

THE SWORDMAKER'S SON



WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

Ralph P. Stoddard
from his father.

Madison, New Jersey,
Christmas, 1903,
William C. Stoddard



THE SWORDMAKER'S SON



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WITH A PEBBLE FROM HIS SLING, CYRIL STRIKES THE HELMET FROM
THE ROMAN SOLDIER'S HEAD. (SEE PAGE 21.)

THE
SWORDMAKER'S SON

A STORY OF THE YEAR 30 A. D.

BY

WILLIAM O. STODDARD

AUTHOR OF "THE WHITE CAVE," ETC.



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CHAPTER I

THE FUGITIVES FROM SAMARIA

A SCORE of mounted spearmen were galloping sharply along the broad, well-kept highway that led past the foot-hills of Mount Gilboa toward the southern gate of the ancient city of Jezreel. The pattern of their burnished helmets, and their arms and armor, indicated that they were from the light cavalry of some Roman legion. There was but little conversation among them, but as they rode on enough was said by both officers and men to tell that they were pursuing fugitives, whom they expected soon to overtake.

"We shall cut them down before they reach Jezreel," came from a harsh voice in the ranks.

"Slay them not," responded the foremost horseman. "The old smith must be crucified, and the boy is wanted for the circus."

Less than a mile eastward from the highway and the horsemen, under thick tree-shelter on the brow of a hill,

stood two persons who eagerly watched the passage of the cavalry, and seemed to know their errand. One was a well-grown, handsome youth, with dark, closely curling hair, clear olive complexion, and eyes that were really glittering in their brilliancy. He may have been somewhat over sixteen years of age; but that is no longer boyhood among the nations of the East. The simple dress that he wore — a sleeveless tunic of thin woollen cloth — hardly concealed the lithe, sinewy form that seemed to promise for him the suppleness of a young panther. Over his left arm was thrown a loosely fitted linen garment — a kind of robe, to be put on when needed; and on his feet were sandals. A leather belt around his waist sustained a wallet.

The other person was a powerfully built, middle-aged man, with a deeply lined, intelligent face. There was a strong resemblance between the two, but there was one marked difference. The features of the man were of the highest type of the old Hebrew race, and his nose was aquiline, while that of the boy was straight, and his lips were thinner, as if in him the Hebrew and Greek races had been merged into one.

The summer air was wonderfully pure and clear. The two watchers could almost discern the trappings of the cavalry horses, while the Carmel mountain ridges, far across the plain of Esdraelon before them, rose above the horizon with a distinctness impossible in any moister atmosphere. Behind them, eastward, were the forests and

crag of Gilboa, and the elder of the fugitives turned and anxiously scanned its broken outline.

They seemed to have escaped for a time, for the Roman spearmen were galloping away steadily; and the young man shook his clenched fist at them as he exclaimed:

“Ye wolves! We could have dared the Samaritan mob, if it had not been for you.”

“But, Cyril, hearken,” responded his father, gloomily; “there were too many, even of the mob. There is but one hope for us now. We are followed closely, and we could not long be concealed here. I must flee into the wilderness until this storm is over. It will pass. Go thou to our kinsmen in Galilee. Go first to the house of Isaac Ben Nassur, and see thy sister; but stay not long in Cana. If thou art not safe in Galilee, go on and join one of the bands in the fastnesses of Lebanon, or find thy way to Cæsarea.”

“Nay, father,” exclaimed Cyril. “Lois is safe there in Cana. It is better I should go with thee. Thou wilt need me.”

His brave young face was flushed with intense earnestness as she spoke. His father had been watching it with eyes that were full of pride in his son, but he interrupted him, almost sternly.

“Go, as I bid thee,” he said. “So shalt thou escape the galleys or the sword. Whither I go, I know not; but what becomes of me is of less importance, now that my right hand has failed me.”

He stretched out his hand, and Cyril shuddered, although he must often have seen it. Sinewy, remarkably muscular as was the bare, bronzed arm, all below its wrist was shriveled, distorted, withered, perhaps by rheumatism or some kindred affliction. The father's face grew dark and bitter as he added: "Who, now, would believe that this hand had led the men of Galilee when they slew the soldiers of Herod the Great in the streets of Jerusalem? We were beaten? Ay, they outnumbered us; but how they did go down! 'T was a great day — that old Pass-over fight. I have smitten the wolves of Rome, too, in more places than they know of! Many and many a good blade have I shaped and tempered — many a shield and helmet; but the war-work and the anvil-work of Ezra the Swordmaker are done, and he goes forth a crippled beggar — yea, even a hunted wild beast! Go, my son; go thou to Isaac Ben Nassur."

"I will go," replied Cyril, with tears on his face and a tremor in his voice; "but when — when shall I see thee again?"

"The Lord, the God of our fathers, he only knoweth," said Ezra. "There have been terrible times for Israel, and there are bloodier days to come. I am glad thy mother is at rest. Only thou and Lois remain. Our kindred are fewer than they were. Something tells me that the day of a great vengeance is near at hand. So all the prophets tell us. O my son, be thou ready for the coming of the promised King!"

“The King!” Cyril exclaimed. “Why does he not come now? Why is it that our people are left without a leader, to be slaughtered like sheep?”

“Who shall know the counsel of the Most High?” reverently responded Ezra. “But the Messiah, the Prince of the house of David, the Captain of the host of Israel, he will surely come!”

Something of their family history presented itself in their after-talk. Long years ago, it appeared, a Greek proselyte to the Jewish faith, a woman of high character and great beauty, named Lois, had met with Ezra the Swordmaker at a Passover week at Jerusalem, and had not long afterward become his wife. She had been as zealous a believer as if she had been born a daughter of Abraham.

They talked of her, and of the young Lois at Cana, and of the oppressions of their people, and of the seeming hopelessness of any present help; but at last Ezra turned and waved his withered right hand westward.

“On that plain of Esdraelon,” he said, “since the world was made more men have fallen by the sword than upon any other piece of ground. In the day of the coming King, in the year of his redeemed, there shall be fought there the greatest of all battles, on the field of blood in the valley before Jezreel.”

He seemed truly to grow in stature. His face flushed, and his voice rang out like a trumpet. All the fierce enthusiasm of the brave old Hebrew, however, was repro-

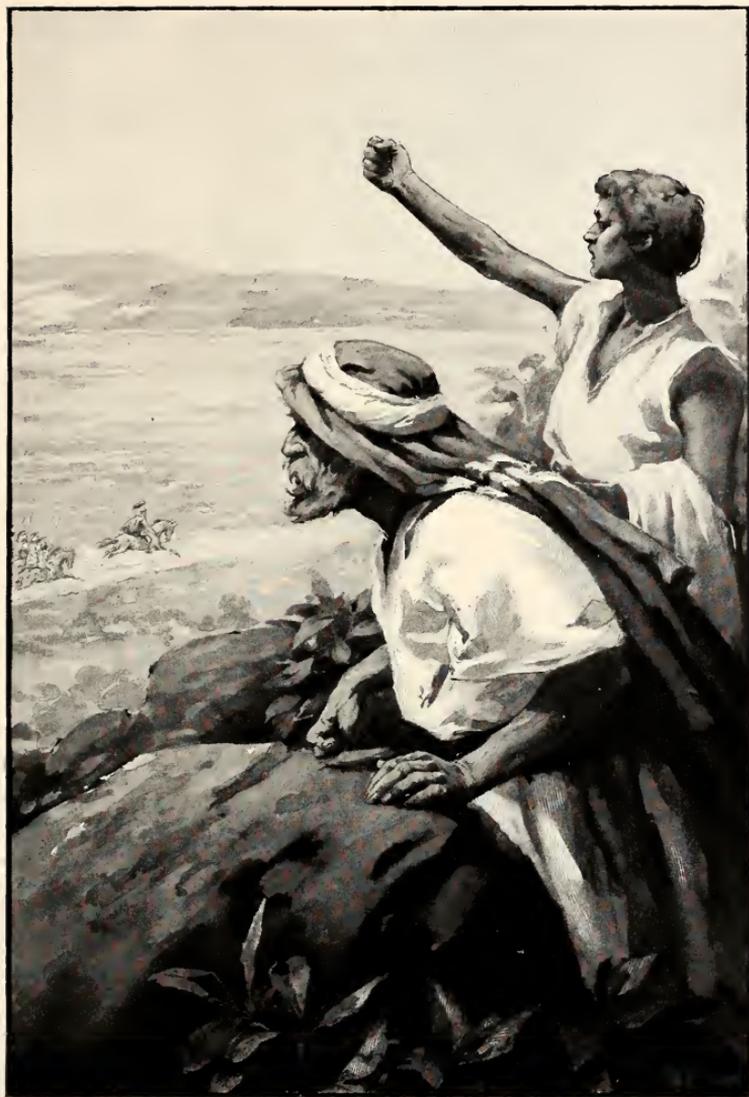
duced in the face and attitude of his son. Cyril looked toward Esdraelon and Carmel with eyes that blazed, and cheeks that were white instead of red.

"The great battle!" he exclaimed. "Dost thou think I may be there?"

"God grant it!" responded the swordmaker, with great solemnity. "I have taught thee my trade; thou hast also learned every feat that is to be performed with the sword and spear. I have taught thee to box, and to wrestle, and to swim. Thou art as fleet of foot as Asahel — as fleet as a wild roe. Thou art perfect, for thy age, with the bow and with the sling. I have hoped for thee that thou mayest be a captain. Therefore, as thou goest, learn all there is to know about war. Learn from the Romans; study their camps and forts, and the marching of their cohorts. What we need is their drill and their discipline. Go, now. If I am slain, I am slain. Live thou, and be strong; and pray that in the day that is coming thou mayest indeed fight at the right hand of the anointed King of Israel."

For one short moment he held Cyril tightly in his arms, and then they parted. The face of the old warrior-armorier grew stern, perhaps despairing, but he turned and silently strode away toward the rugged declivities of the Gilboa Mountains.

Cyril stood, motionless, looking after his father until the rocks and trees hid him from view. He turned again toward the plain, but it was no time for thinking of the



CYRIL SHOOK HIS CLENCHED FIST AT THE ROMANS.

mighty hosts which had met there or were yet to meet. The spot he stood on was no hiding-place, and the boy, too, must flee for his liberty or his life.

The galloping spearmen had long since disappeared, and now Cyril's eyes fell upon something that lay on the ground at his feet. He stooped and picked it up — a little bag that answered with a chink to the shake he gave it. He had known that it was there, but acted as if he had been unconscious of it until now. He untied it and poured out the contents into his hand.

“Seven shekels and twenty denarii,” he mused. “I am afraid he gave me all he had. He can get more, if he can reach his friends at the cave in the wilderness of Judea. I want to go there some day. I wish I could be with him now, and not in Galilee. I will not spend one denarius until I am compelled to.”

He put the money back into the bag and hid it under his tunic. It was not a large sum, but it was quite a provision, in that time and place, for a young fellow like him. The shekel, nominally worth sixty-two and a half cents of our money, was a Hebrew coin, and it might have been called the dollar of Palestine but that it would buy so much more than would a dollar of the present day. The denarius was a Roman coin worth sixteen cents, and was a fair day's wages for a laboring-man.

Cyril's bag, therefore, contained his living for three months, if he could prevent it from being violently taken away by one kind of robber or another. There were

many, of many kinds, for such as he, and he was mindful of them while he so carefully concealed the bag. During the years that he could remember, thousands of Jewish youths had been sold into slavery, and thousands of Jewish patriots, such as Ezra, had been slain with the sword or crucified beside the highways. He had evidently been, himself, an eye-witness of terrible scenes, and his eyes were flashing angrily as he recalled them.

“Oh, that the King of Israel would come!” he exclaimed aloud. “He will rule at Jerusalem and in Samaria! He will conquer the Romans! He will subdue the world! I will go to Galilee, now, but I hope to be with him on that day,—the day of the great battle in the valley before Jezreel!”

He set off at once down the hillside, toward the very highway along which the cavalry had ridden. It led toward Jezreel, but it also led toward the boundary-line between the district of Samaria, belonging to the region under Pontius Pilate, the representative of the Roman emperor Tiberius, and the district of Galilee, belonging to Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who was also a subject of the Roman emperor. If Cyril were once across that line, the perils of such an insignificant fugitive from Samaria would be very much diminished, for there were jealousies between Herod and Pilate, and the military forces of one of them did not trespass upon the territory of the other. No doubt there would be guards along the frontier as well as patrols on the great military

road, and Cyril may have been thinking of such obstacles when he said :

“I can get through in spite of them—and I will die rather than be taken prisoner!”

As for Ezra the Swordmaker, he walked very rapidly for some time after parting from his son. More and more wild and rugged grew the scenery around him. He clambered out, at last, upon a bare, sunlit knob of granite, above a narrow valley in the middle of which was a cluster of rude dwellings.

“No,” he said, looking thoughtfully down upon them; “I must not sleep under a roof to-night. Neither will my boy. The villagers are hospitable enough, but who knows what enemies I might find among them?”

He looked up, for a moment, but the cloudlessly blue sky sent back no answer. He had murmured an earnest prayer in the old Hebrew tongue, and when he ceased he turned his face toward the north, the direction in which Cyril had gone.

“My brave young lion!” he exclaimed. “It must be his hand, not mine, that will henceforth ply the hammer and draw the sword. I am like Israel and Judah, for my right hand is withered and I can strike no more.”

His deep, mournful voice rang out unheard through the solitude, and then he was silent. There was uncommon vigor in the firm, elastic step with which he now pushed forward, across broken ledges and through the tangled forest-growths, toward a mass of gloomy-looking cliffs which rose to the northward of the valley.

CHAPTER II

THE RABBI'S LECTURE

THE village street, in which the maiden stood by the well, wore a half-sleepy look, for little breeze was stirring and the day was warm. Others were coming and going, but she did not seem to be speaking to any of her companions. "It will be one of the largest wedding-parties they've ever had in Cana," she was thinking. "The bride is very handsome, and is rich."

She had put down her tall, slender-necked water-pitcher upon the circle of masonry around the mouth of the well. She stood erect, and the merry expression which had twinkled for a moment in her brilliant dark eyes faded away. They suddenly grew thoughtful, and her lip quivered as she exclaimed:

"When will they come, and why do I not hear from them? They may have been killed!"

Cana was a thriving village on the great highway through the hills west of the Sea of Galilee. From the main road a number of narrow, irregular streets wandered up and along a low hillside, and were bordered by houses that were built mostly of stone. The inhabitants

had need for thrift and industry, if it were only because of the tax-gatherers; for Herod Antipas was building palaces, fortresses, and cities. All the people paid taxes and bribes to him and to his builders.

While the consequences were often painful enough, there were no signs of actual poverty in the vicinity of the well. It stood several paces in front of a dwelling, two stories in height, which seemed somewhat better than its neighbors. The porch along its lower story was thickly clad with vines, and from under these the girl had come to bring her jar to the well. A Jewish maiden of nearly fifteen was accounted a full-grown woman, and the slightness of her graceful figure did not interfere with an air of maturity which her present state of mind much increased. Her simple dress, that became her so well, was of good materials.

Ranged on either side of the well were six large, cumbersome-looking water-pots of stoneware, partly filled, for the convenience of any person wishing to perform the foot or hand ablutions required by the exacting ceremonial law of the Jews.

The vine-clad porch was a pleasant place. It was provided with wooden benches; and on one of these sat a man who seemed to consider himself a person of importance. Every movement, and even his attitude when sitting still, might be said to accord with a conviction that he, Rabbi Isaac Ben Nassur, was the wisest, the most learned man in Cana.

He was very tall, as well as broad and heavy; and his thick, gray beard came down to the voluminous sash that was folded around his waist. His eyebrows were black and projecting; his nose was prominent; his black eyes were piercing; he was dressed, as became a rabbi, or any other highly respectable Jew, in a long linen tunic with sleeves, that was belted by the sash. Over this he wore a long, loosely flowing robe, called an "abba," also of linen. Around his shoulders, with the ends falling in front, was a broad white woolen scarf, with narrow bars of red and purple and blue, and with blue tassels at the corners of each of its two ends. This was the "tallith," and was worn as a reminder that the wearer must remember all the commandments of the Law and faithfully perform them.

Every good Jew wore a tallith, larger or smaller, and some were costly; but Rabbi Isaac was by no means a rich man, as even his well-worn sandals testified, and therefore his tallith was only of fine wool, without ornament. On his head, instead of a turban, was a long linen kerchief so folded that three of the corners fell down at the back and sides. A band kept the kerchief in place.

In front of the rabbi stood a tall young man, listening with most reverent attention, having taken off his turban to receive his father's admonitions.

The thick vine-leaves which veiled the shady porch did not prevent the sonorous voice of the rabbi from carrying at least as far as the well.

The audience there consisted of more than one person. The women, of all ages, who came to the well with water-jars, were ready to rest and gossip a little before carrying them away on their shoulders or gracefully balanced upon their heads.

Lois was disposed to ask, even eagerly, for other news than that of the village of Cana. She laughed when others did, but, as her gossiping neighbors came and went, shadow after shadow, as of disappointment, flitted across her face. Not one of them had any news to tell her of the absent ones for whom she longed.

It was evident that the wedding of Raphael, the near kinsman of Lois, and only son of the wise Rabbi Isaac, was considered an important event, and a welcome variation in the somewhat humdrum course of the daily life of the village. The rabbi himself, so regarding it, discoursed eloquently upon the general subject of matrimony, as well as upon the especial ceremony now at hand; and Raphael would surely be a model husband if he should succeed in living up to his father's instructions. So said the laughing maids and matrons at the well. Almost all of them expected to have some share in the wedding festivities. Some were friends or kindred of the bride's family, and were to join the procession from her residence which would escort her and the bridegroom to the house of Ben Nassur. Others were to wait with Lois and the rabbi's family until they should be told that the

bridegroom was coming. Then they would go out to meet him.

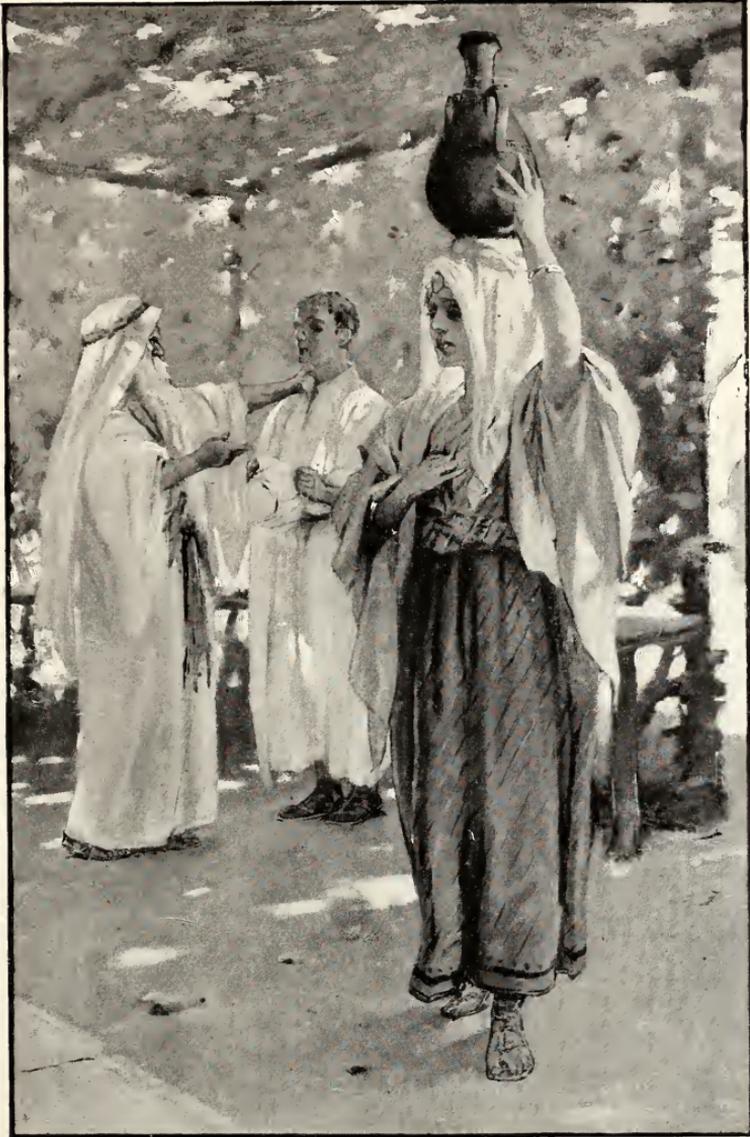
The wedding was to take place in the evening of the following day, whereupon seven days of feasting were to follow, and for these great preparations had been made.

Kindred and friends were expected to come from far and near on such an occasion, and were welcomed with liberal hospitality.

No news is sometimes akin to good news, and the gossippers at the well had brought with them no alarming rumor of any kind. The shadows gradually flitted away from the face of Lois. She lifted her jar and put it upon her head. She was just disappearing through the porch into the house, when the deep tones of Ben Nassur seemed to send a thrill through her. His whole manner had suddenly changed, and he was now standing erect.

"So now, my son," he said, "see to it that all things are ready for the wedding. Speak not to any man, imprudently, of this that I now tell thee. I go to the house of Nathaniel, to hear more; but a mounted messenger from Samaria, this morning, brought tidings of another tumult in that city. More of our brethren have fallen by the swords of their enemies, and there was none to help, for the centurion in command there hates our nation as he hath oft proved. Accursed may he be!"

Bitter and wrathful were the face and voice of the rabbi, but the low-toned, fierce response of his son was not audible beyond the porch. Now, however, there were



RABBI BEN NASSUR'S DISCOURSE TO HIS SON RAPHAEL.

tears in the eyes of Lois, and her cheeks were white with fear.

“And my father and Cyril are in Samaria!” she exclaimed. “Oh, how I wish I could hear from them! What if they have been slain, or — or crucified! The Romans are merciless!”

CHAPTER III

CYRIL AND THE ROMAN SOLDIER

CYRIL was now well out upon the battle-plain of Esdraelon. Too many people were coming and going upon the highways. They were not soldiers, nor pursuing him, but the young fugitive preferred the broad stubble fields, from which the wheat had long since been reaped, and where now the tall growths of weeds concealed him very well. There were stone walls to climb and villages to go around, and the need for keeping under cover made the distances to be traveled longer. On he went, with a springing, elastic step, and he did not seem to feel at all the heat of the sun. It was his native climate and did not oppress him.

The many orchards and vineyards to which he came were those of his friends, for he did not seem to mind the husbandmen at work in them. As he made his way between the long rows of a luxuriant vineyard, he thought:

“It cannot be far now to the Kishon. Father says that there is always a Roman patrol up and down the bank, so that no one can cross, except under the eyes of the guards

at the bridges. I shall have to keep watch for the patrol. Once across the Kishon, and no man in heavy armor can overtake me."

Ezra had said of him, "as fleet of foot as Asahel, the brother of Joab," and Cyril had already shown himself a very rapid traveler; but he might meet mounted men. He went forward more cautiously, among the sheltering vines, and as he paused, listening, there came a sound that startled him. It was faint and far, but he exclaimed:

"A trumpet? That must be a signal. Those camel-drivers on the road saw me, and they must have reported me to the guard at the bridge. It is life or death, now!"

In a minute more, he was peering out from the northerly border of the vineyard.

"There is the Kishon!" he said. "There is a patrol, too; he is a legionary."

On the bank of the deep and swift river stood a fully armed soldier of that terrible power which overshadowed all the known world. To Cyril, that solitary legionary, stationed there to prevent such as he from crossing the Kishon, was an embodiment of all the enemies of Israel and Judah. The soldier stood erect, with his pilum, or broad-bladed spear, in his right hand. The vizor of his bronze helmet was open. He seemed to have understood the trumpet-note of warning, and was looking in all directions. His sword hung at the left side, ready for use, and on his left arm was a large round shield, now raised a little as he scanned the vineyards and the river-bank,

as if he wondered from which of them an enemy could come upon him at that time and place. After a few moments, he turned and strode slowly, vigilantly, along the river-bank, while Cyril watched him.

“Good!” exclaimed Cyril, at last. “He is far enough now. I can reach the river.”

Out he darted and sprang away toward the Kishon. Of course he was at once seen by the quick-eyed patrol, and hoarse and loud came the Latin summons to halt. To disobey was sure and instant death, if Cyril should be overtaken, and he would be followed with relentless persistence if he should escape; but he bounded steadily forward while the soldier ran toward him. The soldier ran well, too, considering the weight of arms and armor he carried, for all Roman legionaries were trained athletes; but he could not get between the armorer's son and the Kishon.

Not broad, but very deep and swift, was the torrent that came rushing down from its sources among the Gilboa hills. A spring, a splash, and Cyril was swimming vigorously, though swept along down-stream by the strong current, while his left hand held his rolled-up robe high and dry above the water.

Fierce, indeed, were the threatening commands of the legionary, but on the brink of the Kishon he was compelled to halt and consider. No doubt he could swim, but not well with his heavy armor, his shield, and his sword.

Lightly and rapidly swam Cyril, and in a few moments

more he was out on the northerly bank of the Kishon, sending back a shout of triumph and defiance. But he meant to send back something more. His eyes were swiftly searching the ground around him, while he drew out something which had been hidden among the folds of his robe.

It was a square of leather, as broad as his two hands, with corner-straps as long as his arm — a sling, such as David used of old. In that older day, all the tribe of Benjamin, to which the house of Ezra the Swordmaker belonged, were noted slingers; and here was their young representative, stooping to pick up smooth, rounded pebbles, as David had picked up his pebbles from the brook in the valley of Elah. In an instant he was erect again, sling in hand, while yet the soldier stood considering the risk of swimming the Kishon.

Whirl went the sling, with such a swiftness that it could hardly be seen, and away hissed the stone. No doubt the Roman had faced slingers, many a time; but the distance was more than fifty yards, and he may not have expected so true an aim. Up went his shield, indeed, a second too late, and well for him that he bowed his head, for Cyril's first pebble struck him full upon the crest. It did not knock him down, only because, in the heat of the day, he had loosened the fastenings of his helmet, so that the blow of the stone struck it from his head, and sent it rolling away in the grass.

No crossing of the Kishon now, with that slinger to

practise upon his bare head all the way! Expert warrior though he was, he had enough to do for the next two minutes in warding off with his shield the well-aimed pebbles which rapidly followed the first.

Fast they came, and loudly they rang, one of them glancing from the shield to batter the brazen greave on his right leg.

"I must not delay," thought Cyril. "Other Romans may be coming. One more!"

Away flew the stone, but the blow on his leg had warned the soldier to kneel and guard now, and the missile made only a deep dent in the face of the shield.

When the bearer of it looked out again from behind the target of bull's-hide and metal which had served him so well, the slinger had disappeared; and there was nothing for the beaten Roman patrol to do but to go and report to his officer that one of the best slingers he had ever met had escaped from him. He could not have guessed how one Jewish boy's heart was dancing with delight and pride as he pushed along northward, thinking, dreaming, and even exclaiming enthusiastically:

"Oh, that the King would come to lead us against the Romans!"

No hunted wolf could have gone forward more cautiously than did Cyril. There were other streams to cross, and some of them were deep; but there were no patrols in his way, and the waters were no impediment. They were more like cooling baths provided for a wayfarer who was

fond of them. If nothing worse should block his path, he would have no difficulty in getting to Cana some time during the next day.

The sun went down, and a cloudless night came on. The sky seemed to blaze with stars, and the young traveler could still find his way, somewhat more slowly, along the lanes which led from house to house and from hamlet to hamlet. It was toilsome journeying, and there was now added the danger of being taken by anybody and everybody for a prowling robber.

“They would make short work of me,” he said, “or I might be sold for a slave. They would not crucify me, but they would surely scourge me.”

It seemed as if Cyril gave hardly a thought to the fact that he had gone without any supper. Perhaps he was used to privation. At all events, he at last lay down under the shadow of a wide-branching olive-tree, and went to sleep as peacefully as if he had no enemies in the world. His last thought was:

“Father will escape them — I know that he will. Tomorrow will be the fifth day of the week, and I shall see Lois before sunset.”

CHAPTER IV

BRINGING HOME THE BRIDE

ABOUT an hour after Cyril lay down at the foot of the olive-tree, that Wednesday evening, Lois was one of a joyous procession which set out from the house of Rabbi Isaac, as soon as word arrived that the bridegroom was coming. Already, at the house of the bride's father, all the wedding formalities and ceremonials required by the Law or by Galilean custom had been fully performed, and the bridal procession from that place was winding its somewhat noisy way through the narrow and crooked streets of Cana. The bridal pair were escorted by all who had any right or will to accompany them. When the procession from Ben Nassur's house met them, it faced about, forming one company, which increased as they went along.

The bride herself, closely attended by the bridegroom and his friends, was the central figure ; but of her nothing could be seen excepting the tresses of flowing hair which escaped from under her veil. Her robes, however, were glittering with all the jewels of her family for which a place could anywhere be found. There were many musi-

cians,—flute-players, beaters of cymbals, and others,—and there were a number of fine singers among the girls who came dancing along in front of the bride and groom, singing the songs that befitted the occasion. Most of these were in praise of the beauty and good qualities of the bride. Among all the singers there was no voice sweeter than that of Lois. She was accompanied by her friends and neighbors; and each young girl carried in her hand a lighted lamp, and all were exceedingly careful lest it should go out, for an idea of evil fortune attached to such a happening. The lights of the little lamps carried by the dancing, singing maidens, however, were as nothing compared with that of the blazing torches borne by the young men who went before or at the sides of the procession. This was evidently no ordinary wedding, in the estimation of the people of Cana.

When the house of Ben Nassur was reached, most of the merrymakers were at liberty to return to their own homes; but a chosen few walked in with the bride and groom, and thereupon the outer door of the house was shut.

The fifth day of the week, Thursday, would be counted as the first day of the feast, and during seven days Ben Nassur would keep open house in honor of his son's wedding.

The fifth day of the week dawned brilliantly over Judea. Ezra the Swordmaker was just then cautiously emerging from an opening which, at a little distance,

looked like a crack or furrow in the steep side of a hill. His place of refuge for the night had been one of the numberless caves, partly natural and partly artificial, with which all that region abounds. They form very safe hiding-places both for hunted men and for wild beasts.

Ezra stood still for a moment in the doorway of his cave, and drew a long breath, glad to see the light and to breathe the fresh morning air.

"Cyril is safe by this time," he said. "He must have passed the border. So am I safe, but — of what use am I now?" He groaned as he lifted his right hand. "I can hardly call myself a man," he said. "I must go and hide in the wilderness of Judea. My days of service are done. There is no power on earth that can restore a withered hand!"

For withered it was: shriveled and crooked and gnarled. He could neither grasp with the nerveless fingers nor straighten them, and he let his arm fall loosely at his side, and, turning, speedily disappeared in the forest.

There were a great many people coming and going that day at the house of the wise rabbi Isaac Ben Nassur. They were not all Cana people, by any means. The bridal feast was spread in the large front room opening upon the porch, and all who had a right to enter were welcomed heartily. Food was plentifully provided, but the merriest hour of each day would be after sunset, when, the day's work being done, all the invited guests would come.

The bridegroom was continually present, to receive congratulations and good wishes. With him were several young men of his more intimate friends; but decidedly the most important figure in that room was Isaac himself. As master of the house and as ruler of the feast, he sat at the head of the long table provided for the occasion. His dress was as simple as ever, but it seemed to have undergone a change, he wore it with so grand an air. He appeared to be happy, and he received great respect from the throng of people who came to congratulate him upon the marriage of his son.

So the marriage-feast went on until the mid-day was past and the shadows began to lengthen in the streets of Cana. In the shade of Ben Nassur's house, hours before sunset, on the easterly side, stood two young people, half hidden by the vines and shrubbery, who seemed to have forgotten all about the wedding. Their talk was subdued but exceedingly animated, for Cyril had arrived and he was telling Lois of all that had happened since they had parted at Samaria so many months before. She was as earnestly patriotic as Cyril himself, and her face said more than her words while she listened to Cyril's account of the doings of Samaritans and Romans, and of the deeds of her father and his friends. Then he told her of his own feat at the Kishon, and her bright black eyes flashed with exulting admiration of a brother who had actually struck off the helmet of a Roman legionary.

“Oh, Cyril!— what a soldier thou wilt be!”

"If the King were here to lead us!" broke in Cyril. "Oh, for the Messiah, the Captain! I could fight under him."

"Cyril," replied Lois, "I have somewhat to tell thee. Nathanael, Isaac's friend, was at the Jordan where John the Baptizer is preaching. That was several weeks ago. He came back with a report about Jesus of Nazareth, and how John had said of him that he was the Lamb of God. It is so strange!"

"Herod has imprisoned John in the Black Castle," said Cyril, "not far from the Dead Sea."

"But he is a prophet," said Lois; "Nathanael believes it. The carpenter's son is of the royal house of David. He will be here to-day with some of his friends from Capernaum and Bethsaida, and thou wilt see him."

Cyril listened in silence, for the tidings deeply interested him. He had dreamed and hoped and talked, as had all other Jews young or old, about a Prince of the house of David, an Anointed Deliverer; but it was quite another thing to be told that the man he longed for had already been found, and that he was to meet him at the house of Ben Nassur.

"Come," said Lois, "I will show thee his mother. She is there by the well, waiting for him. She is Hannah's near kinswoman, and we love her greatly."

"He is only a carpenter now," said Cyril.

"Rabbi Isaac said to Nathanael that Jesus is indeed a lineal descendant of David, but he is not a soldier. He

reads in the synagogues, and he has been preaching much of late. Still, Isaac says he is not learned like a rabbi."

"I wish I could see him," exclaimed Cyril.

"Come," said Lois, again; and they went slowly, talking almost in whispers. Lois had not yet seen the son of the carpenter of Nazareth, and her eagerness to do so was quickly communicated to her enthusiastic brother. He felt his heart beat more quickly, and his breath came faster, as she told him of the various marvels that had been crowned at last by the testimony of John at the Jordan.

"Even while he was in the water," she said, "a beautiful white dove came down and alighted on his head, and there was heard a voice from the heavens."

"I wish I had been there!" exclaimed Cyril. "But is that Mary, his mother?"

"Yes; she stands there — there by the well," said Lois. "Is she not a noble-looking woman? And she says her son has never seemed just like other men."

But such was not the opinion of Isaac Ben Nassur and other leading residents of Cana and of Nazareth. They knew the young Jesus (or Joshua, as they more frequently called him), the son of Joseph. They had seen him from boyhood. They thought no less of him because he worked for a living: the wisest and greatest rabbis did so. Moreover, it was an important matter that he was of the royal line of David, now so nearly extinct; every Jew was ready to acknowledge so rare a distinction; but there

their reverence ended, for otherwise he had neither rank nor power. The older and wiser they thought themselves, the less they were concerned about Nathanael's talk of the marvelous occurrences at Bethabara.

Cyril and Lois were young, and were neither wise nor learned. They, therefore, were more and more excited as they drew nearer the noble-looking matron who stood by the well, gazing expectantly down the street. Her face had just been lighted by an expression of pleasure; but now it suddenly clouded again, as if something whispered to her by a woman who came from the house might be unpleasant tidings. At that moment also, the bridegroom himself appeared in the doorway, accompanied by his mother, Hannah; and his face, like her own, wore an anxious look.

"Such a disgrace, Raphael!" exclaimed Hannah, in a half-frightened tone—"to have the supply of wine fail on the first day of the feast!"

"The tax-gatherers are to blame!" he responded, in angry mortification. "They had secured almost every wine-skin that was for sale in Cana. So I sent all the way to Chorazin, and I provided abundance; but the tax-gatherers have stopped it on the way. They declared that it had not paid its full duty; but I know that is untrue. They have taken it—they are robbers!"

Raphael was sorely mortified. Anybody might have sympathized with him. Such a scarcity would be considered a disgrace to his whole family and to that of his bride.

“‘CYRIL,’ SAID LOIS, POINTING, ‘LOOK! HE IS COME!’”



“Do not tell your father, yet,” said Hannah. “But what are we to do?”

Cyril and Lois, out by the well, had now heard this news, the same which had so clouded the face of Mary. “The publicans took it,” whispered Lois; but her brother was gazing earnestly at the mother of Jesus of Nazareth, and so did not reply. He could not explain to himself what it was that was so different in her manner from any of the other women around her. Her face was so pure, so good, he thought; so full of light as she now turned again to look down the street. Then she exclaimed: “Hannah! He is coming! He will be here quickly.”

“Cyril,” said Lois, pointing, “look! There is Jesus of Nazareth! He is come!”

CHAPTER V

WINE FOR THE FEAST

THERE were half a dozen men in the foremost group of the new-comers, and others were not far behind them. All were in their best array, in honor of the wedding. They were strongly made, brawny, resolute-looking men, of the somewhat peculiar Galilean type, with faces bronzed by the sun and hands hardened by toil. There was no need for Lois to point out to Cyril the one of whom she had been speaking.

Somewhat in advance of the rest walked one who was speaking to a vigorous, fiery-eyed man, who strode along at his side. Could this really be the heir of David and of Solomon, this simply dressed and quiet Galilean?

Whether or not Cyril had begun to form expectations of a different kind, this was the man of whom Nathanael had spoken to Ben Nassur. He wore no crown, no sword, no jewels; and Cyril had not supposed that he would. But there was about him no sign of soldiership, or leadership, or of authority.

"He is no captain," thought Cyril, sadly; "he is no warrior; he seems no greater than other men!"

The boy had a sense of disappointment, so little cause

for enthusiasm or hope did this man from Capernaum seem to bring with him. He should have been very different, if he were indeed to be a king.

Nevertheless, Cyril could not turn his eyes away, although they failed to keep an accurate picture which he could afterward remember. He was sure, indeed, that this man, while no taller than others, was of at least full height, broad-shouldered, muscular, with the firm, easy step and movement which belong to men of perfect form and unimpaired strength. He was as erect as a pine, and his sashed tunic and flowing robe, not different from others around him, befitted him well. Cyril took note of even his hair and beard; but if the boy also tried to tell the color of the eyes, he could not do so, for his own sank before them, and he had a curious sensation of being looked through rather than looked at; and yet his heart beat high and fast for a moment.

“Lois,” he whispered.

“Hush!” she answered softly. “Mary is about to speak to him.”

The party from Capernaum had halted at the well, and Mary stood in front of her son, looking up at him with an expression that seemed to be partly doubt and partly expectation. Before a word was said by either of them, Lois whispered to Cyril:

“Look! just see how he loves her!”

“Hush!—listen,” said Cyril— for at that moment the lips of Mary parted.

Her heart was full of the grave disaster which threatened the wedding-feast, and behind her stood Hannah, the bridegroom's mother and Mary's friend and kinswoman.

"They have no wine!" said Mary.

"Why does she tell him?" whispered Lois; and something of the same idea was expressed in the answer of Jesus. A different spirit, nevertheless, was manifest in the kindly manner and smile with which he replied: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."

Mary must have understood her son's meaning better than others did or could, for she at once turned to those who stood by the well. Among them were servants of Ben Nassur, and she said to these:

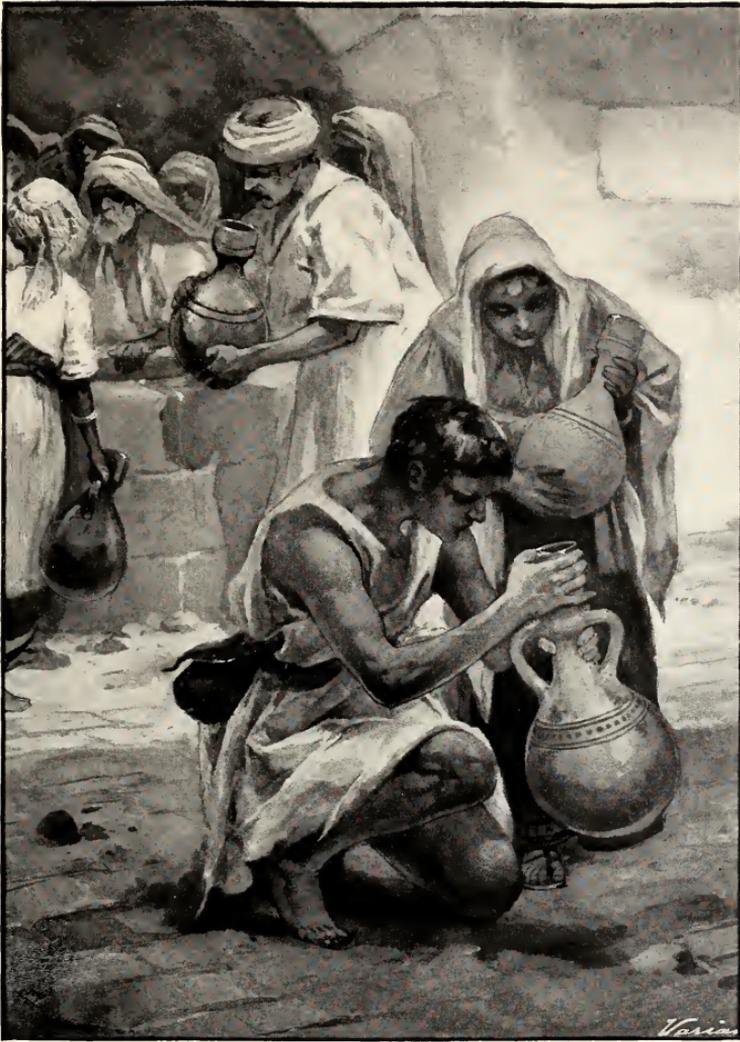
"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

"Will he send them for wine?" thought Lois. "I heard Raphael say there was none to be had in Cana. He may send even to Nazareth." And Cyril exclaimed aloud: "I will go with them."

But at that moment the man Cyril felt so ready to obey pointed to the great jars by the well and said:

"Fill the water-pots with water."

There had been many ceremonial washings that day, as the guests of the wedding came and went, for not one had gone in without pausing by the well. The water-pots were therefore nearly empty, and it would require much drawing to fill them.



“LOIS, MY PITCHER IS FULL OF WINE!”

“This must be done before he sends for the wine,” said Lois. “His mother knows he has some.”

“Or she certainly would not have asked him to provide some for the feast,” said Cyril, leaning over to lift his full bucket from the well.

There was even some haste and a kind of excitement among those whose ready hands were drawing and pouring; and in a few minutes more the sunshine sparkled upon brimming fullness in the last of the six jars.

“Now we are to go for the wine,” said Cyril.

“They can’t drink water at a wedding-feast,” thought Lois.

There was a startled look upon every face around her, as she glanced from one to another, for the next command was:

“Draw out, now, and bear to the governor of the feast.”

Cyril could not account for the tremor he felt as he dipped a pitcher into a water-pot, filled it, and lifted it, and stepped away toward the house.

“Water, for the governor of the feast?” he thought. “Water, to Ben Nassur himself? Does he mean to mock the rabbi, because there is no wine?”

Still, he could hardly help looking into the pitcher in his hands. Just behind him was Lois. Suddenly she heard her brother exclaim: “It is wine! Lois, my pitcher is full of wine! Let me see yours.”

Down came her pitcher, and the two were placed side by side.

“Oh, Cyril!” said Lois, “it is wine! Was that what Jesus meant?”

“It must be,” said Cyril, in a low voice. Then, after a pause, “We must carry it in. Come!”

Behind them followed the line of servants. In a moment more the two tall, slender pitchers were deposited before Isaac Ben Nassur, at the head of the table. It was his duty, as ruler of the feast, to critically taste each new supply of refreshments provided, and now he quickly filled a drinking-vessel, for a hint of the threatened scarcity had reached him.

Cyril and Lois, and behind them the servants of the house, with Mary and Hannah and several others, gazed expectantly upon the face of the rabbi, waiting for his opinion. A little distance from him, at his right, pale and red by turns with anxiety, stood his son, the bridegroom. To him Ben Nassur turned, well pleased and radiant, but still somewhat judicial, as became the ruler of the feast, and remarked:

“Every man, at the beginning, doth set forth good wine, and when they have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.”

So it was said by all. It was as if it had been recently pressed from the best grapes of the vintage.

“Cyril!” exclaimed Lois, as they hurried out, so awed that they were almost frightened, “it was water, and it became wine!”

“What will the people say?” said Cyril. “I wish I dared to ask him if he is to be our king.”

CHAPTER VI

CAPERNAUM

HOW great was the wonder of the guests who drank the good wine at the marriage-feast when they learned that the pitchers must have been filled from the well in front of Ben Nassur's house.

The rabbi himself had not been among those who stood at the well. He had only seen the wine brought to him in pitchers. But Mary and Hannah, the men who came with Jesus, the house-servants, and a few others, well knew the water had been changed into wine.

Cyril and Lois had no opportunity to discuss the matter until late that evening.

A sleeping-place, even for Lois, had to be found at the house of a neighbor; and the best that could be done for Cyril was to give him the freedom of the flat roof of Isaac's own home.

It was no hardship to sleep there, during a warm night. Cyril and his sister went up to the roof while yet the sounds of merriment, the music, and the singing, came up from the marriage-festival below.

It was a beautiful night, and the roof was cool and quiet.

Cyril came up first, and he stood at a corner leaning over the stone parapet, when Lois joined him.

"I cannot be mistaken," said Cyril, as if thinking aloud. "I poured the water into that jar, and I saw it was wine when I took it out in my pitcher, and carried it into the house to Ben Nassur. All the servants saw that there was water in the pitchers first, and afterward there was wine."

"It is true. So it was in mine," said Lois, who had come to his side. "They all go to Capernaum to-morrow. Jesus of Nazareth means to live there. His mother will, too, for a while. Then she returns to her own house, at Nazareth. I wish I could live with her."

"I would like to know what sort of work I can find to do while I am there," exclaimed Cyril.

"I know what I am going to do, I think," said Lois. "There is a woman named Abigail the tallith-maker, who lives there. Some of the women at the wedding told me she wants a girl who knows something of the trade to work for her. I learned needle-work while I was staying in Samaria."

"Thou didst very good work," said Cyril. "There is more to do in Capernaum than there is here. I'll find some work."

"Most of the people are fishing-folk," said Lois. "The lake is full of fish."

"Sometimes little is taken, they say," replied Cyril. "But I must try it. I long to see Jesus of Nazareth, and he will be there. What did he mean by the words he said to his mother — 'Mine hour is not yet come.'"

"I do not know; I did not understand them. I mean to be with her, part of the time, while she remains there," replied Lois. "I go to Capernaum, to-morrow, with her and her friends."

"I am glad," said Cyril, "I will go, too. Jesus is to stay in Cana, for a day or two, but I'll come."

Lois bade her brother good-night, and Cyril was alone upon the roof.

"I wish father could see this man, Jesus of Nazareth," the boy said to himself. "Father is an experienced old soldier, and has been a captain. He would know what the people might expect of him."

Ezra the Swordmaker had studied carefully, and had talked with his son about the ways and means for collecting, equipping, and arming a force of patriotic Jews such as might, at some future day, drive out the Romans and destroy the power of Herod.

At last Cyril went to sleep, but when he awoke, in the morning, his head was still full of the arrangements for his proposed journey from Cana to Capernaum.

Lois also was making ready, and both Rabbi Isaac and his wife were entirely satisfied with the plans of their young relatives. There would be more room in the somewhat overcrowded house in Cana. As for the transfer of

Mary's residence from Nazareth to Capernaum, for a season, such temporary removals were not at all uncommon among the Jewish people.

Only two days later, and while yet the wedding festivities continued in the house of Isaac, Cyril and Lois reached Capernaum. Their little baggage was carried by one donkey, while Lois rode another, and the hire of these animals made the first large draft upon the money Cyril had received from his father.

The direct distance from Cana was only about twelve miles, but the road so wound among hills as to make it longer. Both brother and sister felt they had never before seen so beautiful a country, and when at last they came out in sight of Chinnereth, or the Sea of Galilee, they understood why the rabbis declared: "God made seven seas in the land of Canaan, but chose for himself only one — the Sea of Galilee."

The lake itself was beautiful, and the shores were lined with cities, larger or smaller, or with palaces whose grounds and gardens came down to the water's edge. Capernaum was a well-built and prosperous place at some distance from the shore, but there were no buildings along the beach near it; only boat-wharves, here and there, little more than mere landing-places in the little bays which indented the long, curving shore-line.

The region was a kind of fisherman's paradise; and around it was also a rich farming country, with a climate so mild that even figs and grapes ripened during ten

CYRIL AND LOUIS ON THEIR WAY TO CAPERNAUM.



months of the year, and the fruits of temperate and tropical regions grew luxuriantly, side by side. The population was dense, and it was a continual marvel that the lake was not fished out, so numerous were the fishermen and so heavy were the catches. All the country around furnished them a market, and Cyril was assured that he would find enough to do, but that his wages would barely support him; so he was glad when Lois was kindly welcomed by Abigail the tallith-maker. This woman made other garments worn by the people among whom she lived, and it was of importance to her that the brother of her new assistant was a youth whose training under so good a smith as Ezra enabled him to mend her needles of all sizes. No doubt even the very smallest of them would seem both coarse and clumsy to the eyes of a modern seamstress.

Cyril, from the hour of his coming, was full of the idea which had brought him to Capernaum; and it may have been his eagerness to see and hear Jesus of Nazareth which brought him into acquaintance with Simon and Andrew, and several other men. Soon after his arrival he told Lois:

“The people around the lake know more about Jesus than is known at Nazareth. He teaches and preaches here and all come to hear him. They believe about the turning of the water into wine more readily than some of those who saw the water drawn and carried into the house.”

Lois could hardly have told how happy she was. She was not conscious that she had ever been at all afraid of so wise and learned a man as Rabbi Ben Nassur, but she felt more at ease now she was not near him. Besides, during several weeks she was often with Mary and her son. She sat at her work in the quiet house dreaming over the stories that were told her of the carpenter's son. Some of them went back to the very cradle of Jesus, and this, as Lois now knew, had been a manger in a cattle-stable, in Bethlehem of Judea.

None of these stories had been written down, but Lois learned them all by heart, and she would think of them whenever she saw Jesus or heard him teach.

Cyril had thoughts and dreams of his own very different from hers, for his spirit was becoming more and more warlike. He saw that Jesus had been making himself well known in many places, and would soon be widely talked of. It was the right thing to do, if he was ever to raise an army among the Galileans. So Cyril considered it his own duty to seize upon every opportunity for studying, as his father had bidden him, the fortifications of the towns and cities near the lake, and for witnessing military parades and marches, and for examining weapons of all sorts and whatever else could be made use of in war — in the war of Jews against Romans, in which he hoped to be a soldier.

CHAPTER VII

JERUSALEM

SOMETHING in the air of the beautiful country around the Sea of Galilee seemed to give its people tranquillity. Everybody was busy, indeed, and it was not difficult to earn a living where the needs of all were so simple. There was no contentment, however, for the yoke of the Roman foreigner pressed heavily, and so did the oppressions of Herod Antipas, whom no Jew could regard but as a foreigner, although his mother had been a Jewess. Every act of brutal cruelty and every merciless exaction which the Galileans suffered helped to keep them in mind of the prophecies of future freedom.

There had never been a time when all Jews were so busy with thoughts concerning the coming of the Messiah, and their fixed idea was that he was to be a glorious conqueror and king, one greater than David or Solomon, one who was to make the Jews the foremost nation on the earth.

Lois and Cyril saw each other almost daily, and all their thoughts and talk were about their father. They longed to know what had become of him, but there were no tidings.

"I wish father could come and see the Teacher and hear him," said Cyril, one day. He and Lois had been talking of the subject which was uppermost in the minds of the people, and Cyril had been studying the stockade at the Roman camp.

Lois was thoughtfully silent, and he went on :

"Father ought to be getting ready, if there is ever to be a rising against the Romans. He knows hosts of men all over the country. He knows old fighting men, and they know him. He could get them together, too, whenever the right time comes. Oh, if his right hand were sound, what things he could do!"

"The Nazarene is not often in Capernaum now," said Lois. "He is teaching and preaching among the villages, everywhere, and so many go to hear him."

"I wish I could see him do some new wonder!" exclaimed Cyril. "They 'll forget all about the wine at Cana. I met a man who was at the wedding, and he said he thought I was mistaken in what was done."

For some undeclared reason, the Teacher, as all men except the rabbis called Jesus, was only teaching and preaching among the towns around the head of the lake. He was becoming widely known, however, as those who heard him carried news of his discourses, and as yet he had not made enemies.

The days and weeks wore on until the autumn went by, and then the winter, of that mild climate. The land grew green again with the swift growth of the spring

crops. The time drew near for the annual Passover Feast, and every year a host of pious Galileans — all who were able — were sure to celebrate it at Jerusalem. When it was announced that Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples intended to go, most who heard it took it as a matter of course, but it aroused enthusiasm in Cyril. "I am going," he said to Lois. "I cannot take thee this time; we have not money enough. But I must be with him at Jerusalem. Who knows what great works he will do when he gets there? Isaac Ben Nassur is going, and the Cana people."

"I wish I might go with thee!" said Lois. "Thou canst not wish to go more than I do. I want to see Jerusalem — I want to see the Temple. I long to see what the Master will do there."

"I wish I could take thee with me," said Cyril. "We will try to have more money for the journey next year. But he surely will not yet try to take Jerusalem; I do not think there will be any fighting this time. I do not see how he ever can take that great city; it is so strong. But he must take it some day, if he is the predicted king. Father says there will be a terrible battle, and I am to be in it. Our captain will have to raise an army from all over the country."

Lois made no reply to that. She had never been able to think as Cyril did of the Teacher. She could not imagine him with a sword in his hand, fighting other men.

One of Cyril's ideas had been that the journey of Jesus

of Nazareth to Jerusalem would be like a royal progress, and that he would preach to crowds along the way as he was accustomed to do in Galilee. But Cyril was mistaken, for the Teacher traveled both quietly and rapidly. As for the boy himself, he believed he was safe in crossing the district of Samaria, so completely was he hidden among the crowds of Passover pilgrims. From these pilgrims the Samaritans kept away, and to them the Roman soldiers paid no manner of attention. The weather was glorious; not too warm for traveling, except in the middle of the day; and all the country was in bloom and green.

The Passover was to be eaten on the fifteenth day of the month Nisan, or April; but earlier than that multitudes began to gather at Jerusalem, from all parts of the world; for there were great preparations to be made beforehand. Some of these had reference to food and lodgings, but even more were connected with the sacrifices to be offered in the Temple.

The Temple, crowning a high hill, and visible from a great distance, was in a vast inclosure of strongly fortified walls. Within this there were several minor inclosures, separated by walls and by gates which were themselves important features of the gilded splendor of the most costly and beautiful place of worship on all the earth.

These inner inclosures were called "courts," and opened into one another. Beyond the outer court, none save those known to be Jews could enter, and they only after ceremonial preparation. Nevertheless, the outer court,

just within the Temple wall, was part of the Temple, the "sacred place," the "house of God." Because others than Jews were permitted to enter, it was called the Court of the Heathen or Gentiles. According to the Scriptures, and all the teachings of the rabbis, this court was holy. Into it nothing unclean could be brought. In it nothing could be bought or sold, nor could any trade be carried on there. The entire area, and not a part only, was solemnly consecrated and set apart for worship. Nevertheless, so bad had become the management of the Temple affairs by the priests and other rulers, that during four weeks before the Passover all the laws were set aside, and this court was rented out to dealers in cattle and all sorts of merchandise, and to brokers who exchanged current coins — such as Jewish shekels and half-shekels — for the foreign coins brought by worshipers from other countries. The holy place, therefore, was lined with cattle-pens, the booths of tradesmen, the tables of money-changers, coops of doves, while droves of cattle and sheep, and swarms of buyers and sellers, shouting, jostling, bargaining, and even quarreling, turned the entire court into a sort of fair, where a vast amount of cheating, extortion, bribery, and other mischief went on continually.

If Cyril had heard of all this desecration of the Temple, he thought no more of it than did others, for it was a thing to which even those who condemned it had become accustomed.

The road from the north, by which the Galileans came,

must wind among the hills as it nears Jerusalem, but at last, just after the city comes in sight, the road descends into a valley. When that is passed, there is a long ascent to the great gate in the high and massive wall that then guarded the capital of Judea.

Cyril's eagerness increased as he drew nearer, and at last the long procession of pilgrims he was with reached the ridge of the Mount of Olives, and he could see the city.

"Jerusalem is glorious!" he exclaimed. "What massive walls, and great towers! They say there is a whole legion of Roman soldiers camped near the city, and that the garrison inside is always very strong at Passover time. What can our Nazarene do with them? He is going into the city."

Hardly a pause was made, indeed, by the Teacher and his friends. They were not hindered at the gate, and Cyril hardly allowed himself to wonder at the palaces and forts and other splendors as he followed close after Jesus of Nazareth up the steep street that led to the Temple. It would have taken him or anybody long enough to tell of what he saw by the way; the throngs of people from every nation he had ever heard of, the many different kinds of dress, the horses and their trappings, the chariots, the flowers and fruits, the shops and merchandise, the women in bright colors, the slaves, the soldiers in their armor, the men whom he knew to be gladiators, trained to fight in the terrible arena outside of the walls.



“‘JERUSALEM IS GLORIOUS!’”

It was still early in the forenoon of the bright April day when the Teacher passed into the outer court of the Temple. His face took on an expression of sadness and severity as he gazed upon the scene of traffic and confusion before him.

Only for a few moments, however, did Jesus linger and look. His friends from Galilee, as many as were with him, may have had errands of their own among the buyers and sellers, for when he suddenly turned and walked away out of the court, he went almost alone, only Cyril following, at a little distance, half breathless with awe and with an intense anxiety as to what might be about to come.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SCOURGE OF SMALL CORDS

IN the city of Jerusalem, as in other Oriental cities, the several trades were not in every quarter, but the dealers in different wares generally kept separate. Cyril could not have found his own way to any quarter, but he could follow his captain, as he considered him, to a narrow street near by, mainly occupied by dealers in rope, cordage, and similar wares. There were also tent-makers in that street, and it was by the shop of one of these that the Teacher halted.

Hanging in front of the booth were quantities of the small, strong, tough cords used for tent fastenings; and Cyril wondered to see the Teacher buy some of these.

Cyril and the dealer looked on with more than a little curiosity. A bunch of the cords were at first cut into lengths, and then the Teacher plaited them into a kind of whip, half as large at its beginning as a man's wrist.

Swiftly he worked and dexterously; and Cyril watched him from a little distance.

The whip, or "scourge," was soon finished; and he who

made it rolled it up and silently strode away toward the Temple, whither Cyril followed him.

Through the great gate and into the outer court they went, past the glittering ranks of Roman legionaries posted there to put down any Jewish tumult; the hub-bub of buying and selling was before them.

It seemed to be at its height. The unseemly disorder was even louder than usual. Sheep bleated, fowls crowed, cattle bellowed, men shouted to one another.

“What will he do?” exclaimed Cyril, for now the whip was raised above the head of the Master. Stern indeed was his face at that moment, as he drove forth the chaffering throng. Loud bellowed the beasts as they fled in terror, and loudly, for a moment, shouted their astonished and angry owners.

“They will turn and stone him!” was one quick thought in Cyril’s mind; but it vanished.

Not even the cattle and the sheep fled more unresistingly than did the human beings from before that scourge and from the rebuking face of him who wielded it. The dealers in fowls caught up their coops and cages to hurry them away, but no such escape was permitted to the dealers in money. A moment before they had been sitting, in their customary insolent security, behind their tables, upon which were piled the various coins they dealt in. Of all the thieves who polluted the Temple they were the worst offenders. A punishment came to these men that they could feel more deeply than even the scourge, for

the Teacher grasped the nearest table and scattered the ringing coins on the marble pavement, as he said :

“Take these things hence ; make not my Father’s house a house of merchandise.”

Cyril thought for a moment of the armed guards of the Temple. They were there, truly, but this was a matter that seemed to concern the Jews and their religion — not the guards at all, for the guards were Romans.

There was nothing, apparently, for Cyril to do, nor for any man of the throng which was now gathering behind the Teacher. His own disciples were there, and a fast-increasing throng of sturdy Galileans, whose faces showed hearty approval of his course.

So the buying and selling which had so long polluted the outer court of the Temple came to an end. Cyril was a Jewish boy, and he could perfectly understand the acclamations that were arising so noisily on all sides. He knew that the Teacher from Nazareth had only acted in accordance with the public opinion and the religious feeling of the Jewish people. Every rabbi and every pious Israelite would surely approve of what had been done.

“But the priests and the rulers — what will they think of it ?” — was a question in Cyril’s mind, and others felt as he did, for he heard one of the disciples say to another :

“It is written, ‘The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.’”

The only criticism came from one of the Jewish bystanders, speaking as if for the others. He said, as questioning the Master’s authority :



THE MONEY-CHANGERS AND DEALERS EXPELLED FROM THE TEMPLE.

“What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?”

It sounded like an entirely reasonable question, considering what a responsibility had been taken in enforcing the Temple law of holiness entirely without the authority of priest or ruler, and the reply was :

“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

It did not appear to be an answer. It did not offer even the sign demanded, for nobody could or would destroy the Temple; and the questioner responded :

“Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?”

No more was said, but many were beginning to treasure the utterances of the Galilean Teacher, and this saying of his was not forgotten. Cyril could not then, nor for long afterward, have understood at all, if he had been told that Jesus really spoke of the temple of his own body. But in later times his answer was thus explained. All Cyril then knew was that the expulsion of the money-changers was a proof of power by one who would soon, he fully believed, draw the sword of a military leader, and become a captain of the house of Israel.

Just then he heard a voice behind him in tones of strong approval :

“He has done well. He is for the Law. He is of the house of David ; he should be zealous for the Law.”

Cyril turned to look into the glowing face of Isaac Ben

Nassur. The cleansing of the Temple was in accordance with the strict principles of the learned rabbi, and Isaac's next words to Cyril were both cordial and affectionate :

“Come thou with us. Thou shalt eat thy Passover lamb with thine own kindred. Thou belongest with us.”

This invitation was in keeping with Jewish custom, and Cyril went with Isaac. He felt himself, however, a very insignificant addition to the party, which included some of the most dignified men of Cana.

Isaac's wife, Hannah, was with him, and there were other women belonging to the several families represented.

There were yet two days to be spent before the Passover itself; and Cyril at first knew hardly what to do with them. He heard, however, that the chief priests and the rulers of the Temple had immediately issued orders that the outer court of the Temple should be kept absolutely clear of everything and everybody prohibited by the Law.

A complete victory had therefore been gained. As for the Romans, or any other heathen, they did not care how strict might be the religious notions of anybody who did not meddle with their power to govern Judea and to collect the taxes.

Cyril's main idea, as soon as his mind began to clear a little, was to find out all he could about the Roman power. As he learned its extent, his respect for it grew. With the dawn of each day, he was out from among his friends,

bent upon learning all about Jerusalem. They, too, had much that required their attention, and did not give him a thought.

The walls were so high that it seemed impossible for any enemy to get over them. There were towers, and there were guards at all the gates. The castles and forts were so many and so strong, and the soldiers were so warlike, so well trained, the city seemed unconquerable.

It made Cyril's heart sink, the day before the Passover, when he went out by the Roman camp and saw a legion of the men who had overcome the armies of all nations drawn up in glittering ranks to be reviewed by their officers, and by some great men who were there from Rome, and by some visiting princes from other provinces who were guests of the rulers of Judea. He asked himself sadly, how could the coming king of Israel gather a force strong enough to withstand the Roman legions, of which so many could be sent against him, or how could he drive them out of such a stronghold as the walled city Jerusalem?

CHAPTER IX

HEROD'S AMPHITHEATER

THE Passover feast was eaten with all solemnity, and Cyril went with Ben Nassur and his friends, before and afterward, to witness the Temple sacrifices and to take part in the grand ceremonies. He heard the priests and Levites chant the psalms; he saw the smoke go up from the altars. It seemed to him that he had never before had any idea of what it was to be a Jew and to have a right in Jerusalem, the City of the Great King, the Holy Place, to which all the nations of the world were one day to come and worship. It was to be a wonderful kingdom; but, somehow, the more he thought about it and the more he saw, the smaller grew the idea which had brought him to the feast—the idea that Jesus of Nazareth was really the king who was to come. It had not seemed so incredible while he was among the hills of Galilee.

During the few days before Ben Nassur and his friends were to set out for home, Cyril saw hardly anything of the Teacher. On one of those days he went to the amphitheater, the circus which Herod the Great had built, at some distance from the city. He paid for a seat in one



"THERE WERE CONTESTS BETWEEN SWORDSMEN."

of the upper galleries. On the tiers of seats below him were all sorts of people, and far away, on the opposite side of the vast arena, the sandy level in the middle, he saw, in the lower tier, a canopied place that was furnished magnificently. In it there were throne-seats, and on them sat King Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilatus, the Roman governor, two Roman generals, with other distinguished men, and a number of richly dressed women, some of whom wore brilliant tiaras or coronets upon their heads. He stared at them for a few minutes, and at the tremendous throng of people, but after that he thought only of what was going on in the arena.

There were chariot races; and Cyril could not help being intensely excited by the mad rush of the contending teams, while all the thousands who looked on shouted and raved. After the races, however, came scenes some of which made him shudder. There were foot-races and boxing-matches, but these were soon over, and then there were contests between pairs of swordsmen, spearmen, clubmen, and the like, in which the fights went on until one of the combatants was slain. Close upon the last of these duels, bands of gladiators marched in from opposite sides of the arena, and charged each other like detachments of soldiers upon a real battle-field. The fighting was furious and desperate, but one side was soon beaten, for the parties had not been equal. One party had been trained warriors, professional gladiators, and the other only common men, captives taken in a recent raid of Pilate's sol-

diers upon a wild tribe beyond the Dead Sea. They were brave enough, but they were put there only to be killed for the amusement of the great men and of the multitude. So were the poor victims with whom the day's exhibition closed, for they were driven into the arena, half armed, to contend as best they could with a number of hungry lions, tigers, leopards, and hyenas, which were loosed upon them from their dens under the tiers of seats.

"Oh!" thought Cyril, "if our king were to come, he would never permit such cruelty as this! I ought not to be here! I will not come again!"

It was no place for him, and yet he had all the while been thinking of some things that he had seen, and of more that he had heard, of the dealings of Herod and of the Romans with such Jews as had offended them.

"They seem," he said to himself, "to enjoy putting our people to death, just as they enjoy the suffering of captives and gladiators in the circus. The king will drive out these wicked Romans when he comes and takes the kingdom."

Cyril had something new to hear that night, his last night in Jerusalem. Rabbi Isaac, during the first few days after his arrival, had had a hard time of it; so many people had inquired of him concerning Jesus of Nazareth, the Galilean Teacher, and particularly about the wonder performed at Isaac's house, in turning water into wine. The rabbi had firmly declared all he knew, but the dread of having to tell it over and over had inclined him

to keep away from questioners. Of any other marvelous things which had been done in Galilee he knew nothing. Neither did Cyril, but now something entirely new and positive had come. The Nazarene, as some men called Jesus, had been healing sick people in Jerusalem during the Passover season — not a few, but many. His fame was growing rapidly, and the Passover pilgrims would carry news of him not only to every corner of the land of Canaan, but to other lands — to the very ends of the earth.

Ben Nassur said that he wished he had seen some of these marvelous cures; but his regret was slight compared to that of Cyril.

“I did not think he would heal the sick in the city,” he said. “Yet I might have known the Teacher would do wonderful works. But I have learned all about Jerusalem.”

“Thou hast done well enough,” said Isaac. “Thou art only a youth. What wonder he has healed the sick? He is of the house of David. He is now a rabbi, truly. But Nathanael is wrong, for he is not the coming king of Israel. They will never anoint him. No, no, my son; he will never be the Anointed.”

Cyril was silent. Ben Nassur had spoken in Hebrew, and the words he used, “the Anointed,” were the very words which, translated through the Greek and Latin tongues into our own, are “the Christ.”

Cyril went to sleep that night with the determination

to cease his sight-seeing about the city. He would keep as close as he could to the Teacher, so that he might see him do works as remarkable as that which he had done at Cana.

Perhaps Isaac had formed a like purpose, but it was too late, for almost the first words Cyril heard from him the next morning were these :

“The son of Joseph of Nazareth hath departed for Galilee. It is time for us also to go. Get thee ready. We shall see, now, what he will do in his own country.”

It was all in vain that Ben Nassur and his friends prepared in haste, for Jesus and his disciples were a day's journey on their way. As for Cyril, he felt that a misfortune had befallen him !

“I long to see the wonderful works he is doing,” he thought ; “and I shall not be with him.”

And indeed many were healed all along the homeward way. Ben Nassur and those who were with him heard accounts of these events from place to place. He had worked wonders even at and near Samaria. When they reached Cana, the Master had been there already. He had preached there, and he had healed the sick ; then he had gone onward toward Capernaum.

“My son,” said the rabbi to Cyril, with great dignity of manner, “I will go to Capernaum myself. There have been many rabbis who have healed the sick. It is wonderful, but I have heard of such marvels ; yet it is my duty to see it done.”

So the wise and learned rabbi hardly paused in his journey save to sleep one night at his own house in Cana. He even bade Cyril go forward that very evening, promising to follow in the morning.

"It will be the sixth day," he said. "I must be in Capernaum to hear him preach in the synagogue on the Sabbath."

"Simon is living at Capernaum now," said Cyril. "Thou wilt find me at his house. I shall see Lois, too, and she will tell me all she has heard about the Teacher, and where he is to preach."

CHAPTER X

IN CAPERNAUM

WHEN Cyril reached Capernaum he did not find Lois at the house of Abigail. He went there at once, only to be told that his sister had gone to the house of Simon Peter to help, for his wife's mother was sick.

Simon's house was toward the sea; and even before Cyril reached the house he learned that Jesus had not yet returned to Capernaum. He was preaching in one of the neighboring villages, and would not be in his own town again before the Sabbath.

Lois had watched for her brother when the time for Cyril's arrival drew near, and he found her waiting for him in the porch of Simon's house. Her face seemed sad, too, in spite of the pleasure she felt at seeing him.

"I am so glad thou art here," she said, in her very earnest welcome. "I hope that the Teacher will come! She is so sick, I think she will die. Where didst thou leave him?"

Cyril had a wonderful story to tell, but he did not tell it to Lois alone. Even Simon's wife left her mother for a moment, and came out of the house, and some of her

friends came with her. The nearer neighbors had seen Cyril arrive, and they gathered about him to learn the news, according to the custom of village folk. He was quickly the center of a little group of questioners and hearers, old and young, and to them he related the clearing of the Temple by the Teacher of Galilee. Yet they were not so much impressed by the stories of cures, for these Cyril had heard of but had not seen.

“Thou shouldst have remained with him,” said Lois, reproachfully. “Then thou couldst have told us more of what he did.”

“He will be here on the Sabbath,” replied Cyril. “Ye will then see for yourselves what he will do.”

“He will not cure anybody on the Sabbath,” remarked one of his hearers. “We must wait until next week.”

The people separated, and Cyril went into the house; but the questions of Lois had only begun. As they went in, however, she pointed toward the door of the sick room and whispered:

“If the Master could cure her! We think she cannot live. I wish he would come! He does not even know she is sick. Simon is with him, and perhaps even he has not yet heard of her sickness.”

Cyril sympathized with her thoroughly, but as he turned to go, he exclaimed again:

“Lois, if thou hadst but seen him in the Temple. He fears no one. I hope that he will be our leader against the Romans.”

Cyril believed that the time for him to be a soldier was drawing near. All through that night he dreamed of marching legions and of battle-fields. When the next morning came he went out to find that the people of Capernaum were waiting in a state of impatient expectation for the arrival of the man whom some of them called "The Prophet of Galilee."

The Sabbath began with the evening of our Friday, and the sun set without the arrival of any further tidings except that the Teacher might be expected to preach in the synagogue on the next day. During that sixth day Lois was too busy for more than a brief talk with her brother, but she was waiting even more eagerly than he.

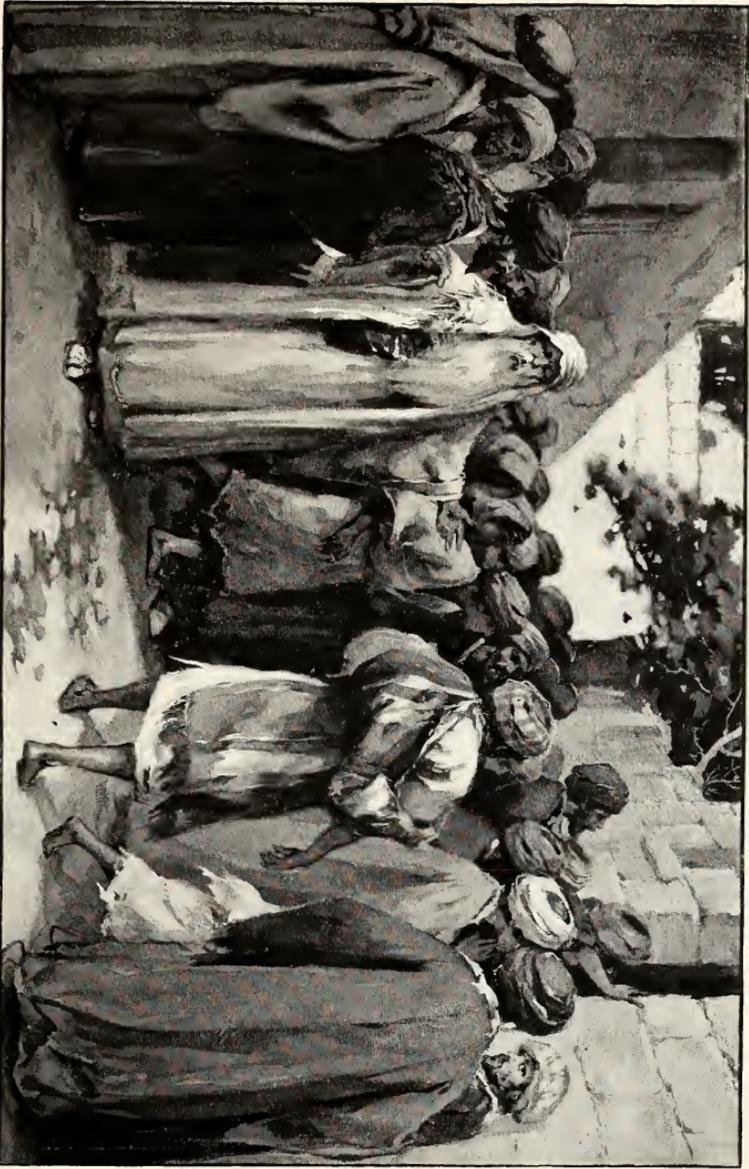
Sabbath morning came, and the hour (about nine o'clock of our time) for the synagogue services drew near, but Ben Nassur had not been seen in Capernaum. Cyril prepared to go early, but Lois was to remain at Simon's house. She was sincerely glad to be there and to help, but she could not help saying to herself: "I wish I could be at the synagogue, and that I could see and hear him!"

The first thing that Cyril saw to interest him that Sabbath morning was the throng passing along the street toward the synagogue, with the Teacher. He had walked several miles to reach the synagogue, and some of his followers had come all the way with him.

"There is Ben Nassur," exclaimed Cyril. "But who is that behind him?"

The very strict rabbi had strained a point and had

RABBI BEN NASSUR AND THE THRONG BEFORE THE HOUSE OF SIMON PETER.



walked further than the Law allowed on the Sabbath, in order to attend these synagogue services. The throng was dense, so that the Teacher and his disciples advanced slowly. Among the crowd walked a tall, haggard, wild-eyed man, to whom no other spoke, and from whose parched and panting lips no sound was uttered.

“Is he insane?” whispered Cyril to Ben Nassur, when they met and when the rabbi had greeted his young kinsman.

“Not so,” responded Ben Nassur. “He hath a demon, it is said. Such cases are more and more numerous, nowadays. Only the chief priests can aid these sufferers—they and the most learned rabbis.”

Cyril had heard that even the rabbis and the priests avoided undertaking to remedy these evils, which some called casting out unclean spirits, and he asked the question, “What is this they call a ‘demon’?”

“No man knoweth,” calmly replied the rabbi. “But I have thought that Herod hath one,” he added thoughtfully.

During all the usual opening services the Teacher sat in silence, but afterward a parchment copy of the Scriptures was handed him, and he read from it several passages. Then he rolled up the parchment, handed it back to its keeper and began to speak.

Cyril was leaning forward to listen, when he became aware of a man moving close beside him, and a fierce face was pushed toward his shoulder. Cyril shrank away, al-

most in fear, for now came a loud voice, as if some power within the man spoke through his lips: "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God."

Ben Nassur had risen upon his feet, and so had other men, in the intensity of their surprise and curiosity.

But there was no change in the manner of the Master, except that he at once spoke, as if reprovngly:

"Hold thy peace, and come out of him."

Down fell the man, as if some wrestler had thrown him, but when, a moment later, he arose again, he was found to be altogether himself, quiet and sane.

"Is the demon gone?" exclaimed Cyril. "Where did he go? What is he?"

"He is gone," said a man who pushed close to him. "But what a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out."

Those who stood near Isaac Ben Nassur said afterward that he seemed to be completely overawed by this evidence of power.

As for Cyril, his first impulse was to go and tell Lois. It was all the easier to go, because he could not now get anywhere near the Master, and because the crowd was slowly making its way out of the synagogue. He reached the house of Simon, and Lois listened in silence to his wonderful story; but she seemed to be thinking of something else.

“I am glad the man was cured,” she said. “Why cannot the Master do something for the people of this house?”

Cyril did not make any reply, for up the street toward Simon’s house, at that moment, was coming the crowd that accompanied the Teacher.

“I believe he is coming to see her,” whispered Lois. “I hope he is.”

He reached the door, but did not pause there. He walked through the main room, and was led into the smaller one, where the sick woman lay.

Little enough could any Jewish physician do for the sufferers from the malignant fevers bred by the marshes around the Sea of Galilee. What would the Teacher do in such a case? What comfort could he give to the poor woman who lay there tossing and moaning?

The Teacher was now standing by the sick woman, but neither Cyril nor Lois caught the few words that he uttered as he took the sufferer by the hand, and raised her gently. He did not seem to be speaking to her, but Lois exclaimed, joyfully:

“Cyril, Cyril! The fever has left her. She is cured. She is well!”

And indeed the matron so suddenly restored to health was quickly out among her kinsfolk. Her very gladness for her recovery at once expressed itself, moreover, in her zeal for the hospitable entertainment of him who had cured her, and of her thronging guests.

Not far from the outer doorway stood Isaac Ben Nasur. His face expressed both wonder and disapproval. He, at least, remembered what so many others had forgotten—that this was the Sabbath day, a day upon which not even such ministrations to the sick was permitted by the rabbis.

CHAPTER XI

THE CAVE OF ADULLAM

THE law of the seventh day of the week, as interpreted by the rabbis, enjoined a quiet Sabbath afternoon. During the hours when perfect rest was observed, however, the news of the Teacher's power to heal spread rapidly from house to house; and people everywhere made ready to claim his aid as soon as the Law would let them.

Ben Nassur had been consulted by several persons, and, among other wise remarks, he had said:

"I did not see the water changed into wine. Neither did I see this woman cured. She was cured, she got up, and came out. I know no more than that. I do not say yet what it is best for the people to think or believe concerning this Teacher."

When the sun went down everybody in Capernaum was listening for the trumpet, in front of the synagogue, to tell them that the Sabbath hours were over.

At length came the signal to the clustered homes of the city, and to the scattered dwellings of the fisher-folk along the shore. It was heard by rich and poor alike, by

sick and well, and from every direction they went in a swelling tide toward the open space in front of the house of Simon.

It was still daylight when Cyril and Lois stood and watched the Master and the people.

"He laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them," said Lois, as she and Cyril walked away, for the darkness came on, and the crowd was dispersing. "Cyril, I heard some voices crying, 'Thou art the Anointed!' and as if answering them I heard the voice of the Teacher reproving and forbidding them."

"It is not time yet," said Cyril. "If the Romans suspected that he was the King, and was to be anointed over all Israel, they would slay him."

"Would they really slay him?" exclaimed Lois. "For healing the sick?"

"Not for that," replied Cyril; "but for being the King, to raise a rebellion. I mean to watch all night. If he goes away, I must go with him. How I wish father were here! He would know what to do!"

Neither his son nor his daughter knew where Ezra the Swordmaker was; but it was many and many a long mile from Capernaum. With a number of companions he was in hiding within a great cave.

It was exceedingly dark, excepting in one spot. That also was gloomy and strange enough. A cresset, or basket made of thin strips of iron, for holding embers to

give light, swung at the end of a chain that hung from a dim frame-work high above the ground. The cresset was about two yards above a mass of iron, smooth on top, which could be recognized as a rude but serviceable anvil. This was indicated also by a brickwork forge, a bellows, hammers, charcoal, and ashes, with other evidences of the blacksmith's trade.

The place was neither untenanted nor silent. Not far from the anvil sat or lay the party of bearded men, to whom a voice, deep and solemn, was rehearsing the story of the doings at Jerusalem during the Passover week, the cleansing of the Temple, and the teachings of the bold prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.

It was an exciting and wonderful story, for it contained, though with some exaggerations, all the tales brought to Jerusalem by the enthusiastic men of Galilee. The name of Rabbi Ben Nassur and the wonder of the wine at the marriage feast were by no means omitted. Dark faces, bronzed and scarred, upon which the red light fell from the fragments of resinous wood that were blazing in the cresset, grew more striking in the earnestness with which they listened.

Some turned to look at one another, or at the almost unseen narrator, back among the shadows; but one brawny form by the anvil never stirred. This man's head was bowed forward and the face could not be seen; but one bare arm rested on the mass of iron, so that the hand — a right hand — lay upon the pointed projection at one

end. It was a hand, truly, but twisted and gnarled out of all shape, and its very fingers were shrunken to little more than the bones.

“Men and brethren,” said the speaker, in conclusion, “they call us robbers of the wilderness; disciples of John the Baptizer; followers of the old faith. We who wait for the hope of Israel know that John, indeed, is in prison. He is bound in the deep dungeon of the fort of Machærus. But this new prophet of Galilee, what shall we say of him?”

There was silence for a moment, and then another voice answered:

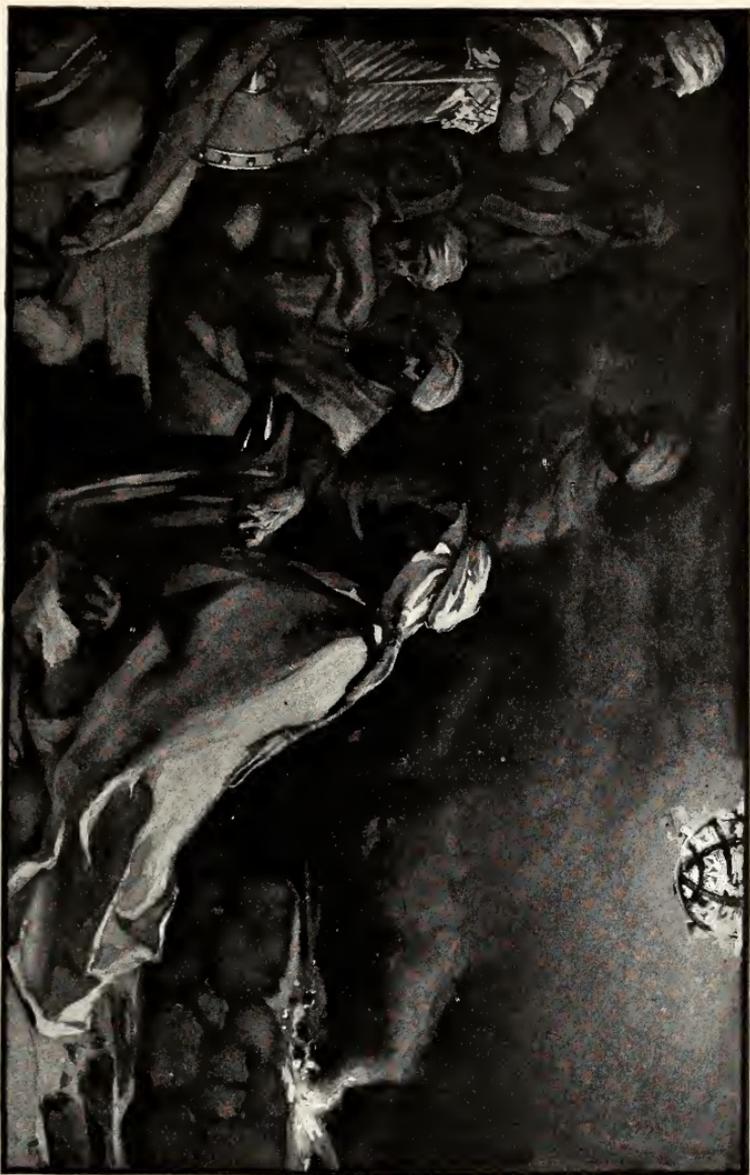
“Let us go and ask John. They still permit us to speak with him. Herod has shut John up, but dares not harm him. I was with him, by the Jordan, when he bore witness of this man of Galilee. Let us know from his own lips what he will say of him now.”

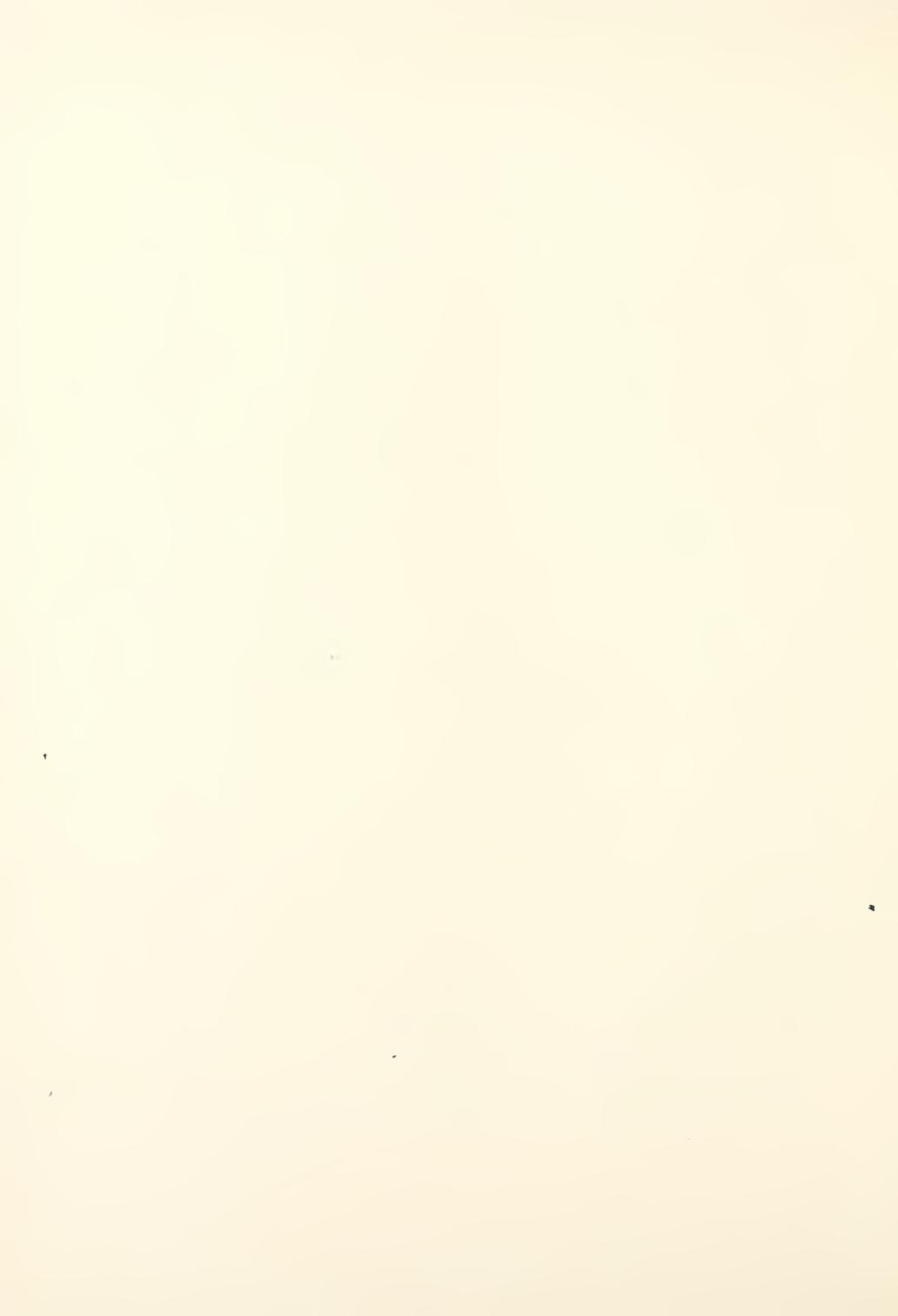
Then spake the strong man by the anvil:

“Go ye to John. I will go to Galilee to inquire for myself. The boy who was with Rabbi Ben Nassur is my own son. Perhaps he can tell me somewhat. I am of no use here. I can ply the hammer no more. Ye must find you another swordmaker. For if this is indeed the King, the day of those who can draw the sword is not distant!”

Slowly he arose to his feet, and in a moment more Ezra the armorer had disappeared in the gloom beyond the red light from the cresset.

IN THE CAVE OF ADULAM.





There was no gloom in Capernaum that night. There were only such shadows as the moon might permit, while it shone so brightly among the trees and houses. The lake was one glitter of dancing waves, and in many a household, until slumber quieted all, there were glad hearts and joyous words, because of the sicknesses of all sorts which had departed at the touch of the Master.

Cyril did not sleep. Neither was he at the house of Simon. Lois was there still, although Simon's wife's mother no longer needed the attention of her young nurse. Ben Nassur was at the house of a friend, a rabbi.

Cyril did not sleep, nor did he long remain in one place, for he was, in his own mind, acting as volunteer sentry, or rather guardian, around the house which contained the leader who would yet, he was almost ready to believe, become his captain and his king. All night long he stealthily patrolled, hither and thither, or lay concealed among trees and shrubbery, and at last, in the dark hour that comes before the dawn, he was rewarded. The moon had long since gone down and it was starlight only, but he saw the house-door open. He saw the Teacher walk out, silently, and pass away through the empty streets out of the city. And Cyril followed until a lonely, deserted spot was reached.

"He is safe there," thought Cyril. "I ought to go and tell Simon and the other disciples."

It was a simple task to find them, and then with them

went out a rapidly increasing throng to gather around the Master and beg him not to go away. There were still, they said, many sick people in and around Capernaum.

“I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also,” was the answer; “for therefore am I sent.”

So those who had heard him dispersed to their own places. Isaac Ben Nassur returned to Cana. Lois went back to her needlework at the house of Abigail. Cyril, much against his will, was compelled to go to the fishing-boats and his daily, or, more often, nightly toil upon the Lake of Galilee. He could not possibly accompany the Teacher upon a long tour of preaching and healing, from city to city, and so Lois plainly told him :

“He has not bidden thee to come with him. Thou art better in Simon’s boat, or John’s, while they are with the Master. I too would wish to go, but I must stay here in Capernaum at work with Abigail.”

CHAPTER XII

THE HEALING OF THE LEPER

ALL over the world, in those days, there was a strong belief that some being was to come and bring with him a great change for good. The Jews especially believed this, because it was prophesied in their scriptures. They expected a king descended from David,—“the Messiah,”—who would not only restore the kingdom ruled by David, but add to it all other kingdoms, so that the Jews would rule the world. All that was said about “the Messiah, the Christ,” however, made it plain that the Jews had formed positive ideas as to what he would be and what he would do, and therefore they were prepared to oppose the adherents of one who did not fulfil their expectations. Cyril was like the rest: the kingdom he hoped for was one which would require grand palaces, strong castles, great armies, and more splendor than that of Herod or even of the Emperor of Rome. He and Lois were aware that they were growing older, and able to share in the prosperity of their people, and they both were glad of this. Lois feared that her brother, though so strong and energetic, was growing almost too fast;

but he was so erect and soldierly, she thought, and he was nobler, finer-looking, than the other youths along the lake-shore. Not one of them could overcome him in their wrestling games, and he surpassed them all in other trials of strength and skill.

"His only dream," she said to herself, "is one day to be a captain in the army of our King."

Tidings came at last that Jesus was once more drawing nearer to Capernaum, teaching and healing as he came. He was soon reported to be among the neighboring villages, and Cyril said to Lois: "I am going to find him."

So it came to pass that, one sunny morning, Lois stood and looked lovingly, proudly, after her brother, as he set forth to seek the Master.

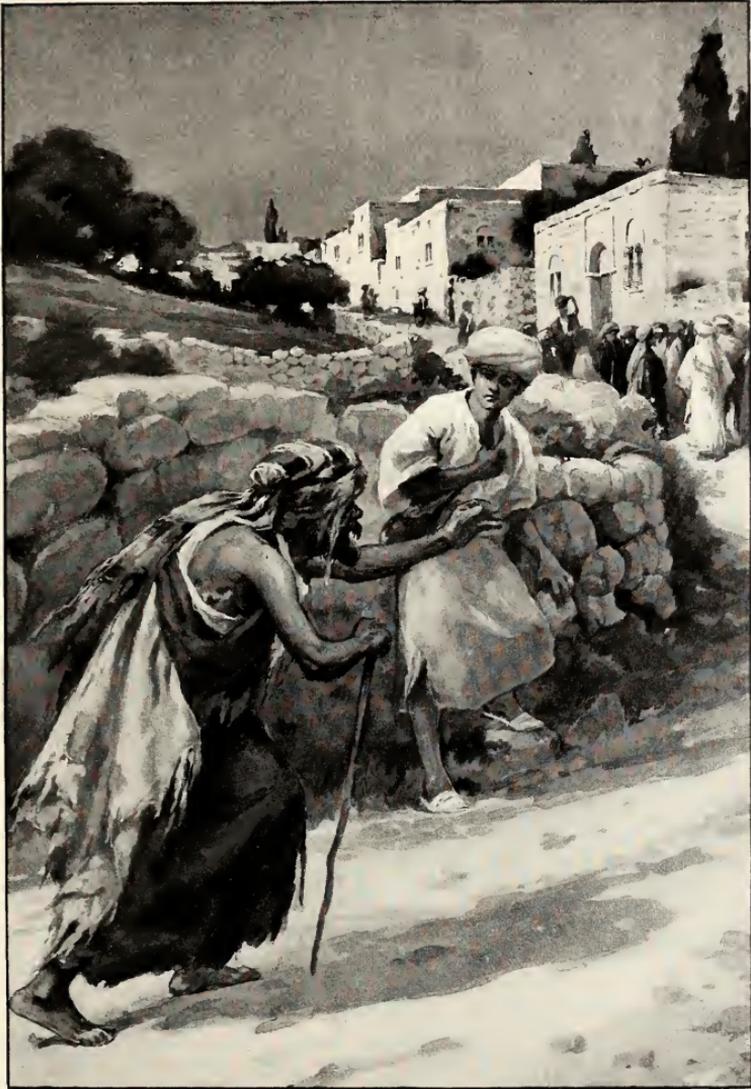
"I wish I could go with him!" she thought. "But Cyril will return and tell all he has seen."

"We know now," Cyril was thinking as he went his way, "the wonderful things the Master can do. He has cured the sick everywhere. And why can he not bring back the greatness of our nation?"

He was in a discontented state of mind, and he walked rapidly. As he went along the road, he suddenly heard a strange cry, and exclaimed: "Poor creature! I must not come too near him!"

Upon the cool breeze was borne that cry so mournful, so forlorn, that it might have touched a harder heart than Cyril's.

"Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!" It was the warning



"THE POOR OUTCAST WAS EVIDENTLY MAKING A DESPERATE EFFORT."

shout of a leper, one of the victims of the most terrible of all diseases. This poor outcast could hardly walk, and he was evidently making a desperate effort. Indeed, only the strength of despair forced him along the road.

Cyril shuddered, glancing in the sufferer's face, and, as the poor man passed, he said to himself: "A leper? Could the Master cure *him*?"

If there were any limit to the healing power, it might well be found here. Cyril could already see the throng at the wayside, gathered around the Master, and he said, "The leper is seeking him!"

Could it be that the outcast himself had any hope, any expectation of aid?

With every moment Cyril found his interest in the unfortunate man increasing. It was terrible to think that nothing could be done; that he would have to withdraw himself from the crowd, as the law required.

Now the prophet of Nazareth, as many called him, was standing in the shade of a tree at the roadside, and the crowd pressed about him. John was there, and James, with Simon, and others whom Cyril knew; but what surprised Cyril was to see, just behind the tall form of Simon the dignified rabbi, Isaac Ben Nassur.

He had come, indeed, all the way from Cana, to continue his duty as a rabbi and a keeper of the public conscience concerning any new doctrine. He had probably just arrived, for there was no dust upon him, nor any other sign that he had come with that throng of wayfarers.

"Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!" There was now an appeal in the leper's warning.

He may have feared some hand of local authority forbidding him to come nearer. Those near him, indeed, did shrink away, as he came hurrying forward, for he was an object to cause repulsion. Still, even while withdrawing, the crowd made way for him, and the leper fell upon his knees at the feet of the Master, breathlessly looking up into the face of the man of Nazareth.

Cyril saw that John and Simon and Ben Nassur and the rest were crowding forward.

Then came the pitiful appeal from the lips of the kneeling leper, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

They saw the Master's hand go out to touch the poor suppliant, and then the gentle voice spoke: "I will; be thou clean."

Breathless expectation made an oppressive stillness that was quickly broken by a smothered exclamation from the lips of Isaac Ben Nassur.

"It is indeed a miracle!" he muttered. "He is made clean!"

Cyril gazed in wonder, for swift indeed was the change which came upon the face that made him shudder when he passed it on the road. It was as if new blood began to course through every vein of the kneeling man, as if a fountain of new life had been opened in him to send its healing forces through every nerve and fiber. For one

moment only he continued kneeling, in a glad, half-doubtful astonishment, and then he slowly arose.

And now the Master said solemnly to the man whom he had healed: "See thou say nothing to any man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."

"That is right," muttered Ben Nassur, approvingly. "He is truly a rabbi. He is zealous for the Law. It is safe for the people to follow him."

"But the healing cannot be kept secret. Everybody saw it done," thought Cyril, as he looked again into the now bright, joyous face of the healed man, who was gazing in speechless gratitude upon that of the Master.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SICK OF THE PALSY

THE healing of the leper was soon told to the people of Capernaum. The report went abroad also to other communities, and many of the Master's teachings went with it.

When, a few days later, the Master came to Capernaum, it seemed that all the people came swarming around the house of Simon, where he was staying. John and Andrew and the other disciples were with him, and so was Isaac Ben Nassur. Lois was yet in the house when the Master came.

Cyril remained outside among the throng, which was now so dense that it was impossible for any more to get into the house. The words of the Teacher, however, could often be heard from outside.

From another corner of the little city there had arrived four men bearing a litter, or hammock, wherein lay a man who seemed beyond all aid. He was more helpless than the leper, for this man could move neither hand nor foot. Still it was firmly the conviction of Cyril, as well as of the palsied man's carriers, that if the Master could touch him he would be helped. The men seemed puzzled

by the crowd, but after some consultation they advanced toward the house.

“They are going to let him down through the roof. I can help!” exclaimed Cyril.

They could not have done so if the house had been a well-built, massive two-story structure, like that of Ben Nassur at Cana. There were few such in Capernaum, however, and that of Simon was like most of the other dwellings, of only one story, with a slight roof, a wooden framework plastered with mortar, and covered thinly with earth and tiling.

The friends of the sufferer were strong and zealous, and no man hindered them. They hoisted the hammock, and long cords were tied to its four corners. A few minutes of work with trowel and hatchet and hands, and Cyril and the others on the roof were able to lower the helpless paralytic into the house.

The Master had healed many sick with various diseases, but never so helpless a man as this. Cyril peered down through the broken roof in eager expectation, and Lois, in the room below, crept nearer, till she could put one small brown hand upon a corner of the hammock and gaze at the deathlike face whose nerveless lips were without motion or expression.

One swift glance upward at the expectant faces of those who had in this way overcome the obstacles between their friend and his helper. He saw their faith, and turning to the palsied man, the man of Nazareth said:

"Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

"Now," thought Lois and Cyril, "he is going to lay his hand on him and heal him."

They were waiting breathlessly, for a moment; but other thoughts than theirs were half angrily manifesting themselves in the darkening faces of the most important men who heard. There were among those who so filled the room scribes learned in the law, men of sacred authority, rabbis as wise as Ben Nassur, or wiser; and their very eyes burned with the indignant protest their tongues were not ready to utter: "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?"

Then, as if they had actually spoken:

"Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" said the Master unto them. "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?"

Cyril was looking at the yet motionless face in the hammock.

"The Master has not touched him," said Lois to herself. He did not; he only looked from one to another of the scribes, as if he were reading their hearts, like written books, and said:

"But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins —" he paused, and, looking down, said to the man sick of the palsy, "I say unto thee, arise, take up thy bed, and go thy way unto thine house."

Up rose the form that had been so nearly without life,

so utterly without motion. The hands which a moment before could not move their fingers, reached down and picked up the hammock. The dense crowd parted before him as he turned toward the door, and he walked away with the firm, elastic tread of health and strength

Nevertheless, the thronging to see such a proof of power compelled Jesus to leave the house and go to the seaside to teach the rapidly increasing multitude.

Cyril did not go with them at once. And while he was assisting the workmen who had come to close the opening made to let down the palsied man, Lois found an opportunity to say to her brother:

“I heard Isaac Ben Nassur and the scribes talking among themselves. They were disturbed, and seemed greatly offended because all, even the lowest people in Capernaum, are flocking to hear him. What has he to do with them? I heard Ben Nassur say that they are accursed.

“What do they mean, Cyril?” Lois went on, “must he not be King over everybody when he establishes his kingdom?”

“Yes,” said Cyril, doubtfully; “and I suppose some of these people will make good soldiers. Father says the Romans are wise, and they make soldiers of any that can fight. We Jews are to be the captains.”

Before long Cyril had a puzzling matter to consider — the same question that interested all those who, like Ben Nassur, were ready to believe that the prophet of Nazareth was really a rabbi, zealous for the Law.

It was no new thing for a Jewish teacher, rabbi, or prophet to select from among his friends or pupils a certain number who made up his school or traveling household. Already it was well understood that John and Peter and their brothers were in this way followers of Jesus; but Jesus now formally filled the number up to twelve, as if, some thought, to represent the tribes of Israel. No youth like Cyril could hope to be among these; but it was at least expected that the chosen would be Jews of good standing, and men of acknowledged patriotism.

“He has not selected them for captains,” said Cyril to himself, concerning certain of the chosen disciples. “Most of them are fishermen or working-men.”

When Cyril next saw the Rabbi Ben Nassur, he told Cyril indignantly that the latest choice made by the Master was no other than Levi, the tax-gatherer of Capernaum, the “publican,” who exacted the imposts of the Romans, and was more hated than any Roman—even more despised than any Samaritan—for doing so. His other name was Matthew, and every zealous Jew regarded him as a traitor to his nation, and worse than a heathen.

“He called him even as he was actually sitting at the seat of custom, receiving taxes for our oppressors!” declared the angry rabbi.

“Did Matthew follow him?” asked Cyril, with boyish directness.

“He left everything, and followed Jesus. He is to be

one of the twelve," said the rabbi. "They are all in his house now — publicans and sinners — and the Man of Nazareth is eating and drinking with them. I will have done with them. I will go back to Cana. I can have no fellowship with the accursed."

So he went his way, full of bitterness.

CHAPTER XIV

JOHN IN "THE BLACK CASTLE"

EASTWARD from the dull and almost waveless waters of the Dead Sea, there is a wild and gloomy land of mountainous heights and dark, precipitous ravines. On one of the highest points of rock, overlooking the surrounding country, Herod had constructed over the ruins of a former fort the stronghold and palace of Machærus, or "The Black Castle." A town had grown up near by, with heathen temples, a theater, and places of trade and manufacture. The palace had been made so splendid that Herod preferred it as a residence, especially as it was close to the frontier of Judea, and as from it he could readily go to any other part of his dominions, unwatched and unimpeded. Here, at least, he could do whatever he pleased, and all prisoners were at his mercy.

It was by no means safe for a stranger to draw near to the frowning gates of the citadel of Machærus; but the disciples of John did come, again and again, only to be refused admission. For a long time, therefore, the Baptist was in comparative ignorance of what might be going on in the great world beyond the castle walls. Its

kings might come or go ; its kingdoms might rise or fall ; its cities might prosper or perish ; and no news of all could penetrate the solid stone that walled him in.

A deep, dark, rock-hewn room was that dungeon under the citadel of Machærus. High up, near the outer level, was one small window, and the door was heavy, barred and grated.

Its occupant was a gaunt, tall, bearded man in a coarse tunic of camel's hair girded with a broad belt of leather. He had preached to multitudes, and he and his disciples had baptized vast numbers. He had actually brought about an important reformation in public morals ; but, more than all, he had proclaimed himself one sent to declare the speedy coming of another "mightier than I," concerning whom the people who heard John obtained only a vague idea. But John's hearers were encouraged to expect the King who was to restore the throne and crown of David.

Whatever John had understood or expected, his work seemed ended, for there was no possible escape from Herod's dungeon.

It was ended ; and yet, one morning, some faithful friends who came to the outer gate of the castle to seek him found the gate open. They were led in, past other gates, through corridors, down flights of steps, until they were permitted to stand at the grated door of the dungeon. After their greetings they told him their errand. One after another, they related the story of all that had

been done by the one whom John himself had baptized, and whom he had declared prophetically to be "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world."

Their sad voices were echoed by the vault where their prophet was now confined. If, indeed, the promised One had come, why should his first witness be condemned to the Machærus dungeon? So the burden of their report and their question was, "What hast thou to say of Jesus of Nazareth?"

John heard them patiently, but he could not answer their questions. All he could say was:

"Go, two of you, and ask him, and bring me word again."

Not all of those who came had been admitted within the castle walls. At some little distance down the slope there sat by the wayside one who seemed to have come with them. He was a large man in tattered raiment, and now he sat there as if begging, holding out for alms, toward the gay courtiers and guests of Herod who sauntered by, a withered hand. He did not ask in vain, for now and then a coin was thrown to him; but oftener he met a scornful rebuff.

He sat there until at last the great gate of the citadel once more was opened, the outer guards stepped aside, and the little band of the Baptizer's disciples came dejectedly out into the road that led on downward toward the town. They made no pause until they reached the beggar by the wayside. As they drew near he arose to



“THEY WERE PERMITTED TO STAND AT THE GRATED
DOOR OF THE DUNGEON.”

his feet, his manner no longer that of a beggar pleading for alms, but rather that of a soldier awaiting orders.

"What saith the prophet?" he asked. "What doth he tell you of the Galilean?"

"He can tell us nothing," said one of the foremost of John's visitors — one who had been a spokesman in the dungeon. "But he bade me and Cleopas go and seek Jesus, and ask, so that not only we, but John himself, might know what to think of this matter."

"I go also, then," responded Ezra the Swordmaker. "Perhaps this time I can succeed in passing through Pilate's dominions to Galilee. They can but slay me. Thrice have I tried and failed. I will go alone, lest the swords that would slay me should find you also. My hand betrays me to Pilate's men; it is like the mark of Cain."

That hand indeed was a reason against venturing once more among the enemies from whom he had escaped. It was better that the two disciples of John should select a different route, and follow it by themselves. Ezra, therefore, turned away from them, and long before sunset had reached a rocky ridge, east of the Jordan, from which he could look back upon the beetling battlements of Machærus, far away on the horizon. At his left, southerly, spread the glassy, gloomy water of the Dead Sea.

"I must see him," he said. "I must see Jesus of Nazareth, and find out who he is. First of all, however, I must find Lois and Cyril. God keep them! But who can rejoice in his children during such troublous times as these bid fair to be?"

Meanwhile Cyril and Lois, far away, had been listening to a sermon which the Teacher had preached to a great multitude. When they discussed it afterward, they were able to repeat parts of it with the accuracy which was common to the Jewish children, trained in the severe schools of the rabbis.

"You remember more than I," said Cyril to Lois, at last. "How I wish father could have been there! And what a multitude there was! Yet all could hear him."

"I long for a sight of father's face more and more," replied Lois. "I know it is not safe for him to come, but he would be almost safe if he could once get into Galilee."

"Perhaps he would," said Cyril. "He is now, I believe, somewhere in Judea, or beyond it, in the wilderness."

This was the first time that either she or Cyril had followed the Teacher so far from their home in Capernaum. That city was now many miles away, and Cyril did not mean to return to it at once.

"Suppose," said Cyril, "that we set out with the Teacher and the Twelve to-morrow, and go as far as Nain? We can then take the highway from there all the way to Capernaum. That will make our journey shorter than to go back the way we came."

Lois assented, for it was in accord with a promise of speedy return which she had made to Abigail.

The next morning came, and Cyril and Lois were among the long, continually changing throng which followed Jesus toward Nain, as similar crowds had attended him from place to place in all his toilsome, unceasing ministry.

CHAPTER XV

THE SON OF THE WIDOW OF NAIN

EVEN the greater number of those who were present could not be near enough actually to see a sick person healed, because of the crowd.

“We will keep as near him as we can,” remarked Cyril to Lois, at setting out.

Others were as eager as they, however; and much of the time they were compelled to follow at some distance, and talk with each other or with various wayfarers concerning works of marvelous healing which they themselves had not witnessed. It was remarkable how many of those they talked with were almost as strongly persuaded as was Cyril himself that the kingdom of David for which they were longing was at hand. So the hours went by as they walked on along the shady highway toward the little walled town of Nain.

As they drew near the town they were compelled to pause, for a number of people came slowly and mournfully walking through the open gate.

It was a funeral procession, and as it drew near enough both Cyril and Lois could hear the talk of those who

came on in advance. The dead man was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.

The mother closely followed the bearers, but she was silent amid the noisy wailing of other mourners. Of these some were professionals, such as mourned for hire at the funerals of that day; but more were friends and neighbors, and their cries were a genuine testimony of their grief and their sympathy.

The mother was no longer young. She seemed pitifully withered and old and feeble, as she tottered along the way, out from the gate of Nain.

"If her son had been only sick," said Lois, "the Master would have cured him. But look, Cyril! What is he going to do?"

At that moment the pent-up sorrow of the widowed mother burst forth in passionate weeping. The throng which had followed the Master had paused out of respect for the funeral procession, but he himself had not paused. Now he stood so near the mother that her sobbing seemed an appeal to him, although she spoke no words nor addressed him in any way.

"Weep not," he said, and the tone with which he spoke seemed a kindly command; and as he spoke he turned from her and stepped close to the bier.

"He will be defiled!" exclaimed a low voice behind Cyril. "A rabbi must not touch the dead! But I have done with him. He does not teach the Law."

Cyril turned, and saw Ben Nassur standing among the

disciples. He had walked many miles the day before, from Cana, to hear the Sermon on the Mount. Ben Nasur himself even withdrew yet farther, although he was already at a safe distance.

The face of the sorrowing mother was bent low above the white cloth which covered the body on the bier. The Master had touched the bier, as if bidding the bearers to halt, and they at once halted and lowered it.

The throng stood still, as if turned to stone. There was a moment of silence, and then the voice of the Master was heard :

“ Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.”

The form upon the bier arose to a sitting posture. “ Mother ! ” came from the son’s lips ; but beyond one sob she could make no sound.

A great fear fell upon all who saw or heard, and the mother’s face, too, was white with awe, but not with the dread that came to the others. She stood with her arms outreaching, in a terrified doubt if indeed her son were coming back. She was understood, for now the risen man was on his feet, and the Master led him to his mother. In the crowd, though they were still stricken with wonder, some began to rejoice, and there arose a triumphant voice crying :

“ A great prophet has risen among us ! ”

Then, like a response, from the men of Nain came back another cry of joy :

“ God has visited his people ! ”

But the mother and her son, with their immediate friends, hastened into the city.

"I shall go back to Cana," exclaimed Ben Nassur. "It is time the very chief priests and doctors at Jerusalem should take some action concerning this man whom the people follow. Nobody will know what to believe."

"I feel so glad for that poor mother," exclaimed Lois. "If only father could have been there!"

"If he does not come soon," replied Cyril, "I must seek for him."

"But now we are to return to Capernaum," Lois reminded him.

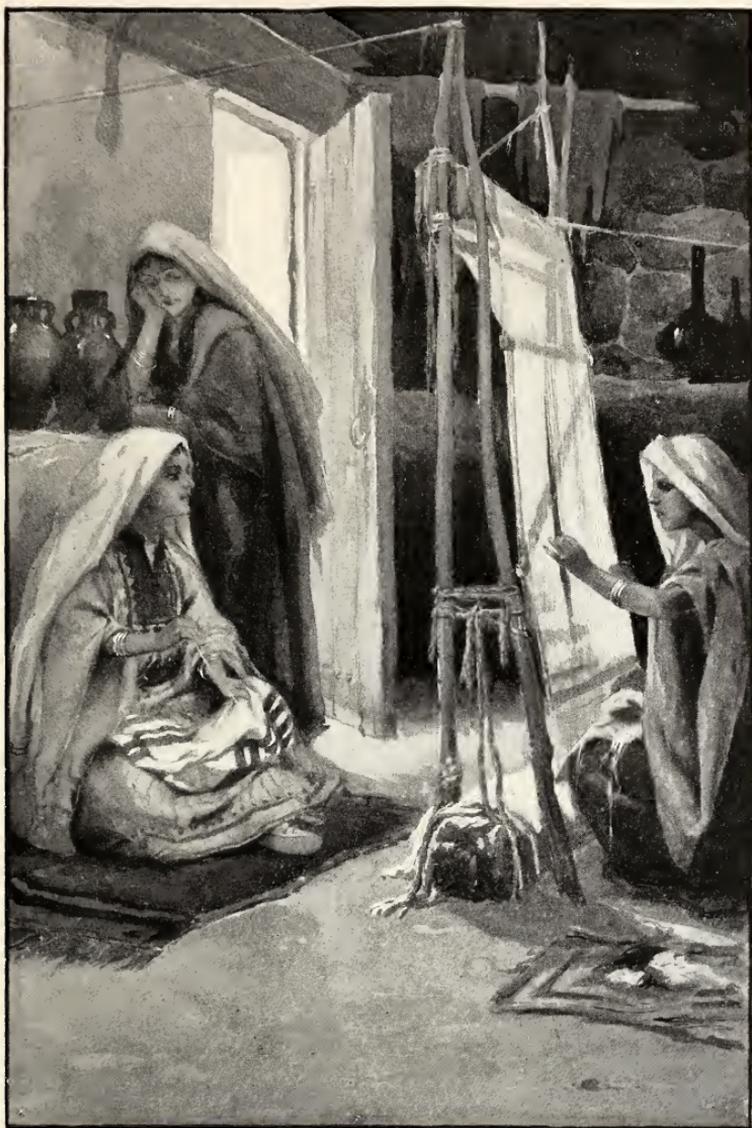
"We have fully twenty miles to go," said Cyril, "perhaps more; but we can go by way of Nazareth."

But, after some discussion of the routes, she and Cyril took the shorter road that went toward the lake, several miles east of the place where the youth of Jesus was passed.

They reached Capernaum on the following day, and Cyril went at once to his work among the boats and nets, while Lois returned to her needlework.

They were the first to bring to Capernaum the story of the widow's son at Nain.

Both Cyril and Lois were eager to be always with the Teacher, although they fully understood and expected that before long he would be once more in Capernaum. If, however, they could have been with him only a few days after they left him at Nain, they might have wit-



"LOIS RETURNED TO HER NEEDLE-WORK."

nessed one result of the conference at the door of John's dungeon in the Black Castle.

All days were not alike in the work of the Master, so far as men could see or understand it. There were days when he seemed almost seeking to escape from his task, as if it overburdened him; and there were many nights when he went away by himself to lonely places for prayer or meditation. There seemed, however, to be days of special power, and one of these came at this time. The crowd was dense around him; the sick and afflicted were many, and he healed them. He spoke to the throngs that followed him.

Standing among those who crowded about were three men, strangers to those around them. They were sunburned, ascetic-looking men, thin as if with fasting, and their sandals were worn with much travel. They had on the coarse garments worn by the Zealots of the Judean wilderness, hermit-like men whom most of the Jewish people held in great respect.

These listened and watched hour after hour, until at last one of them stepped directly in front of the Master and seemed about to speak.

It was by no means uncommon for men to ask questions, and his answers were always listened for with eager interest; and there was a silence, for the manner of Jesus was as if he had said to the stranger, "Speak."

"John sent us unto thee," said the inquirer, "bidding us ask of thee, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"

This question, like an undertone, was heard in all the talk concerning the Prophet of Nazareth. It was in another form Cyril's question about the Captain.

"Go," said the Master, "and shew John again those things which you do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

The questioner bowed low and turned away, followed by his companions. No man hindered them; but as they passed beyond the border of the crowd that still was pressing toward the Teacher, one of them stood still and said to the others: "Go ye to Machærus. Bear ye his message to John. It is yours to bear, not mine. I go to Capernaum. Yet I think you will see me again, not many days hence."

So they parted, and Ezra the Swordmaker turned his steps toward the north.

CHAPTER XVI

EZRA'S WITHERED HAND

THE next day, the Sabbath, was memorable in Capernaum. When the morning came it seemed as if the city awoke in a great fever of excitement and expectation. The Prophet of Nazareth was known to have returned, and he was to preach at the synagogue. All through the town, too, there were sick people from the country around, and even from far away, who had been brought there to be healed. Not that they thought that anything could be done for them upon the Sabbath. Those who were suffering must suffer one day more, and those who were about to die must be left to die. They were utterly sincere, for thousands of Jews had fallen by the swords of their enemies rather than break the law of the Sabbath, as they understood it.

So far as attendance upon religious services was concerned, Cyril was now regarded as a man. He could go to the synagogue, like his elders, and find a seat where he would, so long as he did not take one of those reserved for dignitaries. Lois also could go, but not with her brother. She and all other women went by unfrequented

streets, so far as possible, and might greet no one by the way. On reaching the threshold of the synagogue all had to take off their sandals.

The separate place for women in the synagogue of Capernaum was raised like a gallery above the main floor where the men sat. From this gallery, at the beginning of the services, Lois was looking down through the lattice which prevented the women from being seen.

The Teacher occupied a seat in front, facing the rest, and Lois could see that many of those who were present were intently watching him.

"There is Ben Nassur," she said to herself, as she caught sight of the rabbi. "He has come all the way from Cana."

Perhaps he had come because of his great zeal for the Law; for he and other wise and learned rabbis of the sect of the Pharisees had been of late greatly disturbed by what they had heard concerning some of the doings and teachings of the Prophet of Nazareth. They thought him too bold; and some of the things he had said sounded new. They were such teachings as had never yet received the approval of the scribes, the chief priests, or the rabbis.

"There is Cyril just behind Isaac," thought Lois; and then suddenly her heart gave a great leap, and her face turned as pale as ashes.

"It is father!" she said, but not aloud, almost rising from her seat; "he has touched Cyril."

Cyril at that moment turned, but the synagogue was

not the place for greetings. Besides, the swordmaker's left hand on his shoulder seemed to be pressing him down into silence, as Jesus of Nazareth arose to read, from the scriptures handed him, the appointed lesson of the day. He read the written word, but he was also reading the thoughts of the watchful, suspicious Pharisees before him. He saw Ben Nassur turn and stare at Ezra and at the withered hand which the swordmaker at last held up as if inviting the attention of the Master. Many saw the gesture, and a kind of mute question passed from face to face: "Will he heal on the Sabbath?" Very different was the thought of Lois: "Father has come. I wish I could ask the Master to heal his hand."

Cyril said nothing. He seemed to himself not even to be thinking, hardly to be breathing.

"How eager Cyril looks!" thought Lois. "And father! Will the Master answer them?"

She, too, was now gazing at the Master, with all her heart in her eyes, while Isaac was putting out a hand as if to restrain Ezra, at the moment when the voice of Jesus rang through the synagogue: "Stand forth."

Forward strode the brawny swordmaker, and there he stood, fixing his eyes upon those of the man he had come so far and dared so much to see. Lois thought she had never seen a nobler-looking man than her father, nor a handsomer youth than her brother. Cyril also had started forward; but he had paused, and was now a few steps behind Ezra, his young face all ablaze and his lips parted

in eager expectation. The countenance of the Master did not wear its usual expression.

He glanced from one to another of those who, with Ben Nassur, were waiting, so full of ready condemnation, to see what he would do, and then he asked:

“Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?”

No voice responded to the Master's question.

It was easy to see that the Pharisees were very angry, but not with the kind of anger, that was more like sorrow, glowing in the face of Jesus of Nazareth.

“Stretch forth thine hand,” he said to Ezra the Sword-maker.

Out went the sinewy arm to its full length, while a strong shuddering shook the frame of its owner. He obeyed promptly, instantly, vigorously, like a soldier obeying his captain; but, as he did so, every sinew and fiber of arm and hand was tingling, and the veins in which no blood had freely coursed for long and heart-sore years were throbbing full again.

“It is restored whole as the other!” gasped Cyril, as his father lifted that right hand toward heaven before the congregation.

Shouts arose, and there were many who glorified God; but Ben Nassur and the Pharisees arose and stalked out of the synagogue.

“The people are with him here,” said Isaac to his zealous friends. “All the rabble believe he is a prophet.

"IT IS RESTORED WHOLE AS THE OTHER," GASPED CYRIL.



Even the centurion in command of the garrison is his friend. We must go and take counsel. He has broken the Sabbath! He claims to be above the Law. It is Beelzebub that helps him."

"Herod is at Machærus, but all his friends here will unite to crush a man who talks of a new kingdom," said another.

Cyril heard, for he had been swept along a little distance by the crowd, all the more helplessly because he had been trying to keep his eyes upon his father, still standing at the front of the synagogue and gazing at the Teacher.

The latter was again speaking, and now in all directions the friends of the sick were hurrying away to bring them forth for healing. Not for Ezra alone had the bondage of the Pharisees been removed forever from the uses of the Sabbath.

"I must speak to my father," exclaimed Lois to a friend, as she left the synagogue. "I am so thankful! There he is!"

"My son," the swordmaker was saying at that moment, "I have seen him. Yes, he is the King! He is come! So they carried word to John in his prison. The time is near at hand."

"Didst thou speak to him?" asked Cyril.

"I did speak," returned Ezra, his dark eyes glancing with glad light, and his renewed hand moving its firm, strong fingers, as if to do so gave him the keenest plea-

sure. "But what I said I know not, only that he answered me, 'A little while.'"

"A little while?" Cyril asked eagerly.

"But I cannot wait here," said Ezra; "I must see Lois, and then I must depart. Thou must abide here for a season, to be near him; and I will tell thee where to find me. Seest thou that hand?"

"It is as strong as ever," said Cyril, joyfully.

"Strong for the forge!" exclaimed Ezra. "Full many a blade must pass under the hammer before we can arm that first legion of our King, which is to capture the great storehouse of Roman weapons in Herod's tower at Jerusalem. But first I must go and show that hand as a witness to those in the wilderness of Judea who wait for the kingdom."

CHAPTER XVII

THE GREAT DRAUGHT OF FISHES

LONG were the conferences that Sabbath day between Ezra and his children, for they talked until late in the evening.

Ezra had much to relate of all that he had seen and done since he and Cyril parted on the slope of Mount Gilboa. Cyril and Lois, on the other hand, had endless questions to ask, concerning not only the past, but the future. But Ezra's deepest interest was in what they had to tell him concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

"He is the true Son of David," Ezra at last exclaimed. "Cyril, thou wilt follow him. I trust that thou wilt yet be a captain in his army. He said to me, 'It is but a little while.' We must be ready. I am thankful that my own hand can once more swing the hammer and draw the sword! Thou art grown tall and strong; and thou hast studied the Roman legions. Thou wilt yet throw a pilum as far as Pontius himself, but thou hast yet to learn to put a legion in line, and thou knowest little about the handling of a shield."

"I have practised with a wooden shield," said Cyril.

"I could catch whatever the Capernaum fisher-boys could throw. We made a game of it on the beach."

"That is well," said Ezra, soberly; "but the battle-shield is heavier. Thou must harden thy left arm for it with boxing and lifting. Not many men can lift quickly the buckler of a Roman legionary."

"The soldier I pelted across the Kishon could handle his shield well," said Cyril, "or he would have fared ill."

When it was time to rest, Ezra went to the house of a friend, a disciple of John the Baptizer.

All day, and into the evening, the Master had been preaching and healing, and people said that in the morning he would be on the shore of the lake.

"I shall be there," Ezra had said. "I must hear him once more before I return to Judea. I think I shall have somewhat to send to the Baptizer, in the dungeon of the Black Castle."

Just as Cyril and Lois parted, she said:

"I wish you could see the tallith I am working for Nathanael of Cana. He ordered it when he came here to listen to the Teacher. He was here again to-day. He and Isaac are not friends any more. Isaac has quarreled with him."

Already, therefore, there were bitter factions forming for and against the doctrines of the prophet of Nazareth. Many who had been friendly were becoming enemies; and it was said that in some of the families of Capernaum and elsewhere even near kindred were taking opposite sides.

"I don't see how anybody can be against one who does only good," said Lois.

"All Herod's people oppose him," said Cyril, "and rabbis like Isaac."

Ezra and his son and daughter were among the great crowd that gathered on the beach the next morning.

Closer and closer pressed the eager multitude, and the little company of disciples with whom the Master stood was compelled to give way. They were at the head of a little cove and there were several boats there, pulled up on the sand.

"That is Simon's boat," whispered Cyril to Lois. "There are no fish in it, and he has left his nets there. Perhaps he means to try again."

"Look!" she replied. "The Teacher is getting into the boat with his disciples. He can preach from the boat without being pressed upon by the multitude."

The Pharisees and other enemies were there, listening as intently as did even Ezra. Every now and then Ezra's right hand was thrust out as if it were grasping something, and more than once it went to his left side, where a sword might hang; and his face glowed with enthusiasm. Cyril and Lois glanced back and forth from their father's face to that of the Master.

Simon pushed his boat into the lake, aided by other fishermen, for it was large and heavy, and they anchored it not many feet from the shore. The land came down around the little cove somewhat steeply, and all the throng

on the grassy slope, down to the gravel of the shore, could both hear and see.

Parable after parable was told, like so many pictures painted in words.

At length the discourse was at an end, and the Master spoke to Simon the fisherman :

“Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.”

“Master,” replied Simon, “we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing ; nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net.”

The Master sat silently at the stern of the boat while the fishermen made their cast. It was a large, heavy net, that required three or four men to handle it. No wonder even strong men should grow weary casting such a net as that, and dragging it back empty through the water. There came a shout from the boat, the moment after the net was thrown, and then another.

“Lois,” exclaimed Cyril, “it is so full they cannot pull it in ! Father, let us get John’s boat ! It belongs to him and James. Quick !”

Simon and the rest were already beckoning and calling, and the second boat started as if of itself, so prompt and vigorous were the hands that sent it from the shore.

All the people along the shore could now see that the great net was actually breaking with its multitude of fishes, and the fishermen of both parties were lifting out the catch with their hands.

“This boat can carry no more,” said Cyril, a few minutes later. “She is deep in the water now.”

Simon, in the other boat, fell upon his knees before the Master, saying: “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”

The others looked on in astonished silence, but the answer was heard by all:

“Fear not; for henceforth thou shalt catch men.”

The boats were pulled to the shore, towing the net with the fishes that remained in it; but when it got there the catch had to be cared for by others, for Simon and Andrew and John and James, and the rest who were of the Twelve, seemed to care no more for boats or nets or fish. They at once left all behind them, and walked away with Jesus into Capernaum.

It was late that evening when Ezra and his son stood face to face in a lonely, rocky place, a mile or so south of Capernaum.

“I think they have already ordered my arrest,” said Ezra. “Once in prison, I should never be released. They might send me to the galleys, for they need strong rowers and care little whence they come.”

“We shall drive them all out some day,” said Cyril, bitterly. “They treat us worse than if we were dogs.”

“Our day is coming,” replied Ezra. “I shall be ready, whether it be sooner or later. Be thou also ready, and leave the day and the hour to the Leader. A soldier must wait for orders.”

They bade each other farewell, and Ezra disappeared among the rocks and shadowy trees, while his son turned toward Capernaum. The boy's heart was hot and angry, full of hatred for the men who were ready to slay his father, and, indeed, were oppressing his entire people.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE STORM THAT WAS CALMED

THERE were long intervals when even the friends of Jesus in Capernaum, which they regarded as his home, had but uncertain information as to what precise part of the country he was visiting. News of his intended return at any time, however, was sure to come well in advance of his arrival. There came a day when such an announcement had been bringing into the town crowds of people. Some of them had come at a venture from long distances. It was a day for suspending ordinary work and trade; but it was more than ever manifest that the enemies and detractors of Jesus were bitter and busy. Of these, the more active, if not the greater number, were men who, like Ben Nassur, were in the habit of speaking with something of authority. They had been greatly encouraged by assurances coming from Jerusalem that the prophet of Nazareth was not recognized by the learned doctors, the priests, and dignitaries of the Holy City.

The crowd began to gather early at the shore of the lake, and Jesus was already there to heal the sick, and to put into the minds of men, even those who came out of

mere curiosity, such parables as could not easily be forgotten.

Greater grew the throng, and it pressed him more and more closely. There was no means for compelling order or forbearance. Friends and enemies alike jostled one another for the nearest places. If there was a kind of lull at noon, it was only that the struggle might begin again soon afterwards.

Lois listened until weariness overcame her, but only once did she come near enough to see the Master's face. Cyril, too, was there, and late in the day, Simon Peter, standing near the Master, saw the boy in the crowd and beckoned to him.

"Go thou," said Simon, speaking low to Cyril, "and get my boat. Have it ready at the shore. The Master will cross to the other side. They press upon him."

Away went Cyril, glad indeed of such an errand, for it seemed like a beginning of service to the Master. As for the boat, he knew where it lay. It would have been too heavy for him to manage in the open lake, but he could loosen its fastenings and slowly scull it along until he reached a place opposite the little point to which Jesus and his disciples were making their way, hampered by the eager multitude.

It was growing late, but the Teacher could hardly have retreated into Capernaum. It would have been of little use to have sought rest or retirement in any house. So it was really as to a kind of refuge that he stepped into

the boat when it was sculled to the shore. He was at once followed by certain of his disciples, and they promptly took the oars.

The day's work was done, both its healing and its preaching, and the boat went swiftly over the water.

The Master was in sore need of rest, after so long a toil, and before many minutes, Cyril heard one of those in the boat whisper to another :

“ See ; he sleeps.”

“ How tired he must have been ! ” was the other's reply.

The gentle motion of the boat, rising and falling over wave after wave, had caused the Master to fall asleep, and he lay on a pallet-cushion in the stern.

It was the first time that Cyril had seen the Master's face when it was at rest. Cyril had always seen him either speaking or listening to others, or intent upon some happening.

The face was uncovered only for a moment, for one of the disciples gently spread out a scarf to protect it from the flying spray carried on the wind, which was rising fast. It was one of the sudden storms so common on the Sea of Gennesaret, which were so dangerous to the light fishing-craft, as well as to the gaudy pleasure-boats of the dwellers in the palaces along the shore. Fierce hurricanes would at times sweep down upon the little sea, almost without notice, and dash its surface into foaming billows as difficult to deal with as those of the great seas.

On toiled the rowers, but they made slow headway ;

and manifestly the storm was increasing. The creaking of the oars, the crash of the waves, the roar of the tempest, the shouts of the frightened crew made no impression upon the over-wearied sleeper at the stern of the boat.

He slept soundly even when the waters came surging in over the gunwales, and the oarsmen were almost hurled from their seats.

Cyril was not rowing, and he had therefore perched himself at the prow, where he could look back upon all in the boat. He could make out only terrified faces dimly visible between blinding drifts of sea-spray.

"Master!" he heard shouted loudly by one of the disciples, and then he saw another actually seizing the sleeper's hand to awaken him, while he exclaimed:

"Lord, save us: we perish!"

The sea was pouring into the boat, and it seemed all too late for any power to oppose that tempest.

"We shall surely go down!" thought Cyril; but he saw the awakened Master arise and look calmly around upon the tossing water.

"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" he said to the disciples.

Then Jesus seemed to rebuke the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. No man among those in the boat said a word to the Master as they took to their oars and pulled away; but Cyril heard them murmur, reverently, astonished, to one another: "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"



"CYRIL SAT BY THE BOAT FOR A WHILE."

The night was far spent when the boat touched the shore on the easterly side of the lake. It had been a night of great apparent peril, and such was the wonder at the Master's power that all on board were thoughtful and silent. Hardly a word was spoken now, as they one by one stepped ashore. The Master himself was evidently recovered from his great fatigue, and he led the way up the sloping shore, followed by his disciples.

"Thou canst put up the light sail safely," said Simon Peter to Cyril. "Therefore take thou the boat back to Capernaum. We can obtain another if we need one."

So he walked away, and Cyril prepared to do as he was bidden, but he sat by the boat for a while, trying to recall the picture of the hurricane in the night, the terrified disciples, the half-filled boat, and the Master speaking to the waves and rebuking the fierce gusts of the storm.

The idea was taking shape in Cyril's mind, although he was hardly conscious of this, that he whom even the elements obeyed was something more than man.

Cyril put up the sail. It was small, and it could be used to advantage only when the wind was favorable. There was so little wind that not only was there no danger, but hour after hour went by tediously while the boat floated homeward, hardly leaving a ripple in her wake.

CHAPTER XIX

THE RABBI'S CURSE

ANOTHER summer had passed, and the pleasant autumn weather had arrived. With it had come abundant crops for those who raised them, but there was little profit to the landholders, because of the excessive taxes and other exactions which their oppressors laid upon them.

As for the Prophet, the Teacher, the Man of Nazareth, the Roman officers and the servants of Herod were not disturbed about him. There was no danger to the Romans from him, for, month after month, he devoted himself to healing the sick and to preaching. There was not so much as a sword or a shield displayed among all who followed him.

The Jewish rulers, priests, and scribes, however, felt differently; for even the most learned rabbis understood that their influence over the people was lessening. Here was one, they had learned, who in all his teachings hardly ever quoted from any rabbi, but spoke as if he himself were the only authority required; except when he referred to the Scriptures themselves, the books of the Prophets,

or the Psalms of David. John the Baptizer had done the same, in part, for he had denounced even the highest Pharisees. John was now safely shut up in the Black Castle; but what was to be done with this man, who did not scruple to compare the Pharisees to vipers?

These men were growing more bitter and more threatening every day; and each new exhibition of power seemed only to harden their hearts against the Man of Nazareth, because it increased his influence over the people.

Cyril was beginning to be impatient for the restoration of the kingdom of David, and he grew more and more dissatisfied and restless until, one evening, he came to Lois, at Abigail's, with a determined look on his face. He had said but a few words before he suddenly declared:

“I mean to go to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”

He may have expected her to be surprised, but a pleased light sprang into her face, and she was silent for a moment. Then she replied with cordial sympathy:

“I did not tell thee, but I had thought of it—for thee, not for me. I have thought thou mightest find father. He would be so glad, and so wouldst thou.”

“I have saved money enough,” Cyril said.

“Thou wilt need it all,” said Lois, thoughtfully; “but I have made thee a good new abba, out of some cloth Abigail gave to me. Thou canst buy thee a new tunic. Then thou wilt not look like a beggar, on the way or in the city.”

Cyril thanked his sister, but she had given more thought to his personal appearance than had Cyril himself. He told her, when she showed him the new abba, that the only change of costume he really longed to make was to change his turban for a helmet, and his tunic for a coat of mail.

“I saw father in armor once,” exclaimed Lois, “when I was a little girl. It was like a Roman centurion’s, and I thought he looked so brave! I am glad he was a warrior, but I hope thou wilt not have to put on mail. Father would be as good a soldier as any Roman, now his right hand is whole. But thou wilt be prudent, Cyril? Thou wilt not do anything foolish? Thou wilt come back safe from Jerusalem?”

“Many go safely every year,” said Cyril, reassuringly. “But I shall find father — I know I shall — and I must do as he says. A host of Galileans will attend the feast this year.”

The large number of visitors to Jerusalem was because of the excellent harvests, for the Feast of the Tabernacles among the Jews somewhat corresponded in character to the American Thanksgiving Day. It came earlier, because the season in Palestine is earlier. It was celebrated in October, after all the principal crops had been gathered in the colder hill country as well as in the warm and fertile valleys.

Simple were the preparations required by Cyril, a hardy fisher-boy. With new sandals, robe, and tunic, and with

more than ten shekels, in varied coin, hoarded for his traveling expenses, he was well equipped. He did not need to leave money with Lois, for she was prospering. She was justly proud of the praises lavished upon her embroidery, and she had been entrusted even with the decoration of a costly scarf ordered by a Roman lady.

It was painful when the time for parting came for Lois to say farewell to her brother. She controlled herself, however, and made him promise to return as soon as he could, bringing with him a full account of all that he should see or hear in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was the center of the world, almost of heaven and earth, to the Jews, and from all corners of the known world there came to it pilgrims who had heard of its beauty and splendor.

Cyril decided to travel by way of Cana and of Nazareth. Beyond that, southerly, he did not intend to pass nearer the city of Samaria than he could help. Lois had argued that her brother would be safer and his journey pleasanter in company with the party of his friends and kinsfolk, of which Rabbi Isaac Ben Nassur would be the head. In this Lois proved to be mistaken.

Cyril did indeed reach Cana, walking cheerfully all the way and not spending a denary. He did not need to pay out anything for refreshments by the way, when such delicious figs and grapes could be had abundantly, either for the asking, or wherever the ripened fruit hung out beyond a boundary wall. Such was the Jewish custom,

and Cyril also looked forward to a hearty and hospitable welcome at Cana.

He would have been welcomed in some of the houses, for instance in that of Nathanael; but Cyril went to the wrong door. It was the same which had opened to him so freely during the wedding feast, after his escape from Samaria and his exploit at the crossing of the Kishon. Both of those happenings had made him doubly welcome then, but latterly he had been doing that of which Ben Nassur disapproved. Cyril had been much with the Man of Nazareth, and Rabbi Ben Nassur was offended.

Cyril did not think of this as he walked up the sloping street toward the house of the rabbi.

There was the well, unchanged, and there, close by it, stood the six great water-jars of stone, just as they had been on the day of the wedding. One of them was full, and Cyril paused to wash, preparatory to presenting himself at the house.

“Cyril, my son!”

It was the voice of old Hannah, Ben Nassur's wife, and Cyril turned suddenly to greet her, hardly noticing the frightened tone in which she spoke.

Her look and manner were by no means unkindly, but she cried, “Go not into the house, Cyril, or Isaac will curse thee! He will not permit any follower of Jesus of Nazareth to enter. One such was here the other day.”

“He did not forbid him to come in!” exclaimed Cyril.
“Who was it?”

"I know not his name," she said. "A short, spare man. He crossed the threshold, and as he did so he said, 'Peace be unto this house, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.'"

"And did Isaac—" began Cyril, but Hannah interrupted:

"Do not thou ask what he said, for his words were cruel. And the disciple of Jesus did but take off his sandals and strike them against the doorpost, saying something I did not hear. He went away to Nathanael's house, but Isaac will not speak of him."

"Get thee hence!"

Angry, fierce, threatening were the words that came from the porch of Ben Nassur's house at that moment. Under the vines from which the purple clusters had so recently been gathered stood the tall, dignified form of the rabbi. Cyril had never before seen him so well dressed, for his robe was new and embroidered, his tallith also was new and fine, and on his head was a spotless turban of fine linen. He was evidently more prosperous than formerly, and he had more than ever the air of authority which of right belonged to the wisest, most learned man in Cana.

It had recently been asserted, also, that Ben Nassur was more learned in the Law than any rabbi in Nazareth, and it was said by some that he had greatly strengthened the Nazarenes in their zeal against their law-breaking fellow townsmen. Jesus could not now have found a safe home in Nazareth, neither could his boy follower be ad-

mitted to the house of his learned kinsman. It did not soften Ben Nassur even when Hannah explained to her husband that Cyril was on his way to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Tabernacles, in compliance with the Law. Peace had departed from that house, so far as the new Teacher and his disciples were concerned, and terrible indeed were the words quoted in Hebrew from the old Scriptures, which Ben Nassur hurled at Cyril.

Cyril was really frightened, for the swordmaker's son had been brought up with deep reverence for all rabbis, and especially for Ben Nassur. He regarded him as a great authority in all matters of religion and the law, and the curse of such a dignitary was a thing to be feared exceedingly. It made the young traveler, a moment before so joyous and so hopeful, stand pale and trembling by the well before the house he might not enter. He was as one cast out by his kindred; for such a curse would be known, soon, to all the family connection, near and far, and such of them as revered the rabbi would refuse to receive Cyril.

"Jesus of Nazareth hath despised the Law!" shouted Ben Nassur. "He hath defied the priests of his people. He hath denounced the chief scribes and rulers. He hath denied the teachings of the rabbis. Get thee hence! thou art no longer of my kinsmen. Thou art of the disciples of the Nazarene!"

The rabbi was vehement in his wrath, but Cyril suddenly remembered something that he had hardly noticed



THE RABBI DENOUNCES CYRIL. "GET THEE HENCE! THOU ART NO LONGER OF MY KINSMEN!"

at the time it occurred. It had been Ben Nassur himself who would have openly forbidden Jesus to restore the hand of Ezra, on the Sabbath, in the synagogue of Capernaum. His mandate had been openly ignored by the Master, and there might be therefore a personal bitterness in Isaac's denunciation.

Cyril raised his head and felt as if he were growing stronger.

"Do not answer him," pleaded Hannah, hardly more than whispering. "He is a good man. When thou seest the Man of Nazareth tell him we all love him for the good that he has done. Do not regard Isaac —"

But Cyril's blood was rising somewhat angrily, for Isaac was saying more while the young man waited, and his maledictions now included Ezra the Swordmaker and Lois and all the disciples and followers of the Master.

"I must speak," he said to Hannah, and he turned toward the porch.

Very imposing, in dignity and authority, appeared the large form of the white-robed, white-turbaned rabbi, while his deep, sonorous voice was thundering his wrath.

"Isaac Ben Nassur," said Cyril, much more sturdily than he had thought he could speak to so great a man, "I go to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles. I go to the Temple, but I go not with thee. Seest thou these water-pots? They witness against thee. So witnesseth the right hand of my father Ezra. Thou knowest that Jesus is the son of David, and I—the son of Ezra the

Swordmaker — I am of his disciples, even as thou hast said. I believe he is the king who is to redeem Israel. My father also believes in him.”

Bitter and terrible were the Hebrew words of Ben Nassur as Cyril turned and strode down the street again. Hannah went into the house, weeping; but her young kinsman did not pause in his rapid walking until he was more than a mile beyond the gate of Cana.

There he stood still for a moment, and looked back, as if in deep thought. Then he said aloud:

“I will go on to Jerusalem alone. I do not need the company of Isaac and his Galileans. I will worship in the Temple, and I will offer my sacrifices. I will see my father. But on my way I will enter into no house nor sleep under any roof, lest it fall on me. I shall be safe from the curse of Isaac Ben Nassur and the Law after I have offered my lamb on the altar of burnt offering.”

CHAPTER XX

THE TOWER IN SILOAM

ONLY a few days after his parting with Hannah at the well in Cana, and on a brilliant October morning, Cyril stood upon a mount from which he could look across the valley through which the brook Kedron runs, and see the white walls and the towers and the Temple of the holy city—Jerusalem. Around him on the hill were scattered groves of olive-trees.

“No,” he thought, “I will not go into the city now. I must find my father. I must eat at the Feast of the Tabernacles with him. I will go down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and go to the southern side where is the road to the Cave of Adullam.”

In the valley was a road which made the circuit of the city, following the course of the brook Kedron on that side. There was only just room, it seemed, for road and brook, so densely was the valley occupied by buildings, and by villas and the gardens of the great. It was a broad, perfectly kept driveway; and foot-passengers must make way for the splendid chariots which went sweeping by. There were horsemen also; and Cyril, as he walked,

saw several squadrons of cavalry. He was deeply interested in a cohort of Roman legionaries whose polished arms and perfect drill surpassed anything of the kind he had ever seen. There was a more terrible attraction in a band of trained gladiators that were said to belong to Pontius Pilate. They were enormous men, physically, and were evidently selected from several different races.

Cyril admired exceedingly the vast walls of the city, which arose above him on his right, as he went onward. It was plain that no enemy could so much as assail the battlements that frowned along the edge of the high cliff — Mount Moriah — that formed part of the site of the city. The entire area was a fort, with walls of its own separating it from the rest of the city, and the Temple itself was near the middle of it.

Cyril walked on until he was far down the valley, south-east of the city, between the brook and the wall.

Near what Cyril knew was the Pool of Siloam he saw many laborers at work. They seemed to be erecting a tower; and there was a great throng of people looking on. It seemed as if something more than the building had brought the people there, for near the parties of workmen were gathered throngs of Jews, talking loudly and gesticulating excitedly. When Cyril came nearer he learned the cause of their excitement.

Pilate was really a man of ability, a statesman as well as soldier, or the Roman emperor would never have trusted him with the government of Judea. Pilate had found

Jerusalem greatly in need of water, and had planned aqueducts; he had also decided that the Jews should pay for them. Other taxes not being sufficient, he had seized large sums of the treasures of the Temple, the contributions made by pious Jews all over the world for the support of the Temple worship. As a Roman and a heathen, he believed good water for the city more important than the Temple services.

The entire Jewish people felt differently, however, and the rabbis declared Pilate's project profane and sacrilegious. So here they were looking on at the erection of the great line of towers that were to support the aqueduct, bringing water from the hills to the city.

Cyril, as he stood and looked at the great tower, heard the stentorian tones, furious in anger, of a voice he at once remembered. There indeed, as Cyril turned, he saw Ben Nassur cursing Pilate and his aqueduct, as so recently he had cursed his young kinsman at the well.

The tower represented to Isaac the stolen treasures of the Temple, the plunder of the altar and the priesthood, and Pilate's utter defiance of the rabbis. Even Cyril felt deeply that a heathen foreigner had no right to interfere in any manner with the Temple of God, and his sympathies for the moment were with his learned kinsman and the score or so of angry priests, rabbis, and scribes by whom he was surrounded.

No attention whatever was paid to the prolonged eloquence of Ben Nassur by the Roman architect or his

workmen. Perhaps not one of them understood his torrent of old Hebrew words. The architect, however, had been fatally at fault in excavating for the foundation of that tower. Down a little deeper than the picks and shovels of his workmen had gone there was a quicksand. Now, therefore, as the great stones of the tower were placed in series, tier on tier, the weight grew heavier and heavier, until it became too much for the crust of earth above the quicksand. On the side toward the valley the ground sloped, so that there was really nothing to sustain the enormous wall of stone.

A loud cry sprang from Cyril as he looked, and Ben Nassur turned angrily toward him.

"See!" shouted Cyril. "The tower! It is tottering!"

Pitching forward like a falling man, the tower that was to have stood for ages came crashing, thundering down!

There was a moment of awestruck silence, and then the multitude who saw uttered a kind of inarticulate roar, made up of innumerable exclamations; for it was the curse of Rabbi Isaac and the other rabbis, as many thought, which had brought down the tower of the Romans. Buried under the fallen tower were a number of the officers and servants of Pontius Pilate.

"It is the vengeance of the Law!" shouted Ben Nassur, tossing his arms wildly; but a detachment of soldiers which had been stationed there to guard the construction of the aqueduct, marched steadily forward with leveled



"THE TOWER CAME CRASHING, THUNDERING DOWN!"

spears, and the multitude turned and fled before them. The fall of a tower could not shake the nerves of Roman legionaries, even if they had no idea of what caused its fall. At all events, now it was down the danger was over.

Ben Nassur and Cyril had looked each other in the face for a moment; but Cyril did not wish to have the rabbi speak to him again. On he went, therefore, down the valley and past the Pool of Siloam. He stood still for several minutes when he came to the place marked by a fort and tower where the valley of Jehoshaphat, along which the Kedron ran, was joined at the right by the long, deep, and dreadful valley of Hinnom. Away up that valley, at intervals, Cyril could see the smoke arising from the fires which were burning the refuse materials from the city and the Temple. "The fires of Gehenna!" he exclaimed. There they had burned through ages, never going out night or day.

Cyril appeared to be searching for something as he walked along.

"That is the landmark," he said at last, as he stood before a tall stone pillar at the roadside. "The road to Bethlehem turns off there. I mean to go there, some day. It is the city of David, and Jesus of Nazareth was born there. Mary has told Lois and Abigail all about the shepherds and the angels and the wise men who came from the East." Cyril plodded on steadily southward, being guided from time to time by some prominent landmark — rock, or hill, or tree, or running water — which his father

had described, as a means whereby Cyril was to find his way to the Cave of Adullam.

There was no general "shop" or salesroom in the house of Abigail the tallith-maker. There was, however, a front room where she received her customers, some of whom were people of rank, and a rear room where most of the varied needlework was done, and some kinds of weaving.

Here sat Lois that long afternoon. She was at work upon an abba—the flowing outer robe of white linen, worn by Jews of good degree and fair circumstances. Though not embroidered nor ornamented, it was of peculiarly fine texture.

"I wish I knew whom it is for," said Lois. "I suppose for one of the rabbis."

"So it is," said a pleasant voice behind her; "and thou mayest know, but thou must not tell others. Too many of the other rabbis oppose him, and it will not do for a working-woman like me to make enemies."

"Abigail," exclaimed Lois, "is it then for the Master? Have I worked for him?"

A noble looking woman was Abigail, with closely folded masses of nearly white hair above her high forehead. Her face told of trouble which may have whitened her head before its time; but her smile and her eyes were very sweet in their expression as she answered:

"Salome and some other women brought the materials. It is for him to wear when he goes to Jerusalem to the next Passover. And there is something else. Come!"

Lois put aside her work and followed Abigail into another room — a small one, at the right of the workroom. She could not have told why such a feeling of awe came over her as she watched the actions of her white-haired friend. A large box, covered and fastened, lay in a corner of the room, and Abigail went and opened it. It contained many articles of apparel; but these were lifted out, and Abigail took from the very bottom of the box a light casket made of some odorous wood with which Lois was not familiar.

“Look,” she said, as she put back the lid of the casket. “I need not take it out. It is his inner robe. It is woven without a seam. It is such as the high priests wear in the Temple at Jerusalem.”

“Where did it come from?” whispered Lois.

“Nobody must know,” said Abigail. “One evening, not long ago, when there were neither stars nor any moon, I was called to the door, and a stranger handed me this. He was a tall, strong man, in a robe that covered him all over, and he had come on horseback, for his horse stood by him. ‘This,’ he said, ‘is for Jesus of Nazareth, who is called the Christ. Finish it thou, and keep it for him. He will be told that it is here.’”

“Did you speak to him?” exclaimed Lois.

“‘Who art thou?’ I asked,” said Abigail. “But he answered me: ‘I am told that thou art discreet. I am from the wife of Chusa, Herod’s steward, and from the women who are with her. That is enough for thee to

know. They who made that garment for him dwell in the king's house.'"

"Then Jesus has friends," said Lois, "where nobody would think of seeking them. But what kind of man was the messenger?"

"It was too dark to see plainly," said Abigail. "I suppose he did not wish to be seen. There were scars on his face. He may have been one of Herod's soldiers. I took the casket and he went away. Now I must wait until it is sent for."

"There is no robe too fine for the Master," said Lois, with reverence. "I shall watch every stitch I take, now I know the abba is for him. But what a beautiful vesture this is! From the ladies in the palace. It is fine wool, woven without a seam, and white as snow!"

CHAPTER XXI

CYRIL AND THE OUTLAWS

THE sun was setting at the close of Cyril's somewhat anxious day's pilgrimage. He had met no enemy since leaving Jerusalem, but he had met many strangers. Cyril had preferred not to make acquaintance with any, but at last he stood facing a man who was evidently determined to find out something about the young traveler before he would let him pass. The stranger was short and broad-shouldered, with a red face and a closely-curling black beard. He commanded Cyril to halt.

It was a place where, for a time, one strong man could have halted a dozen, or even a thousand. It was a mere shelf in the side of a great cliff. On Cyril's left was a precipice hanging above a gorge far below, through which a stream was running. On the right was the wall of rock, ledge above ledge — Cyril did not know how high.

"Who art thou?" curtly and sternly demanded the stranger, gripping hard but not lifting the weapon in his hand. It was a Roman pilum or javelin, and must at some time have been carried by a legionary.

There might have been danger to Cyril at that moment,

if he had not been warned against it by his father. He did not speak, but turned at once to the rock, and passed his forefinger along it as if writing.

The face of the grim sentry of the pass brightened suddenly.

"Again I say, who art thou?" he asked, but nodding his head in a friendly manner. "Canst thou write 'Shallum'?"

Cyril's finger moved along the wall, but he said aloud, "Shallum, of the sons of Hezekiah, of Galilee —"

"Amen!" shouted the sentry. "Name?"

"Cyril, the son of Ezra the Swordmaker —"

"Amen!" almost roared Shallum in evident delight. "I know thee now. Come on with me, and I will show thee thy father. Hast thou any news? Tell us of Galilee. What is Jesus of Nazareth doing? Thy father saith thou hast been with him."

He had turned at once, and Cyril was now marching side by side with him along the shelf of rock. In his eager delight at meeting a friend and comrade of his father, Cyril was beginning to talk freely, but Shallum stopped him.

"Tell thy tale in the cave," he said. "I shall soon be there. Go on, now, and at the entrance thou needest no password but Shallum and Ezra. They will know thee."

The narrow path continued along the side of the rock, but there were places where it widened so that small parties of defenders could withstand an army.



“WHO ART THOU?”

And now, just a little ahead, the path appeared to end in a kind of opening of the rock.

“That is where I shall be questioned again,” he was thinking, when a loud cry of pleasure seemed to sound from the rock itself.

“My son — thou art here !” and then it was Ezra himself who stepped out from another cleft and threw his strong arms around Cyril.

A rapid exchange of questions and answers followed, and then, led by his father, the young adventurer found himself groping his way through a dark and seemingly intricate passage.

Ezra put out his hand and pushed aside a kind of curtain ; there was a glare of dull and smoky light, from cressets and torches and a forge-fire, and Cyril knew that he was in the outer chamber of the well-known cave. It was by no means regular in shape, but it was about sixty feet long and from thirty to forty feet in height.

Cyril's first glance around him showed him several anvils and quite an array of tools ; but what his father had told him had prepared him for that. He had not expected, however, to see so many men.

They seemed to swarm from the rocky sides of the cave and out of the ground. So must the cave have looked in the days of David. He had had four hundred men with him, it was recorded, and Cyril soon discovered that there was plenty of room for even a larger band.

Just now, none of them thought of David or Saul. No

doubt they had some means for learning the news of the day, but a traveler from Galilee, and straight from Jerusalem that very day, was sure to bring them tidings eagerly desired.

They were ready to listen, with breathless interest, to all that could be said about the Galilean prophet who was gaining so many followers, and who was of the royal line of Judah, descended from David, and whom even John the Baptizer had pointed out as the Anointed, who was to restore the Kingdom.

Question followed question, and Cyril's answers became full and free as he acquired confidence, until at last a grim old graybeard remarked :

“Amen! It is enough! I am for this Prophet of Nazareth. But the young man has traveled all day. He is tired out. Let him have food.”

“I will care for him,” said Ezra; and in a few moments more he and Cyril were alone together in another cave, into which Cyril followed his father, through a long, low burrow, on his hands and knees. It was like the other, somewhat, but here was no smithy. It was the sleeping-place and store-room. Cyril ate heartily and so did Ezra, and all the while the talk went on. While his father learned the news of Lois and of the doings in Galilee, Cyril was told about the cave and about the plans of Ezra. At last, however, somewhat reluctantly, Cyril told how Ben Nassur had cursed him, and then about the fall of the Roman tower near the Pool of Siloam.

Ezra was a follower of Jesus, but he was a Jew, zealous for the Law, and full of reverence for the rabbis and their teaching. He grew very grave as he heard, for he was by no means ready yet to cut loose from the traditions of his people.

“Jesus is also a rabbi,” he remarked, after a long minute of thinking. “He could tell us what to do. At all events we must go to the Temple, and offer a lamb for a trespass offering.”

“I have money enough to buy one,” said Cyril; “but can you venture into Jerusalem?”

“Safely enough,” said Ezra. “Many of us cannot, but unless we meet some of our Samaritan enemies, to denounce us, we are in no danger. Especially during the days of the feast, I can safely go and come.”

Cyril felt greatly relieved by the idea of offering a sacrifice. He felt that it might entirely prevent the evil consequences of Ben Nassur’s terrible curse. Not that Cyril thought he had really broken the Law, but the rabbi had said he had, and Isaac, being a very learned man, might be right.

“We will set out for the city to-morrow morning,” said Ezra, when they had finished their last cluster of grapes. “Now I will show you the rest of the cave.”

Cyril’s curiosity was intensely excited, and he sprang to his feet. His father carried a torch and led the way. At the further end of that cave was an opening, and they had to climb upward a few feet to reach it. Then they

followed a narrow cleft in the rock for a number of feet, and went down again five or six yards of steep descent, into a large underground chamber. It was a place for men to sleep in, but it was also used as an arsenal. All along the walls were stacked various kinds of weapons, among which were great numbers of bows and sheaves of arrows.

"The Romans took them from the Parthians," said Ezra. "Then the Parthians destroyed that detachment of Romans on their way home, but our tribes gathered the best of the spoils. Come! I will show you something more."

Through a curiously crooked passage Cyril was led into the fourth chamber of the cave; and into this he could not go very far, it was packed so full of arms and armor.

"Year after year has this been gathering," said Ezra. "There are other storehouses like it in other places. When the time comes for our people to rise against the Romans, we shall have something to fight with, in spite of all that Herod and Pilate have done to leave us defenseless. We capture new lots of weapons whenever we can; but we are never seen to bring any in this direction."

"Thou and the other smiths are making new things all the while?" asked Cyril.

"Not so," said his father. "We can do better by repairing and keeping in good order all we have on hand.

That gives us work enough. But I have one piece of work that I will show you some day. Come out of the cave now, and rest. Most of us prefer to sleep in booths among the rocks, though there is always plenty of air in the caves."

It seemed a vast relief to get into the open air again after Cyril made his long way out; for, in order to do so, he had to creep and grope and walk over five hundred feet through the cavern to the entrance on the ledge.

CHAPTER XXII

THE MASSACRE OF THE GALILEANS

THE falling of the tower occasioned great excitement in Jerusalem. There were, indeed, two parties to the controversy. A large part of the resident population was strongly in favor of Pilate's plan, and wanted the water brought in. On the other hand, pilgrims from a distance, come to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, and more than usually filled with religious fervor, were not interested in an aqueduct which was never to benefit them. Foremost among these, and always the most daring and rebellious of the Jewish people, were the pilgrims from Galilee. They were certainly the most hated by the Romans, on account of their free speech and unsubdued spirit. They were now stirred up to fanatical violence by several other grievances, including the fact that Pilate kept a Roman garrison within the walls of the Temple area, and Roman sentries in the approaches to the Temple itself. It may have been only prudent for him to do so, but his soldiers carried their eagle standards with them. They were known to worship these, and therefore, they, as heathen, had taken idols into the sacred places.

It was Pilate's custom to come to his official residence — a kind of palace for public business — during all feasts, and he was there that day; but he was in a very ugly frame of mind. Such men as Ben Nassur, aided by zealots from other places, were arousing their followers more and more from hour to hour, until at last an angry multitude swarmed around the gates of Pilate's house, cursing him in the name of the Law, and of the Temple. They demanded the restitution of the treasures taken from the priests; the cessation of the aqueduct work, which the fall of the tower so plainly declared to be wicked; and they furiously demanded the removal of the Temple guards.

The Roman governor had not the least idea of granting any of these demands, and he determined to teach the angry Galileans a lesson. He sent to his camp for a large number of soldiers. They were not to come in armor, but in ordinary clothing, and were to be armed only with clubs. Strong men can do a great deal of mischief with heavy cudgels, but Pilate's idea was to express in this way his soldierly contempt for a Jewish mob. His men were ordered to surround it and to wait for such commands as he might give them.

Of course it was late in the day before all this could be accomplished; but at a very early hour that morning, Ezra the Swordmaker and Cyril left the Cave of Adullam, and set out for the city. It was not yet noon when they passed through one of the southern gates of Jerusalem, unnoticed by the silent guards in full armor.

It was part of the caution of Ezra's friends at the Cave that they should never be seen in large parties. He and his son were by themselves, therefore, when, shortly after passing the gate, they were informed of the great tumult at Pilate's house.

"It is no place for us," said Ezra. "Thou and I have but one errand. We must offer our sin-offering, and get away."

Cyril's fear of the rabbis and priests grew stronger as he drew near the Temple. There was no other place on earth, he believed, where a sacrifice to God could be offered as it could upon the brazen gold-ornamented altar of burnt-offering, which he and his father were soon to see.

Louder and louder grew the sound of the tumult in the open space before the governor's palace, but Cyril and his father could no longer hear it, for they were now in the outer court of the Temple. They advanced toward the steps leading up to the gorgeously-gilded portals of the inner court. Here they were met by a Levite to whom Ezra at once handed the fleecy offering which he had brought and had so far carried in his arms. During several minutes, however, there had been strange sounds beyond the gate of the outer court, and they were fast growing louder. Ezra and his son would have paused to listen, but the Levite led the way into the inner court, and they followed. In a moment more Cyril could see the smoking altar, the splendidly arrayed priests, the chant-

ing Levites, the swinging censers, and all the grand appliances of the Temple worship. Everything was splendid beyond his imagination; but he could not look at it for more than a moment. Behind him, surging through the gate into the outer court, filling that space, and then pouring on into the inner court, came a shouting, shrieking, maddened multitude.

Pilate's club-men had been doing their brutal work only too well, and, if his soldiers carried clubs only, other enemies of the Galileans (and they were many) had seized this opportunity, for steel blades were flashing among the pursuers. An angry mob were now pitilessly smiting down the Jews who had protested so zealously for the Temple and the Law.

They did not pause at the gate of the inner court, but, in a moment more, there were slain Galileans lying among the carcasses of the animals prepared for sacrifice, and the revenge of Pilate upon those who had upbraided him was becoming terrible. The priests and other Temple officers were fleeing.

"Come," said Ezra, in a low, fierce whisper, "Follow me. We must escape now, that we may some day smite them."

"There is Ben Nassur!" suddenly shouted Cyril. "Father, help him! He is down!"

Bravely, indeed, had the burly rabbi turned upon a pursuer who was close upon him with an uplifted simetar, but at that moment his foot slipped and he fell heavily

backward. No genuine Roman soldier was near them, and Ezra caught up one of the heavy knives with which the Levites had been preparing beasts for the sacrifices.

"Thou son of Edom!" he shouted, as he sprang over the prostrate Isaac and struck down his fierce enemy.

In a few moments his simetar, a very good weapon, was in the hands of Cyril himself.

"Onward," said Ezra, "but strike no man carrying a club. It is not safe. They are Romans. These other fellows are only Samaritans and Edomites — Herod's own men, not Pilate's."

It was a confused hurlyburly, but the Roman governor's lesson to the Galileans had already been completely given, and a trumpet in the outer court was sounding the recall. All the soldiers obeyed like machines, not striking another blow.

It had been Cyril's first experience of actual fighting. At his father's order he had reluctantly thrown away the captured sword, and they were making their way out with the motley crowd of people who were permitted to escape. No such bloody massacre had been intended by Pilate, and his Temple-guards were now actually serving as a police to prevent further slaughter. Not a few of his club-men had been badly hurt, and a number of the Herodian rabble had been slain, for the Galileans were brave men and had fought for their lives. One of them was now ruefully risen from among the bodies of men and animals which littered a spot in the inner court.

“Isaac Ben Nassur the rabbi!” he exclaimed. “Defiled by the blood of beasts and men, in the very Temple! I shall be unclean for many days! I have touched the dead! My glory is departed! Woe is me! I am defiled!”

He was full of sincere grief, but not, in the first place, for his slain or wounded neighbors and countrymen.

As for Cyril and his father, they were safe now, and were hurrying toward the southern gate of the city.

“Father,” said Cyril, “what had Ben Nassur and the others done that this should come upon them?”

“I know not,” said Ezra, thoughtfully. “It is written that we are punished for our transgressions, but I have seen the best men of Israel go down before the swords of the heathen. At least we have made an offering.”

“We brought the lamb,” said Cyril, “but we did not see it offered.”

“I am no rabbi,” said Ezra, sturdily. “I cannot say whether or not that was enough. I do know that I have smitten Herod’s men and I have seen thee fighting them bravely. Thou wilt make a strong swordsman one of these days, but thou art in need of practice. I will teach thee in the Cave.”

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SWORD FOR THE KING

THOSE were lonely yet busy days for Lois at her embroidery work, in the house of Abigail. Such news as came through the customers of her mistress, or from their neighbors in Capernaum, had almost a monotonous character.

There was, of course, a great excitement when pilgrims returned from the Feast of Tabernacles to tell of the slaughter of so many Galileans by Pilate's order.

Still, a girl at her sewing could do no more than sorrow for all who had suffered. She and her people were apparently doomed to suffer oppression, generation after generation.

"How I wish Jesus were king now," she often said to herself, "just as so many believe he is going to be. We should all live at peace, then."

The thoughts of a great many people were turning more and more toward Jesus of Nazareth. It was understood that the priests and scribes were more than ever opposed to him. Isaac Ben Nassur had returned to Cana in a most fanatical zeal for the Law, and all who agreed

with him were expected to denounce Jesus. Not all of them did so, by any means, for wherever Jesus went he was doing much good among the people. So were his disciples, of whom he was now said to have sent out, in various directions, not only the original twelve, but seventy more, to preach and to teach and to heal.

But many longed for action against the Romans. The delay seemed hard to bear to the impatient patriots, who had made their headquarters at the Cave of Adullam. They had almost nothing to do except to hear what news they could get, and to talk about it.

Ezra himself, and such as knew even a little of the armorer's trade, had plenty of occupation; but even for them it was dull work to sharpen arrows, and polish bows, and fit spear-heads which might never be used in battle. Not a great many days after Cyril's arrival, however, he and his father were alone together in the outer cave—the smithy. It was the first time that they had been so, although they had worked there daily, and Ezra had waited for the opportunity. As soon as he was sure that they were alone, he put down his hammer, and went to the side of the cave. He pulled out a piece of wood which closed like a lid or little door a deep crevice in the rock, put in his hand, and drew out something that was carefully wrapped in goat's leather.

“Father!” exclaimed Cyril, as the coverings were unwrapped. “What a splendid sword! Didst thou make it?”

"That did I not," said Ezra, holding it up. "The smith that forged that blade was in his grave before the Canaanites were driven out of Canaan. I think it has had more than one hilt put on, and it has passed through the hands of kings. It is covered, hilt and all, with inscriptions."

The richly chased handle of that sword was of pure gold. It was indeed such a weapon as no ordinary chief could have afforded, for among the chasings at the haft there were great jewels that sparkled in the forge-firelight.

"Do you know what kings owned it?" asked Cyril. "Some of the other swords are fine, but this is the finest."

"That is why I picked it out," said Ezra, coolly, holding up the long, gracefully curved weapon. "No man knows if the things that are told him are true or not, but they say it was one of the treasures of the old Temple first, and then of this new Temple. It may be so. It may be that Joshua carried it once, or David. It is the sword I have made ready for the king that is to come. He should have a better one if I could find it for him."

"He may bring his own sword," said Cyril.

"Kings do not make swords," replied Ezra. "They do not often use one themselves. Others do it for them."

He was speaking entirely as if he were the king's armorer just then, very proud of his work, and of the weapon he was prepared to offer his monarch.

"I wish the king might come," said Cyril, "so we might rise against the Romans at once."



“WHAT A SPLENDID SWORD!” EXCLAIMED CYRIL.”

“So do I,” said Ezra. “But thou hast seen the sword, and I will put it away. And now it is time for thee to set out for Jerusalem on thy errand. Thou wilt reach as near it as one of the Kedron villages to-night, and get in when the gates open to-morrow morning.”

Cyril departed, while Ezra returned to his work.

Another day came and passed, bringing no change to the men of the Cave of Adullam.

“He will return to-morrow,” said Ezra to his friends, when they asked concerning Cyril. “No doubt he will bring news.”

“As good a runner as Asahel, the brother of Joab,” had Ezra once declared Cyril, but even he was astonished when a little after the noon of that day, as he worked at his anvil, his name was shouted by Shallum at the entrance of the cave with the announcement:

“Thy son is here! He brings tidings he will not give but in the cave!”

“Then they are black,” said Ezra, throwing down his hammer. “Let all gather to hear.”

The summons did not have to be carried far, but Cyril first said words, quietly, to his father and one or two more to make them send for all who were near enough to be summoned, and the cavern was thronged with arrivals from the booths among the gorges and under the shelter of the neighboring crags. There had been various reasons why so many had gathered at that time, as they often did, indeed, and the excitement of expectation was now

strongly at work among them. Every cresset was piled high with blazing wood, the torches flared, and the cave was full of a red and smoky glare.

“Speak, Cyril!” said Ezra.

Cyril had arrived pale and almost breathless, but he had now recovered himself, and his boyish voice was clear and full as he responded, speaking as if to his father.

“I rested among the vineyards last night, and this morning I was at the southern gate of Jerusalem before it was open. There was no need to remain there, and I walked on along the valley of the Kedron, looking at the walls. I meant to go in at the Jericho gate on the north, but when I reached it it was still shut, and there were guards before it, and the centurion in command stood on the wall above the gate. I think he was there because of a mounted messenger who came spurring at full gallop up the Jericho road. I dared not go too near, for the trumpeter at the gate blew as if to warn me, and there were others who stood still. I saw the horseman draw his rein, and his horse fell as he did so, but the rider sprang to his feet and shouted:

“‘From Herod the king to Pontius Pilate and to the High Priest: The sun has risen twice since the head of John the Baptizer was brought before the king in the banquet-hall of Machærus. Let all guards be doubled. Let the Temple gates be shut. Let the camps be under arms, lest there shall be a tumult among the people.’

“Then,” continued Cyril, “the guards at the gate began

to arrest every man who had heard, but I fled away down the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I came hither through the hills, telling no man by the way — for John the Baptizer is dead!”

For a moment there was deep silence, and then arose loud cries of lamentation, while strong men rent their garments, sobbed aloud, and threw themselves upon the ground; for these men had regarded John as a prophet sent from God.

“My son,” said Ezra, “thou hast done well. Rest thee, now, and eat. Then go thou with all speed to the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. He has been in Judea, but I think thou wilt find him in Galilee.”

“Others will carry him the news sooner than I can,” said Cyril; “but I will gladly go.”

“Herod will seek him next,” said Ezra. “He would have slain him ere this if he had dared.”

Cyril had traveled fast and far that day, winning high praise from the tough-sinewed men to whom he had brought his terrible news. He felt somewhat stiff and lame next morning, but he was eager to set out upon his errand to Galilee; and before the sun of that day set he was again upon the Mount of Olives, taking a farewell look at Jerusalem. It was not easy to take his eyes away. As he did so, and turned his face northward to resume his journey, he exclaimed aloud:

“It is the city of the great King! It is the city of God! The Temple of the God of Israel is in Jerusalem!”

CHAPTER XXIV

FEEDING THE MULTITUDE

CYRIL made his way on foot from Judea through the district of Samaria and as far into Galilee as Capernaum.

Footsore and weatherbeaten, but glad to be at his journey's end, he sat with Lois, early one morning, in a little porch behind the house of Abigail.

"I will never let thee leave me again," she said. "If thou goest, I will go. It has been so weary a time here, without thee or father."

Then she told him her own simple story, and all that she had heard or known concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

"Would that I knew where to find him!" exclaimed Cyril. "None seems to know."

"I know," said Lois. "He is not in Capernaum, but he is among the fisher people, at the lake shore. But I must tell thee about my abba. Cyril, I made it for the Master."

Lois arose and stood straight up, her slight figure full of the pride she felt at having had such a task assigned to her. But when she also spoke of the sandalwood casket and the seamless vesture, Cyril exclaimed :

“Canst thou let me see it?”

“Why, no,” she said; “he has them both. The messenger from the wife of Chusa came again, yesterday, to warn him. Herod means to kill him, if he can compass it without rousing the people. So Abigail sent to warn the disciples. Two of them came, and they carried away the clothing.”

“Come,” exclaimed Cyril. “I must see him — I must not wait!”

Lois exchanged a few words with Abigail, in the house, and then the brother and sister were hurrying along together through the streets of Capernaum, toward the sea.

“Look!” suddenly exclaimed Cyril. “Other people know. Crowds of them are going in the same direction.”

All wanted to see Jesus, as much as did Cyril and Lois, and they did see him, but not as they expected, for when they came out upon the open, sandy slope, going down to the beach, they suddenly stood still.

“See,” said Cyril, very much disappointed. “That is Simon’s boat, and in it is the Master with the Twelve.”

“Where can they be going?” asked Lois.

“He must escape from Herod,” answered Cyril. “He will land on the other side of the lake, below Bethsaida. That is in Philip’s land.”

Philip was Herod’s brother. When their father, Herod the Great, died, his will divided his kingdom among his

three sons. The territory given to Philip was mainly north of the sea of Galilee. Herod Antipas obtained Galilee and a district called Perea, east of the Dead Sea. All of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea were given to a favorite son, Archelaus, but he was now in disgrace, and the only real ruler of Judea was Pilate.

Cyril and Lois knew these things very well, and that Philip and Herod Antipas were not friends, so that Jesus might be safe in the place to which Simon's boat was taking him.

"Lois," said Cyril, "we have no boat, but we can go there on foot, around the head of the lake. It is only a few miles."

"Let us go," said Lois.

The same idea seemed to occur at once to other people; and the crowd, with all who followed behind it, turned toward the head of the lake. Of course they would have further to go than would a boat, but the people on foot went faster than the heavy fishing-boat, tacking to and fro in an unfavorable wind. So it came to pass that when the boat steered by Simon drew near the shore east of Bethsaida, those who were in it saw the beach already lined with an eager throng, waiting for Jesus.

There was no escape from so touching an appeal, for all who could had brought their sick ones with them. The blind were there; the lame, the deaf, the dumb, and there were new-comers continually.

It was afterward written about it that, when Jesus

came out of the boat and saw so many people, he had compassion on them, "because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things."

Cyril and Lois were there among the earlier arrivals, and they had come meaning to stay.

Lois looked as if the last desire of her heart were gratified when she saw that Jesus was healing the helpless and the suffering.

As for Cyril, it seemed to him as if he had not only succeeded in asking a question, but also in getting a direct answer, for, before the day was over, he heard the Master say:

"Suppose ye that these Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

"After all," said Cyril to Lois, "Ben Nassur's curse and the Law could have had nothing to do with the fate of those men. But I am glad that the Master has declared so."

"It is late," said Lois, after some time. "How are all these people to find food in this place? It is well that we brought some food in a basket."

The sun was already sinking behind the far-away hills beyond the palace-walls and towers of Bethsaida when the Master paused in his teaching to listen to something that was said to him by one of his disciples.

Lois half heard what was said, and, after thinking a moment, she whispered to Cyril:

“He has asked for something to eat. Tell them thou hast five loaves and two fishes in thy basket. If they want them for the Master, tell Andrew.”

Cyril stepped forward in time to hear one of the disciples say:

“This is a desert place, and the time is now past. Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves victuals.”

It was Philip who had spoken, and the look on the Master's face was full of the kindly interest it often wore when he was instructing those he loved.

“Whence,” he asked, “shall we buy bread that these may eat?”

Philip answered him in sober earnest:

“Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one of them may take a little.”

But Cyril had already obeyed the suggestion of Lois, ashamed as he did so at mentioning the insignificant contents of his little basket. But Andrew had read some kind of meaning in the question of the Master, and he promptly added:

“There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves,

and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"

"Make the men sit down," said Jesus, addressing his followers.

In a moment more, Cyril's little basket was in the hands of the Master, and the multitude, under the direction of the disciples, were arranging themselves, by ranks, in groups of fifties and hundreds, over the broad green level, fronting the knoll from which he had been speaking. Near the foot of the knoll lay the provision baskets, a dozen of them, now empty, in which the disciples were accustomed to carry their own supplies.

"What can they expect?" thought Cyril, but Lois whispered:

"Look! They have put the big baskets down before him. Wait and see!"

The fishes and the loaves were in the hands of Jesus, and he was looking upward while all could hear his voice as he asked for a blessing on that small provision.

The Twelve, at his command, took up the baskets, and into each he broke both fish and bread until it was full.

In awe-struck silence then out went the Twelve among the multitude. That which was handed to them was but such food as they were accustomed to, and they could see the Master fill the baskets.

When the breaking of bread was ended, the Master said:

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be wasted."

It was rapidly done, and as the disciples returned to the knoll, Lois exclaimed in a tone of wonder:

“Look, Cyril, every basket is full!”

“Didst thou hear him?” said Cyril. “He bade the disciples take the boat and go to Bethsaida. He will stay here, awhile, to dismiss the people. Let us go out and get there before the boat does. We can find a place to sleep.”

Lois was tired, and did not feel able to walk a long distance that evening, but Cyril never seemed to be tired. They saw the disciples go. They saw Jesus send away the multitude, while the dangerous talk about an immediate uprising against the Romans died away — perhaps because there was no one to take a leading part after the Twelve were gone. Then Jesus turned away eastward, toward the mountains, and Cyril and Lois walked slowly along the lake-shore toward Bethsaida.

CHAPTER XXV

CYRIL'S ERRAND

CYRIL and Lois found shelter for the night among their hospitable friends near the head of the lake. Cyril, however, was out of the house in the gray dawn of the next morning.

"I must see some of the Master's followers," he said to himself. "They will go after him some time to-day, for he is yet on the other side. I believe he means to visit Jerusalem for the Passover, in spite of Herod's threats; but if Herod can seize him on the way through Galilee, he will put him to death as he killed John."

It was, therefore, with a sense of duty that Cyril went down to the shore, at the point near which he believed Simon would be likely to approach the land.

In a few minutes more he exclaimed, as he stood on the beach peering out across the morning sea :

"The Master is with them! How could that happen?"

When they had come ashore, Cyril asked of Philip, "Did you go back after him?"

"No," was Philip's reply; "we rowed against the wind all night. The sail was of no use. Not half an hour ago,

out upon the lake, when it was the roughest, he came to us." And then he told Cyril that they had seen the Master walking upon the water, and that Peter also had been seen to walk upon its surface. But Cyril was prepared for this miraculous power by what he had seen when the Master stilled the storm.

After a little Cyril asked :

"Is he going to Jerusalem for the Passover?"

"If he go," said Philip, "he must go through Galilee in secret. We could join him after he got into Samaria, or Judea, or into some land beyond Herod's reach. The Romans will protect him."

"I cannot believe they will," said Cyril; and he gazed at the Master as reverently as did the rest, for a moment, and then he hurried away to tell Lois. On the way, however, thinking of the Romans, he remembered that he had heard of their quarrels with the Herod family, and that Ben Nassur and the Galileans, whom Pilate had smitten at the Feast of the Tabernacles, were well known to be enemies of Jesus.

"Pilate is not his friend," said Cyril to Lois, when they met; "but Pilate may protect him in despite of Herod."

"All of Abigail's friends are going to Jerusalem," said Lois. "She has heard that Mary is at Nazareth. They will all be there. I can go with them."

"I'll give thee the rest of my money, nearly all of it," said Cyril. "I cannot travel with them. It will be better for Abigail if I am not with thee, for Ben Nassur and his

friends might trouble her; he is very bitter toward me. But I shall be with the King when he goes into Jerusalem. Father will come, too, for I will carry him word that the Master is coming."

Cyril was enthusiastic. Lois told him that their first duty was to go and see Abigail.

"I will just stop there a moment," he said, "as I go through Capernaum. There is no time to spare now if I am to be in time."

"Cyril," she said, "the Master did not wear his new abba yesterday —"

"He will wear it when he rides into Jerusalem," replied Cyril. "It is that for which it was made; and the inner vesture, too. Father and all the rest must be ready for him."

Abigail, when they came to her house, did not share Cyril's enthusiasm.

"Yea, truly," she said, "I go to Jerusalem. Lois will go there with me also, because I go to remain, and do not return to Capernaum. Lois will work with me and be nearer her father, but what Mary and the others said was that they would go if the Master himself went."

"I have heard that he is going," said Cyril positively, but his assertion was stronger than his convictions.

Even as he hurried away, after bidding an affectionate good-by to Lois, it came more plainly into his mind that neither Andrew nor Philip had said more than that if the Master should go to Jerusalem, he would have to go secretly in order to go safely.

He trudged along with the other Passover pilgrims until he approached Samaria, but there he was recognized by some enemies of his father, and only by his fleetness of foot did he get away into the mountains which had so long ago hidden him and Ezra. He did not now, as before, make his way northward to Mount Gilboa, but he was so long in scouting southward, from point to point, that he came very near not reaching Jerusalem in time for the Passover at all; and he was in continual dread lest the New King should get to the holy city without him.

“Father will be there,” Cyril thought; “but I want to be there as well. Lois and Abigail will not have anything to hinder them. Lois won’t have to work at her embroidery and sewing after the new kingdom begins. I can take care of her then.”

He was very sure of that, for he meant to be one of the King’s captains, and he believed that his father Ezra, the King’s Swordmaker, would be put in command of a whole legion of men.

Cyril felt safe and could walk along the Roman highway after he entered Judea. He felt almost grateful to Pilate when he saw the eagle standards carried past him by some cohorts that had marched all the way from Damascus. They were not under the direction of Herod. They were not preparing to attack any of the Jews. He was willing to march behind them all the rest of the way, until he saw them wheel toward the great fortified camp north of the city.

Cyril himself plodded steadily on, for it was getting late in the very day before the Passover, and he must reach the city before the closing of the gate at sunset.

“I must see some of the disciples,” he thought. “Simon will tell me what it is best for me to do next.”

The Jericho gate was still open—the same gate at which he had heard the news of the death of John the Baptist. Many were going out and in, unhindered by the guards. Not a Roman among the stern soldiers who were there on duty seemed to fear that the new king of Israel was coming to drive him and his comrades away. Cyril thought of that as he pushed along past them; but he had not walked a hundred yards beyond the gate before he was suddenly halted. Right in the way before him stood the frowning and imposing figure and face of Ben Nassur.

“Thou here?” exclaimed the rabbi. “What part hast thou in the Temple, thou accursed one? Thou shalt not eat the Feast with thy people! The man of Nazareth dares not come. He fled away unto the coasts of the heathen. He is with the outcasts of Tyre and Sidon. Go, thou,—and may another tower in Siloam fall on thee and thine!”

Cyril had not so far forgotten his old reverence for the rabbis that he was able to make any reply. He felt stunned by the news, if it were true, and chilled to the heart by Ben Nassur's ill-omened greeting. Isaac had evidently put away all memory of the fact that Cyril and

his father had fought for him, and had saved his life on the day of the massacre of the Galileans in the Temple. What he had said now was only in part true. Jesus of Nazareth was, indeed, not to attend that feast, and he was away toward the Sidonian border, preaching and teaching and healing. Herod, the king, was so occupied with other matters just at the time, that he could give but little attention to one he thought a mere visionary — one whose followers had hardly so much as a bow and arrow among them all.

Cyril made his way onward as best he could until at last he sat down wearily on one of the stone steps leading up to the gate of the Temple, in utter dejection.

“He is not coming,” he muttered.

“Cyril,” said a low, sweet voice near him, “look up. Father and I are here. We knew that thou wouldst be sure to come almost at once to the Temple.”

“My son,” said Ezra, “the Master will surely come in his own time. Thou must now go with us, and after the feast I will tell thee what to do.”

“It is so long to wait,” said Cyril; but he arose and went with them.

He heard many things on the way; not the least of all was the news that Abigail and Lois were not to live in the city itself, but at Joppa, by the sea, where a kinswoman of Abigail's, named Tabitha, had already a high reputation and a thriving trade as a maker of garments,



“‘CYRIL,’ SAID A LOW, SWEET VOICE NEAR HIM, ‘LOOK UP.
FATHER AND I ARE HERE.’”

and was in need of skilled women. She was now in Jerusalem, but they were all to return to Joppa with her.

“It will be better than being under Herod’s rule at Capernaum,” said Lois; and we can wait there until we hear that the Master is coming.”

CHAPTER XXVI

EZRA AND THE CENTURION

THE Passover Feast, always a solemn season, seemed to Cyril changed to a time of mourning, so great was his disappointment. It was, on the contrary, a time of joy to Lois. After so long a separation, she was once more with her father and brother; she was in Jerusalem, and they were never tired of showing her the city. She could attend the Temple services, in the Court of the Women; but Cyril was unable to forget, even while gazing with her upon the glories of the Temple and its surroundings, that it was still a kind of Roman fort, with heathen guards, and that the standard over the city gates was the imperial eagle of Rome, and not the lion of the tribe of Judah.

Lois was happy, and her enjoyment of her companionship with her father and brother continued when, after the feast-days were ended, they all set out together for Joppa.

“I have heard that it is a beautiful place,” she said. “A city of gardens! And then, Cyril, I have never seen the sea, nor any sailing-vessels larger than the fishing-boats at Capernaum.”

Cyril also was thinking of the sea; and all the more because of several serious talks he had with his father. A clear-headed man was Ezra, and he seemed to have utter confidence in the wisdom of Jesus of Nazareth as a leader. It was a matter of course that he had no confidence whatever in the wisdom of Cyril, and was ready not only to reprove him for his impatience and his low spirits, but to tell him what to do.

“The Cave must be kept more secret,” said Ezra. “Not so many men must come there. I shall be there only a part of the time. At other times I can find work at Joppa. Lois has a home. I tell thee, the Master will wait till next Passover. He is now visiting different towns, to make them ready. Thou wilt then be a year older. What thou hast need of is to know more. It were well for thee to know somewhat of the sea. Thou must see Egypt and thou must see Rome, that thou mayest be of more use to the King. He may need, some day, to send out a messenger who knows the sea, and has seen other lands than this — ”

“I am a good boatman,” said Cyril.

“Good enough for Chinnereth lake,” replied his father, but thou must see war-galleys and fleets. I can give thee some money. Thou canst earn more. There are ships from Joppa to Alexandria. There are many from Alexandria to Rome. Thou wilt go and thou wilt return before next Passover, and — the God of Israel go with thee.”

"I will go!" exclaimed Cyril, hopeful again; "I will learn all I can, and I will come back in season to march into Jerusalem with the Master."

Cyril was not contented in Joppa, in spite of its towers and temples, and its beautiful gardens that are so fruitful to this day. He had seen such things before. He could sympathize with Lois, in her great delight concerning her new home with Tabitha, after they reached it, but he could not feel as she did when they went down to the shore, and looked out on the blue waves of the Mediterranean Sea. Not only had he seen them before, but he was thinking and dreaming of something beyond them.

He was more interested in the instruction his father was giving him as to how he was to conduct himself after they should be separated. And yet he found growing within him a sense of confidence that he could take care of himself after all. He was going out to see the world, and the Mediterranean and the ships were to take him where he wanted to go. Lois felt the separation keenly, though she was more used than other girls to living away from her own kindred. She clung to Cyril more closely, day after day, while he was waiting for the ship in which his father had secured him passage to Alexandria, the great seaport of Egypt.

"Cyril," she said, "here we know even less of the Master's work than we did at Capernaum. You will not hear anything about him at Rome."

The sailing day came, and Cyril bade Lois good-by at

the house of Tabitha. Both of the older women gave him good advice, but Lois could only weep and cling to him as if she could not let him go. Ezra walked on with him, in silence, down to the wharf. There he spoke in a voice that told how deeply he felt at parting from his son.

“The God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, go with thee and bring thee back to thine own land in peace! While thou art gone, keep thou thy covenant with thy God and with thy father, and with thy King that is to come—for he will surely come,” were Ezra’s parting words.

Cyril had no words to answer, and the sailors were lifting the mainsail of the ship, and a shout summoned him hastily on board. The last man he saw, as the swift vessel bore him away, was the tall form of Ezra the Sword-maker, standing on the wharf, and watching the sail that was carrying his only son out into the world—out among all manner of perils and all races of heathen.

It was indeed a heathen world into which Cyril was sailing. It was a world into which the Master had not yet come, and in which the Scriptures that prophesied his coming were unknown.

The wind was fresh and fair, the sea was no rougher than Lake Chinnereth itself, and the vessel was a speedy traveler. She was not large, and could be propelled by oars when necessary, but she was not what was called a galley. Cyril had seen numbers of these in the harbor of

Joppa, and now he saw more; and the more he saw of these boats the more horrible they seemed to him. They were in reality floating prisons for the captives, the slaves, or the convicted criminals who were chained to the seats as rowers.

Cyril pitied them from the bottom of his heart; for among the stories told him by his father had been one concerning hundreds of the bravest men of Judea and Galilee who had been condemned to work until their death in the galleys of Herod the great. Beyond that, he had another interest in the galleys, for they were the ships of war also, and the Romans had great fleets of them. Once the thought came to him: "If Jesus were King, he could have no fleets of galleys. I don't believe he would condemn anybody to row in them — even Samaritans or Romans."

Cyril was at the same time conscious of a fierce, revengeful bitterness of his own, which made him long to send to some such punishment every man of the oppressors of his people, beginning with Herod Antipas himself. The towers of the strong fortifications of the port of Joppa were now growing small and dim in the distance, whenever he looked back; but he preferred looking forward, standing on the high perch made by the cabin deck in the front part of the old-fashioned ship, and gazing out as if he were looking across the water into the wonderful places he was soon to visit.

Away behind him, a trim, well-built house, in one of



"EZRA AT ONCE HELD OUT HIS STRONG AND PERFECT HAND."

the upper streets of Joppa, had a small but very pretty garden behind it; and there, in a kind of arbor, shadowed by a very luxuriant almond-tree, sat Lois, all alone. Her eyes were a little red, but she was not weeping. She was thinking.

“Cyril will see very many wonderful things,” she reflected. “He will see those great cities and the temples father told about, in Egypt, and in Greece, and in Rome, too, if he goes there. He will see how the people live, and what they do. I long to travel, to go out into the world.”

Meanwhile, several miles east of Joppa, at a place where two roads met, one of them the road to Jerusalem, a squadron of Roman cavalry had halted, and in front of them a horseman, who seemed to be their commander, leaned forward, looking down into the face of Ezra the Swordmaker. He was now on his way to perform his errand at the Cave before going to work at Joppa.

“I know thee,” said the horseman. “I am Regulus, the centurion. Thou canst not escape me now. I will send thee back to Samaria to be condemned.”

“If thou hast aught against me, tell me what it is,” said Ezra. “I have not harmed thee or thine.”

Ezra had been keeping his right hand covered by his mantle, and now the centurion laughed aloud as he exclaimed:

“Knowest thou not that thou art a marked man? Hold out thy right hand!”

They were, except that the soldier spoke in Latin, the very words that Ezra had heard the Master speak in the synagogue at Capernaum, and he at once held out his now strong and perfect hand for the centurion to see.

“Am I so at fault?” said the Roman. “Get thee hence. Thou art not the man. His hand was withered to the wrist. Ride on, men! But he is very like him. I should know the old smith, too.”

On they rode and on walked Ezra, but nothing on earth could have convinced that centurion that he had really seen the same useless, withered hand that had at one time abandoned the hammer and the sword, as its owner thought, forever.

CHAPTER XXVII

CYRIL AT ROME

MONTH after month went by, and Lois was quietly happy in her new home in Joppa. Her father was near, and came to visit her frequently. She had never known a kinder, better woman than was Tabitha, whose Greek name was Dorcas. She was a friend to the poor, and she was loved by the bright-eyed daughter of Ezra the Swordmaker. Moreover, she seemed never to tire of hearing Lois and Abigail tell of the doings and sayings of the great Galilean prophet, the Son of David.

For that matter, his name was in the mouths of all men. Stories came with all travelers from the north, or from Jerusalem, of the marvels which still accompanied him as he journeyed hither and thither. Not only were his cures even more wonderful, but he had again fed a great multitude with a mere handful of bread; and it was said that he had more than once recalled the dead to life.

Lois was thinking of him one day about noon. She had gone up to the housetop. It was a favorite resort, for there she could be alone; and the housetops of that part of Joppa overlooked the harbor and the sea.

"He has never preached in Joppa," she thought. "People here have to go to Jerusalem to hear him — and, oh, I would I knew where Cyril is, and what he is doing to-day."

She would not have been by any means so happy if she had known, or if she could have read his thoughts.

Rome was a mighty city in those days. It had many a mile of streets and avenues, reaching out into the surrounding country, until nobody could tell where the city ended, although everybody knew that its center was on a hill at the capitol. Far from the capitol, but still within the city, was the amphitheater, or circus, where the most wonderful shows were given that the world has ever known. There wild beasts and men were made to fight by thousands, for the shows were murderous, and the vast sandy area of the amphitheater was often stained with blood.

Cyril was walking along a narrow, crooked street, that led away from the capitol in the direction of the circus.

"My last copper coin is gone," he said. "I can earn nothing. The city swarms with unemployed freemen. There are slaves to do all the work. I shall starve, for I am not a slave, and have no master to feed me. Were I a Roman I would be fed by the authorities; but I am only a Jew. Only a Jew?" He straightened up proudly. "I am glad to be a Jew, and not a Roman. But nobody could capture this place — I suppose I shall die here. I have had no food since yesterday morning, and but little

for days before that. I shall never see Lois or father again, for I shall not be at Jerusalem next Passover. Jesus of Nazareth will be there; but I fear he cannot take Jerusalem, and as for Rome—it is quite impossible to overcome the veteran legions that I have seen at Rome. All the world could not conquer them!”

So all the Romans believed, not dreaming of the days to come, when swarms of men from the North were to slay their legions in the very streets along which Cyril had been walking during those weary days.

How endless they seemed as he walked aimlessly on! He was ragged and hungry, and without hope, for he was a stranger in a strange land. His heart grew heavier, and there was a mist before his eyes.

“I have seen Egypt,” he thought, “and the pyramids, and the temples of the old heathen gods. And I saw many Grecian cities on my way here. I can talk better Greek and better Latin. How hungry I am!—and so thirsty, too!”

At that moment he almost ran against a wall, and he stood still. It was one side of a vast marble arch at the main entrance to the circus, and, as he looked up, he saw a placard, with an inscription in several languages. He could read some of them. They were all alike, and they told him that the Emperor's prefect of the circus had arranged for prize foot-races. One of these was free to all who could pass the trial race for admission. There was to be a prize of ten sestertia, and Cyril's brain whirled a little at the thought of so much money.

“More than six hundred shekels!” he exclaimed, after a calculation — “and I can yet run! It says that the sub-prefect will see all who apply.” He stood gazing at the placard and reading it aloud. Suddenly a voice near him said:

“That he will, and he will scourge you well if you fail at the test. Can you run? You look like it. Come!”

Black as jet was the face of the dwarfish figure that Cyril at once turned to follow through the arch and a side-door and along a tile-floored passage. In a few minutes more he stood in the presence of a richly dressed official who for a moment eyed him sternly. The dwarf had addressed this great man very reverently, calling him Crispus, but a strange thought flashed into the mind of Cyril, for he had never seen a Roman whose face was like that of the sub-prefect.

“O Jewish boy, who art thou?” asked Crispus, in Aramaic, with an accent that made Cyril’s heart beat.

“I am Cyril Ben Ezra, of the house of Kish,” replied Cyril, staring hard at the grim, iron-mouthed official, for something in the man’s face seemed familiar.

“Amen!” said Crispus. “Answer in thine own tongue, for thou art a Galilean. I am Reuben Ben Nassur of Cana. I am thy kinsman. Knowest thou aught of my house?”

“Isaac the Rabbi is well,” replied Cyril, and on he went, for Reuben, or Crispus, asked him many questions, and they talked in Hebrew, which none who came near them

could understand. Perhaps one reason why Crispus was sub-prefect was his gift of tongues. Perhaps another reason was plain when he said of the circus:

“What is it to me or thee if all the heathen slay one another? Thou shalt run. I will give thee a week of training before the trial, but know that I cannot save thee from the scourge if thou fail before the prefect. Mark thou this, also — forget that thou art a Jew until thy feet have told Tallienus that thou art a good runner. Thou hast nothing to do with the Law whilst thou art a beast in the Roman circus.”

Bitter indeed was the cup of poverty that Cyril was drinking. He had put away his pride, driven by starvation, and now a brother of Ben Nassur himself was bidding him put aside his religion. No opportunity for answer, yes or no, was given, however, and he was led away by the dwarf to one of the outbuildings of the amphitheater. It was, as he at once discovered, a kind of jail in which were kept the men who were in training for the races. Many of them were mere slaves put there by their owners, in hope that they might win a prize for their masters. At all events Cyril was to have shelter and food, but the boarding-house or jail of the runners adjoined great dens of wild animals, and he was kept awake by the roaring of many lions; for a thunderstorm swept over Rome, and the imprisoned kings of forest or plain responded with thunders of their own making.

In the morning it was a relief to Cyril to find how un-

noticed he was among the motley crowd who were there to get a right to run for the prize. There were scores of them, and none could hope for favors. Cyril could not, certainly, for Crispus seemed to have entirely forgotten that he had ever been in Galilee. There were training races that very morning, and one of them was also a first trial of speed. It was severe, they said, but when it was over and only three out of more than twenty were permitted to train longer, Cyril said confidently :

“There was not a runner among them except the Greek.”

A tall, dignified man, in a plain white robe, with a broad purple border, stood near him. Cyril knew that the robe was the “toga,” but its wearer needed no ornament to show that he was the person of highest rank among those who watched the runners. Not a word did he speak now, but looked at Cyril from head to foot, and then beckoned to Crispus. The grim brother of Rabbi Isaac hurried forward, bowing very low.

“See thou to it,” said the Roman. “Train thou that young panther well. I see no other that will stand a chance with the Athenian slave of Tallienus.”

“Most noble Valerianus,” responded Crispus, “thou art an admirable judge of men, but I will dare remind thee. Be thou sure that Tallienus’s slave will run well — but the course is long. Yonder youth is of the hardiest race on earth.”

“It is well,” said Valerianus, coldly. “I will send him to the quarries if he lets the Athenian beat him.”

It was a hard saying, but Cyril already understood that a Roman noble considered a young Jew like himself of much less importance than a chariot-horse.

The training-school of the circus was no place for favoritism; but Crispus now had a special reason for giving his young Galilean kinsman a full week of preparation before testing him. Cyril quickly recovered from the effects of his days of hunger; but nothing could take from him a certain sense of shame that he was to take part in the games of the heathen and to run a race to amuse the rabble of Rome. A more cheerful thought followed, and he consoled himself with the reflection: "It is really not against the Law. Ben Nassur would say that. And if I win a prize I can get back to Jerusalem in time for the Passover."

CHAPTER XXVIII

A FOOT-RACE FOR FREEDOM

EZRA, the armorer, had long since returned from his first visit to the Cave of Adullam. He had afterward made other visits, and had included in his errands other places as wild and as deeply hidden among the cavernous ridges of eastern Judea. His wish was to attract attention as little as possible. He could not forget his first warning from Regulus, the centurion, who had commanded at Samaria at the time he and Cyril fled from that city. Whenever he was near Joppa one of his comforts was to talk with Lois and her friends about Cyril, and to bring them tidings concerning the work and the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. The Galilean Teacher was now known throughout the land, and through wide regions of the adjoining countries. It was said that the pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem to attend the feasts since his ministry began already numbered several millions, and that they had carried away with them his marvelous sayings and accounts of his more than human power to the remotest corners of the inhabited earth.

Of course, great numbers of them had been from

Rome, and the name of Jesus of Nazareth was known even in the palace of the Emperor, but the Roman rulers were convinced there was no danger in him, so far as they were concerned.

Cyril's week of preparation went quickly by, but he had made the most of it. It seemed to him that he had never felt better than he did one morning — it was on a first day of the week — when he was marched out, with a gang of nearly four score others, to see how many of them were really fit to run for a prize in the presence of the august ruler of the Roman Empire.

“Run thy best, son of Ezra,” said Crispus. “I have no fear for thee. Run thou like Asahel, or the scourge will await thy return!”

Cyril had no thought of failure. He said to himself as they gathered at the starting line:

“I am so sorry for them. Almost all of them will be scourged.”

There was none to protest, for most of them were bondsmen.

The word was given, and off went the racers.

One man had quickly mounted one of the horses held in waiting, and now cantered briskly along with the runners. He was a Roman, with his toga thrown over his arm, and he seemed to be intently watching the runners.

Away went Cyril, as light of foot as a wild roe, and the horseman was compelled to spur his nag, which was a somewhat heavy steed.

There were cheers from some voices behind, but Cyril knew not what it was for. He had seen a number of noble Romans at the stand, and among them was the Valerianus who had so savagely threatened him.

On, on, on, around the circus oval, and still the rider urged his horse, but no other runner was near them as they returned to the starting-line, for Cyril was three full horse-lengths ahead.

“Most noble Tallienus,” came with a sneering laugh from the lips of Valerianus, “thou hast need of a better horse if thou art to beat my Syrian panther. I will wage thee a hundred sestertia he wins the race against thy Athenian.”

“Taken! Apollos can beat him!” shouted Tallienus, angrily.

Meanwhile Cyril stood awaiting further orders, hardly knowing that he had done anything remarkable, until he was bidden, in a low voice, by Crispus:

“Get thee in! I am proud of thee! Israel against the world, after all, and Galilee against Græcia!”

Even the hard heart of the apostate Jew who had forgotten the Law retained some national pride—the brother of Rabbi Isaac was still a Galilean.

Cyril knew the Greek runner who was supposed to be his rival. He had even spoken with him, but they were now kept apart, by order of the prefect of the games, and no other public trial of speed was permitted until the day of the races.

There was a great show for the people of Rome, but none of the men who were to strive in the arena were allowed to witness other performances. Like the lions and tigers, they were kept in their dens until the hour came to send them out. Then, indeed, hundreds were to go out to die, but the mere trials of speed of foot came on before the more barbarous combats.

Just before the hour for Cyril's race, the owners of slaves who were to run, and certain men of distinction, were admitted to the rooms where the runners were gathered. Among them were several whom Cyril had seen before, and he was soon aware that most of them favored Apollos. The tall, finely formed young Greek, half a head taller than Cyril, did indeed seem to promise speed. So did a number of others, but the son of Ezra had been studying them during their training, and believed most of them to be overrated by their partizans. He had somehow formed a liking for Apollos, and now it made him sick at heart to hear Tallienus say so unfeelingly to his noble-looking bondsman :

"I promised thee thy freedom if thou wert among the first four. Now, I tell thee, if thou art not there, I will slay thee. If thou art only there, I will give thee a prize. But if thou wilt win the race I will free thee and thy father's family, and will also give thee back thy confiscated estate at Athens."

Apollos heard in silence, but his face was of an ashy pallor as he glanced toward Cyril.

"Valerianus speaks to thee," said Crispus at that moment, and Cyril turned to look into the cruel face of the haughty Roman.

"The second prize is five sestertia," said Valerianus. "If thou win but that, thou wilt with it win the scourge, and manacles, and thy hammer in the quarries. Thou must win the first prize!"

The hot blood rose to the forehead of the young Jew, but his lips closed tightly, and, at that very moment, the summoning trumpet sounded at the door opening into the arena.

Four ranks of runners marched out, ten men in each rank, each man's place being decided by lot, by a number drawn from a box.

The amphitheater was enormous. All around the oval sandy level of the arena, the seats arose, tier after tier, and from them eighty thousand spectators were looking down in eager expectation. Cyril hardly saw them, although the Emperor himself was there, and all the splendid array of the richest people of Rome itself, with kings and nobles and chiefs from all the world tributary to Rome. For one moment he was thinking and he was listening. He and Apollos were side by side, in the foremost rank, and he heard the Greek boy murmur:

"Mother—father — my brethren and my sisters,— they shall be free, or I hope Tallienus will slay me!"

Cyril did not turn to look at him, for he was thinking:

"The first prize or the quarries—I *must* win, or I

shall not be with Jesus of Nazareth when he enters Jerusalem."

The trumpet sounded again from near where the Emperor sat, and the racers were off, all together. Not one of them but was a good runner, and there were several smaller prizes, but the race was little more, after all, than an occasion for gambling to the dissipated, corrupt, idle populace of Rome. It was evil, evil, evil, like all the other games of the Roman circus!

A splendid runner was Apollos, and he shot ahead with a great bound that called forth plaudits from the spectators. Close behind him, quickly, came several others, but before the runners were a third of the way around the arena one of these tripped and fell, and another fell over him.

"They will be scourged!" thought Cyril. "More than half the rest are behind me now. But the pace is too fast at the beginning."

Several more were shortly compelled to slacken their pace and Cyril passed them, but still, away in the front, with an elastic, springing step, the tall young Greek kept the lead.

"The Greek will win!" growled Valerianus to Crispus, who sat at his side. "Thy Galilean is twenty paces behind him. I will send him to the galleys!"

"Only ten paces now," said Crispus, calmly, after a few minutes. "O noble Valerianus, it is the last circuit that tells."

Just then the runners came nearer and Valerianus was silent until they had passed. The race included one more complete round of the arena.

"All are out of the race but those two," muttered the Roman noble. "I shall lose half my fortune if that Jewish boy fails me. What! See — they are abreast. Bacchus! My Jew is winning!"

Not yet. There was still a long race before him, but he and Apollos ran side by side, and the circus rang with the loud applause of the multitude.

Other runners were not far behind, but it seemed evident that the first prize was between these two. Until that moment, Cyril had had no thought but of winning if he could; but suddenly he cast a swift glance at the face of Apollos. It was somewhat pale instead of flushed, and Cyril saw a look of terror, almost of agony, in his eyes.

"He is breathing with difficulty!" thought Cyril, "and I shall beat him! But he and his family will be slaves forever if I do."

Cyril was ahead now, and the plaudits rang out again.

"Thy sestertia are safe," said Crispus to Valerianus.

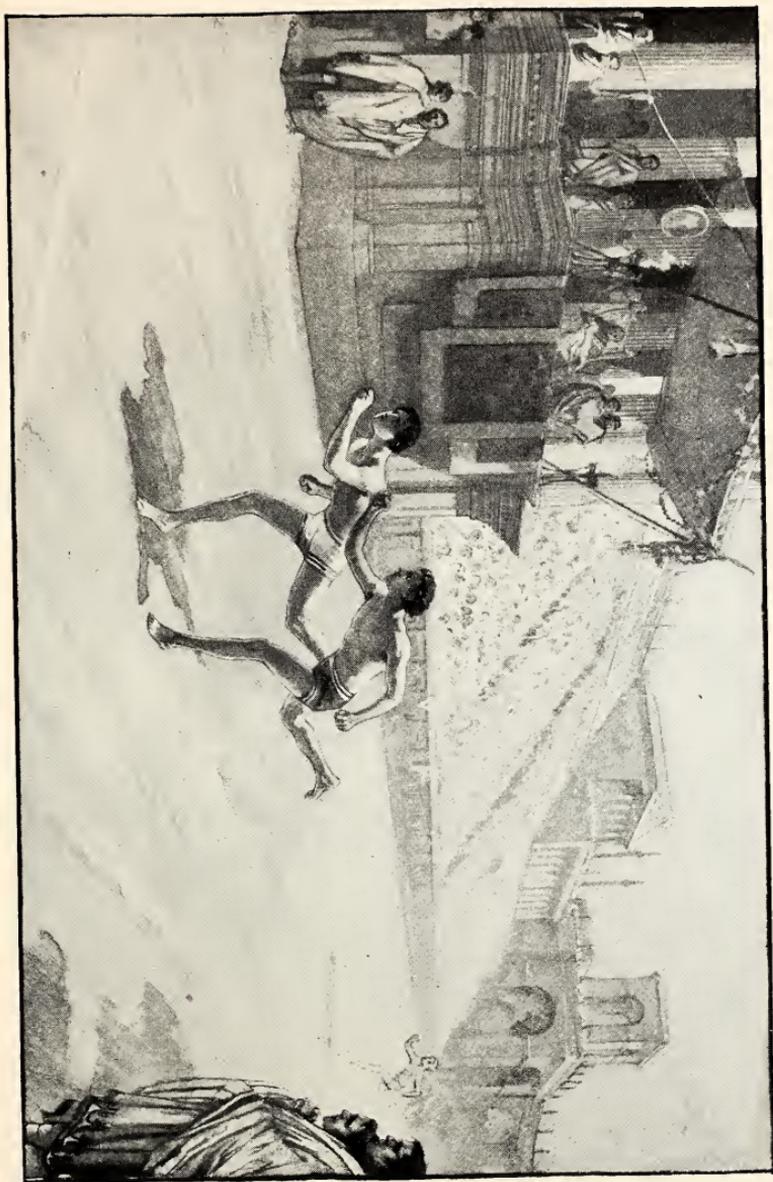
"I will slay that Greek!" hissed Tallienus.

Cyril heard a gasping cry as Apollos put forth all his remaining strength, for they were nearing the goal.

"I can give him his freedom!" flashed into the mind of Cyril. "They may slay him — or me. Shall I?"

Then it was as if he heard certain words — but in truth he only remembered — words he had heard the Master

“WIN THOU, APOLLOS!”



say long ago, upon the mount in Galilee. Cyril could not have told his thought, but in the next moment he spoke in Greek to Apollos:

“Win thou, Apollos! Jesus of Nazareth has bidden me to set thee free!”

Cyril had to slacken his speed, for the Greek boy was beginning to falter.

One moment more and they were over the line, with Apollos the winner by only half a pace!

How the amphitheater rang with the shouts, as the two who had distanced all the rest were led before the Prefect of the games to receive their prizes! Tallienus was there, and he at once loudly proclaimed his promise to Apollos, and his purpose to keep it. Valerianus was not there; but Crispus stood by the Prefect with a darkening face, and he spoke low to Cyril in Hebrew as the little bag of gold containing the second prize was handed to the Jewish runner.

“Thou didst well. There is no fault to be found with thee. But get thee hence. I have ordered them to pass thee at the gates. Betake thyself to Ostia!—and that with speed. Take any ship that sails this day, no matter whither bound. If thou art found in Rome at sunset, thou art at the mercy of Valerianus. Belt thy prize under thy tunic, that none may know it is with thee. Nay, speak not again to me! Go! Go!”

CHAPTER XXIX

THE SHIPWRECK

THE autumnal months were beautiful along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean; the people of Joppa said that never before had their gardens been so lovely or so fruitful. But as the long weeks went by without any word from her brother, it seemed to Lois as if there was no joy in the world.

Ezra the Swordmaker was cheerful whenever he came to see his daughter, but even he grew gloomy when autumn wore away and the winter followed, and he knew not what had become of his only son. All he could say to Lois was:

“Cyril promised to return in time for the Passover, and if he is alive he will keep his word.”

The spring returned, and the gardens of Joppa were one flush of flowers and fruit blossoms, but neither message nor letter came from Cyril.

Tidings came from Galilee, both to Ezra and to Abigail; and many others also seemed to have good reasons for believing that Jesus of Nazareth purposed being in Jerusalem at the Passover. At the same time, it was known

that the enmity toward him among the high priests and scribes and Pharisees was becoming embittered.

Nearer and nearer came the April days set apart for the great feast, and Lois found herself more than ever inclined to go often up to the roof of Tabitha's house and gaze out upon the sea. There were always sails in sight, and one of them might belong to the ship which was bringing Cyril home.

One evening of the first week of the Passover month Lois was still upon the roof, gazing upon the sea. A gale was blowing, and the waters were all one toss of white-capped billows.

She was not the only anxious watcher that night, for even after the shadows deepened so that the whitecaps themselves were hardly visible, a tall, vigorous man was walking to and fro along the shore. There were others upon the shore, but he was walking alone.

"It has always been a terrible place for wrecks," he said. "Fleets have gone down, off the coast of Joppa. But Cyril must be very near us now. The Master will come to this Passover, and I pray that my son may meet him with me."

Ezra could not leave the shore, but Lois gave up her watch on the roof. It was so dark that the ships could not be seen.

That, indeed, was one great peril of the ships, for they could no longer see each other. Neither could they be easily steered in such a storm. Hardly had Lois left the

roof before there was, far out on the water, a sound she could not hear. It only lasted for a few moments, and then the gale roared on, more loudly than before.

There had come a terrible crash, first. One of the ships, driven by the fierce wind, was borne down upon another, with all the strength of the great billow that carried it. Then came shrieks and cries of men and women, for both ships were shattered in the collision, and the sea was quickly dotted with the heads of struggling swimmers.

There were fewer, soon, for now and then one of them seized frantically upon another, so that both sank.

Cyril was one of the passengers. He had clung to a piece of plank at the moment when the vessels came together. He had been standing at the prow of the foremost ship, peering out into the gloom.

He was a good swimmer, and had instinctively swam apart from the rest. In only a few minutes he believed himself to be alone, and he said, aloud:

“Can I land through the surf?”

“Help!” shouted a loud voice near him. “Hast thou a float?”

“Come!” said Cyril. “I have one.”

Soon a second pair of hands were on the plank, but it would not have supported the two men unless both had been strong swimmers. As it was, two were better than one to propel it to the land.

“I am Simon,” said the new-comer. “I am of Cyrene.

Our craft was full of Passover pilgrims, and of all on board I think I alone am left."

Cyril gave his own name, and then added:

"After we sailed from Byzantium, I found I was on a pirate vessel. The pirates captured three merchant-vessels, and our ship was full of slaves — for all the captives were to be sold in Africa. They meant to sell me, too. But I hoped to escape, for they spoke of touching at Joppa."

"Save your strength," said Simon. "I sailed from Cyrene in the hope of seeing Jesus, the prophet of Galilee, at the Passover. I think yet that I shall see him and hear him. There's a light! Swim!"

"I know him!" Cyril exclaimed. "He is the King!"

Cyril was swimming his best, and Simon was a large, powerful man. Their vigorous strokes sent the plank yet faster through the water.

"Beware of the surf!" cried Simon, and that was indeed their danger as they neared the shore.

Perhaps they could hardly have overcome it, if no help had come; but the loud, clear voice of Simon made itself heard through the sound of the breakers. Then men came hurrying along the sand, for the Joppa people were used to wrecks and to rescuing those who came ashore.

"A rope!" shouted Simon; but even as he spoke, a long line with a stone at the end of it came flying across the plank.

"Only a slinger could have done that," thought Cyril, as he caught it; but the moment he and Simon made it fast, the Cyrenian hailed the shore with, "Pull!" and the life-line drew them in.

"Oh, if it were but my son!" exclaimed Ezra.

"Father! I am here!"

Loud voices joined in Ezra, the Armorer's, cry of gladness and thanksgiving; but some of the men thanked Jupiter, and Neptune, and Mercurius, and even Isis, as well as Jehovah, the God of the Jews — for there were many religions along the coast near Joppa.

Cyril was soon rested sufficiently to walk, and he and his father went up the hill together, into the city. As for Simon, the big and burly Cyrenean said a hearty farewell to his young companion, and was then led away, in a kind of triumph, by a squad of Greek and Sidonian sailors, who said that Neptune had made them a present of him.

Neither the Swordmaker nor his son found much to say on their way to the house. Nor was Lois talkative for a while after her joyful greeting. But after that the lamps in Tabitha's large front room burned out and were filled again, and a second time burned low, before any of them tired of hearing the story of Cyril's adventures out in the world beyond the sea. It was long enough before he came to his escape from Ostia, the seaport of Rome, from the wrath of the disappointed gambler, Valerianus.

"As Crispus bade me," said Cyril, "I took passage on a ship just casting off at the pier. She was bound for

Massilia, in Gaul, and she made a quick voyage; but before we got there she was sold to some Phœnicians who were going to the island of Britain, after tin, I knew I would be safer with them, and so I went. I worked hard, for she was a trireme, and I took my turn with the rowers to save money, and to keep the men from thinking I had any."

He told of many places passed on the voyage, and then he said:

"So we sailed out, between the pillars of Hercules, into the great ocean, with the war-galleys of the Roman general Demetrius."

"You have seen the further ocean?" Ezra demanded. "Solomon's ships and Hiram's, of Tyre, went there. Go on! Thou art the better fitted to be a servant of the King!"

"We passed the cape at the end of the world and sailed away across the sea until we reached the harbor and city of Trinobantum, in Britain," said Cyril. "But I did not feel safe except upon the sea, and besides, I had no time to lose. So I sailed back, in another ship, to Malta—"

"Oh, where have you not been!" exclaimed Lois, gazing up into his face, admiringly. "You have seen the whole world."

Not many Jewish boys had seen so much of it, certainly; for Cyril went on to tell of his drifting here and there, until he reached Byzantium and made a last effort to return to Joppa and Jerusalem.

“I think I should not be here,” he said at last, “if it had not been for the storm, and for Simon of Cyrene.”

“Sleep, now,” said his father. “On the morrow we must all set out for Jerusalem. We shall be there in good season. Verily, the God of our fathers, thy own God, has been with thee through all the way by which he has led thee, and he has brought thee back to me in peace! Glory to his name, forever! Amen!”

CHAPTER XXX

THE COLT, THE FOAL OF AN ASS

THREE days after Cyril's arrival at Joppa, Ezra the Swordmaker stood just outside of the Jericho gate of Jerusalem, as the sun rose on the first day of the week.

"We must set out at once," said Ezra, "for the messenger told me that the Master rested on the Sabbath at Bethany. He will reach the city to-day."

"He is really coming?" said Lois, looking earnestly away down the road from Jericho. "How glad I would be to see him again — and hear him speak!"

Cyril said nothing, but his eyes were flashing, and his sun-burned, handsome face wore a warlike expression. He was taller now, and stronger, than when he hurled stones at the Roman soldier across the swift torrent of the Kishon.

Lois eagerly tripped forward along the shaded highway. Village joined to village so closely that it all was really a part of Jerusalem, though outside of the gated walls. They had not walked very long before Cyril remarked:

"This is Bethphage. I must go to the Cave of Adul-lam soon, and select a sword."

"The time is at hand," said his father. "Many swords are ready. This is to be a week of great events. I think there has been no other like it."

At that very hour the Master was walking toward them, along the road from Jericho, pausing, as he walked, to open the eyes of the blind and to heal those who were sick. And on the way he told those with him of the things that were to come to pass before the sun should set upon another first day of the week. It was to be his own day, thenceforward, and all of them would then remember and would tell one another how he had talked of these things before they came to pass.

Ezra and his party had entered the village, and all the road behind them and all the way before was full of people, for there were many who had heard that the prophet of Galilee was coming.

"The street will soon be thronged," said Ezra. "They are taking those asses out of the way."

Two of the animals had been tethered before one of the houses, a she-ass and her full-grown colt. He was a large, fine-looking animal, such as brought a higher price than did most horses in the markets of Jerusalem, but at that moment two men who had come up the road were untying him.

"Cyril!" exclaimed Lois. "Those are two of the twelve. Two of his disciples!" But before he could reply, somebody spoke from the door of the house:

"What do ye, loosing the colt?"

“The Master hath need of him,” came back from the man who held the halter.

Low bowed the speaker in the doorway, and the colt was taken.

“Come!” whispered Lois earnestly to Cyril. “We will follow them.”

But Cyril was stepping forward toward one of the disciples, and had forgotten all else in the excitement of the moment. Off came his robe, a new abba he had bought in Jerusalem the previous evening, and he threw it over the back of the colt. Ezra and others did the same, and when, not many minutes later, the obedient animal was led through the throng around the Master, he was as if saddled. When mounted he seemed to need no bridle, for he turned and began to walk toward Jerusalem, carrying Jesus of Nazareth.

Close pressed the thousands who had already been following. Every village was adding new swarms of young and old. From the now open gates of Jerusalem poured out increasing multitudes. Slowly stepped the colt, that required no guiding; and on the highest point of the road, as it went over the ridge of the Mount of Olives, the animal stood still, while his rider gazed long and wistfully at the splendors of the sunlit city.

“He is about to ride in,” thought Cyril. “He will soon be crowned there and he will reign over all the world! Even over great Rome! I wish I dared ask him, or one of the twelve—” but at that moment he felt the hand of

Lois on his arm, and her voice was hushed and awed as she murmured in his ear :

“Cyril, He is weeping !”

Then he and all could hear the Master addressing the city in loud and earnest lamentations, as if foretelling some great woe that was shortly to come upon it. They heard, but they did not understand. Neither did Cyril, for he said to himself :

“Perhaps it is because there will be bloody fighting when the city is taken. I expected that.”

On moved the vast procession, and soon the feet of the colt did not touch the earth because of the many abbas that were spread before him as he walked ; and all the way was littered with the fresh-leaved branches of palm-trees. Palms, too, were carried by those in advance and those who followed, and chorus after chorus of praise to God, of thanksgiving, and even of triumphant expectation of the new kingdom, arose like the songs and responses in the Temple on a day of national rejoicing. Among them all there was one in which Cyril joined most heartily :

“Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of Jehovah ! Peace in Heaven and glory in the highest !”

It meant, to him, all that he had so long been dreaming, but he saw that the face of his father was clouded. He heard Ezra mutter :

“The Master said that the men who would take Jerusalem would not leave one stone upon another. Who

then shall rebuild that he may reign there? I fear that there are dark days coming for Israel."

Many, even of the Pharisees, carried away by the torrent of the Nazarene's popularity, had gone out to meet him. It was from some of these that words of criticism came. They said to him, on the way, as they listened to the glad hosannas:

"Rabbi, rebuke thy disciples!"

"I tell you," he replied, "that if these should hold their peace, the very stones would immediately cry out."

Louder and more exultingly rang the shouts of praise to God and of honor to the "Son of David," the prophet who had come at last. The whole city seemed to be pouring out to meet him. On, on, on, he rode, preceded and followed by the enthusiastic multitude through the gates and the city streets to the very Temple itself.

Once more the outer court of the Temple had been turned into a general market-place, but when the Prophet of Galilee entered it now, he had no need to drive forth any of the dealers; his order for its cleansing was obeyed in haste.

"It is written," he said, "that my house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

It was no use for Cyril to try to keep close by his king. Not only were the disciples there, but also there came continual delegations of the most important men of the city. Still, as Cyril noticed, however great was the tumult and the enthusiasm, there was nothing hostile in it,

nothing that at all disturbed the iron composure of the Roman guards, stationed in and about the Temple.

Lois returned to the house of a friend of Tabitha, where she and Abigail were waiting for her, but Ezra and his son walked away, together, toward the pool of Siloam.

Until the close of the day, Jesus of Nazareth continued in the Temple, and all that he said or did was peaceful, at the same time that he both defied and denounced the chief priests and the scribes and the Pharisees. When evening drew near, and before the gates were shut, he and the twelve disciples returned to Bethany.

It was not strange that the Roman governor, Pontius, "the spearman," turned away in careless indifference when reports came to him of what appeared a mere difference of opinion among the Jewish rabbis concerning some of their curious doctrines — of which he knew nothing whatever.

CHAPTER XXXI

BEFORE THE LAST PASSOVER

THE whole city was moved when the shouting multitude marched up the Jericho road to Jerusalem, announcing the arrival of the great prophet of Nazareth. His bitterest enemies understood that at that hour they were powerless against him. The hearts and hopes of all the people were set upon him, and year after year his work had become better known. All over the land, in cities and towns and hamlets, were large numbers of men and women whom he had helped with new health and life, while uncounted thousands had witnessed his good works and listened to his teachings.

But now, at last, the very summit of his power and popularity seemed to be reached, and from this time onward there seemed, to his enemies, a rapid ebbing away.

On the second day of the week, our Monday, the Master came in again from Bethany, and among those who met him before he reached the city were Ezra and Cyril, but there was now no throng, for his return had not been announced beforehand.

They went with him to the Temple. The directions he

had given the previous day, for the clearing of the outer court, had been obeyed. The buyers and sellers and their merchandise had been expelled. The "Court of the Heathen" was once more a house of prayer for all nations. Here the Master sat down and taught, and the blind and the lame came to him and he healed them — but this was not at all what a great many of his following, or even the patriotic multitude, had led themselves to expect.

They came and lingered around him, and went away and came again. They heard what he said and they saw what he did, but even his denunciation of the Pharisees and scribes puzzled them. Were not the priests still to officiate in the Temple, after the Messiah should come to rule the world? What, too, were those strange things that were said about the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple itself?

Darker and darker grew their difficulties, from hour to hour. It puzzled Cyril, and something of faith or of enthusiasm he was losing. It was not so with Ezra, perhaps because he was older; but Cyril noticed that his father was all the while in deep thought, and, at the close of that day, as they walked homeward, he said:

"My son, stay thou here, in the city. I go to the Cave, to see some of our friends, and I return at once. I will get thee a sword. I will not bring the King's sword, now, but thou and I may have need of weapons."

"Has the Master said anything?" asked Cyril

“One of the Twelve told me,” replied Ezra, that he said, ‘If I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me’; but what he meant, I know not. Of this I am sure, that the God of Israel will tell him when to act and what to do.”

“The time is at hand, then?” persisted Cyril.

“This, too, I do not understand,” said his father. “He hath said that in his battle for the Kingdom he must be slain and the third day rise again. It is a deep saying, but I have seen him raise the dead. Whatever is to come must come.”

So Ezra went away, and Cyril went to have a talk with Lois, who was not at all troubled as were her father and brother. She had now to repeat to her brother something she had already told Abigail.

“Didst thou notice,” she had said, “when we were in the Court of the Women, that the Master wore the abba we made in Capernaum, and the seamless vesture? I did, but I saw it upon him first when he was riding in on the colt.”

Abigail had not failed to see, and she remarked:

“It was not our gift, Lois. I now know that the wife of Chusa, Herod’s steward, and the other women, have continually ministered unto him from their own property.”

Lois was silent, for she strongly felt that her own small hands had worked upon that abba, and she had been proud to see the Master wearing it.

There were many stories told, some of them very beau-

tiful, of his kindness to women and children, and Lois had treasured them all.

Cyril was now thinking of what his father had said to him, for Ezra was not only an old experienced soldier, but a Jew. "Jesus will be compelled to wait," Ezra had said. "He cannot attempt anything until after the Passover, and then not until after the Sabbath. Our best men would not rally on the feast-days nor on a Sabbath."

Cyril, therefore, was waiting wearily and impatiently. The Passover was not to be eaten until the fifth day of the week, or Thursday, at night. During the fourth day, nearly all day long, Jesus continued in the Temple, teaching. It seemed to some who heard him that his words were more wonderful than ever before. In the morning hour, as he sat in the Court of the Women, opposite the treasury chests into which many who came were casting their voluntary contributions, he had said of one poor woman who gave only two small mites, that she had given more than all the rest. It was so hard to understand a great many of the things he said, that Cyril had pressed nearer, through the throng. Lois had followed, until she and her brother were side by side, close to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Mary of Magdala.

He was now speaking again, and his voice seemed to fill the open spaces of the temple and to find its way to the ears of all the crowds that filled the porches and the courts. The voice was so powerful, so full of pathos and of pleading, that all other sounds were hushed. Could

he be in pain? In suffering? He certainly was not now speaking to the people, for he was looking upward.

“Lois,” said Cyril, but her hand on his arm silenced him, and she was gazing upon the face of the Master.

“Now is my soul troubled,” they heard him cry out. “And what shall I say? Father save me from this hour—But for this cause came I unto this hour.—Father! Glorify thy name!”

All through the temple sounded the strange prayer of the prophet of Galilee, and the people held their breath for a moment. Then came, through the corridor and porch and court, an utterance so wonderful that many cowered in sudden terror, exclaiming that it thundered, while those who were nearer said to one another:

“An angel spoke to him!” for the words of the sound could both be heard and recorded:

“I have both glorified it and will glorify it again!”

“This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes,” said Jesus, but, as he talked on, Cyril crept silently away and so did many others. He had a frightened feeling that he could not bear to hear any more.

“Something great and terrible is surely coming!” he said to himself, “when the angels of God speak to us. Father must know this.”

It was not until evening that Ezra and Cyril met, according to their appointment, near the Pool of Siloam. Cyril had many things to tell, and his father heard him in silence, but, at the end of it all, he said:

"I reached the city hours ago, and I have been with the disciples. We must watch now. Herod has at last determined to slay him. So have the high priests. They are the rulers of the people —"

"I am not with them!" sprang to the lips of Cyril. "I am not with the priests and rabbis. I am with the Christ, the King! I have heard God speak to him in the temple!"

Ezra rose to his feet.

"I also am with him!" he answered. "But his enemies follow him closely. He is even now concealing himself —"

"They will find out where he is to eat the Passover," said Cyril. "Then they can seize him and the Twelve. He must have chosen the place days ago, and many must know it."

"So I thought," replied Ezra, "but the Twelve said not so. Not until to-morrow will they or anybody else know where the Passover is to be eaten by Jesus of Nazareth. Only the Twelve will know, even then, lest he should be betrayed to those who seek his life. They know, as well as we do, that after the Feast and the Sabbath he will be free to act."

So reasoned Ezra and his son, and so had reasoned and plotted the enemies of Jesus.

"We will eat our own Passover," said Ezra, finally, "and then we will go out and watch. I gave my own sword to Peter. He asked for it; he had none. The

sword I had meant for thee I gave to Andrew. They will all the while be with him. We can go unarmed now, but I think the servants of the King may be ready with shield and blade upon the first day of the week. The Passover Lamb must be slain, and after that he will enter into his kingdom."

So spoke the old swordmaker, and a great longing arose in Cyril's soul.

"We must wait," he said; "but I shall be ready to march with him when he calls for me,—on the first day of the week."

CHAPTER XXXII

GETHSEMANE

IT was late in the Passover night. All through Jerusalem, all over the world, wherever there were Jews, those who had eaten the Pascal lamb had arisen from the sacred feast. For the greater part, they remained in their houses, or went only short distances to other houses, or in and about Jerusalem, to the booths and tents provided for pilgrims. Rarely had these been so numerous, for men had come from all over the world to hear and see the new Teacher, the Prophet of Galilee.

Out of one house came two who went in haste, and one said to the other: "My son, we did well to watch when he came in. Now that we know where to seek him, let us not be too late. He will not stay in the city, for they will take him."

"Father!" suddenly exclaimed the other. "Look yonder! There are torches and armed men. They are coming from the house of the High Priest. They are the priests and the captains of the temple, and the elders!"

He paused, while around a corner of massive masonry near them marched a motley throng which seemed to pour out curses as it came.

“THE THRONG THAT WAS LED BY JUDAS.”



“Cyril!” exclaimed Ezra, “Seest thou that man with the torch? It is Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve! The Master is betrayed! Oh, that we could warn him!”

They could not! They did not know, as Judas did, that Jesus had appointed the shadowy garden of Gethsemane as the place of his last hour of agony and prayer and communion with the men he loved, before he should be given up to death. All that Ezra and his son could do was to follow the throng that was led by Judas.

On went the traitor and those who were with him, through the eastern gate, opened for them by its guards, and out toward the Mount of Olives. On went Ezra and Cyril, almost as if they were themselves members of the band of men who were seeking the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

“If they succeed,” groaned Cyril, “if they should take him, what will then become of the Kingdom?”

No answer came, for Ezra was striding forward, his right hand working almost convulsively, as if he longed to grapple an enemy or grasp a weapon.

In strong contrast with that tumultuous rush of angry men, through the streets of the city and out across the Kidron, was one shaded spot upon the Mount of Olives.

Three men who lay there had been overcome more by grief and anxiety than by bodily fatigue, and they were sound asleep although they had been bidden to wait there and to pray. At no great distance from them, in one direction, waited eight others, who seemed to be awake but

silent, while at a stone's cast in the opposite direction knelt one who was all alone.

He had been praying again and again, each time returning to find those men asleep, to waken them, to then go and pray once more.

The third time, when he came back to waken them, he again upbraided them gently, but added :

“It is enough. The hour is come. Behold the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise. Let us be going.—Behold he that betrayeth me is at hand.”

Whatever was yet to come, that night or afterward, was to him the fulfilment, the actual endurance, of what he already knew and felt beforehand, as he had often told not only the Twelve but many others, who could not grasp the meaning of what he said.

Not many minutes later, the stream of men with torches, staves, and swords, went up the slope at a point directly across the valley from the temple, and poured in among the trees and vines of Gethsemane.

Cyril knew at once that Judas had guided only too well, and the son of Ezra saw rather than heard, for all his soul was in a tumult of dismay.

He saw the Master stand as if waiting, and he saw Judas press forward to greet him with a kiss. Then he saw the sword of Peter flash from its sheath and strike one blow, giving a wound which the Master at once touched and healed, as he said to Peter :

“Suffer ye thus far. Put up thy sword into its sheath.

The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

The armed men stepped forward, but the disciples had fallen away, at that moment, from around the King, and he stood alone, in the glare of many torches. So majestic, so kingly a presence was it that those who came to take him reeled backward and then fell upon their faces.

They arose and again rushed forward, while all the disciples turned and fled, and Cyril gasped in terror:

"They have taken him!"

The Jewish priests would not have been permitted to go with their servants armed through the streets of Jerusalem, by either day or night, nor would the gate have been opened for them had they been unaccompanied. The real arresting force had therefore been a strong party of Roman legionaries from the temple guard. These were the very men who had been so overcome by the more than earthly majesty of their intended captive, and now they acted as a protecting escort while they led him back across the Kidron and into the city. The officer in command of them, as Cyril knew, was responsible for the safety of Jesus until he should deliver him to the authorities. Cyril therefore breathed more freely as he marched along with them into the city and up the street which led to the princely house of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest, to whom the first report of the arrest of Jesus was, for some reason, to be made.

All who could manage to do so, and many had joined

on the way, pushed through the ample portal into the great hall where Annas, in a kind of vindictive triumph, waited for the prisoner.

"There is John," said Cyril to himself. "And there is Peter, pretending to warm himself by the brazier. Not another man of the Twelve is here. Father is not here."

In every direction, as he glanced around, were only angry and scowling faces, or else those whose open exultation more plainly declared the spirit that brought them. The Master was before his accusers, deserted by his followers.

Cyril himself was thinking:

"There is nothing that I can do!" when he suddenly felt as if something had stung him, and he came near speaking aloud: "Oh, they have struck him!"

All in that chamber had been humiliated by the blow except the unflinching majesty which had been smitten. Cyril was not looking at others, to see how they felt, but at the servants of Annas, who were now tying the hands of Jesus, as those of an accused criminal, to lead him away to the house of the High Priest Caiaphas.

"I will be there before them," exclaimed Cyril, turning to hasten toward the door, but a voice at his side responded:

"Thou here? I had hoped to see thee again. It was in his name that thou didst set me free in the Arena. I heard of him again, both at Rome and at Athens. I came to Jerusalem to see and hear him—"

“He was my King!” gasped Cyril. “Oh, Apollos!— he is the Messiah that was to come, and they will slay him!”

“I fell, when the rest did, in the garden,” said Apollos, as they hurried on, side by side. “Tallienus commands the new legion,— the garrison of the city,— and I, though I am now free, was with him when he ordered the guard for the chief priests. My own people murdered Socrates for speaking the truth. I think the Jews will slay this prophet, for I heard him say, in the Temple, ‘I am the truth.’ I believe he is. He set me free. Come. Thou art a Jew, and I am a Greek, but he is my King as much as he is thine. Let us see what will be the end.”

So the two who had raced for the prize before the Emperor in the Roman amphitheater, ran now, and were among the first arrivals at the house of Annas to enter the ample audience-room in the palace of Caiaphas, the High Priest.

It was something more than a mere popular assembly that had gathered there. Had Cyril and Apollos been a moment later, they might not have gained admission, for they went in with some of the most distinguished members of the Sanhedrim, the great council of the Jewish nation, and shortly afterward the doors were closed against the multitude.

It was an exceedingly dignified, pompous tribunal, a kind of senate, and the High Priest sat as its presiding official. Before him, calm and utterly silent, stood Jesus

of Nazareth, while the witnesses attempted to give some reason known to the laws why he should be arrested or punished. No questioning drew from him a word of comment or response, while the conflicting witnesses, one after another, broke down in their too willing testimony.

"They must let him go," thought Cyril. "He has done no wrong."

But at that moment the High Priest himself arose and stepped forward, confronting the prisoner, and said:

"I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God!"

Cyril's heart seemed to stop beating, for a new and tremendous thought that had been dawning upon him was now taking a shape he had never dreamed of.

"In truth," whispered Apollos, "he is not a man. He is one of the gods."

For Apollos was a Greek, a heathen, and his people believed that their divinities sometimes visited the earth.

Deep, hushed, awful, was the stillness over the Sanhedrim, as they listened for the reply to the question of the High Priest. It came distinctly, in words which sent a thrill through all who heard:

"I am. And hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of Heaven."

The High Priest rent his clothes, and loudly exclaimed:

"What need have we of further witness? Ye have heard the blasphemy? What think ye?"

Angry responses from all sides declared that the blas-

phemer must be put to death; but only one authority in Jerusalem could inflict the death-penalty. The offender must, therefore, go before the Roman governor. First, however, while the leaders prepared to take him there, others vented their fanatical spite upon their unresisting victim.

“Let us be the first at Pilate’s house,” said Apollos, in a low voice; and Cyril turned away, feeling almost as if the earth were going out from under his feet.

“It is all over,” he said. “They will imprison Jesus as they did John.”

“No,” exclaimed Apollos, as they hurried onward. “No prison could contain him. I heard him say it — he is the son of God!”

Many things had been said which Cyril had heard but could not now recall, and he was only looking forward to what might be the next scene in that dreadful night. It was now, indeed, no longer really night, but in the dawning of the sixth day of the week — our Friday. It was still one of the festival days, and no member of the Sanhedrim would have entered the house of a heathen, like Pilate, for fear of becoming thereby unclean, unfit for entering the temple.

It was for this reason that Pilate, notified of what was coming, had ordered his throne-chair of judgment brought out to a spot called Sabbathath, from its ornamental “pavement,” in front of his palace portal.

Here he now sat, and before him came the Jewish notables, bringing with them their prisoner.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE CROSS AND THE CROWN

IT was, indeed, an imposing spectacle, that court before the splendid palace of the Roman ruler of Judea. It was, nevertheless, a great piece of hypocrisy. Pilate, sitting in the Judge's seat, knew very well the true nature of the case brought before him. The course pursued by Jesus of Nazareth year after year, all over the land, had been known of all men. Pilate was entirely willing, however, to see and hear a person so celebrated as the Galilean prophet. There were political reasons why he was willing, at that time, to please the Jewish priests and people.

So there he sat and listened, while members of the Sanhedrim presented, with their prisoner, their formal accusation :

“We found him perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is the Christ, a King.”

“Art thou the King of the Jews?” said Pilate, to the prisoner.

“Thou sayest!” was the Master's response, as if he had said, “I am.”

Immediately Pilate arose from his chair, and the two went into the palace together, out of the hearing of all who stood around the judgment-seat.

After a few moments of suspense, during which scarce any audible words were exchanged by those who were waiting, the two came out again, and then Pilate spoke :

“ I find no fault in this man.”

Cyril's heart leaped gladly for a moment, and he heard Apollos mutter :

“ After all, the Roman law has something of justice in it.”

But loud, fierce, angry, threatening in its tone, was the response of a white-robed rabbi, who now stood forth in front of the rest :

“ He stirreth up the people, teaching through all Jewry, beginning from Galilee, to this place !”

The face of Pilate was crafty as well as cruel, and there came a change in it as he heard Ben Nassur speak of Galilee.

“ He belongs to Herod's jurisdiction,” he said. “ I will send him to Herod, for his decision.”

Herod had no power to inflict capital punishment in Judea, but the responsibility was to be shifted.

It was not difficult for Cyril and his friend, less dignified than their elders, to speedily reach the palace, where Herod maintained a kind of royal state during the Feast. He, too, had been notified, and was waiting in his judgment-hall the arrival of the escort which Pilate sent with Jesus and the priestly accusers who came with him.

Herod had slain John in the dungeon of the Black Castle, but this prophet of Galilee he had never seen. His face wore an attentive look as the throng poured in and its numbers took the places which their rank or assumed duty assigned to them. Certainly nothing was lacking of external pomp, and state, and splendor, in the appointments of Herod's hall and throne of public audience. Jewels and gold and royal robes and armed guards and the assured appearance of conscious power over the lives of men, all these were there, with Herod, and not in all the world were there men of more personal dignity than belonged to the Jewish rulers who now stood before him as accusers of the prisoner sent to him by Pontius Pilate. Nevertheless, not only did this pomp fail to be regarded by the prisoner, but even in the eyes of others it was shorn of its ordinary effect.

The real royalty, the one manifest greatness in that hall, stood all alone before them. He was in plain clothing, bareheaded, but he was kinglier than the king, as he listened in undisturbed silence to the many questions put to him, loftily, at first, then angrily, by Herod himself.

Not a word of response was made to either accusation or inquiries. To Herod's disappointment, there was no exhibition of the superhuman power concerning which the murderer of John the Baptizer had heard so much. At last it became plain that Pilate's cunning attempt to rid himself of a troublesome case had failed, although he

had succeeded in pleasing Herod by a semblance of deference to his authority over Galileans. The whole matter must therefore be referred back to Roman jurisdiction.

So Cyril himself understood, half gladly, even while the wrath and disappointment of Herod and his officers broke out in fierce derision of the "pretended King," as they called him. A King, they scornfully said, should have a better robe than the plain abba he was wearing, and so, as they sent him away, they threw over it one gorgeous in tints and embroidery upon its ground of royal white, from the wardrobes of the palace. He was not crowned as yet, but upon him had been placed the raiment which, by old tradition, belonged only to Hebrew royalty, to the princes of the house of David.

Once more did Pontius Pilate come out to sit in the chair of judgment at the Pavement. Once more the accused Prophet of Galilee stood before him, the royal robe he wore neither adding to nor taking from the majesty of his serene, undisturbed demeanor. His head was not bowed, nor did his lips open to utter a word.

No one knew what had been going on in the mind of Pilate, nor what motive he might have for wishing to spare his prisoner. But Cyril now heard him once again declare his first decision that he found no fault in Jesus; he added that Herod also had sent him back uncondemned. Therefore, as it was an honored custom to release one important prisoner at the Passover Feast, he would but

scourge him and let him go. What was called Roman justice could do no more for a man whose innocence was admitted.

"Scourging, for the King?" shuddered Cyril; but at that moment there arose a cry of many voices, acting on a quick suggestion by the accusers:

"Not this man, but Barabbas!"

"What?" thought Cyril, "the robber instead of the Christ?"

Then Pilate added, as they called loudly for Barabbas:

"What then shall I do with Jesus, who is called the Christ?"

Not till that very moment had Cyril understood how deep and deadly was the enmity which had been growing during all the years of the Master's open condemnations of the priests and rabbis, the scribes and Pharisees, their teachings and their works. There had been a war, long and severe, waged without swords or armor, and it was a war of life and death. The old evils or the new good must perish. Hot and fierce was therefore the fanatical zeal of Isaac Ben Nassur, as his stentorian lungs sent forth the cry caught up and repeated by so many:

"Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Cyril heard other words around him. He heard Pilate speak again, and the priests and rulers replying. He knew that Jesus had again been taken into the palace but knew not what there had passed between him and Pilate.

“He is coming now!” exclaimed Apollos at his side, and in a moment more they saw Jesus standing near the judgment seat.

“Behold your King!” said Pilate, and then loud shouts replied :

“Away with him! Crucify him!”

He once more almost pleaded for his prisoner :

“Shall I crucify your King?”

The tumult deepened; the outcries became more seditious; and the weakness of Pilate’s cruel, selfish nature yielded to the clamor of the bloodthirsty rabble.

“He is delivered up to be crucified!” cried Cyril.

“Come!” said Apollos. “They are leading him forth.”

Cyril hardly knew how Apollos led him, but in a minute more they were in the great hall of the palace which was known as the *prætorium*.

The soldiers of Rome, mere swordsmen who knew no mercy, were having their own way, now, in a kind of brutal sport with their prisoner. They removed the royal robe of Judah, and then his own simple clothing was removed that the heavy scourge reserved for malefactors might fall on the bare back. Ruthlessly fell the rain of cutting lashes, till the punishment number of them was full.

Equally cruel hands were meanwhile plaiting, with twigs from the thorn-tree of Canaan, a torturing imitation of an imperial crown.

The scourging ceased; the crown of thorns was forced

down upon the kingly head; the seamless robe and abba were replaced. Over them, now, however, was thrown, in mockery, not the white broidery of Judean Kings, but the rich, deep-tinted purple robe of Roman empire — of the empire of the world.

Insult followed insult; mockery on mockery; while Cyril writhed in agony, as if the sharp strokes were falling on himself.

“Come!” said Apollos. “They are leading him away!”

The streets of Jerusalem were already thronged, and all knew what was going forward. Not the enemies only of the Prophet of Galilee were in the long, mournful procession which now marched with him out through the Joppa gate; multitudes had preceded it, for Golgotha, “the place of a skull,” was the usual place for public executions.

Before one doorway Cyril paused and Apollos with him, for it was full of weeping women, to whom he hurriedly related all he had seen and heard. With them were many of their friends — women from Nazareth and from the Chinnereth shore. Even while Cyril was speaking, the heavy tread of a band of Roman legionaries came down the street, while walking among them was one on whom the eyes in the doorway looked, but could hardly see for weeping.

“My son,” said a speaker behind Cyril, “he is bearing his own cross —”

“Would I could bear it for him!” exclaimed Lois, and Cyril replied:

“He has fallen! Look! Who is that?”

No man would have been permitted to break the serried ranks and help the fainting Master, but that the soldiers themselves were loth to be impeded, and they had seized upon a sturdy man who had been pressing too close that he might stare, wonderingly, at Jesus of Nazareth. On him they bound the pieces of wood that were to form the cross, and Cyril, as he looked again, exclaimed:

“It is Simon of Cyrene. He swam ashore with me. He came to see the King.”

“He has seen him,” said Ezra, reverently. “Let us go out to Golgotha.”

It was by no means easy to follow closely, so dense was the throng. Other parties of soldiers tramped behind the first, for two thieves were to suffer, at the same time and place. Each of these carried, hung around his neck, a whitened board, on which was written his name and the nature of his offense. Another had been provided for Jesus, but Cyril did not then see it.

In fact, he could hardly see anything or think anything, for all the hope and enthusiasm of his young life seemed to be dying away from him. Even Apollos was steadier; but then he was not a Jew, and he had not been dreaming, year after year, of the new kingdom, and of the coming of the conquering King, the promised Messiah, the Son of David.

The place of execution was reached, a kind of knoll, just off the Joppa highway, where the crowds who continually came and went might not only see those who suffered, but take wholesome warnings of the power and severity of the Roman authorities.

Lois was vaguely aware that she heard a sound of hammering, as of men who were driving heavy spikes. She knew that her father and brother had thrown themselves upon the ground, and that all her women friends had covered their heads; but after that, it was all so silent for a moment, that she looked up, timidly.

Three crosses arose from the top of the little hill, and from the central cross came a voice full of pleading, that said:

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!”

Near the foot of the cross were four Roman soldiers who had been stationed there as a guard. They were talking, almost disputing, about something, and Lois turned to look at them.

They were drawing lots for the seamless vesture which had been sent to him, and they had already torn up the abba. Small indeed was the impression made upon their hardened natures by so ordinary an affair as a crucifixion.

Worse than theirs, even, seemed the hardness of some who called themselves Jews, for they stood before the cross and hurled derisive taunts upon the sufferer who had healed so many other sufferers. The very inscription



"THEY WERE DRAWING LOTS FOR THE SEAMLESS VESTURE."

above his head seemed to arouse or increase their bitterness, for Pilate had written it, in Latin, in Greek and in Hebrew :

“ This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

The purple robe had long since been taken from him, but still he wore the crown — the crown of thorns.

It was high noon and the sun poured hotly down upon the uncovered flesh of the men upon the crosses. It was said that no other torment equaled the intolerable thirst of crucifixion.

Swift death could not come, and the sultry, feverish, merciless hours dragged slowly by.

There was more mockery, more railing, and several times the Master spoke, with a wonderful calmness, to one of his disciples, to his mother and to the other women, and even to one of the criminals who were crucified with him.

“ My son !” Cyril turned from a long gaze at the crown of thorns, for Ezra was leaning over him. “ I must go. The centurion yonder is Regulus, who commanded in Samaria. Stay, thou, but know thou this that I heard from one who was in the palace: The Master said to Pilate: ‘ My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight. I am a King.’ Cyril, son of mine, I must go; but only to wait for his other kingdom. I believe that I begin to understand better than I did.”

Ezra was gone, and it was only a moment later when Jesus exclaimed :

“ I thirst !”

As if he had been waiting for some service, Apollos darted away to where stood a jar of vinegar and by it a sponge at the end of a reed, such as was provided by the merciful women of Jerusalem for all who were crucified. He was filling the sponge, when the lips of the sufferer opened again, and with a loud and terrible cry :

“My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?”

To those who understood the tongue in which he spoke, the first words sounded like the name of the prophet Elijah, and, as Apollos hurried forward, they shouted to him :

“Let alone! Let us see if Elijah will come to save him!”

Neither did the young Greek understand them, but he pressed the cooling liquid upon the parched lips, for a moment. Then he drew back, for yet another cry of agony burst forth, and with it the words :

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!”

So saying, he bowed his head and all seemed over; but now, although no clouds had arisen, a great and awful darkness swept across the sky. The earth beneath them shook and trembled as if in horror of that which had been done, and great rocks by the roadside were cloven to their bases, while in the Temple itself, the vast veil before the holy of holies was rent in twain.

“Truly,” spoke the deep voice of the centurion, “this was the Son of God!”

But all others only smote their breasts and hastened away in terror towards Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XXXIV

AFTER THE RESURRECTION

THE next day was the Sabbath and a deep stillness, as of fear, seemed to have settled over Jerusalem. An awful deed had been done, and men were whispering to one another concerning the signs which had accompanied it — the darkness and the earthquake and the rending of the veil, and concerning the last woes spoken of by the crucified Prophet of Galilee.

Abigail, Tabitha, and their friends, were only waiting for the morrow, to return to Joppa, but Lois had been provided for, as had Cyril, in the house of one of Ezra's friends, an old disciple of John the Baptizer.

“We will remain in Jerusalem, for a season,” said Ezra to Cyril and Lois. “We must have courage and wait. The kingdom will surely come, and he said it was at hand. I believe him.”

So did his children, and yet all hope of it seemed gone. Perhaps the old swordmaker could not clearly have told them what he meant or what he expected, but every now and then he looked at his right hand, and his face always brightened when he did so.

They knew already that the body of Jesus had been placed, by Joseph of Arimathea, in his own rock-hewn tomb, in a garden at no great distance from Golgotha, or, as the Romans called it, "Calvary." They also knew that a guard of Roman soldiers kept ceaseless watch by the tomb, lest the disciples of Jesus should steal the body away and then assert that he had risen from the dead.

There was little or nothing to be done on the Sabbath, except to wait, and to weep at thinking of what the Master had suffered on the cross.

There was a kind of revengeful triumph, too, in the feelings of the enemies of Jesus; but the chief priests and their followers, and such men as Isaac Ben Nassur, were tormented by a dread lest something, they knew not what, was yet to come. It was from this that the caution came which made them obtain a guard of legionaries for the tomb of Jesus; and all his friends, especially his disciples, were aware that violent measures were planned against them. They were therefore concealing themselves, although not altogether debarred from coming and going among those who were in sympathy with them.

The Sabbath passed, the first day of the week came, and still a troubled, uncertain state of mind seemed to weigh down Ezra the Swordmaker and keep him from attempting anything. The morning hours went by, and still he sat gloomily in the house with his children. That is, with Cyril, whenever his impatience would let him keep still, for Lois did better and took her part in house-

hold duties. It was a little after noon, therefore, when Cyril was summoned to the outer door. He opened it and uttered a loud exclamation, for there stood Apollos, his face all radiant, like that of a bearer of good tidings.

“Oh, my friend,” he said, “thy King is risen!” And then, in quick excited sentences, he told a story of women who had been early at the tomb, and some of the disciples; and how the guard had fled in fear of an angel who came and rolled away from the sepulcher the stone that closed its door. The women first, and then the disciples, had not only seen the risen Jesus, but had spoken with him.

“Oh, that I might see him again!” exclaimed Cyril.

“They know me not,” said Apollos, “and I cannot join their company. Neither must thou, except secretly, for Valerianus is here, and he might do thee a mischief if he found thee. He is a man who never forgets or forgives.”

Ezra had come out and had listened.

“I believe it!” he shouted. “I go to the Cave and to our friends. I will return before next Sabbath. My son, thou wilt be safer in one of the villages than in the city. I will send thee out to Emmaus with my friend Cleopas. Thou knowest him.”

Cyril might have preferred remaining in the city, but he knew that his father’s counsel was best. Before long, he was on his way and beyond the city walls. His companion, Cleopas, an old disciple of John the Baptizer, was the very man with whom he could talk most freely con-

cerning his life-long dream of the King and the new Kingdom, and of how it had been shattered.

It was a kind of mournful comfort to recall the words and works of the Master, and even to rehearse the marvels which had attended the crucifixion. Most marvelous of all, most impossible to make real, was this last wonder, told to them that day.

“Apollon said,” remarked Cyril, “that after we all fled, on the sixth day, one of the soldiers plunged a spear into his side, to make sure that he was dead. How can he have risen again?”

As if it would have been easier, if, like Lazarus or the young man at Nain, the Master had died in the ordinary way, not torn with spikes nor pierced by the broad blade of a Roman pilum.

Heavier grew their hearts and slower, more thoughtful, their long walk through the winding valley and over the hills between Jerusalem and Emmaus.

Of course, they met with many wayfarers and many more, upon more pressing business, passed them; but one of these, at last, a stranger who caught up with them, seemed in no more haste than were they themselves. It seemed to Cyril that his heart was too full to speak to any man, but the stranger greeted them with a very winning courtesy.

“What manner of communications are these things,” he asked, “that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?”

They stood still, looking sad enough, but Cleopas seemed even to feel a little nettled by such a question and he responded quickly :

“ Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that are come to pass there, in these days ? ”

“ What things ? ” again asked the stranger.

“ Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, ” replied Cleopas, “ which was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people : and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and have crucified him —— ”

“ But we trusted, ” exclaimed Cyril, “ that it should be he which should have redeemed Israel. ”

“ And beside all this, ” continued Cleopas, “ it is now the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher ; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the sepulcher and found it even so as the women had said, but him they saw not. ”

“ O fools, ” exclaimed the stranger, “ and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken : ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory ? ”

He was evidently a man learned in the Scriptures, for

he began, as they now resumed their walk, a series of quotations, from the books of Moses onward to the latest prophets, all of which, as he brought them out and explained them, seemed to tell the story of Jesus of Nazareth, to the very hour when the Romans crucified him. It all seemed clear to Cyril, and he wondered that he had not understood it before. The time slipped by them unobserved, and the sun was low in the sky when they entered Emmaus. They reached the house which was the temporary home of Cleopas, and the stranger ceased to speak. He would even have walked on if Cleopas and Cyril had not urgently invited him to come in.

It was time for the evening meal and it was put out upon the table for the refreshment of the arrivals from Jerusalem, but there was a gloomy air in the house, for all its inmates were mourning over what had been done at Calvary.

No ordinary man had been this rabbi who had talked with them on their way. It had been easy for Cleopas and his young friend to take instruction from their manifest elder and superior, who was evidently, also, so strongly in accord with them. So they reclined at the table, with their guest in the place of honor. Immediately he took in his hand a loaf of bread and blessed it and broke it, and gave to each of them one of the pieces.

For one brief moment they gazed at him in glad, astonished recognition.

"It is the Master!" said something in the heart of

Cyril, although he did not speak. Then they saw him no more, for he had vanished out of their sight.

“Did not our hearts burn within us,” said Cleopas, “while he talked with us on the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”

Cyril was silent, but he arose at once and so did Cleopas. They did but pause long enough to give to all in the house the tidings they had brought with them, and then they set out for Jerusalem.

“We must hasten to tell his disciples,” said Cleopas, as they walked rapidly onward.

“I must tell Lois and the women and Apollos,” replied Cyril, “but most of all, I must go and tell my father. I think this is part of what he was looking for. I shall never again be dissatisfied about Jesus of Nazareth. He is not dead, he is risen. It is just as he said to Pilate. His kingdom is not of this world. So he said to us in the way. He is the Christ, and he has suffered, and he has entered into his glory.”

“Amen!” said Cleopas.

And so they walked on, together, into Jerusalem.

