afflicted at this, and prayed very earnestly to God that He would deliver Peter out of the power of the wicked king.

Now Peter was one night sleeping in his prison, between two soldiers, to whom he was chained by each hand, when, suddenly, a bright light shone around, and an angel of the Lord stood by him, and bade him rise quickly, put on his clothing and his shoes, and follow him. As the angel

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PETER DELIVERED OUT OF PRISON.

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spoke, Peter's chains fell off; and he rose, clothed himself, and followed the angel, thinking it was all a dream. The prison-doors were closely guarded as usual; but they passed on, without any one seeing them, till they came to the great iron gate. This opened to them of itself; and they went out through it, and along a certain street, where the angel left Peter.

Then when he was at last convinced that he was really brought out of prison, Peter knew that it was God Himself who had sent an angel to deliver him from the cruelty of King Herod, and the Jews. And he went on to the house of Mary, one of the disciples, where many of his friends were praying for him. When he knocked at the gate, a young woman, named Rhoda, came to see who it was. And when she heard Peter's voice she was so glad, that for very joy she forgot to open the gate, but

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ran into the house instead, to tell them that Peter was standing there. They told her she must be mad to suppose such a thing; for they knew how Peter had been chained in prison. But she declared it was certainly he. And as he kept knocking, they at last opened the door; and then they found that it was indeed Peter himself.

Then Peter told them how God had sent an angel to deliver him out of prison. And bidding them relate all these things to the Church—that is, the disciples at Jerusalem—he went away to another place, that he might be out of the reach of Herod.

At daybreak, there was no small stir among the soldiers when they found their prisoner missing. And Herod was so enraged with them for letting Peter go, as he supposed they had done, that he ordered the guards to be put to death.

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ELYMAS STRUCK BLIND.

THE Jews who lived in Damascus were so angry with Saul for proving that Jesus was the Messiah, that the next time he came to the city they plotted together to kill him. And they kept watch night and day at the gates of the city, that they might be sure to catch him.

But Saul knew of their wicked design; and his friends got him safely out, by letting him down in a basket through the window of a house that was built upon the wall.

Then he went up to Jerusalem; where the disciples, knowing how he had formerly persecuted them, were at first afraid of having anything to do with him. But Barnabas, one of the disciples who had been at Damascus, took him to Peter and

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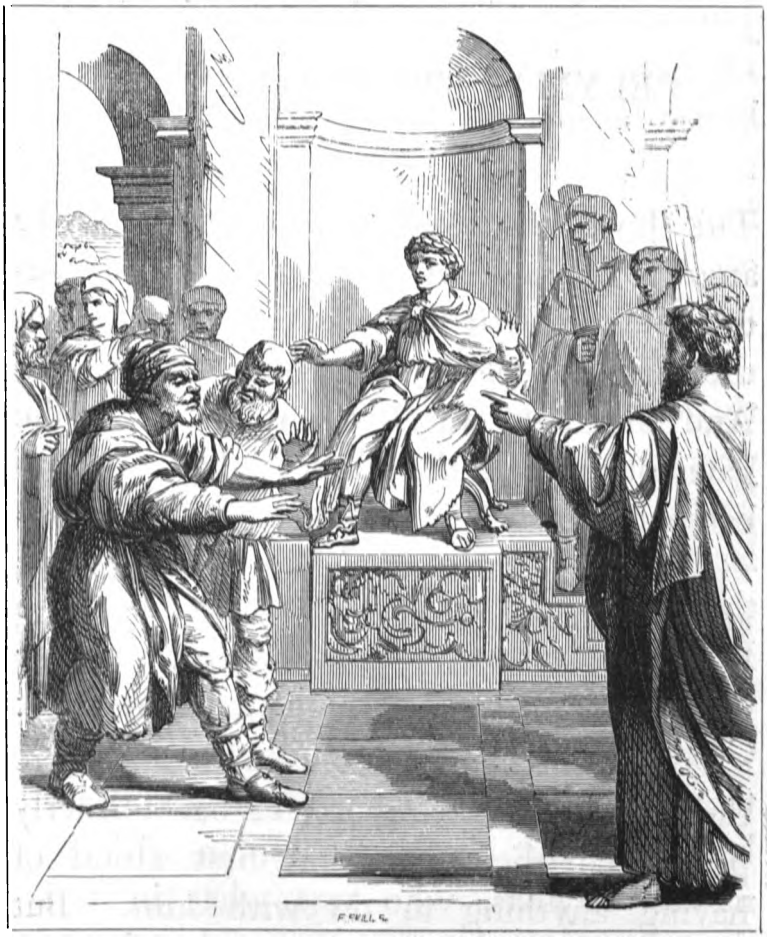

ELYMAS STRUCK BLIND.

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James, and told them how the Lord Jesus Himself had appeared to Saul, and chosen him to be one of His Apostles. Then they received him, and he stayed with them, till he was obliged, in order to save his life, to go away to his own city Tarsus, where he lived for some years.

Afterwards he and Barnabas travelled through various countries, teaching the people about Jesus Christ. One of the places to which they went was Cyprus, a large island in the Mediterranean Sea, and the birth-place of Barnabas. Here the Roman governor, Sergius Paulus, sent for the Apostles, that they might tell him about God and Jesus Christ. And when he heard them, he thought that what they said must be true. But there was a man with him named Elymas, who was what in those days was called a sorcerer,—that is, one who pretended to be a prophet, and to be

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able to do wonderful things, almost like the miracles that God enabled His prophets and disciples to do. And this man did all that he could to prevent the Roman governor's becoming a Christian.

But Paul (for so Saul was then called) was bidden by God Himself to put an end to the wicked doings of Elymas. So, looking steadily at him, he spoke to him sternly of his misdeeds, telling him that God was about to punish them, by causing him to be quite blind for a time. As he spoke, a mist came over the eyes of Elymas; and then it was all dark, so that he was obliged to seek some one to lead him.

Then when the Roman governor saw that Elymas was struck blind by God, as Paul had said he should be, he was filled with astonishment, and believed all that the Apostles had taught him about the true God, and Jesus Christ His Son.

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PAUL AT JERUSALEM.

PAUL often got very ill-treated as he went about teaching. He was beaten, he was put in prison, he was stoned, till the people thought he was dead; indeed, over and over again the Jews would have murdered him if they could. The last time that he was in Jerusalem, finding him in the Temple, some of the Jews who hated Paul laid hold of him, dragged him out to kill him, and raised such a riot in the city, that the captain of the guard was obliged to bring out a company of soldiers to put an end to it.

When the people saw the soldiers, they were frightened, and left off beating Paul. But when the captain asked what their prisoner had done wrong, they clamoured, and became so riotous again, that he was obliged

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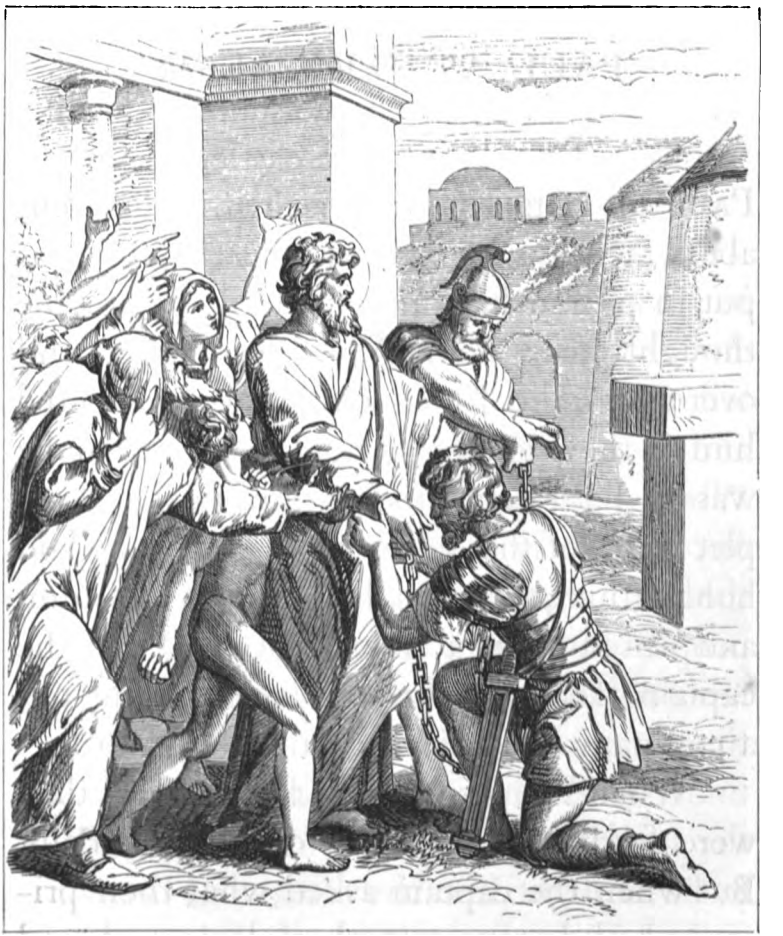

PAUL AT JERUSALEM.

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to order the guard to take Paul into the castle, close to the Temple, for safety.

When Paul was on the staircase leading from the Temple into the castle, he begged the captain to let him speak to the people. And then he told them how Jesus Christ had appeared to him as he went to Damascus, and that He had commanded him to tell the Gentiles that He was their Saviour, and not the Saviour of the Jews only. When Paul said this, the multitude broke out in fresh rage against him; for the Jews thought that God did not care for any people but themselves. And they clamoured so for his being put to death, that the captain, (who, being a Roman, did not understand what Paul had been saying to the Jews in their own language,) ordered him to be brought into the castle and beaten, to make him confess what he had done wrong.

But when the soldiers were going to

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beat him, Paul told them that, though he was a Jew, he was a Roman citizen. They were afraid when they heard this, for it was against the law either to beat or put fetters upon a Roman citizen; so they brought him to the chief priests, that he might defend himself against what the Jews had to say of him. But the chief priests, and those with them, quarrelled so violently among themselves after they had heard Paul, that the chief captain was again obliged to send soldiers to take him into the castle, lest he should be torn to pieces.

Paul was safe in the castle; but the Jews laid a plan to kill him the next time he was brought out before the chief priests. Paul's nephew heard of this, and told it to the chief captain; who then sent Paul away, with a guard of near five hundred soldiers, horse and foot, to Cæsarea, where Felix, the governor, was.

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PAUL AT MELITA.

PAUL at length found that there was little chance of his being justly treated if he were tried in his own country. So, as he was a Roman citizen, he required that he should be sent to Rome, that the Emperor himself might judge him.

It was a long and dangerous voyage from Judea to Italy. The vessel in which Paul and a number of other prisoners were sailing thither, crept slowly along in the Mediterranean Sea, going this way and that, according as the wind blew. For sailors in those days could not manage vessels as they do now, neither had they any compass to direct them. Suddenly a violent storm arose, which almost wrecked the ship at once. But, by throwing over-

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PAUL AT MELITA.

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board the tackling of the ship, and its lading, they managed to struggle on for a time. But presently, trying to steer the vessel into what seemed a safe opening in the shore, they ran it aground; and the forepart sticking fast, the stern was soon broken to pieces by the waves dashing against it.

Then the soldiers proposed to kill all the prisoners, lest, in the confusion, they should make their escape. But the Roman officer, who had charge of Paul and the others, would not allow this. He ordered all who could swim to throw themselves into the sea, and get to land as well as they could. Those who could not swim he told to cling to planks and broken pieces of the ship, which would float them ashore. And so they all got safe to land.

The island on which they were ship-

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wrecked was named Melita, but is now called Malta. And though the people who lived in it were rude and uncivilized, they treated the poor, wet, cold, weary crew very kindly; lighting a fire to warm them, and doing what they could to comfort them. They all had to set to work, and Paul collected a heap of wood for the fire. But when he threw it upon the fire, the heat caused a viper, which had been hidden among the wood, to come out, and it fastened upon his hand. When the poor, ignorant people saw this, they thought Paul must be some very wicked man, who was to be stung to death for his ill-deeds. But when, instead of falling down dead, as they expected, they saw him shake the viper off into the fire, and remain unhurt, they changed their minds, and thought him a god!

Paul did many miracles at Melita.

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And when at length he sailed away to Italy, he taught the people of Rome, both Jews and Gentiles, that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of the world.

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