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THE
L I F E
OF
J O S E P H,
THE
S O N O F I S R A E L.
IN EIGHT BOOKS.

Chiefly designed to allure young Minds
to a Love of the Sacred Scriptures.

BY JOHN MACGOWAN.

PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

PRINTED BY CHARLES PEIRCE

1797.



TO THE PUBLIC.

THE following History of the Life of Joseph was forwarded to me by a Friend in London. On perusing it, and finding the English Edition out of print, a number of persons have expressed an earnest wish of seeing an American impression of it. In my opinion, it is well calculated to instruct and entertain the rising generation, and as such will, I trust, be deemed an useful Book in our public Schools. The BIBLE is an inexhaustible Treasury of Divine Truth: whatever, therefore, is conducive towards promoting a Love for that Blessed Volume in the youthful mind, will undoubtedly meet with the Patronage of the seriously disposed of every Christian Denomination—The Author was a much esteemed Minister of the Gospel

pel in London, and, had he lived, would have prosecuted his pious plan.* Well acquainted with his excellent character, I could not, after being repeatedly requested, any longer deny the present editor these few lines, expressive of my warmest approbation of this valuable work; sensible that it only wants to be known in the United States in order to be admired.

WILLIAM ROGERS, D. D.
 Professor of English and Oratory in the
 College and Academy of Philadelphia.

PHILADELPHIA,
 Jan. 1, 1791.

* See the close of the Preface,

P R E F A C E.

WHEN a new book is ushered in to the world, if it has the happiness either to please or displease, there is great enquiry made after the author:— And as I think it would be a pity to forbid the world this pleasing itch of enquiry, I forbear putting my name to the Life of Joseph till such time as this curiosity hath in some measure spent itself. Yet not to leave the reader altogether in the dark about who and what the author is, I shall give him a negative or two.

1. He is not then a writer who cannot err, for he thinks it possible for him now and then to be guilty of mistakes, in sentiment as well as literature. Consequently,

2. He is none of that class whose *ipse dixit* is the pure standard of orthodoxy. But he has one thing to say for himself, which will weigh a great deal with peo-

ple of sense and candour, and that is, that the Life of Joseph is wrote as well as he could do it, for could he have done it better, he had never sent it into the world as it is : for it was not wrested from him by force ; neither got out of his hands by clandestine means ; by those who were eager to see it in print, before he had time to put the finishing hand to it, as has been the unhappiness of some other authors. He can assure the reader, that had his ability bore any tolerable proportion to his time and opportunity, the present production had been without a blemish.

But why did I choose any part of sacred history for my theme, will be next asked ? Did you not know that the Bible has been laid in a great measure aside for many years past ? and that people of fashion will contemn it, if it was for nothing else but being akin to scripture ? Yes, I know it very well ; but because I have not seen a better book substituted in its room, I would gladly have the use of the Bible revived again. If writers were all agreed to keep to Bi-
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ble subjects, of course the readers must ; for they can only ramble, as they are led by their author. The sacred volume is fertile of subjects, calculated both to please and instruct ; when let down, by proper elucidation, within the reach of young capacities. And rather than one class of readers should want entertainment, let me tell them, that the Bible contains many histories of love affairs. Perhaps this may tend more to recommend it to attention, than all besides, which I could say.

I have sometimes thought, that, if instead of useless controversies, upon points which the infinitely wise God never intended to be clearly understood in this life, gentlemen of sacred character were to employ their leisure hours in rendering some part of divine history pleasing, and easy to be understood by young ones, their lives would be spent to much greater advantage than they frequently are. Much time and pains have been taken ; much zeal, as hot as Smithfield fire, has discovered itself in defending that which never was revealed ; and in
explaining

explaining that which is inexplicable ; and many a flaming curse has been thundered against those heretics, who would not believe but upon evidence given. Whether my writing the Life of Joseph is not a less abuse, both of the world and of my own precious time, I leave to the reader to determine.

Well, but what induced you to set about writing this same Life of Joseph ? I tell you honestly then, that I was not prayed and intreated to do it, by people who thought me master of the subject, as has been the case with more respectable writers : for no one person ever hinted such an opinion of me.—But I wrote it merely to please myself, as the first party concerned ; and had fully gained my end, had I been as well pleased with my own performance as I was with the subject.

And pray what induced you to publish it, seeing the world is already burdened with more books than ever will be read ? In this also I differ very widely from many of my brother authors, some of whom seem to be objects of our warm-
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est pity. I have grieved, or might have grieved, at the heavy complaints of some authors whose labours have been taken from them as it were by force of arms. Such was the importunity of friends, who had seen the manuscript, to have it published ; that they could not possibly refuse to gratify them, however reluctant they were to appear in print in so discerning an age. But, alas ! I cannot pay this compliment to the Life of Joseph ; for to tell the truth, no one creature ever desired me to send it abroad, or so much as to read one page of it in manuscript. The whole affair was settled betwixt my honest, and since then very unhappy bookseller.* Certainly those friends act in a very unfriendly manner, who oblige a modest author, contrary to his strongest resolutions, to print a performance which he has such a very mean opinion of himself, and to expose his reputation in genius and literature to the hazard of being bandied about, throughout the whole nation by those

* Mr. Joseph Johnson, lately burned to the ground in Pater-noster-Row, and uninsured.

those too merciless sets of waggish reviewers ; who make nothing at all of laughing at human folly. Were my friends wicked enough to expose me to such disagreeable hardships, I should certainly renounce their friendship forever. I might indeed say that the *Life of Joseph* is *published by request*, if I thought it would promote the sale of it ; but then I should mean the request of my bookseller, who had some hope of making a few pounds by it, if published. But *Joseph* shall go without disguise, whether it succeed or not.

What is the most wonderful of all in me is, I am not afraid to appear in print, even in this age, discerning as it is ; not that I think myself censure proof ; very far from it. But I have a reason more formidable, and which effectually secures me from apprehending any evil at the hand of the critic ; and that other authors may attain the same happiness, I shall reveal the important secret to them. And it is this. I shall be glad to have every fault in the performance pointed out, that I may make the second impression

pression more perfect than the first ; therefore the more curious they are in noting its defects, and candid in communicating them to me, the more shall I deem the critics my friends.

Having given an account of myself, sufficient to satisfy any reasonable reader, I proceed to observe that I have a class of people in my eye, and for whose sakes chiefly this little performance is sent abroad, amongst whom I hope to have even some admirers. I mean the young and rising generation, whose felicity I hope I can say I have very much at heart. If I can but get their good opinion, I care not who else snarl at the *Life of Joseph*. I have been much conversant with the geniusses and tempers of young ones, both in my own family of seven children, and in a much larger sphere of action ; and have had frequent occasion to mark with regret, that the harsh and severe methods which many take with a view to form the young mind to agreeable habits, have quite the contrary tendency. I have an utter aversion to the crabbed countenance of
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the cynical pedagogue, who has no other way of imparting instruction but upon the end of his cane, or face of his ferula. If the terrible man, and terrible he is to the little lovely creatures, who shrink as it were into nothing, and shudder at his tremendous menace, would only consider that it is impossible to divide hatred from servile fear ; he would perhaps see it necessary to aim at gaining the affection of his young pupils, in order to insure his own success. Or if he himself would go to school to common sense, and learn to dress virtue in its native attractions, and learning in its own innate loveliness, he might spare the labour of the cane and ferula, enjoy the love & esteem of his pupils, instead of their dread and hatred ; and return them to their parents good proficients in useful learning, instead of branding them with the infamous name of dunce. A name however, that always proclaims the master's incapacity to teach ; and but very seldom want of ability in the boy to learn. Want of ability to learn is very rarely the case ; and want of inclination would

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be much seldomer found than it is, if care was taken, to entertain the fancy whilst we would inform the understanding. - If learning was made to resemble play rather than slavery, it would become a pleasure instead of a burden.— I never yet found that I could succeed by mere precept and penalty ; but if I was happy enough to hit upon the turn of my pupil's fancy, I never failed of the desired success. Fancy is an active principle and will be employed, though in different subjects it operates variously.

The Life of Joseph is designed to entertain my young reader, without vitiating his mind ; by setting before him one of the most amiable of sacred characters, in the person of Joseph, the hero of the story. I am not aware of having at all departed from the spirit of the text, nor from the rules of probability. I have indeed ventured upon a few conjectures & fictitious possibilities, which some very grave reader may perhaps be offended with ; but in this I am kept in countenance by the most orthodox of our commentators, who all have

their suppositions and conjectures on many places of sacred scripture. It may be, my young reader could even wish that I had more enlarged upon the fanciful part of the story. To him I would make this apology for myself.— I wrote with caution, always keeping in my eye the people above referred to, and was cautious of offending them; for I know that it is possible for a man to be deemed an heretic, for a few things which to them appear to be new and out of the beaten tract of orthodoxy; therefore I had a restraint upon my own inclination, which otherwise would have led me to give a free scope to my fancy.

Should The Life of Joseph, the son of Israel, be acceptable to those for whom it is designed, I am not certain that I shall not send something more of the same kind abroad into the world.

THE
L I F E

O F

J O S E P H.

A R G U M E N T.

Jacob entertains his family with the history of his own life and that of his fathers—Joseph's private reflections upon it, —His first dream—His brethren's envy on account of it—Judah and Simeon's different reflections upon Joseph's dream—Reuben endeavours to remove their jealousy—Belphegor's resolution to blow the flame—Simeon's dream inspired by that devil—Joseph's second dream—His brethren's resolution to murder him—The patriarch's care about his sons—Joseph sent to enquire after their welfare—A Canaanite finds him and invites him to his tent, where he tarries till morning, and dreams an alarming dream—He departs for Dothan—His brethren consult about putting him to death—Reuben interpoles, is exposed to danger from their resentment, and is upbraided with defiling his father's bed—Joseph intercedes for his life in vain —Recites his last alarming dream in order to move their pity—Reuben dissembles with a view to divert his brethren's purpose and persuades them to cast him into a pit—Joseph's prayer in the pit: Abel the protomartyr appears to him, comforts and instructs him.

B O O K I.

IT was at the end of autumn, when the bounties of Providence were safely gathered in, that venerable Jacob entertained his convened family with the history of his own life, and the lives of his father Isaac, and Abraham his grandfather. A story so full of interesting incidents, related in a manner truly pathetic, sometimes excited the friendly tear, and at others the cheerful smile, upon the countenances of his audience.—None was more affected than pious Joseph, who seemed earnestly to catch every syllable in the narration; little Benjamin indeed marking the emotions of his brethren's hearts, by their countenances, gave undoubted tokens of filial piety, as well as his elders. Joseph, love Rachel's eldest born, was absorbed

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contemplating the vicissitudes experienced by his revered parent, and could not forbear sympathising with him in every part of the history, whilst tears bright as orient pearls ran down his cheek. Even when alone he could not but ruminate on the wisdom and goodness of the God of heaven, in setting virtuous Jacob before Esau the prophane; notwithstanding nature and Isaac's choice seemed to have designed otherwise.—Says he to himself, when alone, “Raw and unexperienced as I am, young and untaught either in the mysteries of religion, or the mazes of deceit among men of this world, I can see a very wide difference between my father and my uncle Esau. A greater difference there was not between the roughness of the latter, and the delicacy of the former, when examined by experienced Isaac's careful touch, than there is between their two minds, formed so very different from one another. And who made, or could make the difference but God, from whom the spirit of life originally came, and who formed them both in the same maternal

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nal womb. I adore thee, O my God, that the promise is with my father Jacob." Often did he reflect with pleasure and delight on the gracious visits, which the patriarch received from the Almighty at Bethel and Peniel. "Oh, said he, that this same God, the God of my father, may be with me even as he hath been with him! that this God may be my God in the land of the living, and my guide and portion for ever and ever."

Thus meditating on the changes through which providence had brought his father, and earnestly imploring grace to imitate the patriarchal conduct, he was seized by the lulling charms of balmy rest, and sunk beneath the superiority of the angel of drowsiness. As he slept he dreamed, and lo! all his brethren and he were together in the neighbouring field, laboriously reaping the nodding harvest; when to his amazement, the sheaf which he had last reaped stood upright in the midst, as a governor; and all his brethrens sheaves, as so many loyal subjects, hastened to pay their court,

court, falling down prostrate before it. Unacquainted with malice and envy, and not knowing but his brethren were as free from it as himself, he very innocently told them his dream ; but alas ! the distinguished regard at all times shewed him by his indulgent parent, had already called up the demons of malice and envy to possess their unequal hearts. They heard him with attention, and felt the impresson in their hearts, but could not hinder the disagreeable sensation from discovering itself on their countenances ; so sure an index is the countenance to the heart. He, as a youth who loves instruction, asked them what could be the meaning of such a dream ? But they disguised their apprehensions, and with affected disdain turned from him, telling him they understood nothing of the matter. But no sooner was he departed from them, than they entered into a consultation among themselves relating to the affair. Judah first began, “My brethren, said he, the dream which the youth has related to us, however innocent and thoughtless he may be respecting

pecting the event, appears to me something more than the influence of mere imagination ; and if my judgment is not mislead, it is ominous of superior dignity in the person of Joseph, or the dominion of his seed over the children of his father." "For my own part, returned Simeon, I consider the whole as the fruit of ambition ; you know he has been fostered up in a vain conceit of himself, by the overweening fondness of an indulgent and doting parent. Seeing himself placed first in the paternal affection, who knows but his pretended dream is a scheme concerted to root himself the deeper in his father's heart, with a view to supplant us of the patriarchal blessing, as our father did our uncle Esau ? Or, if he really did dream what he has now related, is it not pretty plain from thence, that it is owing to his mind running upon the wished for dominion ?" Reuben now rejoined his brother Simeon thus, "the patriarch's partiality towards Joseph can never be justified, for if brethren are expected to dwell in unity, there must be an equali-
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ty among them ; partiality in a parent being the seed of certain diffentions among his children. Yet we ought to do the boy justice, he is truly lovely in his person ; even in his opening graces you may see all the beauty of his mother, mingled with the masculine gravity of our renowned father ; besides, his temper is amiable and mild, his manners sweet and attractive ; let us not then load the good man with reproach, even if he should love our brother with superior regard. Our father was put before his elder brother, and thereby the promise descends to us, let us not, then, too hastily condemn the youth, before we know what the Almighty will do with him."

THUS reasoned the sons of Jacob, whilst Belphegor an angel of the damned race, implacable in his hatred against mankind in general, and especially against the children of the promise, returning from a detestable incursion in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, drew near and hovered in the air over their heads, to acquaint himself with their circumstances

circumstances, the better to imbiter their lot, if not precipitate them into ruin. He was a witness to the perturbation of Simeon's heart, and resolved that the flame already kindled should not die, whilst it was in his power to throw oil upon it. What the malignant spirit aimed at, was to excite him to embrue his hands in Joseph's youthful blood, as before he had done in that of the Shechemites; which, as he concluded, if executed, would answer infernal purposes in divers respects; that it would bring down the holy patriarch with sorrow to the grave; it would bring an everlasting reproach upon the chosen race; and, it might provoke a just God to visit them with some terrible judgment. To accomplish this with the greater facility, he resolved to impose upon his senses by a dream; for which purpose he watched him in his tent, and perceiving him in a deep sleep, he first breathed upon his eyes an hellish damp, that diffused darkness and horror thro' his whole soul. Then, directing his views to futurity, he discovered Joseph

in a chair of state, himself and his brethren prostrate before him, intreating mercy at his hand ; by and by he finds himself bound in fetters, in the presence of his brethren, and cast into a dungeon ; now he sees his own seed the drudging menials of the seed of Joseph. The name of Joseph is extolled to the heavens, and those of his brethren mentioned but with coolness, and some of them particularly his own, with abhorrence. Withal he saw the behaviour of Joseph's children to be haughty and tyrannical to their enslaved brethren. So did the parent of error mislead his judgment, by the delusion of an hell inspired dream. Simeon awoke in the morning, and addressed himself to his pastoral care, following the fleecy race as they cropped the verdent herbage ; but a fullen pensiveness was settled on his countenance, the cause of which he chose not as yet to reveal.

IN the mean while Joseph grew in stature, in the affection of his father, and fear of his God. And ere long he dreamed again, a dream of the same import.

port with the former. He fancied himself in a pleasant meadow, covered with the freshest verdure, bespangled with the many coloured stains of natural dye; the lion, the leopard, and panther, were hid in silence, in their lonesome retreats;—their nocturnal prowlings in the desert were suspended, and only the voice of the nightingale was heard. As he walked along, admiring the beauties of nature and adoring the supreme Creator, he perceived an uncommon motion among the celestial spheres; the sun, the moon and the seven stars, flew swiftly from their orbits, and came and made obeisance to him. The next day after evening oblations were offered up, and Jacob's family convened to supper, such as the simplicity of those days admitted of: unsuspecting Joseph told his dream before them all. His father heard with thoughtful attention, yet deemed it prudent to conceal for the present his thoughts, not knowing what envy it might excite among his brethren; and therefore gave him a slight rebuke, by saying, "Shall I and
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thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down themselves to thee, to the earth?" The dream and interpretation of it had both taken possession of the patriarch's mind, and, notwithstanding his reproof to Joseph, he pondered it in his heart, and considered it as divinely inspired, portending some important event.

It was quite otherwise with Joseph's brethren : this last brought the former dream afresh into their minds, and they began to fancy themselves as almost in servitude to their brother already. The repetition of the dream encreased their envy, and alarmed their apprehensions : especially when Simcon, who had concealed his dream until now, had related it to them. They considered the whole as fixed by fate, and saw but one way to prevent the execution of the decree ; and that was (horrid to name) to cut short his period of life ; as if there had not been blood enough already upon their guilty souls. Strange indeed that the parents of the chosen seed, should be found contending with their God,
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and striving to prevent the execution of his purposes ! How unsearcheable are the ways of the Most High ! and his judgments past finding out !

THEY now departed to their rural employments, first to Shechem, where the herbage was soon devoured, and from thence to Dothan, where there was plenty of grass, and shelter for their cattle. Unfurnished with that dutiful regard, due to so good a father, their departure was concealed from him ; whether from thoughtlessness, or with a view to find occasion to destroy Joseph, I pretend not to say : but their absence filled the patriarch's mind with solicitous concern for their welfare, wherefore, he resolved to send his beloved Joseph in quest of them, to learn their situation. In the mean while, being arrived in Dothan, they consult together what methods to take to prevent the grandeur of their detested brother, and his death was determined on by the majority. Thus sin at first discovered itself to be exceeding sinful by the horrid act of fratricide, and now the issue of this coun-

fel was, that brethren should shed their brother's blood, and without so much as the allegation of guilt against him.

JOSEPH was dispatched by his father to enquire after the health of his brethren, a task which was extremely agreeable to a mind like his, formed to offices of benevolence. First he went to Shechem, where he expected to have found them, but instead of them he met with a stranger, who, seeing a comely young man wandering in the fields, drew near and thus accosted him:—
“Young man, if I mistake not you are a stranger in these parts, wandering in quest of some desired object; I am a native of this country, and if you will be pleased to command me, I am ready to serve you to the utmost of my power. It is the will of heaven that we should not be neglectful of strangers, but perform all offices of good-will towards them, and we find our account in obeying the precept, for the God of heaven is the Guardian of strangers.”
Joseph, affected with the goodwill of this stranger, meekly replied: “My friend

interpretation of them ; but amidst his contemplations he fell asleep, & dreamed one of a very different nature. He fancied himself wandering in an unknown field, amidst the nocturnal gloom ; sun, moon and stars, having hid their radiance in the density of the atmosphere, Pensive and melancholy, he wandered with painful steps, he knew not whither. No voice was heard but that of beasts of prey, upon their nightly ravages, the growling of the lion, and hooting of the bird of darkness were the only musick that saluted his ear. Ere he was aware, he fell into an horrible pit, inhabited by hissing snakes, and other deadly reptiles ; and in the fall, his many coloured coat was torn piece-meal, and hung upon the bushes over him.— He had but just reached the bottom when two monstrous adders warped themselves about his legs, which frightened him so that he awoke and rejoiced that it was but a dream. Some benevolent spirit of the ethereal race, having heard the malevolent consultations of his brethren, might take this method of appriizing

apprizing him of some danger near at hand, that he might guard himself against their bloody designs. But Joseph's friendly heart was incapable of suspicion. He would have deemed it a crime in him never to be forgiven, to have entertained, but for a moment, the least jealousy of their humanity. Had integrity & uprightness equally governed the rest of thy sons, O Jacob! What scenes of sorrow wouldst thou have escaped, and how gently would time have conducted thee through the decline of life.

The reverse of Joseph's disposition was theirs, for the moment they saw him afar off, they renewed their determination against him to destroy him, and by one bold stroke to free themselves from the fear of his future advancement.—“According to our wish, cried raptured Levi, he comes; behold this dreamer cometh!” returned Simeon, “Now is the time brethren, let us put him to death, and see what will become of his dreams.” “Not so, replied Reuben, How shall we who have the adoption
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and covenant, we who are the seed of the promise, be guilty of fratricide?—What! shall we who are called to lift up holy hands, and to offer pure oblations to the God of heaven, stain our souls with the blood of an innocent brother? remember brethren, the blood of Abel, cried from the earth to the Lord to whom vengeance belongs, and will not the blood of Joseph rouse the wrath of the Omnipotent? And who shall escape when an avenging God pursueth? Is our father partial in favour of the youth, the fault is not with him. Even envy itself must confess his merit. Are his dreams ominous of his future greatness? Cannot Joseph be great without our being slaves to him? Shall we slay our brother for the licentious roivings of unbridled imagination? Who can answer for dreams? Could we even convict him of ambition, might not his youth and inexperience, in some measure plead his excuse? Further experience, growing acquaintance with men and things, would teach him that man is not originally designed for slave-

ry. Let the old man our father plead for his Joseph. His life is wrapt up in that of his child. And will you dare to murder the father in the son, and pierce his heart thro' the blood of his Joseph? Think of our father my brethren; see him weeping a detested life away over his murdered son; murdered by the begotten of his father; murdered by the very men in whom he confided without reserve. Let the fear of God, and the love due to so venerable a father, be advocates for his helpless youth; and let me never see the evil that shall by this villainous barbarity be brought upon Israel, the favorite of heaven."

"Is this Reuben, with malicious irony, cried Levi, Reuben the first-born of Jacob? The pious Reuben, who in a phrenzy of brutal lust crept into his father's bed, and defiled it? Where was thy fear of God, thy love and veneration for thy father then? Art thou our dictator? Thou who couldst not spare even thy father's wife, all of a sudden become so pious? Art thou so careful for thy father's life, thou who alone
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hadst audacity to cuckold him ? Let shame for ever shut Reuben's mouth, and leave it to good men to be advocates for virtue."

"Your invective, my brother, said Reuben, stings me with the keenest remorse. I own the charge to be just and cannot forget the evil of my sin. I have dishonored my God, my father, and myself ; and have left thereby, an indelible stain on my offspring, to the latest generation. But the heavy days and the many sleepless nights, that this foul miscarriage has cost me, though they can never extenuate my highly aggravated guilt from before the God of Jacob ; might in some measure exempt me from the upbraidings of my brethren. Believe me, Levi, my own conscience serves as a thousand reprovers, and needs not your cruel assistance. Yet it is just, my brother, and I cannot resent it. But my former impiety, is indeed the reason wherefore I cannot fall into your bloody measures. My conscience, too, loudly tells me that I have guilt enough upon my soul already, without contracting more

in such an horrid manner as this, which Simeon has prescribed; that I have already been the cause of more than enough of sorrow, to my dear and honored father, without joining in the murder of his son, to bring down his venerable hoary head, with insupportable sorrow to the grave. He whose conscience groans under the weight of incestuous adultery, has little need to add to the burden, the tremendous weight of innocent blood. I cannot therefore consent to the deed."

"The indelible stain which Reuben, by his own confession, hath fixed on himself and offspring, may reconcile the baseness of his mind to slavery, said Simeon; but our seed is free, and not born to servitude. Therefore, Joseph, by my advice shall die; if pious and reformed Reuben, will not consent to his death, he dies along with him. Why should he live to be able to accuse us to our father? One condition, and only one, if you are all agreed, I would have offered to Reuben; if he agrees to that he lives, and if not, he and Joseph die together; for he shall never be the publisher of our guilt.

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Let Reuben become our accomplice, otherwise bind himself by an oath to the most inviolable secrecy. By this alone can he hope to prolong his life. Speak, Reuben, do ye accept the conditions?"

"Give me till to-morrow about this time to consider of it, and then you shall have my answer, replied Jacob's elder born."

"One hour and no more we grant, at which time we expect your answer," rejoined the brethren in wickedness.

By this time Joseph came nigh to his brethren, and smiling with delight at having found them all together, came near to embrace them, and inquire after their health. But what inexpressible surprize seized him, when instead of returning his careffes, they turned away from him, and shook him off, with vengeance louring on their countenances? Instantly he is seized, stript of his rich party coloured coat, and fettered both hands & feet. Alarmed Reuben, cried, "Stop, stay your hand but one hour, the hour promised & ye shall then have
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my answer." All agreed that one hour and no more should be granted, ere Joseph was put to death ; and Reuben casting a look of despair and pity on his fettered brother ; " I wish, said he, your duty to your father, and love to your brethren, could have admitted your staying at home, instead of visiting these men who are bent on your destruction ;" so saying, he precipitately withdrew to consider what answer he should deliver to his brethren.

The elder brother gone, and Joseph enclosed amidst his sanguinary brethren, like an helpless lamb amongst so many voracious wolves, was thus addressed by one of them. " Ambitious youth ! think now of your state, one hour elapsed and the tide of your ambition is forever stemmed, one hour puts a period to your life, which is forfeited to our liberty. Die you must and shall, if fate had decreed the contrary." He replied, " Had I known the malignity of your intentions, I might have avoided the snare ; but duty to my father, and to my brethren, and therefore duty to my God brings

me here ; if he hath led me hither for slaughter, I ought, I must submit, but if my God sees it for the honour of his majesty to preserve me, he hath power to change your purposes, as he turneth the rivers of water ; or may point out means whereby I may be delivered from your vengeance. Tell me what I have done : wherein I have offended you : If I have erred, it is unwittingly, and it is hard to be put to death for inadvertency. Make known my faults, and if I reform them not, let loose your fury upon me. But I adjure you by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that ye slay me not unconvicted. If I have wronged any of you, I am willing to make restitution to the utmost : If I have offended, to submit myself, and to implore forgiveness ; but O cut me not off in my youth, before I arrive at the state of manhood !” “ Yes, youngster, replied Simeon, you have wronged us so, that you cannot make restitution. You have stolen the affections of a partial father, which you cannot restore ; you have set yourself up by your pretended dreams, as our lord and governor ;

error ; you have made us and our children, yea, and our father himself to do homage to your pride ; but we shall soon see what your greatness will come to.— You shall not live to triumph over your enslaved brethren : die you must.”

“ Alas ! must I then die for my dreams ! which of you has the government of his fancy whilst asleep. Oh, Simeon ! my brother Simeon, could I help my dreams ? I little thought that they would have given offence to any of you, when I innocently related them. I want no superiority, I account, myself unworthy even of equal regard, much more so of superior esteem. If my father shows any partiality towards me, it is for my mother’s sake, and not for any thing in me. And must I die for any partiality in my father ? Make the case your own, my dear Simeon, would you like to be put to death for any ravings of your dreaming imagination ? To be murdered in cold blood for what you could not possibly help ? If I must die for having dreamed a dream, which you think portends felicity

city and greatness, give me leave to relate to you one that I dreamed last night ; if the former excited your anger and resentment, the latter may as justly entitle me to your compassion and sympathy." Leave obtained, he related the dream he had in the tent of the Canaanite, which his brethren heard with rising indignation ; and as soon as he had finished, Simeon spoke to his brethren, with fury flashing from his eyes ; " This dream is an artful contrivance of the insolent wretch to fix a lasting reproach upon us, and upon our seed. We, my brethren, are intended by the deadly serpents ; perhaps I myself am meant by one of the adders that warped themselves about his legs, and wakened him in such a fright : but why do we suffer him to prate any longer ? One stroke of my scymeter will put an end to his insolence. Ambitious wretch ! Thou shalt prate no more." Here he drew his sword, and rushed up to have cloven the stripling in twain, but Judah caught him in his arms, and cried, " Stop, stop, my Simeon.—Remember

member the promise we have just now made to Reuben ; wait the time, and let us see what resolution he comes to."

"O Judah ! cried Joseph, Judah, my honoured brother ; thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise : May I hope to find an intercessor in thee ? What if thy sons, either Er or Onan, were in the same condition in which thou seest me ? How would thy bowels yearn over them ? See their distress in mine : feel my father's affliction in thine own : act a faithful part in delivering me from mine enraged brethren, who are this day risen up against me without a cause. O Judah, let me owe my life, and all the happiness of it, to a brother so honourable in the house of his father. And you, O Simeon and Levi think, think of the guilt ye will bring upon yourselves, by perpetrating a deed so horrid. Ye may escape punishment from the hand of man, but assure yourselves ye will not escape from the hand of God. For judgment is his, and he will repay it either in this life, or that which is to come."

Thus

Thus Joseph interceded for a life, now indeed rendered wretched, by the unkind behaviour of his father's sons; more out of desire to dissuade them from contracting fresh guilt, than from any dread that he had of death, or what should follow after it. Whilst Reuben retired behind a neighbouring thicket, to pour out the bitterness of his soul before God, and pray to be directed what part he should act in the present iniquitous affair. How shall I act said he? If I consent, I bring guilt upon my own soul and add murder to my incest. If I do not consent, my life is forfeited to the jealousy of my brethren who will never be easy whilst I am alive, let me be tied to secrecy by what oath soever. Surrounded by evils, prudence dictates to chuse the least, that thereby we may escape the greater. I must at all events endeavor to save the boy's life; in order to which I must consent to his death, and may perhaps win so far upon his enemies, as to leave the manner of his death to me. His heart was divided between
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the thoughts of his own safety and Joseph's. The sorrow which he foresaw ready to fall upon his aged father, and the guilt just about to be contracted by his brethren ; but still he steadily determined to use his best endeavors for the safety of the youth. With this resolution, although dissembled, he returned to the rest seemingly with a placid countenance ; and thus addressed them. My brethren, I am now ready to concur with your measures, and even to be active therein, upon one small condition being granted me, which is, that instead of shedding of his blood, we confine him till death in yonder pit, on the other side of the pasture." Agreed, replied his brethren: So that he dies, no matter how. And hereby Reuben makes himself not only an accomplice, but a principal actor in the tragedy. Away with him to the pit, and there let the sun, moon, and stars, pay their court to him as their governor."

At this instant, they hurried him away to the proposed pit, whilst he in
anguish

anguish of heart, summoned them all to meet him hereafter before the judgment seat of the King of Kings, where he assured them he should have justice done him. This appeal he designed as a means of conviction, whereby his brethren might be brought to repentance that their sins might be blotted out, when times of refreshing should come from the presence of the Lord.

Joseph, now let down into the pit; Reuben rejoiced in hope of having it in his power to deliver him safe the ensuing night to his good old father; whose heart he knew must pant with painful anxiety till his return. Having determined upon this salutary project, he left him there and went to dispatch some pastoral business among the menial herdsmen, at a different part of the wilderness, proposing ere long to return. In the mean while, Joseph having nothing but death to expect, and hardly even desiring any thing else, lift up his soul in fervent prayer to the God of his salvation. "Thou God," he cried, "whose presence fills immensity itself, whose eyes see, and
whose

whose eye-lids try the actions and hearts of men ; thou must of necessity be present here, and witness to all my treatment from my brethren. So far as the appointment is thine, I desire cheerfully to submit to it, and own thy conduct just, as I have deserved a thousand deaths ere now. But Lord, my brethren's motives differ from thine as far as east from west, for envy do they now rise up against me. Here I am in all appearance shut up for certain death. My God, let not my blood be charged upon the sons of my father. My God forgive their iniquity. And O Lord do thou support my aged father under the pangs of sorrow, which he will from his paternal fondness necessarily feel. Support him, O my God, and give him to bear his affliction in my loss, becoming the parent of the chosen race. Here I am, thou God of heaven and earth.— I must die if thou interposest not. If death is designed for me, help me to bear it with humble resignation ; but Lord, if thou pleasest to prolong a life altogether insignificant, thou hast the means.

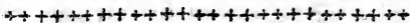
means in thine own hand. Use them as will be most for thy glory." Here he was surpris'd by an uncommon radiance which diffus'd itself through the place. A splendor which overcame him with the sweetest sensation, and gave his enraptured soul a large taste of ethereal felicity. The amazing brightness a little diminished, so far as to enable mortal eyes to endure it, there stood a blooming youth confest to his view.—The instant the celestial visitant discovered himself, he thus accosted the son of Jacob. "I am sent, by my God and thine am I sent, to inform thee that he is well acquainted with all thy afflictions and perfectly knows thy present distress. Not Jehovah only, but the hosts of heaven, in general are witnesses of thy misery. The celestial legions bowed over the brow of heaven, and beheld the baleful deed with as much uneasiness and fearful apprehensions for thee, as celestial spirits are capable of, till the purpose of the Eternal was revealed. But this calmed every mind, and the sovereign will of thy God, reconciled in an instant.

instant the will of miriads. I am Abel the proto-martyr. I fell, my Joseph, by the hand of my brother Cain, and the day of my fall was the day of my exaltation. O Joseph, did you but know the joys prepared for those that love the Lord, you would not wish to prolong life a moment. But your time is not come. You are designed to foster infant Israel under the shadow of your wings. You must be sold into Egypt to govern that fertile land, and provide sustenance for the seed of the promise. Even to day you must be gone, for thy God makes use of thy brethren's jealousy for this very purpose. Only remember that when thou art in Egypt thou wilt be tempted, but keep it ever in thy mind that the God of the Hebrews sent thee thither. There shall thy brethren bow down to thee. There shalt thou embrace thy father, and there shall Benjamin fall upon thy neck and shed the fraternal tear. Be not careful about thy father's affliction. Leave him to his God, he shall be supported and brought through. When the day is
thine

thine think well of thy brother Reuben, he had thee here purposely to deliver thee, but he must see thee no more, till you meet in the court of Pharoah. I leave thee Joseph, the peace of thy God go with thee.



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A R G U M E N T.

Joseph taken out of the pit—Sold to Alvah an Ishmaelite--Reuben returns to the pit—His sorrow & despair on missing Joseph—His lamentation—He chargeth the murder upon his brethren—Judah repents of what was done and informs Reuben—They send out messengers to overtake him and bring him back—An angel appears to Reuben and comforts him—They dip Joseph's coat in blood and send it to Jacob—Jacob's grief and Dinah's despair—Joseph's arrival in Egypt—The friendly treatment he meets with from Alvah—He chooseth to abide in Egypt—Potiphar sees him on the mart and conceives a liking to him—Purchases him and presents him to Sabrina his new married lady—A grand hunting match in the desert—Joseph kills a lion and delivers his mistress—Sabrina conceives a violent passion for him—Gabriel inspires Joseph with a dream ominous of danger—His prosperity—Joseph saves his mistress a second time from a band of Arabs—His mistress's passion thereby greatly inflamed.

B O O K II.

ABSORBED in thought the son of Israel lay, after the heavenly vision was departed, when Judah came to the brim of the pit, and calling Joseph by name, let down a rope which he ordered him to tie about his body below his arms, then he and his brethren drew him out of the pit, and led him to a numerous caravan of merchants, going from Gil-ead to Egypt, with myrrh, balm, and spicery. Confident in the word of the heavenly messenger he ascended out of the pit dreading no evil, and suffered himself to be sold to Alvah, the chief of the company for twenty pieces of silver. The youthful beauty and mature understanding of our hero, equally conspired to endear him to his master, who soon employed him in the government

government of his camels, with whom we leave him whilst we follow Reuben from the distant field to the pit. "Joseph, my brother Joseph," he cried, but Joseph made no answer, he repeated the doleful invitation, but still no voice was heard. He rent his garments, tore his hair, and roamed about the brink of the pit in the greatest anguish of soul, almost to throw himself down into it, and die with his lost brother. At last having spent himself to no purpose, he called Joseph's last dream to remembrance, and dreaded its being literally fulfilled. Then he thought again, can my brethren have treacherously murdered him in the absence of his friend. O false and dreadful brethren! cruel and bloody men! to shed the blood of the innocent, contrary to solemn contract. Racked with despair and glowing resentment, he reasoned within himself, whether it were not best to rush upon his brethren and plunge his dagger in each of their hearts, one by one, till he himself should perish upon the points of their swords. In one
minute

minute he was fully bent upon the bloody purpose, in the next, the horrors of an agonizing parent expiring over his murdered family, pierced him to the heart. Then he cried, "O my father, my father, how wretchedly am I deceived? I thought to have been happy in making some atonement for my past guilt, by delivering thy darling from his murderous brethren, and restoring him safe to thy fond embrace. But, ah! I am deceived. Joseph is lost, irretrievably lost. And what sorrows will wring the heart of my parent, when he learns that Joseph is no more. O my Joseph, gladly would I revenge thy blood upon thy murderers. But, alas! the loss of one is more than enough for a tender parent to bear. How would his aged heart sink under the carnage which this arm would make, should I give scope to my just revenge? But, O my father, my father, for thy sake I live, and leave it to God to avenge the death of thy son. So saying, he went up to his brethren, grief and resentment sparkling in his eyes."

“False men, where is the lad? Where is Joseph? Could you not withhold your bloody hand from him for one night, that the unhappy youth might have had time to pour out his heart unto his God? But alas! he is gone. And I, whither shall I fly? How shall I answer to his father for his untimely death? What agonies must the good man feel, when he hears that Joseph is no more? O my father! O Joseph! my poor Joseph.” So saying, his over swelled heart breaks forth in gushing sorrow, which trickled down his manly cheeks like christial waters from the diamond rock. But surely never did tears better become the masculine countenance than now! Such was the anguish of Reuben’s spirit, that like a contagion, his grief reached the hearts of his brethren: and even Simeon himself, felt for a moment something like remorse. A solemn silence reigned in the whole assembly.

Judah at last broke through the gloom that covered them, and addressed Reuben. “My brother, permit your sorrow to subside, suffer your reason
son

son to supercede your passion, and coolly hear what I have to offer. I am now thoroughly convinced that what we have done is wrong, notwithstanding Joseph is yet alive." Reuben quickly replied, "If he lives let me set my eyes upon him that my heart may be at rest." "Alas, said Judah, though he lives, I cannot present him to you. For I, even I, to save his life, advised to sell him to some Midianitish merchants, who passed by here in your absence. This is done and cannot be undone, or it should. And I am now more convinced than ever that he will live to see his dreams fulfilled, and his brethren to bow down unto him. Yes, my brethren, his last night's dream has been amply verified, for it may be truly said, he fell into a pit of serpents, even in the house of his father. I feel within me some monitor telling me, that God who weighs the actions of men in an even balance, will visit and punish my having concurred in separating Joseph from his father and brethren, by the judicial death of my own children

dren. O that it was undone again, and that we had it in our power to restore him to his father."

All the brethren heartily concurred in Judah's sentiments, Simeon alone excepted, "For his part, he said, all that he grieved at, was, that they had suffered him to escape, and leave him within the possibility of superiority.—When we had him, said he, it was madness to let him go." "I would not for the world, said the rest of his brethren, Simeon, that it had been as you would have wished it." But Reuben, flew from his place like lightning, and would instantly have killed Simeon; but that Napthali, who perceived from his countenance, the effect that Simeon's sanguinary speech had made upon his heart, arose with the swiftness of a hind; caught his elder brother by the arm, and begged for Jacob's sake that he would moderate his passion. Again composed, the brethren consult how they may strive to regain their lost brother. It was agreed to send out messengers early in the morning

morning, to overtake the Ishmaelites, offer to Alvah the price given for Joseph, and as much more as might procure his release. This agreed upon, and messengers appointed for the negotiation, they all retired to rest, every one with his servants to his separate tent. Reuben was just laid down, and striving to compose himself to rest, when a dazzling glory shone through all the tent, and a voice more than human, called him by name, "Reuben, Reuben, first born of Israel, hear my words and attend unto my speech.— You mourn for Joseph, and not without cause, considering the occasion of his exile. But know this, that he is the peculiar care of his God, who is with him wherever he goes, and who will make whatever he does to prosper.— He shall find a friend, a father, and brethren in a strange land, where he shall dwell securely, till his brethren, unknown to themselves, shall bow down unto him with the humblest supplications. For Joseph shall be found.— Thine arms shall yet embrace him, Reuben,

ben. And the whole world shall know him as the nursing father of the chosen race. Meanwhile, secure thine own life, Reuben, by concealing the matter from hoary Israel, lest the rage of thy brethren mix thee untimely with the dust; for some of them are old in bloodshed, and shudder not at human carnage. Observe my words and all shall be well."

As Phœbus approached the north-east verge of this dusky world, and fair Aurora purpled the sky, the messengers set out by different ways, to overtake the caravan, they roamed through howling wastes and sandy deserts to no purpose, till spent with the fatigue of the day; they returned faint and weary on the ensuing night, to their brethren at Dothan. Every countenance discovered disgust and sorrow; even Simeon could have wished for Joseph's return. Reuben alone maintained a placid countenance, to the surprise of all his brethren who saw his rage and despair so suddenly turned into calm serenity. He said, "Come, my brethren, let us
leave

leave of caring for Joseph. The pious youth is the care of his God, who will never forsake the needy in their affliction. Let us concert some measures to support our good old father under the heavy weight of affliction, just falling upon his venerable head. O Jacob! revered old man, my heart bleeds for thee. A tide of sorrow will soon overwhelm thee. But thou hast the promise, and thy God is thine. May he indeed be near to thee."

Matters being as they are, said Asher, I hold it good that we kill a kid or a lamb, take Joseph's many coloured coat, rend it in divers places, and smear it with the blood of the slain beast, and send it to our father, who will naturally conclude, that some hungry lion has devoured him, and we his sons shall be freed from all suspicion. We are necessitated either to confess the fact, or cover it over with dissimulation. If we do the former, we draw down the curse of our father upon us, and there is at least a strong probability, that by the latter we shall retain his love and confidence :

dence : though God knows we little deserve it."

The advice given by Apher, was immediately approved, and Simeon and Levi, were appointed the messengers to carry the coat unto Jacob, all the rest being unable to bear the sorrow of their parent upon this mournful occasion.— How nearly allied is one sin to another? The sons of Jacob have now no covering for their infamy, but lying and dissimulation. "Welcome my sons, welcome Simeon and Levi, says the tender patriarch, how do all your brethren my children, and how does Joseph?" "Our brethren, Sir, are all well, but as for Joseph we have seen nothing of him."—"Seen nothing of him! replied he, these five days are gone since I sent him forth to visit his brethren, and enquire after your health. I pray God, that my fears may be groundless. O that no harm may have befallen my boy!" We would hope for the best, Sir, and yet we are not without fear about him ourselves, said they, seeing he is not at home. As we came along through the wilderness,

wilderness, we found a coat that somewhat resembles our brother's, but you will better judge of it when you see it. This, Sir, is the coat we found; see now whether it be thy son's coat or not."

"Ah! it is my son's coat indeed. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces," he said, and the blood receding from his countenance, he sunk down into the chair, and could not for a long time be recovered from his fit. The household was alarmed. Benjamin and all his daughters flew to his assistance, and the general cry was—O our father! Our father! Our good father is dying. Dinah flew about the tent, tearing her hair in the utmost distraction, crying, "O my father, my father, would to God I had died in thy stead. What shall thy daughter, thy friendless Dinah do now? A dishonor to her race; now turned out into an inhospitable world, without the protection of a father. Wretched Dinah! Better thou hadst never been born! Cursed be the son of Hamor.—Cursed be he that glories in the destruction of a virgin." One of the female

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train chafed his withered limbs, another rubbed his temples with odours, till at last life began to return. Fetching a deep sigh. His eyes widely rolling, he asked, "Where am I? What has been the matter my daughters? Why have ye disturbed me? I am now awakened from the soundest sleep that ever I fell into. My Dinah, where is she? Tell me my girl what ails thee? I am thy father, Dinah; come near my love, and let me embrace thee. Bid Joseph to come speedily, I want to see him. Ay, now I have hit the fore. Joseph is gone, Dinah! Joseph is rent to pieces. Bring that bloody coat. That coat, Benjamin, is thy brother Joseph's. He wears it no more. Some of that voracious army, wherewithal God hath plagued sinful man, hath torn him in pieces and devoured him. O my Joseph! my Joseph! Had I a thousand lives, I would have given them all to have redeemed thee from death. But thou art gone my son, forever gone from the land of light, and I shall soon follow thee into that of darkness. I come my son.

son. I follow thee, I soon shall join thee in the land afar off. Hasten thy pace thou tardy executioner ; cut short thy work thou friendly enemy ; I long once more to encircle my son in these withered arms. Yet my Dinah, poor ruined damsel, if I could, I would live for thy sake, a little to alleviate thy sorrows. But I die my girl ; I find I cannot long survive my Joseph." Lovely Benjamin, Dinah, and their sisters endeavored to console the mourning patriarch under his heavy loss. But all in vain. He refused to be comforted, saying, "Nay, but I will die with my son." Shunah the wife of Judah, Tamah the wife of Simeon, and Zillah the wife of Napthali, endeavoured to set before him his numerous seed. His eleven remaining sons, their present offspring, and the prospect of a numerous issue. But the good man replied, "These are not my Joseph," and sunk into another fit of agonizing sorrow. Thus he grieved from day to day for the loss of his son, nor could all the endeavours of his children comfort him.

Joseph

Joseph and his company drew near to Memphis, the capital of Egypt, where the merchants intended to dispose of their goods. And here Alvah the Ishmaelite, found a market for his young Hebrew likewise. Alvah had seen so much of Joseph's dexterity in the management of his affairs, and was so delighted with his piety and good sense, that he would gladly have kept him for his own servant, had it been his pleasure to have continued with him; but knowing his distressed circumstances, deemed it ungenerous to lay any constraint upon his inclination.

Therefore the evening after their arrival in Memphis, he calleth Joseph to him, and thus addressed him. "My young man, I am perfectly sensible that for envy you was separated from your father's house, and sold unto me. Since you came under my direction, your agreeable converse, your courteous and affable conduct, has perfectly gained my affections. If you are content to abide with me, I will use you as a friend rather than a servant; for
you

you are dear to me Joseph, as if you was my own son. Nevertheless as you may have your objections to returning to the land where your barbarous brethren reside, and as I am uninformed concerning the purposes of your God towards you, I leave you to your own voluntary choice, either to return with me, or to abide in Egypt. . . But if you fix upon Egypt as your residence, you must be sold my Joseph—Sold as a slave my friend, notwithstanding I believe you are born to rule.” The son of Jacob respectfully replied. “My dear Sir, my honoured Alvah, my friend, my father, permit me to call you by that endearing name ; I cannot enough admire the goodness of God who provides for me in strangers, that friendship which was denied me in the house of my brethren. . . All was cruelty from them, but friendship my dear master has run through the whole of your conduct towards me. Inclination, Sir, would induce me to follow your fortune good or bad, but a secret message delivered to me by an heavenly messenger not

two hours before I was sold unto you, obliges me, as your will coincides therewith, to abide a bondman in Egypt.— I would not as yet willingly divulge the contents of the message referred to; but the time will come my honoured master, that I shall more fully reveal the cause of my banishment. Then you will clearly see that want of respect to you is no part of the reason why I desire to leave your very agreeable service. Permit me, Sir, to beg your endeavour to dispose of me as you would wish to have your own son disposed of in similar circumstances, and let me owe my good fortune, if such should befall me in a strange land, to a man to whom I am already under so many great obligations. Thus, Sir, will you bind me to you for ever, and make me more yours than I possibly could be as one of your domestic servants.”

“I will Joseph, replied the good Ishmaelite, I will take care to dispose of you to your best advantage. I will be to you in place of a father at this time. But when you are advanced my son,

as God, even the God of your father Abraham will advance you to the highest honours, forget not your friend.— Think of poor Alvah, and for my sake deal favourably with my seed, should they ever make supplication unto you. I will enhance your price my friend, in some low proportion to your worth, but not a penny of it shall abide with me, for I have profited greatly by your presence already.” “My dear Sir, replied Joseph, you are a merchant, and must live upon your gain, why should you throw away any part of it upon a poor unworthy stranger?” “I tell you Joseph, returned he with some emotion, you are a friend of the Almighty’s, and your God will never let poor Alvah be a loser by any little kindness which he may shew to you. Be satisfied Joseph. Be content I say. And prepare yourself by to-morrow noon for the market, and here, let me see, take these few pieces to provide yourself with decent apparel; and I in the mean while, will be taking what measures I can for your good.” So saying he turned and gave

gave no time for reply. Joseph overwhelmed with gratitude, burst forth into tears, admiring the wisdom and goodness of God in raising up unto him, as it were a second Jacob in the person of Alvah. "O thou Holy one, he cried, I am now convinced of thine omnipresence and superintendency over human affairs. I admire thy wisdom, I adore thy goodness to me, who am unworthy of the least of all thy mercies; go on my God to perfect what thou hast begun, and succeed the earnest endeavours of benevolent Alvah, in my behalf, and succeed thou me, and be thou with me; my father and my friend, in this land wherein I am a stranger, and the glory of all will ultimately redound unto thee. Amen."

The time arrived that Joseph must appear for sale, he came arrayed in plain, but decent apparel, which shewed the graces of his person to the best advantage. His master and he had but just come to the mart, when Potiphar, a renowned officer in the army, and captain general of the forces of Egypt, happened

happened to come past, and fixing his eye upon him, conceived a singular liking for him. What pity is it, said he within himself, to see a person of such an attractive deportment, displaying a countenance so distinguishingly lovely, exposed to sale to every sordid wretch of a master? If money will redeem him from slavery, it shall be done, and I think I shall deem myself happy in having released one of the most amiable of human kind. "What is the price of this young man, my master?"

"If he is sold, Sir, replied Alvah, an hundred and fifty pieces is his price; but I sell him not, unless I know to whom, and what treatment he is likely to meet with. For it is not necessity, but choice that detains him in Egypt."

"My name, said he, is Potiphar, I am of some consideration in the state, and near the person of his majesty." "Then Sir, the young man is yours at your own price, and I hope you will consider him as one that might have expected better fortunes, but for the malice and envy of jealous brethren. I

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am proud, Sir, to recommend him to you as the most virtuous, faithful, and pious of his race." It is agreed. "Are you willing to follow the fortune of Potiphar?" "I am willing to be his humble servant, if Sir, you are he." "Here then merchant, here is your money." "One word Sir, ere the bargain is closed, and that is, that as I trade to this place, I must beg leave to have a friendly interview occasionally with my friend Joseph, for he is my friend, although I have the power of disposing of him at present." "Far be it from Potiphar to hinder the youth he loves from access to his friends. You are welcome at all times to visit your youthful, your amiable friend."

Joseph was placed in Potiphar's family, after Alvah had according to promise, obliged him to accept of the hundred and fifty pieces, for which he was sold, and taken a tender farewell of him for a season. He had not been long in his new station before he gave such proofs of his probity, as gained him the esteem of all the family.

Potiphar was but lately married to a beautiful

beautiful lady of the first rank, whose name was Sabrina; given to the captain by his majesty himself. The better to solemnize the nuptials of his warlike officer, the king appointed an hunting match in the desert of Arabia, where he was graciously pleased himself to attend Potiphar and Sabrina.— They had not long ranged the lonely wild, ere they roused a monstrous lion, master of a savage family, at whose appearance even the hardest of them gave back. The surly monster with furious disdain flashing from his eyes, stalked slow in sullen majesty, and with eyes askance surveyed his competitors, till perceiving himself overmatched by the number of baying hounds, just letting loose upon him, he took to his heels, and sought refuge in the distant thicket. Sabrina, mounted on a swift Arabian horse, well accustomed to exercises of this kind, surpassed the hounds, and even outfled the wind; exposed herself to the greatest danger, to the terror of the noble company, none of whom could come near her, Joseph alone excepted

cepted. Mounted on the fleetest of his master's courfers, he kept close to his lady; and well for her it was so; for coming to the edge of the thicket, which by reason of its closeness, would not admit the entrance of the lion; who finding himself so closely pursued, turned fiercely upon his enemies. Sabrina being next unto him, had no doubt fallen a prey to his fury, had not Joseph rushed between her and danger. The savage roared like the loudest thunder and flew in the greatest ferocity at the lady, who almost swooned with the fright, whilst Joseph sprung from his horse, goared the monster in the neck, and pinned him fast with his spear to the earth. By this time Potiphar himself arrived, and struck with astonishment, partly at the danger in which his Sabrina had been, and partly at the heroic fortitude of his new and beloved servant, he could not speak a word, till falling first on the bottom of his spouse, and then upon Joseph's neck, he poured forth a flood of joy and gratitude. He instantly enfranchised the deliverer

deliverer of his love and placed him at the head of his family, where he acted in all respects as one who serveth not man so much as God. Such circumspection and fidelity rarely attend the stewards of gentlemen of elevated rank. Joseph was exceeding lovely in his person, and the late instance of his gallantry and fortitude, made a criminal impression on the mind of his lady, whilst he unsuspecting thereof, from a principle of duty and benevolence, performed both to her and to his lord, all the good offices within his power, which altho' a duty incumbent on him, contributed to foster the latent flame unlawfully kindled in her warped heart.

The Almighty Jehovah, whose all-seeing eye, with one comprehensive glance, examineth all our thoughts, whether virtuous or corrupt; seeing the workings of Sabrina's heart, and having destined the blooming youth to escape the snare so fatal to his hopes, as well as ruinous to the peace of his undisturbed mind, commanded Gabriel to descend to earth, and give the stripling some

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striking imitation of the danger he was in, yet still to conceal the quarter from whence it was to come. Obedient to the high behest of the Eternal, the seraph prest with glowing ardour, binds on his golden pinions, shoots through the vault of ether, and stops not till arrived at the palace of Potiphar, when gloomy night in her ebon car had measured half her lonesome journey. He breathed an odoriferous gale upon the bed, and instantly the Hebrew exile, felt the warm glow of exalted virtue, ascending towards the empyreum.— Sweet was the slumber when the pious soul breathed after joys of an immortal nature. Soon he fancied himself, studious of his master's affairs, assiduously promoting the interest of his generous patron. Thus employed, he saw an hand drawing a net composed of golden wire around the place where he stood, and instantly found himself intangled therein. The snare appeared so formidable, that he saw no way of escape left for him, nor could he tell to what purpose he was thus involved. Consider-

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ing himself as a prisoner in this golden snare, he heard a voice as it had been from the ærial regions. "O Joseph! most favoured of the children of Jacob, remember thou the God of the Hebrews. Take hold of the strength of Omnipotence, and one vigorous effort, delivers thee from the snare." This said, the young patriarch lift up his heart to his God, in this short ejaculation. "O God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac & Jacob, for the sake of him who shall bruise the serpent's head, and destroy the snare of the devil, assist me this once and deliver me." Then collecting all his force, he exerted himself in one vigorous struggle, and found the wires break as easily, as Sampson afterwards did the new cords with which he was bound. Just as he sprung into liberty, he awoke and rejoiced that it was but a dream.

Joseph's God was with him in whatever he did. He gave him singular wisdom and prudence in the management of all his affairs, insomuch, that whatever he did prospered in his hands; which led his lord to rely upon his wisdom

dom and integrity, with a perfect confidence ; and unreservedly commit unto his care, the sole management of all his state. Unenvied, he enjoyed this flow of calm prosperity, without any mixture of bitterness, besides that which arose from his banishment from Jacob and Benjamin. Happy had it been for Sabrina, if her heart had been as free from unlawful desire as was that of her amiable Hebrew. But alas ! she fondly encouraged the pleasing wish, till it arose to a passion too strong for her to subdue. Shame induced her long to conceal the guilty flame, yet in spite of art and studious care, an inward langour discovered itself in the pensiveness of her countenance. Her unsuspecting lord, called every possible means to her assistance. The sons of Esculapius exhausted their skill ; the whole *Materia Medica* was ransacked for a cure, every diversion which pleasantry could devise, in vain was instituted to divert the gloom of her solitary mind. She was never happy in any diversion, unless Joseph made one of the party. Her only seasons of pleasure

sure were when she could prevail with him to sit with her, and entertain her with the history of his native country; which he, unskilled in the mysteries of love, very readily consented to.

About this time an accident happened, which served greatly to increase the fatal passion. Potiphar & Sabrina went on a visit to Ira, a Lybian prince, where they plenteously enjoyed the rites of hospitality for two or three weeks, but unhappily were attacked by a band of Arabs as they repassed the howling wilderness. At the first discovery of them, Sabrina sunk as a person dying in the arms of her husband, and her soul stood as it were on tiptoe, on her pale trembling lip. As a panther rusheth from the thicket, to seize the passing prey, Joseph bounded from the chariot, vaulted on a led horse, and encouraged the menials to stand by their noble patrons. The Arabs charged them with resolution and vigor; animated by the intrepidity of our hero, the Egyptians returned the charge, and sent amongst them a score of winged deaths, every arrow marked by fate.

Then Joseph putting spurs to his horse, rode up to the enemy, and with his sabre divided the head of Mezero, their captain, from his body, and dealt death to many of the Arabs: the servants of Potiphar, following the example of their leader, above half the banditti were presently dispatched, whilst the rest fought to hide themselves from death by flight. Joseph pursued and killed many more, as they strove to fly from his avenging arm. Sabrina being somewhat recovered, Potiphar himself flew to the assistance of his guard, fierce as the lion ravaging for prey; but the work was done, and the enemy discomfited ere he could arrive. Sabrina from the charriot beheld the heroic fortitude of the gallant Hebrew, as he raged along the ranks of the enemy, and every wound he inflicted upon them, was as oil poured into the latent flame.

The grateful soul of the young patriarch rejoiced at having it in his power to manifest the sense which he had of their goodness, by exerting himself in their defence, in a season of difficulty
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and danger. With modesty he received Potiphar's careffes, who presented him to his lady as her friend and deliverer. His address to his mistress, was full of duty, gratitude and affection. All which encouraged her to hope, that he was smote with the same guilty passion with herself, and made her half resolve at a time convenient, to come to an avowal. Again she resolved to wait yet farther, to see whether his confession, would save her from that confusion.

T H E





THE

L I F E

OF

J O S E P H.



A R G U M E N T.

Syrena comforts her mistress, by promising success to her amour—She strives to entice him—in vain—She persuades her lady to an avowal—His mistress confesseth her love—Solicits his embrace—To divert her attention from it, he relates the story of Eve eating the forbidden fruit—Applies it to his mistress, with a view to reanimate her virtue—He relates his sister's ravishment, and its fatal consequences—Her silence and discontent at his coldness—Consults her nurse, who encourageth her to persist—She commandeth Joseph to her chamber—Strives to win him by persuasion—Then to force him—He flies from her, and leaves his scarf behind—Her love turns to rage and hatred—She accuseth him of an attempt upon her honor—He is imprisoned.

B O O K III.

SYRENA, a person well skilled in all the wily mazes of woman kind, was governess to Sabrina, in her virgin years, and now attended her in the capacity of waiting woman. She alone was instructed with the fatal secret ; her mistress having had full proof of her readiness to concur in any measures to gratify her inclination. She consoled her distress and flattered her passion, by assuring her, that as far as she could dive into the secrets of a youthful heart, Joseph was glowing with a passion, at least equal to her own. She could read it well in his looks and in his sighs ; for amidst all his prosperity Joseph could not help sighing after his guilty brethren, and his distressed honourable father, from whose embraces he
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was banished without a cause. She promised to use all her wisdom to serve her mistress, and did not doubt by her prudent management to bring the blooming Hebrew to her fond embraces. As he was one day in his office settling his master's accounts, Syrena entered, and having shut the door, she thus accosted him. "Master Joseph, be idle who will, we are always sure to find you in your business. Indeed master Joseph our lord is happy in having such a servant as yourself. I do not wonder that both he and my lady have such an high esteem for you." "I tell you Mrs. Syrena, replied Joseph, I do nothing but what is my duty. My honourable master and lady have a right to my best services, and I should be shamefully wanting in my duty to God, to them, and myself, if I did not study to my utmost to promote their honour, advantage and delight." "I am glad, Sir, replied Syrena, that your virtuous sentiments concur so exactly with my own. And I can tell you, Mr. Joseph, that more tenderness is due from you to
your

your amiable mistress, than perhaps you are aware of." "I know said he, that my lady is amiable and virtuous, and merits my humblest regard, which I shall ever be ready to render her with the utmost pleasure." "She is virtuous, said Syrena, and yet I can tell you Joseph, she cannot help being sensible of your attractions, and entertaining the fondness of affection for you. I wrung the painful secret with the greatest difficulty from her lips. And you my friend may avail yourself of your happiness, and embrace a favour which she would deny to any but yourself, was he even the first prince of the blood." Rejoined the patriarch, "My master and mistress are daily loading me with favours, of which I am altogether unworthy. I believe their readiness to add more as occasion may offer. But the lips that would insinuate so much as an hint contrary to my mistress's honor, ought to be sealed in everlasting silence." "Not so fast, Sir, returned she, I tell you she loves you, and longs for your embrace. But I enjoin you to conceal the fatal truth,

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truth, and improve it to your own advantage." She ended here, and returned to her lady, who waited impatiently the issue of this conversation.

Syrena failed not to enlarge upon her own sagacity and address, she related the converse she had had with Joseph, in the manner which would best flatter her lady's passion; and from the whole she inferred that it was caution in the Hebrew, which caused him to feign ignorance. But she was sure that amidst all his care to conceal it, she could discern flashes of passion dart from his amorous eye, when the name of Sabrina was mentioned. In short, Madam, continued she, the matter must be between you and him, for I perceive he is so cautious, that he will admit none into the secret beside yourselves. And indeed I cannot blame him when I consider how false and deceitful the greater part of people are. You know Madam, he is young, and a stranger to intercourse with our sex; and who knows how far modesty may keep him back from an avowal; besides he may
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fear your ladyship's resentment in case your passion should not be answerable to his."

"O Syrena ! replied the wife of Potiphar, thou knowest that in our sex an avowal is hard, even when the object is lawful ; but how much more so must it be when the object is criminal, and an avowal is the display of our guilt and shame. Yet I would even venture to confess my love to him, could I but hope the haughty youth would embrace my proposal. But, O Syrena, should he refuse it, then should I be undone. His person is amiable and lovely, his conduct affable and polite, his spirit open and benevolent ; but his virtue, Syrena ! I fear his virtue is inflexible."

"O Madam, replied the swarthy Duenna; no virtue can be proof against such charms as yours. The Hebrew will fall an easy victim, when he is assured of your affection."

Encouraged by the assurances of Syrena, she resolves to abandon shame and modesty at once, and solicit Joseph to her embrace. To this purpose she proposes

proposes an airing, and requires him to attend her in Potiphar's absence, in her chariot. As they were on the way with a scarlet blush upon her countenance, and desire sparkling in her eyes, with a faltering voice that bespoke the blackness of her guilt, she said, "Joseph you cannot be ignorant of my desire for your company, and yet I can tell you, that if your bosom is proof against love, love even to me, I may rue the day that ever I beheld your too amiable face. For I love you Joseph; my pain forces me to confess my shame, I have trusted my honour in your hand, I hope you will act with your usual gallantry." She said, then leaning her head on his snowy bosom, melted into a flood of tears, which she endeavoured but in vain to conceal. Astonished at this open declaration, it was sometime before he was capable of speech or reflection.

After a long silence, accompanied with tears upon her part, and heartfelt sighs upon his, not without struggles between corruption and virtue, in broken

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ken accents he replied : “ Your honour, my lady, is ever safe with your unworthy servant, whose greatest glory is to be faithful to the trust reposed in him. But before I explain myself upon this matter, will your ladyship give me leave to relate an affair which is better known among the children of Shem, than among the descendants of Ham. After leave obtained, with hope of extricating himself from his present difficulty, and working some suitable impression upon the mind of his mistress, he thus begun.

“ When our first parents Adam and Eve originally dropped from the all-forming hand, they were perfectly free from any bias to evil ; not one corrupt inclination possessed their peaceful breasts. This calm serenity, this sweet composure, continued with them as long as they retained their innocence. But to their sad experience they ere long found that the effect of guilt is dire alarm and incessant perturbation. Our benevolent Creator was pleased to put the parents of mankind in possession of

the paradisaical garden, where a perpetual spring cheered the blessed mound, and every salubrious vegetable. All that thine eyes behold, all that the earth produceth, Adam, is thine, saith the munificent Deity. I give thee leave to use thy utmost freedom with all the produce of the earth. One tree, and only one I forbid thee to touch. Its fertile boughs indeed bend low beneath its fruit, which pendant hang attractive of the eye. This Adam, is the forbidden tree. These are the fruit, to taste of which, is death. Beware of it man, come not near it Adam, for on the day thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die. Incautious Eve, the mother of humanity, in an evil hour was prevailed upon by the arch apostate, to eat the prohibited morsel, and awful was the consequence. Having eat thereof herself, she became her husband's first seducer, and drew him contrary to the light of his own conscience, to partake of her guilt. This done, the horrors of Gehenna tortured their guilty consciences, and they knew not where to fly, to shun
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the threatened death. The evening arrived, the sky had lost its serenity, the beasts their wonted tameness, the flowers loose the greatest part of their fragrance, and all nature seemed to wear a melancholy aspect. On the evening just as radiant Phœbus concealed himself in the western ocean, the Divine Creator himself comes down into the garden, to call the delinquents to account for their conduct. Awful was the change. They cannot stand with filial respect and confidence in the sacred presence; much less did they long for the approach of the celestial visitant as heretofore; but basely fly from the sight of their Maker, to hide themselves from his researches; whose amiable presence erewhile, they counted the most exalted blessing. Nor did the eternal himself appear at this time with that friendly and familiar air as before, but with resentment glowing on his awful countenance. The thicket unable to conceal the parents of mankind, from the piercing eye of Omniscience, he arraigns them at his equitable bar, hears
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their poor defence, and denounceth upon them the fatal sentence. Since then none may hope to touch forbidden fruit with impunity. You my lady are like the interdicted tree. Your amiable personal excellencies, display themselves in the most alluring manner.— But they are forbid the enjoyment of all men, my lord alone excepted. He alone may approach you with familiarity. He alone may lawfully enjoy.— Was I, Madam, to dare injuriously to betray my master, and to dishonour his amiable consort, I should act as a villain, and ungrateful traitor to the best of masters, and as a rebel against the God of my ancestors, whose tremendous wrath I should thereby awake; and you yourself, Madam, upon cool reflection would curse me for perpetrating the execrable deed. I love you mistress, and would protect, not dishonour you: I love my honourable lord, and would not betray him. I love my God, and would not offend him. Permit me then, Madam, to intreat you to stifle a passion so destructive to your hon-
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our and tranquility ; which if indulged, will yield the most bitter reflections and expose to the greatest dangers.”

“Ah Joseph ! replied the wife of Potiphar, what a well invented story your icy heart has contrived, in order to evade the honours proffered you ? What needless scruples does that whim of religion and virtue inspire you with ? What injury would thereby be done to your master, Joseph ? I am still his. Always ready to oblige him, and should never behave to him with the greater distance. We have nothing to fear, so long as we are prudent enough to conceal our intercourses from the curious eye. I tell you again, I love you Joseph.

“Madam, returned the Hebrew, even in my father’s family in the case of my only sister, I have a loud monitor, that bids me beware of the sin of uncleanness.” “I pray now let us have it, said she, I suppose it is some whimsical religious story, tending to the same purpose.”

“It is a truth, Madam, the remembrance of which, will give occasional sorrow to me to my dying day. My sister, young,

young, amiable, and curious, longing to see more of the world than her father's house admitted of, went forth into a neighbouring principality, at a time, when a magnificent festival, in honour of their patron deity, was solemnized. Amongst the multitude who attended, were Shechem, the young prince of the Hivites, and Tamar his sister. Dinah, young and vain, was attended with a gaudy train selected out of my father's menials, and she herself in an elegant apparel. Prince Shechem cast a languishing look upon my sister, conceived a violent passion for her, and resolved at all events to possess her. His sister Tamar, was young and beautiful, but unadorned with that amiable virtue which is the greatest glory of her sex. She contracted an intimacy with my sister Dinah, who unskilled in amorous intrigues, accepted of an invitation to visit the princess Tamar, in the city of Shechem. The day was spent in innocent pleasantries, only every now and then there was something that bordered upon the profane. As the solar orb descended.

scended the western hemisphere, Dinah proposed her return to her father, but was put off from time to time, by the prince and princess, till she was at last convinced of her unhappiness, and too late repented the curiosity that led her forth to see the daughters of the land. She was not to be won by prayers and intreaties, therefore was forced to a compliance with his lewd desires, and for a time continued a prisoner to the prince's affection, within his palace. Still he loved her with encreasing fervour, and his very soul clave to the unhappy damsel. So courteous, affable, and loving was his conduct to her, after he had defiled her, that she half forgave the injury, and conceived something like affection for him. His love grew stronger every day, and finding that he could not live without her company on the one hand, nor his affection permit him to use her like an harlot on the other, he implored the good offices of King Hamor his father, to procure her for him in lawful marriage. From motives of policy, the old king readily complied, proposed to
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his courtiers the desire of his son, and then made suit unto Israel for his consent. My father called a council descended from his loins, to deliberate on the proposal of Hamor; and the issue was, that unless the subjects of that prince, would conform to the laws of the Hebrews, they would not consent, but would rescue their sister by force of arms, or perish in the attempt. This communicated to Hamor and Shechem, they made no difficulty of complying with the condition. A public festival was appointed to be observed by all ranks of the people to solemnize the marriage of Shechem and Dinah: on the first day of which, every male was circumcised in compliance with the Hebrews, and the carnival greatly inflaming the blood, and enervating their minds, they fell an easy prey to the premeditated revenge of my brethren.—Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, selected a choice band out of Israel's domestic retinue, and clad in arms, before the dawn of the third morning of the festival, came intrepidly upon the city,
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and filled it with fearful carnage. King Hamor and his son hearing the cry of murder from all quarters, alarmed the household troops, but ere they could make resistance, met with death in the gates of the palace royal. The city they reduced to ashes, and slew every man within it. This horrid slaughter and conflagration all arose from the unlawfulness of Shechem's love. Had he observed the rules of virtue, and proposed honourable terms to the Patriarch, he would no doubt have accepted of the alliance. But uncleanness is not to be tolerated in the house of Israel. Now, my honorable lady, consider the difference between my lord Potiphar, first of Pharaoh's martial train, and these simple Hebrew swains. If they could pour out desolation upon the metropolis of a kingdom, in revenge of their sister's dishonor, what might not my lord do, was any villain to dare audaciously to defile his honorable bed, and violate the chastity of his betrothed lady? Far be it from Joseph, Madam, to entertain a thought so treacherous to either you or my lord."

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She replied not, but disappointed in her love, continued the rest of the time full of silent discontent, her troubled mind agitated with different passions, gave place alternately to love, fear, and hateful revenge ; but the more that Joseph saw the agitations of her mind, the more steadily was his own heart fortified by virtue. Arrived at the palace, she retired to her chamber to consult with her nurse Syrena, what further should be done ; and afflicted Joseph went to his apartment to implore the protection of Jacob's God.

Syrena gave it as her opinion, that fear or modesty must needs be the cause of Joseph's refusal of an offer that did so much honour to a favourite menial ; alledging, that her mistresses graces, were sufficient to thaw the frigidity of even old age itself : and advised that a further trial should be made ere she gave up her hopes. Pharaoh's birthday was now at hand, and the general must repair to court, to compliment his majesty, and assist upon the grand occasion, but Sabrina was taken extreme-

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ly ill in the morning, with a palpitation of heart, and great depression of spirits, and therefore could not attend him to the court. Her lord no sooner gone with his retinue, than she sends Syrena to command Joseph to attend her pleasure in her chamber. Slow of pace, and with a reluctant heart, he came and stood at a formal distance from her, while in thoughtful silence she sat, her eyes intently fixed on his blushing face. "And are you at last come, said she, ungrateful youth, to scorn and slight your over fond mistress. Come nearer, Sir, and let me speak with freedom to you, for you and I must be better acquainted before we part. It would have been better for you, and more becoming your character and station, to have complied at once, with my former request, if it had only been out of respect to the dignity of my station, and the violent excess of my passion; and not have suffered me to undergo the shame of repeating my solicitations, and condescending to express myself in terms too strong for female modesty to
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utter without a blush. But I am willing to put the most favorable construction upon your conduct, and will not only make all possible allowances for it, but endeavor to remove out of the way, every thing that would protract our pleasure. Perhaps, Joseph, you might entertain some suspicion, whether I was really in earnest at our last interview, or if I did not make that humble prostration of myself to you, on purpose to try your virtue. But assure yourself that I was in earnest, as my repeating the same request, might abundantly serve to demonstrate. But I'll tell you more Joseph, and what would undo me, was it known to any but ourselves. This day I feigned myself sick, on purpose to be at home with you. The jolity of courtly parade, is nothing to your sweet company. Now you may if you will, see, that I can part with the company of nobles, and princes, for the love I bear to your amiable person, my Joseph.— And shall I languish and pine without any hope of comfort, when it is in your power my dear friend to relieve me? do not

not talk any more to me of those holy ties of religion, those severe rules of virtue. Virtue is a mere imaginary thing, that can bring no pleasure, but only distract the heart with terror. And what is religion, but a dream, as the lives of all our priests testify ; for however they cry out against the sins of the times, when in the pulpit, there are none that relish gay delights better than they in private ? Could thy God, my Joseph, delight in making thee behave cruelly to one that loves thee, he were to be detested instead of adored ; beware, Joseph, and not father thy indifference to me upon the gods ; rather own that some happy unstained nymph has captivated your affections, and that for her sake you cannot, you dare not oblige your mistress. But cannot you be her's and mine too ? But oh ! your honor is concerned. Pray were is my honor in thus humbly suing to you my friend ? but what is honour ? merely fantastic and precarious. Honour is certainly to ease the pains of those that love us."

"Oh madam ! returned he, with a
 I 2. sigh.

figh sufficient to rend his loins, what avails a momentary pleasure that soon must be devoured by keen remorse? Once done it cannot be recalled, let the repentance be ever so poignant. Concealed by these curtains, will not secure us from the fears of discovery and disgrace. I might indeed join with you to dishonour my lord, and for a moment we might riot in the pleasures of sense. But, alas! what would this be in comparison of the solid pleasures of a good conscience? Equal if not superior delights are lawful to you in your marriage relation with him, to whom you gave yourself. And where can a man be found more amiable and more desirable for a bosom companion, than my lord? Think my lady how far what you propose would debase you below your rank, to come to a level with your poor servant, whom you may at all times command in every thing lawful. No, Madam, I assure you, I cannot consent to a deed so base, as wilfully to injure the benevolent Potiphar, dishonor the God of my fathers, and bring an indelible

ble stain on the family of Israel. Far from being like idols of stocks & stones, my God sees our most secret actions; he hears our softest whispers, and tries the deepest recesses of thought. Urge me not, Madam, for I cannot commit this great wickedness in the sight of my God." He ended here, and she full of resentment replied.

"It might have been sufficient, modestly to have refused the offer which the excess of my passion urged me to make, without upbraiding me with my shame. This argues impudence, joined with an unrelenting heart; but I leave it for you to choose, whether you will kindly embrace your own happiness, and render happy her that loves you to distraction; or to stand the shock of my revenge, for revenged I will be; these charms for which princes have sighed in vain, are not to be slighted with impunity. No, Sir, never think of it. I shall certainly accuse you to your master of having attempted my dishonour, and a dry ostentation of virtue, the most solemn protestations of innocence, will not then deliver

deliver you from the fangs of punishment.

O Joseph! never was virtue assaulted like thine. Never did youth more gloriously triumph over temptation.—Neither prayers, tears, nor threatnings upon her part, compassion nor terror upon thine, could alter the purposes of thy determined virtue, and make thee yield to the importunity of a dishonest appetite. Amiable youth, how swelled thy noble heart with generous pity for thy betrayed master; and with grief for thy fallen mistress? Even the danger that on all hands surrounded thee, could not stem the chrystal tide, that ran down thy manly cheeks—while Sabrina, sat with her eyes fixed upon thee, eyes sparkling both with love and revenge.

Mistaken woman, she interprets Joseph's tears in her own favour, and bent on completing her own shame, she lays hold on him, and threw herself on the bed, saying, "Come Joseph, let us enjoy the present moment, whilst kindness gently flows through your yielding heart."

"No.

“ No, Madam, replied the steady youth, dungeons and gibbets, are no objects of my fear. Criminal converse with a forbidden object ; injuring my master, and offending my God, are what I justly fear, and I am in danger of them all, whilst I am in your company. But I abhor the deed, and fly from the place of temptation. So saying, he turned hastily about, freed himself from her embrace, and rushed from the room. Her lust grown to a fury unbridled, she strove to pull him upon the bed, when disentangling the diamond, which buttoned his purple scarf, he left it in her possession and so escaped the snare.

The noble youth departed, obstinate in virtue, she was miserably distracted between the sting of her disappointed love, and the fear of being discovered, but soon she resolved the ruin of him who had goodness enough, not to ruin her even at her own request. She cried aloud as if in imminent danger, and nurse Syrena, who guessed at the cause, flew to her assistance. She found

found her sitting upon a bed, Joseph's scarf lying by her, and deeply bathed in tears. "O what shall I do Syrena? cried she, the scornful Hebrew despiseth my passion, and fled but just now from me, with as much horror, as if I had been a cockatrice. Go nurse, alarm the house, and have him seized; for I will swear an attempt of ravishment against him. Befriend me now but this once, my dear Syrena, and I am your friend forever." The household alarmed, Joseph is seized and kept in confinement till Potiphar's return, which was in the evening; he went directly to his spouse's chamber, to enquire after her health, where he found her in the utmost disorder and confusion, with the rage of her disappointed lust. Struck with astonishment, he kindly enquired the cause of her disorder.

"Alas! my lord, said this daughter of deceit, we have nourished up a viper to sting us, a wretch that will undo us, if permitted under the roof. The insolent Hebrew, forgetting his wretchedness when you was pleased to take
him

him under your protection ; and the friendly entertainment we have given him since he lived with us. Not content with being the sole disposer of all your possessions, aspireth even to your bed. I was laid down to take a little slumber at noon, when the fellow came audaciously into my chamber, and explained his beastly design. I chid his impudent lewdness, and charged him to be gone that instant, or I would inform you of his conduct ; but instead of departing the villain laid hold on me, and by force would have obtained his filthy purpose, had I not alarmed the house with my cries. When he found me inflexible, and heard the cries of my distress, he hasted away in such disorder that he left his scarf behind him ; a sure testimony of his villainy. My lord, you have professed to love me. If you do, you will revenge the insult offered to my honour, by inflicting the most exemplary punishment upon this insolent wretch. I shall never be able to endure the sight of him again about the house."

Highly

Highly delighted with the virtue and probity of his lady, and astonished at the effrontery of the Hebrew, he commanded Joseph to be brought pinioned into his presence, and with a countenance, stern as the face of war, thus accosted him. “Wretch! What pity is it that thy outside, and undaunted air should bely such a base and diabolical heart. I blame myself, wretch, that I ever sheltered thee under my roof, and placed such a villain at the head of my affairs. But thy vile hypocrisy would deceive those that are even but a few degrees better than thyself: well then might thy faintly shew, gain upon my artless heart, a stranger to treachery and black design. Wouldst thou, viper, bite the hand that feeds thee, and poison the bosom that nourished thee? Was it not enough that I had put my all into thy untrusty hands, but thou must aspire even to my bed? A gloomy dungeon shall supersede the purple bed to which thou aspirest; and rattling chains shall serve instead of the soft careffes of unlawful love.

love. Away with the slave to his destined dwelling, till I have time to meditate some unheard of punishment for his baseness." The same virtue that preserved the pious Hebrew, in the time of temptation, from the guilty deed, preserved him now from fearing the threats of his master, wherefore with a steady and undaunted air, he replied,

"Dungeons and chains, my lord, I can defy, nor can even the approach of death at all disturb the peace of my heart. But your displeasure, my lord, I cannot sustain. The hatred of my kind and generous master; once my avowed friend, is worse than a thousand deaths. But remember it Potiphar, Joseph is clear from the guilt charged against him, and his own conscience cannot accuse him of so much as a dishonest thought of this kind. I believe in God. The God of my father in due time, will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness in clearing up my innocence, and exposing to infamy the baseness of my accusers,

ers, of what rank soever they be." He said, and instantly was conducted to jail, with a strict charge to the keeper, to lade him with the heaviest irons, and to shut him up in the closest ward.



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L I F E
O F
J O S E P H.



— A R G U M E N T .

Gabriel ascends to heaven to receive fresh instructions—Rachel & Thirza the wife of Shem, descend and comfort him unperceived—Potiphar called in a hurry to fight the Ethiopians, forgets Joseph—Their discourse—Chorion the jailor, has a dream that impresseth his mind with tenderness—The night following, sees an heavenly apparition go to Joseph's apartment—Gabriel appears to Joseph, instructs and comforts him—The jailor's reverence for Joseph—He gets acquainted with the king's butler and baker—Their dreams—The butler's interesting history—The good interpretation of his dream—The fatal interpretation of the baker's dream—His former villainy and murder—An apparition of his murdered brother—The butler's restoration to his office—Joseph falls in love with an unknown princess—The baker's execution—Sabrina's passion for Joseph rekindles.

B O O K IV.

GABRIEL appointed guardian to the banished Joseph, industriously strove to fortify his youthful mind against the attacks of wickedness. Seeing now the issue, ascended swifter by far, than the forked lightnings, to the regions of eternal day, to receive instructions from the universal Governor, what to do in favour of his beloved charge. Mean while, Rachel, Joseph's mother, and Thirza the wife of Shem, riding on a golden cloud; were taking a tour through this part of the universe; and seeing the lovely youth conducted to prison, they descended low, and breathed ambrosial fragrance into the dungeon, a little to mitigate his sorrow. "O Thirza, said Jacob's departed spouse, how deep and intricate

cate are the ways of the Almighty to us, whilst in a state of dark mortality? Who could from his present circumstances think, that in the divine purpose, my Joseph should be placed at the head of his brethren from whom he is separated? Who could suppose that the lovely prisoner is to be the future protector of the chosen seed? The archers have indeed galled thee sore my son, but thy bow has still abode in its strength; by the mighty God of thy father Jacob, shall the arms of thy hands be made strong, and these thine enemies, shall yet bow down unto thee. O Jacob! thou dear, thou honourable man. What pangs would wring thy sorrowful heart, didst thou but know the agonies of thy beloved? But thou art soothed under the kind deception, believing his pain long since to have been finished. His supposed death gave thee less sorrow by far, than his present life would bring upon thee. Faith and patience, possess ye the heart of my darling, till he ascend triumphant over his enemies." "O

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my Rachel ! my dearest daughter, returned the wife of Shem, we have ever seen, that whom the holy and allwise God designs for eminent usefulness, he trains them up in the rough school of adversity. The afflictions my lovely descendant endures, will endue him with sympathy for the distressed : even when ascended to the government of the kingdom, thy chains Joseph, will make thy grandeur to sit more graceful upon thee. The false accusations laid against thee, will teach thee the necessity of caution and impartiality in the administration of justice. Persevere in virtue my son. Take kindly the rough means by which thy heavenly father instructeth. The end shall crown the work, and fill thy heart with gratitude, and thy mouth with praise." Thus the two mothers conversed together, after the manner of disembodied spirits, and gently moved forward upon their cloudy chariot, leaving the perfumes of life behind them.

Chorion the jailor, had just secured his new prisoner in irons, made fast
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the prison, and retired to rest, when he fell into a deep sleep, from which he was awaked by the following dream.—

He supposed himself in a widely extended field, ruminating on the beauties, which every where decorated the teeming earth. Walking slowly along, a yearling lamb, closely pursued by a couple of wolves, run up to him, and fell down at his feet, as if supplicating protection. Untimidated, the she wolf came rushing forward, and with bloody fangs, was for devouring the innocent even before his face, whilst he drew his sabre to defend the fugitive. In the midst of the scuffle betwixt him and the ravenous monster, he awoke with an impresson upon his mind, that some prisoner under his care was personated by the lamb, persecuted by enemies, who eagerly thirsted for his blood, and hoped to find that safety and friendship in the cells of a prison, which were denied him where he had a right to expect it. Chorion was none of the savage herd, who have in later times kept watch at the doors of prison

son-houses. He had a humane heart, capable of feeling the distresses of his fellow creatures. The necessary strictness and severity of his office, was always performed with a reluctant hand, and with inward sensations, becoming a descendant of Adam.

The dream was suggested at Gabriel's request, by one of the benevolent etherial spirits, with a view to render Chorion as gentle as might be to Joseph, during the absence of his guardian angel, who upon his account, was ascended to the empyrean. It had its desired effect, for the cautious jailor, for fear that he should add to the sufferings of the innocent, was extremely gentle and tender to all his prisoners.

The following night having spread the thickest darkness over all the land, neither moon nor star embellished the concave sky. As Chorion stood upon his tower, he saw at a distance, darting through the air, a form divinely beautiful and fair, surrounded with glory, almost too strong for his visual orbs to sustain.

sustain, and followed by a train of stupendous splendour, which evidently bespoke the visitant, to be of celestial lineage. As he drew near, and went past the keeper to the prison, he had as good a view of him, as his confusion would suffer him to take. For Joseph's sake, the friendly angel thought proper to favour Chorion with a glimpse of ethereal brilliance, and but a glimpse, lest he should by too rich a display of celestial excellence, overturn the reasoning powers of his mind. Some heavenly deity, cried Chorion in a rapture, some God who defends virtue and innocence, propitious to the cries of distress, condescends to visit the loathsome cells of a miserable prison. See, he is gone directly to the stranger's apartments. The youth is innocent of whatever he is accused of; the holy Gods will not condescend to visit the guilty. This is the lamb that fled to me for protection. O lovely youth, as far as poor Chorion's influence can go, you shall meet with nothing but friendship within these walls.

I will ease you of your chains, and provide suitable apartments for your reception.

Mean while Gabriel stood confest in Joseph's cell, and even groaned to see the son of Israel incumbered with horrid chains. Secretly he gave him a celestial draught just drawn from the fountain of life, which enabled him with pleasure to bear the heavenly radiance with which he was arrayed. "Fear not Joseph, said the splendid messenger, I am Gabriel of whom thou hast often heard. Gabriel who stands in the presence of the Lord. This is the first time indeed of my appearance to thee, but thou hast long been my careful charge. It was I that sent Abel thy kinsman to comfort thee when thou wast in the pit. I stood by with unspeakable pleasure and beheld the noble resistance you made to the temptations of your mistress: and rejoiced to see you come off a conqueror from danger so fatal. Your present afflictions my Joseph are not the fruit of guilt on your part. They are such as you shall
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be delivered from. But, O, what keen remorse would have torn your heart had you been left Joseph to sin so loudly against your God! From some inkling which the infernal spirits had got of the designs of your God towards you, they have leagued together to destroy you; and two of the most active of the damned race, as agents for the rebellious community, undertook to accomplish your ruin. Belphegor and Adramelech, they stirred up your brethren against you, and had not I interposed, your blood would have been sacrificed to their malice. Little did they know that the very means which they took to frustrate the designs of grace were appointed directly to promote them, and that whilst they were gratifying their own infernal malice, they were doing what should be over-ruled to your advantage. They inflamed your mistress with a burning desire to enjoy your embraces, and turned her love into hatred and rage upon being disappointed. And it was them who inspired Potiphar with the rash design of destroying

stroying you. Thus far they have been divinely permitted to persecute you Joseph. But here ends the bounds of their permission, Trust in the God of thy fathers. Let patience have its perfect work ; for when thou art tried, thou shalt come forth as purified gold.— Grieve not for your father, for you shall yet see him in a strange land ; and these hands of yours shall close his aged eyes, after you have received the paternal benediction from his prophetic lips.— Potiphar will soon have his attention attracted by other objects, so that he shall not touch your life ; you will yet see him and embrace him as your friend, for Sabrina shall one day be made to confess her guilt. I leave you Joseph, but remember you the God of your fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart. I have prejudiced the keeper much in your favour. The peace of the everlasting covenant be with you." So saying he shrouded himself in darkness and the young patriarch saw him no more. But O ! what pleasure did the seraph's melodious voice cause to

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thrill through the heart of the prisoner. Even in a prison he was wrapt up into the suburbs of heaven. As soon as the morning began to dawn, Chorion the keeper from whose eyes sleep had been banished all the night, visited every apartment in prison, and when he came to Joseph's cell he stood motionless with awful reverence of his prisoner; and as soon as he could speak, with a faltering voice he said, "I am sorry, Sir, that you have been so ill used. I wish I had known your desert before, then these servile chains should not have disgraced your limbs." So saying he took off his irons, led him up to his own apartments, and treated him with the utmost respect.

That very day a courier from the frontiers of the kingdom arrived at the war-office, with advice that the Ethiopians, then a warlike people, had invaded those parts of the empire most contiguous to them; wherefore Potiphar was dispatched at the head of the army to put a stop to their ravages; an expedient that took off his attention from
Joseph,

Joseph, and kept him long at a distance from Memphis. During which time, our injured hero continued a prisoner, neglected and forgot. But the same divine & ever-watchful Providence which prospered him in the house of Potiphar, followed him still in the house of his prison, and succeeded all the works of his hands.

Amongst the many prisoners that were confined for different crimes were Florillo the king's principal cup-bearer, and Labonah the chief baker. Having received charge of all the prisoners from Chorion the keeper, Joseph frequently visited them, and soon contracted an intimacy with them. Making his morning visit to Florillo and Labonah, one day after he had been near a year in prison, he found a pensive sadness louring upon their heavy countenances.—“What is the matter with you my friends said he? It appears by your countenances that your hearts are sorrowful. May I beg to know the cause? If any thing within my power can be of service to you, my assistance may be depended upon.”

upon." "Alas, Sir! replied the butler, assistance can come from the immortal Gods alone. Our case seems to be beyond the arm of humanity to remedy. Each of us have had a dream ominous of some important event, but what it may portend is to us a secret involved in the most cloudy mystery."

Joseph observed that dreams are not always to be regarded, and even such as are significant and ominous must have their interpretation from heaven. "Will you tell me your dreams, said he, for some I have interpreted? And I promise you at least I will not deceive you. But it would add greatly to the kindness, if you would give me with your dreams some account of your past lives, and I in my turn will freely communicate to you every material part of my own history."

"I am, said the butler, the only son of Arba an Elamite, who dying when I was very young, left me under the care and direction of Athgar, my uncle by the mother's side. The tender and delicate usage which I experienced from
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my parents, was changed into rough and rigorous treatment by my uncle; and although so very young, I was made to feel the difference between paternal affection, and the guardianship of the nearest kinsman. Possessed of my father's substance, which he was to husband to my advantage, he relished the sweets of it so much, that he entertained thoughts of keeping it as his own property, and took care to let me know that I was solely dependant upon him for the means of my subsistence. Conscious that in a land of oppression, where my uncle had principal rule, there was little prospect of power giving place to equity; I was obliged for my own safety patiently to bear my injuries; imagining, upon no ill ground, that complaint of the grievances I suffered would only add to the weight of my oppressions. It was not long before Cushi, an enterprising prince of a neighbouring people, upon some slight pretence quarrelled with the king of Elam, and invaded his territories. I was sent to the war by my uncle's command, and

I had reason to fear with a view to rid me out of the way. But you may think that I had but little heart to fight in defence of a land where I had suffered such base oppression. Our army was far from being either spirited or disciplined like the Hummims under Cushi. The Elamites of distinction wallowed in luxury, whilst those of inferior rank groaned under oppression. Therefore, when they came to face the enemy, they could make but a faint resistance, and soon sought for safety in rapid flight. Many were cut to pieces as they fled, and many were taken prisoners by the Hummims, amongst whom I was one. It was my lot to be brought to Memphis, and sold to one of the stewards of Pharaoh's household; and I must say in honour of my lord, that I have met with more hospitable friendship, although a slave in the royal palace, than I ever received under my uncle's roof, where my own property should have procured me welcome.

“ But the barbarous man did not long

long enjoy either my estate or his own, for the Elamites unable to stand before the Hummims, Cushi soon became master of the whole kingdom and divided it among his faithful followers. Meanwhile I was put into the lowest and most servile office in the palace; which was much more agreeable to me than to live near to a kinsman; who had in my person violated all the laws of hospitality. My advancement was by slow degrees from one place to another, till it pleased his majesty to enfranchise me, and place me near his person. I had long served in the capacity of cup-bearer; when his majesty was taken with a violent disorder in the viscera, which his physicians judged to be the effect of poison; and as I had the inspection of all the wine which he drank, and my friend Labonah of all the fruits and baked meats presented at the royal table, we were by special order seized and committed to prison till further orders. But far be it from Florillo so much as to wish the least inconvenience to his royal master. May heaven pre-
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serve the life of Pharaoh to be a blessing to the land whatever becomes of me. Last night I had a dream which greatly disturbs me, apparently big with some important event. I thought there was a vine before me, which divided itself into three luxuriant branches, each of which blossomed, budded, and bro't forth the most delightful grapes that I had ever beheld, and that in the greatest plenty. I tho't that I took of the grapes that were fully ripe and pressed them into Pharaoh's onyx cup, and presented to him the most mellow and best flavoured wine that I remembered ever to have seen. His majesty drank the wine, and smiling said, he hoped I would always procure him such wine as this, upon which I awoke full of anxiety about the event."

"My friend, said the son of Jacob, for your having drank of the cup of affliction, entitles you to that endearing appellation. You may make yourself very easy about your dream, for the God of heaven, who regards the cry of the oppressed, sends you by me a good interpretation

interpretation of it. Before you was a luxuriant vine ; a gift of God to undeserving men, the fruit of which composeth differences, creates friendship, dissolves care and melancholy, and turns our sadness into joy. The three branches, are three days, which shall be productive of great events in your favour, for on the third day, the king shall raise you up out of the prison, restore you to your office, to the good graces of your master, and to the glowing embrace of your wife and children. I beg Florillo, that you may think of me. I have undergone oppressions, at least equal to yours, and am here unjustly confined, for preferring my own, and my master's honour, to the brutal pleasures of the flesh. It will be easy for you, when you regain your master's confidence, to make mention of me to him, and procure my release."

Labonah, the cook, having heard the favourable interpretation of his companion's dream, and hoping that his would be equally so, began and related
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it to Joseph, as follows. “ I thought I had upon my head, three baskets made of the whitest osier, filled with provision for Pharaoh’s table ; in the first basket was bread, made of the kidney of the finest wheat ; in the second, were all manner of tasteful viands ; and in the third and uppermost were savory baked meats, such as my master loveth.— But in spite of all my care, as I passed along, I could not preserve my charge from the rapine of the filthy birds, which eat the baked meats out of the uppermost basket.” “ I pity your circumstances, my friend, said Joseph, and wish it was in my power to give comfort to you : But your fate, alas ! is determined. The baskets are three days, yet within three days, the king will order you to be beheaded, after which your body will be hanged on a gibbet, and the birds of the air, will eat the flesh from off your bones, nor will it be in your power to shun the threatening evil. What you have done to deserve it, I know not, but such is the decree of unerring Providence. Let me therefore advise.

advise you, to make confession to the God of heaven, implore his mercy to pardon your sins, and grace to fit you for another world, for you have little more than two days to live in this. Let your case be ever so desperate, with him there is mercy, and plenteous redemption to them who call upon him."

"I see then returned Labonah, that judgment and justice sleepeth not, but sometimes overtakes the offender, when he thinks himself most secure. I am indeed clear from every bad design upon Pharaoh. A thought of poisoning him, never entered my mind. Yet I exasperated him, when I found myself arrested without a cause, and wished the deed to have been done, of which I was accused, that I might have had something worthy of imprisonment and death. But this was only the effect of ungovernable passion; though according to the law of Egypt, it will be deemed high treason, and worthy of death. But alas! although I count myself in this to be innocent, it is long since I merited the death now to be inflicted

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on me. So that however inequitable I account the sentence of Pharaoh, that of the Gods is just. I am a Lybian by birth, Obed my father, left my elder brother and I, possessed of his whole estate, which was very considerable.— Osmyrn, my brother, was industrious and frugal, by which means he greatly increased his wealth, gained the friendship of his superiors, and the veneration of people of lower birth. For my own part I minded nothing but pleasure, and those were my choicest companions, who were the greatest voluptuaries. By these means my wealth was impaired, and I brought to wish my niggardly brother, (as I then called him,) out of the way, that I might possess myself of his estate. Glad would I have been if some fatal accident had clipped the thread of his life asunder, but it was long before I could come to a resolution to destroy him myself. However, at last, by the advice of a lewd woman, I gave him a poison that stole insensibly into the mass of blood, and by slow degrees stopped up the springs of life. It was long before

fore its effect became apparent, though at last it put a period to his days, and I took possession of his estate, as being his heir at law. Some years I lived in the quiet enjoyment of the fruits of my brother's toil and my own unrighteousness, when an unhappy circumstance obliged me to leave all behind, and seek for safety in a foreign country.

Having contracted an intimacy with the wife of a considerable man in the neighbourhood, I had the misfortune to stay later than usual one evening when the husband was not expected to come home, but to our utter confusion he entered the chamber and found us conversing criminally together. How nearly alas ! is one evil allied to another ? To conceal our shame, and prevent him from obtaining legal redress, I rose in a fury, flew to my poignard, and plunged it into his breast before he had time to reflect on his own dishonour. As I had perpetrated the horrid deed, I hastened from the scene of murder, and retired to rest in my own apartment. In the third watch of the

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night, I was surpris'd by a supernatural light, which darted into my chamber, and illuminated every corner of it. Unused to such phœnomena, my blood froze in my veins, my hair stood upright on my head, and all the horrors of my guilt stared me in the face. The light increased, and I clearly saw my brother Osmyn clad in celestial attire, standing by my bed side, whilst he thus address'd me. "Wretched Labonah, will thy murdering hand never be tired with shedding innocent blood? Was it not enough to possess yourself of my estate, by murdering me; but you must go and violate your neighbour's bed? And was it not enough that you robbed him of his honour, and his wife of her virtue, but like a villain, innur'd to bloodshed, you must drench your thirsty sword in his honourable blood? Do not you fear the awful God, who hates injustice and violence, and with whom no unrepenting murderer can dwell? can you spare no time from your riot and wantonness to think but a little of the tremendous audit, to which you will
soon

soon be called? Can you bear an eternity of unspeakable torment, rather than forego your sensual gratifications? It is an awful choice, Labonah, yet that choice seems to be yours. Arise guilty man, arise, and flee to some foreign country, where the vengeance of man, will not be able to reach thee. But remember, the vengeance of God will follow thee even there, and bring thee to condign punishment, both in this life and that which is to come, unless thou repentest of, and forsakest thy vicious habits." So saying the vision departed, and as soon as somewhat recovered from my fright, I collected all my money and jewels, and instantly departed for Egypt; in which kingdom I went through many scenes too tedious to mention, before I rose to the dignity of my late station. Too late I now see, that honour and integrity, shall preserve those who are guided thereby, and that however pleasant, sensual indulgencies for the present may be, the end of them is bitter as wormwood."

Early on the third morning a chari-
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ot rolled up to the gates of the prison, in which was a reverend old man, whose silver hairs hanged down in graceful ringlets upon his shoulders ; he was come as Florillo's friend, with special order to restore the cup-bearer to his dignity. Along with this senior prince, Joseph beheld a young lady, who gave him much uneasiness afterwards. She was that beauteous virgin Alenath, the only daughter of the prince of On, who was also high-priest of Heliopolis. An artless modesty greatly improved the native elegance and matchless graces of her outward form. Her cheeks were a lovely mixture of the rose and lilly, and her eyes a sprightly blue. Her hair in careless elegance descended low, and partly covered the strings of jet and pearl, which adorned her comely neck. —The first sight of her wounded the youthful son of Jacob, and kindled an uneasy unknown passion in his heart ; till now, he never had felt the vacuum left in his breast for his other self. But now the damsel had fixed her empire in his heart, and the lovely image of the fair
unknown

unknown wantoned perpetually before his eyes, whilst he languished for the absent substance. But hopeless was his passion, he is a prisoner, accused of a capital transgression of the laws, and she a person of elevated rank. This, this, he cried, must confound all my hopes, and I alas ! must languish under a wound incurable.

Florillo replaced in his office, a guard arrived at the king's command, and conducted despairing Labonah to the place of execution, where Joseph's prediction was amply verified upon him. But the courtier advanced again to favour, forgot the friendship of Joseph the prisoner.

Sabrina's rage had long subsided : her deadly hate, returned into female tenderness, and kind relentings. Her thoughts repentant, accuse her rashness. And O ! her heart is pierced with poignant pain at the thought, that her mad revenge causes him, for whom she languisheth, to lay in an offensive dungeon, whilst she had it not in her power, without exposing her own shame, to admin-

ifter the least consolation to the injured victim of her rage ; or procure the smallest degree of relief for herself. And thus she languished away a miserable dying life at home, whilst Potiphar was dealing slaughter and death among the warlike Ethiopians, and Joseph lay neglected, and forgot in prison.

“ *A deep remorse, from conscience of her sin,*
 “ *With constant horrors, vex her soul within ;*
 “ *Her thoughts ten thousand racking torments feel,*
 “ *Yet in her treach’rous crime obdurate still ;*
 “ *Her life and youthful spirits, melt away,*
 “ *Her beauty withers with a swift decay :*
 “ *By day she wildly raves, consumes the night,*
 “ *In thoughtless watchings, and imagin’d fright,*
 “ *While airy terrors glide before her sight :*
 “ *Pale ghosts with wide distracted eye-balls stare,*
 “ *And burning spectres, through the darkness glare.”*

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OF

J O S E P H.



A R G U M E N T.

Pharaoh's two prophetic dreams—The convocation of the clergy—The butler confesseth his neglect of Joseph—Informs the king of his sagacity—He is brought into the presence—He interpreteth the dreams—Pharaoh remembers to have seen him in his sleep, as recommended to him, as an assistant in government—He is clothed in rich apparel—Potiphar comes to solicit Joseph's enlargement, Sabrina having confessed the truth to him—He is astonished to find Joseph advanced so near the king—Joseph made lord-chancellor of Egypt—builds granaries for receiving corn—The king proposeth a marriage to him—He is greatly perplexed, being already in love with an unknown lady—The match is proposed to the princess Asenath, who rejects it; having been in love with the Hebrew, who rescued Sabrina from the lion, and not knowing that lord-chancellor was he—Their astonishment and joy at meeting, when Joseph finds Asenath to be the lady whom he had loved with such vehemence, and Asenath found her lovely Hebrew, to be the very person designed for her—The death of Judah's sons—It renews his sorrow for his violence to Joseph.

B O O K V.

THE time of Joseph's sufferings elapsed : on the very night before his enlargement the monarch had two heaven-inspired dreams which baffled the skill of all his diviners. He fancied himself by the side of the river Nile, where the monsters of the flood sport themselves on the oozy shore ; he saw seven oxen of an enormous size, fat and well-fed, ascend out of the river ; and feed upon the herbage of the neighboring verdant meadow : afterwards arose seven meagre and ill looking beasts, upon which there seemed hardly to be flesh enough to keep their bones together ; they also went and grazed on the same meadow, and presently devoured all its verdure. Still hungry, they set upon the fat oxen and eat up
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them likewise, and yet continued lean and hungry as ever. A sight so strange in itself, impressed the monarch's mind so deeply that he awoke in confusion, and sleep departed from his eyes. Towards morning he dreamed again, and lo ! he was in the midst of a fertile field, admiring the gifts of Ceres, when to his wonder and surprise, there sprang up instantaneously seven of the largest and loveliest ears of wheat that ever the earth produced, and presently after there sprang up beside them seven thin and blasted ears, which contained nothing at all but dust and chaff ; and what was very strange, the thin and blasted ears fell upon and devoured the others, yet still continued thin and blasted themselves as before. Such were the dreams of Pharaoh, and the interpretation was given him likewise in his sleep, but awaking in confusion of mind the interpretation was gone and he retained only the dreams. Early in the morning he summoned a convocation of all such doctors in the metropolis, that were famous for learning in the Egyptian sciences.

sciences. Each appeared in the habit of his order, trailing behind him the ensigns of his reverence. But all in vain their priestly parade ; for the dumb idols which they adored could not speak the interpretation of the mystery. Every priest has recourse to different schemes of augury, and each produced different interpretations from his neighbours, but all of them rejected by the king, who well enough knew that none of them agreed with the interpretation that he had seen in his sleep, although he could not remember it himself. All the attempts of the priests became abortive, and Pharaoh's rage kindling against them for their impositions ; the cup-bearer recollected his error, hastened before the king, and thus humbly addressed him :

“ O King live forever ! I humbly sue for pardon, as I have greatly offended, and have not till now recollected my fault. Your Majesty may well remember that falling under your royal displeasure the chief baker and I were imprisoned. It came to pass that
each

each of us had a dream on the same night which greatly troubled us, as no interpretation could be found. I dreamed that before me was a noble vine bearing three luxuriant branches, each of which budded, blossomed, and brought forth large clusters of grapes which ripened whilst I looked on, I held my lord's onyx cup in my hand; took the grapes and pressed them into it and gave it into the hand of my lord to drink, your majesty drank and was highly pleased with the flavour of the wine. The baker also dreamed, and lo! upon his head were three baskets, in the uppermost of which was all manner of baked meat for Pharaoh, and as he brought them to the royal table, the birds of heaven descended and eat the meats out of the basket; nor could he keep them away. The next morning as we sat sad and sorrowful, an amiable young man, an Hebrew, in whom is the spirit of the holy Gods, and whom is there unjustly confined, came in and interpreted both our dreams according to the event. The happy Florillo

ello he restored to his master's favour ; but the wretched Labonah he hanged. Will it please my lord the king to order the young man before you, and I doubt not but he will interpret both of your majesty's dreams."

The impatient monarch immediately ordered Joseph to be brought from prison into the royal presence. Cloathed in decent apparel he came ready prepared to give the king an answer ; for Gabriel his friendly guardian had appeared to him, and related both the dreams and interpretation of them, and withal gave him suitable instructions relative to the government of Egypt.—As he approached the throne with reverence, the eyes of all were attracted by the graces of his person, which were greatly enlivened by the blush of modesty, which glowed upon his countenance. He bowed before the monarch, and silently waited his commands.

The moment that Pharaoh beheld the face of Joseph, he saw something in his countenance that attracted his friendship ; he took him gently by the

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hand and said, "There is a servant of mine, who has given you the character of a very wise man, especially in the matter of opening hidden mysteries, of which he says, he has had abundant proof in his own experience. I also had my dreams, the interpretation of which is dark and difficult, yet portending some great event." Here he related his dreams, and required that Joseph would lay aside all fear, and reveal the simple truth, however disagreeable it might seem.

With a calm and serene countenance, yet with an elevated air, that displayed the majestic dignity of his person, he replied. "Let Pharaoh give glory to the God of heaven, who in his great condescension, makes known unto the king what he is about to bring to pass on the earth: The dreams, my lord, were two in form, yet one in substance and signification. The first seven oxen and ears of corn, both mean the same thing, and reveal to Pharaoh, that there shall be seven years of such excessive plenty of all sorts of grain, as

was never known in any kingdom from the beginning ; as appears by the bulk and fatness of the first seven oxen, and the largeness and fulness of the first seven ears of corn. The second seven meagre and ill-looking cattle, and the seven thin and blasted ears, denote also seven years of such scarcity, as has never been known in the world, for there shall be neither earing nor harvest ; and whereas the latter lean and ill-looking cattle, eat up the fat, and well favoured, and the thin and blasted ears, devoured those that were ripe and full ; it shows that the seven years of plenty, will not produce sufficient to supply the seven years of famine, unless the best œconomy is established in the land. Let my Lord the king consider, that the great governor of all, raiseth up certain men, to sovereign rule over their fellow creatures, that they may be as fathers unto them, and provide for their peace, safety and supply. Thy God, O Pharaoh, who established thy throne, hath not revealed this to thee, with a view to afflict thy royal

royal

royal mind, but that by taking proper measures for preserving the luxuriant superfluity of the first seven years, thou mayest be able to supply the wants of thy people, during the seven years of famine, that they perish not with hunger. Wherefore my advice is, that your majesty look out for some wise and honest man, suitably qualified, and give him a commission for this purpose, that the burden may be lighter upon the king."

The king looked with admiration at Joseph, all the while he was speaking, astonished to find so much wisdom in a youth, and as soon as he had done speaking, sprung from the throne, and grasped him in his arms, with all the ardour of friendship, and said, "Yes, this is the interpretation, and thou art the man, who was presented to me in my sleep, to be my assistant in a work so great; I embrace thee therefore, as one sent by the God of heaven, to be a saviour to the people. And where, my lords, said he to his courtiers, shall we find one endued with wisdom and discretion

cretion equal to him." Now the butler, who all this time stood by, a silent but delighted auditor, came up, and tenderly embraced his quondam friend, begged pardon for his long neglect, and hoped that Joseph would not impute it to want of regard. Joseph told him, that the Lord's time was not till now come.

The king then gave command to the master of his wardrobe, to take Joseph away and clothe him in superb array. — Just as he departed from the king's presence one of the lords in waiting entered, and informed his majesty, that Potiphar, his general, waited in the hall, and requested a private audience upon matters of great importance. Let him come in, said the king, for he is a good man. The king retired with Potiphar, into an anti-chamber, and thus he preferred his suit. "May it please your majesty, immediately before I went by your commission against the Ethiopians, I committed the steward of my house to prison, on my wife's accusing him with an attempt to ravish her; it was

indeed my intent, to have spoke to your majesty, to have had him put to death; but thanks to the Gods, the suddenness of the invasion, and the urgency of the king's command, together with my regard for the public good, made me utterly forget my own affairs. My wife upon my return hath withdrawn her charge, intreating me to procure his release, and indemnify him for his unjust imprisonment. This favour therefore, I would humbly intreat of your majesty, and if it is agreeable, to take him under your sacred protection, for he is one of the most virtuous and wise of the human race. Glad should I be to enjoy him as my friend and companion in my own house; but circumstances forbid his re-admission there."

The king heard with attention, and rightly suspecting that Joseph was the person in question, ordered him to be brought again into his presence. But how great was Potiphar's surprise, to see his friend, his ill-used Joseph, brought unto the king clothed in purple, with a chain of gold and diamonds about his neck.

neck. He stood motionless for some time, then with an agitated voice, he abruptly said, "It is he." And flying to his embrace, he held him as if he grew unto him. Joseph equally astonished on his part, to find such a change, said, "I rejoice, my master, once more to embrace you as my friend; and indeed, Sir, I never gave you cause to be otherwise." "I know it Joseph, I know it, returned he, but if his majesty will permit me, I will give you an account how it is that my friendship hath returned to its proper channel.

"You told me Joseph, on that detested night that I sent you to the dungeon, that the God whom you and your fathers adore, would by some means or other clear up your innocence, and detect the guilt of your accusers. It is done my friend, your prediction is fulfilled. Your poor unhappy mistress has paid dearly for her folly; she is a proper object of your pity, let her then be ever free from your resentment. The accursed nurse, the wretched Syrena, was more to blame than

than my fond Sabrina. But I was more to blame than both. How could I think that female virtue, could be insensible of your attracting charms? I delighted to present you to her, rejoiced to see her at any time look friendly upon you, not considering the danger to which I exposed my poor unhappy wife. Whereas I ought to have concealed you entirely from her sight. But I exposed her to the snare, and I wonder not if she was entangled. I grieved to see her beauty fade away like the decaying rose, and all her wonted vivacity changed into a settled melancholy. She lost all taste for pleasure, for amusements, company, or dress; her sleep was unseasonable, and disturbed with distressed dreams. And oft have I heard her in secret, mourning her betrayed lord Potiphar. Cautious of adding to her distress, I avoided searching into the cause of it. Till last night, she sent for me into her apartment, where she has been for several days confined to her bed dangerously ill of a fever. "O my lord!" said

said she, can you forgive the most wretched creature, that ever was confided in by an indulgent and over credulous husband? I have betrayed you my lord, and I cannot die without informing you of my guiltiness. Had the injured Hebrew been no more virtuous than Sabrina, your bed had been stained with the vilest pollution." What, cried I, is he not guilty? "No, my lord, returned she, he is not guilty, his virtue is inflexible. Neither tears, intreaties, nor threats could shake his steady mind. He trusted in his God, and was delivered. I alone am guilty. —I conceived an involuntary passion for him, the first time you presented him to me. Conscious of its baseness, I did what I could to stifle it; but do what I would,* it grew stronger upon me, till it burned as a flame intolerable. Encouraged by my nurse, I gave scope to my wild desires, did all that I could to entice him, but to no purpose. His regard to his God, and his master, prevailed over all my charms and snares; and by his stability he hath convinced
me,

me, that there is something in piety and virtue, which I am unacquainted with. O my lord ! may I hope to hear the voice of your forgiveness before I depart. And O ! how heartily could I beg forgiveness of injured virtue, was I not fearful that the sight of the Hebrew would overcome me."

"Yes Sabrina, replied I, I forgive you with all my heart ; this honest, this frank confession, is a certain sign of returning virtue. I embrace you my love, and will hasten Joseph's enlargement, and reinstate him in the family. "Oh ! never, never, answered she ; I shall not dare to behold him again ; for although I feel nothing but the most laudable friendship for him now, I shall never dare to expose my weakness to danger so imminent any more. Do you my lord, what you can to serve him in any other way, but do not let me see him. When I am dead you may use your discretion, but save your poor, weak and unstable spouse from temptation ! She said, and I promising to comply with her request, left her to rest. Hav-
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ing unburdened her mind, she slept composedly all the night, and I have not seen such calm serenity on her countenance for a long time, as this morning when I visited her, before I came to wait on his majesty.

“ But I see Joseph that your God in whom you trusted, would not permit Potiphar to have the pleasure of presenting you to the king; but whosoever he is, that has that honour, shall be my friend forever.” Pharaoh replied, “ Joseph hath preferred himself to my regard, and your story Potiphar hath riveted him in my esteem. It serves to illustrate and confirm what the native loveliness of his features indicate; and let me say, it does not a little embellish the character of my noble captain, to be so ready to repair an injury done through misinformation.— Go home, my good lord, and let poor, penitent Sabrina know, that Joseph is second in dignity and power in the kingdom of Egypt. The particulars of which, you shall be informed of Potiphar, at another time.”

The

The same virtue that enabled Joseph to bear with fortitude the adversity to which his innocence had exposed him, enabled him now to bear his praise echoed from one to another, without pride or vanity. His purple robe, and almost imperial dignity, altered not the native humility and modesty of his mind whereby he retained his dignity unenvied by those of inferior rank.

Pharaoh issued a royal proclamation, in which he nominated Joseph as high steward of Egypt, and required all his subjects, of what rank soever, to be aiding and assisting to him, in whatsoever work he should undertake, or in whatsoever else he might require. Joseph, on his part behaved with so much equity, discretion, and benevolence, that the people in general rejoiced to see the reins of government put into a hand so suitable.

Advanced to power, the first thing he did was to establish the strictest œconomy at court, to abridge the king's expences, as much as consisted
with

with the dignity of so great a monarch, that the exchequer might furnish him money sufficient to buy up all the overplus of annual grain, and provide proper repositories for receiving it, when purchased. A square mile, on a pleasant meadow adjoining to Memphis, was selected for the seat of his granaries. The spring approached, and every thing in nature appeared to bear a fertile appearance, for the earth brought forth not in its usual course, but in great abundance. At the close of the year Joseph issued a proclamation, wherein he signified by royal authority, that at the king's granaries a certain price would be given for all the corn that should be delivered to the servants in waiting. The proclamation brought prodigious quantities of corn from all parts of the kingdom, as soon as the overflowing of the Nile enabled them to bring it by water carriage; and this was continued annually for the space of seven years, by which time he had filled every place that he could procure with grain.

One day king Pharaoh took him into his closet, and thus addressed him, " Joseph, I and Egypt in general have reason to consider you as a preserver and redeemer, raised up unto us against the day of calamity. As your God has been pleased to send you amongst us, it behoves us to do what we can to make your accommodation agreeable. I have proposed a match for you Joseph. Nay, do not be surpris'd : it is with one of the first ladies of the Egyptian empire for birth, beauty and virtue. I intend to bespeak her for you this very day. Had I a daughter of my own, that I deemed worthy of you, she should be your bride ; but as I cannot thus gratify myself, I have sought out one to whom I think, even the greatest of monarchs can have no objection." " I beg, said Joseph, that you majesty will leisurely think of it, before you propose a matter of such importance. How would a prince of Egypt be debas'd in being given to a mean, and once unhappy foreigner, whose birth comparitively is obscure ?"

" Say

“ Say no more of it replied the king, for the matter is already determined. It will be an honour to the greatest princes to be advanced to your bed.”

This advantageous offer, met not with that agreeable reception with Joseph, as one would have expected. The fair unknown whom he had seen whilst a prisoner, had captivated his heart : for her he languished in secret, and could admit of no thoughts of another to have place in his mind. He knew not well how to conduct himself in a matter so delicate, but at all events he resolved to do no injustice to his first love, although unknown, by admitting a second to his embrace.— Prince Potipherah being then at court, king Pharaoh proposed to him a match between Joseph, lord high-chancellor of the kingdom, and the lovely Asenath, his virtuous daughter. The proposal was heartily embraced by the reverend prince, and at his master's command he went home to consult his daughter's inclinations. But how great was his surprize to find Asenath utterly
averse

averse to the honourable compact. "I entreat my father, she cried, with tears like pearls dropping down her cheeks; I entreat that you will not oblige me to marry a man for whom I have not the slightest degree of desire, and who since this proposal, is become the object of my real aversion." "What objection can you have Asenath, replied he, to the lord high-chancellor, the favourite of both king and people? Inconsiderate woman, it is the greatest honour the king can confer upon you; and I insist on your embracing it, otherwise give me a plain account of your reasons for refusing it." "Ah, Sir! said she, the lord high-chancellor is not the man who can make me happy, and I would not marry till I can have the prospect of being happy in my husband."

Young Asenath was one of the party, who to grace the nuptials of Potiphar and Sabrina, went to hunt the monsters of the desert, and had seen the young Hebrew's distinguished gallantry, in rescuing his mistress from the ferocity

ferocity of the desperate lion. Her young and tender heart, could not but feel the impresson of the many graces of his amiable person ! but his generous valour most sensibly touched her. In short, she conceived a most ardent and virtuous passion for him, and resolved that if ever she should enter into the marriage relation, Joseph, the gallant Hebrew, should be the man of her choice. But seeing nothing of him for a long time, she conceived a dislike to all other men : and notwithstanding the fame of the lord high-chancellor re-sounded through every Egyptian mansion, she never had the curiosity so much as to look upon him.

It was insisted on however, by Pharaoh and Potipherah, that she should have an interview with Joseph ; notwithstanding, they had both of them too much goodness, absolutely to force the inclinations of either. But when they met, what a delightful surprize was it to Joseph, to realize in Asenath the features, the air, and the very person of the lovely virgin, whom he had seen

whilst a prisoner ; and for whom, altho' unknown, he had renounced the whole female race ? Nor was Asenath's surprize inferior in viewing in the person of lord high-chancellor, every feature and gesture of her almost adored Hebrew. Never did two come together with more consummate aversion to each other, and never were two more agreeably disappointed. "And is it you my lovely fair, for whom I so long have sigh'd, that unknown to me his majesty designed for my spouse ? said Joseph, O my love, you cannot conceive what antipathy I entertained against you ; but blessed be the God of heaven, who brings the object of my warmest wishes to my bosom." "And can it be possible, that you my lord are the very deliverer of the fair Sabrina, said Asenath ? Ever since that jovial day, the noble, the gallant Hebrew, has been the sole lord of all my affections. What a blessed Providence is this, that crowns my wishes by contradicting my inclination ; for I hated you, Joseph, I hated the lord high-chancellor of Egypt, for the sake
of

of my amiable Hebrew. Let us adore the wisdom and goodness of that God, who has in such a desirable manner disappointed our fears." The nuptials were solemnized the ensuing day, in the presence of the monarch. Great joy abounded amongst the people upon the occasion, and every body wished prosperity to the new-married couple.

Whilst Joseph continued prosperously to govern Egypt, it pleased God to visit eloquent Judah with a remembrance of his former treachery. Er, his first born, mature in years, married a damsel whose name was Tamar, young, beautiful, and virtuous; in many respects surpassing her fellows. Er, was atheistical and profligate, disregarded the commands of Abraham's God; and sought only to gratify a sensual appetite, and wallow in the pleasures of the flesh. Judah and Shuah his parents, endeavoured to correct the irregularities of his life, by wholesome precepts and examples; but all their instructions he foolishly rejected, and sought

fought for death in the error of his way. His disposition was the very reverse of Joseph's amiable qualities; virtue was the delight of the one, but vice alone was the pursuit of the other. It happened on a day, that Er was sent to a distant part of the country upon some rural business, when going past a fatal thicket, a panther sprung from the midst of it, and instantly tore him to pieces. Not returning at the time expected, messengers were dispatched to seek for him, and found him miserably torn by that monster of the wood.— Then it was that Judah began to realize in his own experience, the heart wringing agonies of his father upon Joseph's bloody coat being presented to him. Then the pathetic address of his suppliant brother, begging for life, returned to his mind, with all its affecting circumstances. And to the loss of his son, he had the painful reflection of its being a just judgment of the Omnipotent upon him, for having joined his brethren to bring affliction upon chosen Jacob.

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That the name of the elder born might not become extinct in Judah's family, Tamar was given to Onan, that seed might be raised up to his deceased brother. But Onan's heart being attracted by other charms, and knowing that should the marriage bed become fruitful, the children would not bear his name; he took care to prevent the fruits of their intercourse, though he did not altogether deny the pleasures of the conjugal state. What he did, was offensive to the eye of infinite holiness, and the Most High to avenge himself of his impiety, struck him dead with a blast of lightning darted from the æreal stores of wrath.

O Judah! how sensibly was thy heart affected by this second stroke of the divine hand? How didst thou read thy sin in thy punishment! Both thy sons snatched away by death, in the prime of their days. Tamar, thy daughter-in-law, had the bitterness of burying two husbands, ere she reached the meridian of life. Shelah alone, young and tender, support the hopes
of

of thy family. How did thy heart pant with jealous fear, lest vengeance should write thee down childless, and summon young Shelah to follow his elder brethren. Nothing but the fear of Simeon and Levi, kept Judah back from making a full confession of his guilt before the venerable patriarch. But the fear of them restrained him still from duty, especially as he could never hear in what manner the Ishmaelites had disposed of Joseph,



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OF

J O S E P H .



A R G U M E N T.

Joseph purchaseth all the spare corn in Egypt, for seven years—The famine begins to be felt—Jacob sendeth his sons down to Egypt to buy corn—Simeon's dream by the way—They are brought before Joseph—He knows them, but they know not him—He questions them strictly, and chargeth them with being spies—They study to clear themselves of the charge—He proposeth to send one of them to bring Benjamin down—That is objected to, on account of Israel & his family—They are imprisoned 3 days—The brethren reason concerning their cruelty to Joseph, and consider all this as the hand of God upon them—Simeon bound and cast into prison—The rest set out on their journey—They are surpris'd at finding their money returned in their sacks—They arrive in Canaan, and relate to their father all that befell them in Egypt—Long discourse between Jacob and them, upon their present circumstances—They persuade Jacob to send Benjamin along with them—Jacob favoured with a divine vision, and is comforted.

B O O K VI.

PHARAOH had such proofs daily of Joseph's wisdom and fidelity, that he fixed no limits to his power; whatever was done throughout the land of Egypt, he was the doer of it, and whatever he did prospered in his hand. His equipage was next in grandeur to that of his majesty himself, and only in the throne was Pharaoh greater than he. He went through the whole kingdom, provided granaries, appointed deputies in every province for purchasing of all sorts of grain, the advantage of which was afterwards found not only by the Egyptians but other kingdoms adjacent.

As his duty and pleasure run in the same channel, he collected corn sufficient, during the seven years of plenty,

to supply the Egyptian empire for twice seven years of famine, had it been the pleasure of God to continue it so long; and this he was prompted to by his native benevolence, that thereby he might assist other distressed states. Never was a person more venerated than Joseph was by the Egyptians, when they saw every thing come to pass according to his prediction. All held him to be a peculiar favourite of the Gods, and many of the vulgar could not help believing him to be some celestial deity, come down in human form to be the preserver of their beloved nation. For the Egyptians were under no doubt at all, that they were the people most dear to heaven. What different treatment did Elijah meet with from the seed of Israel, when he foretold the famine that fell out in his days? He was accounted the troubler of Israel, and was glad to fly for his life.

Joseph had continued to purchase corn for the space of seven years; but such was now the will of Providence, that the rains fell not at their season
upon

upon the mountains of Abyssinia, in their usual quantity, to feed the streams of the Nile. So that the waters measured not above seven cubits upon the Nilescope. A quantity scarce sufficient to water the very lowest parts of the country. Of course there was very little grain produced in any part of the land, and that which grew was like Pharaoh's thin ears, not worth the reaping. Now the famine began sensibly to be felt in the land of Canaan; and the Egyptians applied in their turn to their provident governor, to purchase food for their families.

The aged patriarch seeing the approach of pale hunger towards his family, made diligent enquiry where food might be procured for money; and being informed that in Egypt only there was corn. He assembled his descendants, and thus addressed them. "You see my sons, that the allwise Governor provoked by the sins of men, has denied the first and latter rains in their season. Those lofty seas which ride upon the air, are not suffered to descend
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and visit the thirsty world. You see there is neither earing nor harvest in the land, our family provision is almost exhausted, and ghastly famine makes hasty strides towards the dwelling of Israel. But why stand we gazing fearfully at one another? Let us use the means of support whilst in our power. We can but die, when the means of life have forsaken us. I am informed that fertile Egypt abounds with provision, whilst the rest of the world is starving for want; and that so hospitable is the governor of that land, that he sends none away empty who apply unto him for relief. Arise therefore my sons, go down thither, and bring us provision for money; for money will be useless to us, when the staff of bread is cut off from our mouths. Thus shall ye avoid seeing your wives and children perish for want of sustenance—Go all of you except Benjamin. I desire that he may be left to superintend our domestic affairs in your absence.” Benjamin being all that the patriarch now possessed of his dear departed Rachel, he could

could not bear the thoughts of his being exposed to the dangers of such a journey.

The sons of Israel readily agreed to his proposal, and departed the ensuing morning towards Egypt. Two days before they arrived at the capital, in the dead of the night as they slept in the inn, Simeon dreamed that he was at Dothan along with his brethren consulting the death of Joseph; which being determined, he thought that just as they were going to cast him into the pit, an invisible hand was stretched down from heaven, snatched Joseph from the threatening danger, and carried him out of their sight. And as it lifted Joseph from the earth, with a jostle tumbled Simeon himself into the pit designed for his brother. Alarmed with his danger, he awoke in a fright ere he reached the bottom. Hard as his flinty heart was, the impression of this dream made him realize the anxiety of Joseph's mind on that day of his calamity. Nor could he, notwithstanding his resolution and courage, prevent his heart being de-

jected under the apprehension that his dream was ominous of some event fatal to his peace. Therefore the rest of the journey was dull and unpleasant to him.

Joseph by the spirit of prophecy knew that the famine was extensive, and reached even to the land of his fathers; and therefore conjectured that amongst the many who came for provision, his brethren also might arrive; therefore described them to his steward, and directed him, that if such men should arrive, that they should not be served before they were brought before him. Accordingly when they came and applied at the granaries for corn, they were directed to wait on the governor's steward, who told them he could not possibly give them an answer till his master, the lord high-chancellor, came home. But that being only gone out with his majesty for an airing, he would have them abide near the palace till noon, about which time he expected his return. They did so, and beheld such dazzling splendour in the
king's

king's and Joseph's equipage as they had never seen at any time before.

Brought before Joseph, he immediately recollected the features of every countenance, but they had not the least suspicion of him; and notwithstanding his eminent meekness and humanity, he could not help the recollection of their baseness. The sight of them brought all his sufferings afresh to his mind. They bow before him with the most humble reverence, with their faces towards the earth, and wait for him to ask their business. This brought his dreams also to his mind, and with a borrowed sternness he demanded their business with him, and directed his eye chiefly to Simeon.

Judah replied, for he was speaker at this time for the rest. "May it please your excellency, we are from the land of Canaan. Being pressed with the famine in our native country, hearing that there was plenty of corn in Egypt, and also the fame of the governor's hospitality, we were induced to come down to purchase a little food for ourselves,
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our wives and children, that they perish not in the general scarcity."

"Tell me not, said he with a menacing countenance, of such men as you being concerned in traffic. There is something in each of you that bespeaks you sprung from no common race; for by your deportment you might be the sons of a king. I suspect you to be men of birth, servants of some martial, enterprising state, come under this disguise to spy out the nakedness of the land."

"No my lord, returned the parent of the Jews. We are no spies, but true men; by the nakedness of our own country, forced to seek for provision in a land more blessed with the bounties of Providence. We are strangers to court intrigue, and have no concern in martial achievements. Whatever may be the appearances of our persons, your excellency may assure yourself that all our concern has been about cattle from our infancy. For your servants are not courtiers but simple shepherds, and our only business in Egypt is to procure
food

food for our families, for which we are very willing to pay whatever my lord may demand."

"No, no, returned Joseph, such men as you have not the appearance of shepherds. Nor does your eloquence my friend discover you to be an attendant on the bleating herd. You would not be proper agents for carrying on a treacherous design against our state, if you had not sagacity to cover it over with dissimulation and guile. I tell you, you are spies, come with a bad design against the state."

"Far be it my lord, said Judah, from your servants to be guilty of the dissimulation that your Excellency speaks of. I assure you that we are all shepherds, as our fathers for some generations backward have been. We are the descendants of Abraham, whose name perhaps your excellency has heard of. We ten are brethren, sons of one man in the land of Canaan. One remains this day with our father, and the other, alas ! is not now numbered among his brethren."

"Well

“ Well, replied Joseph, ye declare your innocence in point of treachery. But I shall not take your bare word for it, but will prove you, and if ye bear the trial and approve yourselves to be true men and no spies, you shall find in me a friend : and you shall have liberty to go and come at your pleasure, and traffic in all the coasts of Egypt ; but if it is found that ye are traitors and spies, ye shall surely be put to death.— By this shall you prove yourselves to be honest men. Let one of you be dispatched to your father’s house and fetch that younger brother of whom you speak, and then will it appear that your words are right. If you refuse this, it is a sign that your purpose is bad, and as sure as Pharaoh lives ye are spies upon our state.”

“ No, my lord we are not spies indeed, answered Judah with a submissive voice, notwithstanding we have one reason wherefore we cannot with pleasure submit to your excellency’s command. And that is not fear of being detected as spies ; but the famine of
our

our houses. For we left but barely sufficient to supply the wants of our wives and children, during the time necessary for us to come hither for food, and return again unto them. If we should do as my lord hath said, then must all our father's house perish for want in our absence, and we should be guilty of their blood. Wherefore if nothing but that will satisfy your excellency of our fidelity, it is better for us to submit to death in a strange land, than to return and be witnesses of the evil to come on our dearest kindred ; for we cannot survive the destruction of our father's house."

Joseph commanded his guards in waiting to take the ten brethren into custody and carry them to prison, where he kept them three days and three nights ; but withal he gave secret orders to his stewards to look well to them, to their servants and cattle, that they should lack nothing. On the third morning, as soon as the sun enlightened the earth he ordered them all before him, and thus he addressed them. " I have

have considered all that you have said, when you were last before me ; and as there is a possibility of your testimony being true, I would not expose your old father of whom ye spake, nor your wives and little ones, to the severity of famine ; for I fear God, and am no stranger to the feelings of humanity.— One condition I propose to you, which must and shall be complied with, and that is, one of you shall be left bound in the house of your prison, as an hostage to ensure your return ; and all the rest of you shall go to your families, with what provision you can carry, and when ye come again be sure you bring your younger brother along with you. Which if you do, your hostage shall be delivered up to you, and you shall all go in peace again to your father. But if you return not, he who I shall secure as an hostage shall pay for your unfaithfulness with his life.”

“ O said Judah, how doth one sin bring a lasting train of evils after it ? Er and Onan are fallen victims to that justice which avengeth Joseph's afflictions.

tions. Another is now demanded, and who knows what the issue will be? The guilt of our brother's blood pursues us, and embitter's every Providence. Our God leaves us to intreat in vain; because when we saw the anguish of his afflicted soul, we would shew him no mercy, although he besought us with tears. Lord, thy conduct is just, we alone are guilty."

"Did not I, said Reuben, do what I could to dissuade you from a deed so vile and barbarous? I used every argument, I was master of, to prevail with you to save the child's life, but all in vain. And with a view to be able to restore him to his father's embrace, I proposed his being let down into the pit, and had performed my purpose the ensuing night, had I not been prevented by your untimely sale of him to strangers, who have carried him I know not whither. But the all-seeing and ever watchful Providence, I doubt not shelters him from injury in some country more hospitable, and affords him that peace and pleasure which he was denied

ed in the house of his brethren, whilst we, his persecutors, are justly pursued by the avenging hand of Joseph's God."

"I freely confess, said Simeon, that I never felt a proper remorse for that sin against my brother till five nights ago, when I realized the anguish of his soul in what I myself felt in my dream. And from what I then felt, I have reason to fear that something of a very afflicting nature is before me, for I found myself exactly in Joseph's circumstances when he was last in the pit; since then my mind has never been free from either the distressing idea of the boy's anxiety, or the overwhelming grief of our poor father, when Levi and I presented the bloody coat to him at Mamre. But let what will come, I find I deserve it. I should wish to be as submissive in my affliction, as I was resolute in perpetrating the guilty deed."

Little did the sons of Jacob imagine, that the lord high-chancellor understood their discourse, for the better to conceal his relation to them, he had spoken all along by an interpreter, whom he caused

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to withdraw as soon as his brethren began to confer among themselves. With all the distance that Joseph affected, with all the resolution he could summon up, he found that he could not suppress the rising tide of fraternal sympathy, ready to gush from his eyes upon hearing his brethren's penitent conference; therefore he turned him into a private apartment, and gave free vent to the emotions of his manly heart. And as soon as he had composed himself he returned to them into the hall, and communed with them about the affairs of their native country, till their sacks were filled and their camels and asses loaded with corn. But never was there such a struggle between sound policy and brotherly tenderness, as Joseph felt in his disturbed mind. Brotherly love urged him to fly to the embraces of his brethren, but sound policy advised to stay his caresses, till he had proved their regard to Benjamin his brother. Sound policy will prevail over passion, where wisdom presides.

It was just as Simeon's foreboding heart had presaged, for Joseph selected

him from amongst his brethren, to detain him as an hostage for the return of the rest ; although it went now against the tenderness of his inclination to give pain even to Simeon, since he had some proof of his penitence. But he found himself under a necessity of either detaining one or discovering himself to them ; the latter of which he chose not to do for the present. Simeon therefore was bound in the presence of his brethren, and conveyed to prison : whilst the rest were dismissed from the presence of Joseph, and began their journey towards Canaan. Not without much reflection upon the calamity to which they were reduced, and their cruelty to Joseph as the procuring cause of all.

Arrived at the inn, how great was their surprise, when Issachar opening his sack to give his ass provender, found all the money he had given for his corn returned in the mouth of it ; astonished at the event, he tells his brethren. Equally astonished, they fly every man to his sack to examine, and lo ! in the mouth of every man's sack is found his money

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in full tale. In silent amazement they look at one another. Every one knows himself to have been clear ; but no one man could be certain about his fellows. All alledged that the hand of their God was upon them for evil ; but no one could so much as conjecture how their money should come to be returned.— Sleep departed from the eyes of the patriarchs that night, for they expected every moment to hear the voice of the pursuers, coming to carry them back to the governor. In short, at last they considered the matter as a fraud put upon them, to find a pretext to enslave them. And well knowing that their detention in Egypt would prove the destruction of the house of Jacob, they resolved not to submit tamely to their betrayers, but to perish on the spot rather than be slaves to such perfidy, and to sell their lives as dear as possible. Now they lament the absence of Simeon, the strength of whose brawny arm they had heretofore amply proved. But all in vain their fears, and vain their desperate purposes. For Joseph had secretly commanded his chief

factor to return all their money into their several sacks, in the same order which it was found ; so that when morning came, none appeared in pursuit of them. They laded their cattle and proceeded on their journey, every now and then looking behind them to see if any danger appeared ; and thus they proceeded from day to day, till they arrived at their own habitations.

The good old patriarch looking out, saw them at a distance moving on heavily, because of their loads of provision. And how did his aged heart beat thick with joy to see them safely returned with food for their families ? but how soon did his joy abate, when he discovered that Simeon was missing ? They found themselves under a necessity of declaring all that had past, between the governor of Egypt and them in their absence, and that Benjamin was demanded. Upon hearing of which the good man's heart failed him, and he could not forbear thus chiding them for their conduct. " Could not you, men of your years, never remarkable for ignorance,

rance, have gone and bought provision for us, without revealing the circumstances of your family? What need was there for you to have mentioned that you had another brother at all? That could be nothing to a foreigner, nor would it have been at all enquired into, if you had not incautiously mentioned it. I cannot agree that Benjamin should go. On your account I am bereaved of my Joseph. You have no more mercy on my feeble age, than to take Benjamin away also. All these things are against me."

Reuben, the elder born, approached and respectfully answered his father, "Were we insensible of the grief and affliction of a parent so venerable, we should debase ourselves below brutality itself. Let not Israel charge us with want of tender regard, if we have thro' the necessity of circumstances been induced to declare, what he could wish to have been concealed. For my own part, I am of opinion that the governor's countenance must greatly belye his heart if any evil is to be apprehended at his hand.

hand. There is something so amiable and attractive in him, that I think I could without hesitation entrust my life in his hand. And as a proof of my sincerity, I offer, that if my father will permit Benjamin to go along with his brethren as we have engaged, to leave my two sons Hanoah and Phallu as pledges for his return ; and if any harm befall him, let them be slain."

"Ah Reuben ! replied the aged man, thou talkest in a simple stile. Should Benjamin be lost, the death of my grandsons would but make the wound deeper and more painful. Joseph is already dead, Benjamin is all that is now left of Rachel, for whom I served your grandfather fourteen years ; and should he go with you, and evil befall him as it did Joseph, this hoary head would come down with an insupportable load of sorrow to the grave. My son Benjamin shall not go down with you."

Aged Jacob soon perceiving that their late purchase was three-fourths expended, apprized his sons of the necessity of returning into Egypt to re-

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new their stock of provisions, to prevent the devastations which meagre famine would otherwise make in their dwellings. “Go, said he, my sons, return into Egypt and buy us a little more food for the household.” “We go, Sir, replied Judah, if Benjamin go with us; but if he is not with us, we cannot go: for the lord-chancellor solemnly protested to us that unless we brought our youngest brother with us, we should not see his face; and that if we did bring him, we should, under the shadow of his protection, have full liberty to traffic in any part of Egypt. Think, therefore, my father, what we are to do, for want will speedily be here.”

The holy man, with an heart wrung with sorrow, replied, “Wherefore, Judah, dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the lord of the land that you had another brother, for I understand that you was speaker for your brethren?”

“Alas, Sir! the man was very strict in examining of us concerning our state, our kindred, the number of our father’s children; and we told him the
truth

truth in every thing. Could we certainly know that he would demand our brother of us? And had we known that he would say bring your brother down to me; we durst not have dissembled and uttered falshood, for then we should have offended our God; and you yourself would have grieved for our transgression. Allow me to say that my worthy father errs in his over-carefulness for Benjamin. We are all your sons as well as he; therefore equally intitled to your tender regard. But Simeon lies in chains, in a foreign land, pale famine stares you and all of us, our wives and little ones in the face. Nothing can save the life of Simeon, but our return into Egypt with our brother Benjamin: and nothing can save our tender families at home, but speedy supplies from that county. Send him with me my father. I will be surety for him, of my hand do you require him. If you will send him, we will arise and go directly; but if not, we cannot go. We may as well stay at home and die by famine, with our wives, and little ones,

ones, as be put to the sword in a strange land. Determine, therefore, what we are to do, my father. For unless we had thus lingered, we might have been all safely returned the second time.— And let Israel consider that certain death awaits us all, if Benjamin is not permitted to go with us, and there is but a bare peradventure of danger to him if he goes. Remember, my father, the God of Bethel, in whom thou hast trusted, he is in Egypt as well as in Canaan. He is able to protect thy Benjamin in what land soever.”

He ended here, and the pensive patriarch replied. “ Well, Judah, your reasoning is home and conclusive. We will call the boy and enquire at his own mouth : if he is willing, I shall not further oppose his going ; but if he is not willing, I will by no means constrain him. Are you willing, Benjamin, to accompany your brethren through the dangers of another journey to Egypt ? They protest they will not go without you, and I am very unwilling to expose your young and tender years to
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the hardships and dangers of such a journey. Be free my son, and speak your mind ?” Said Benjamin, “ I should ill deserve to call Jacob my father, if I should so much as desire to shun any dangers to which my brethren are exposed. Far be it from me to delight in loitering at home, whilst they by hardship and toil are caring for me and my little ones. I am not only perfectly willing to go with them, my father, but even desirous of it ; and would have proposed it ere now, had it not been for fear of adding to your burden, my father ; I want to see this lord-governor of Egypt. I know not how it is : but ever since my brother Reuben gave you an account of him, I have found my mind unaccountably attached to him. And last night I dreamed that I stood in his presence along with my brethren, and I thought I saw something so unspeakably agreeable in him, that I could not but love him.” But when he came to embrace me (for I thought he embraced me) I felt such a glow of friendship warm my bosom,

bosom, that I never experienced the like in my life. For my part, I am of Reuben's mind, I fear no harm from lord-governor."—"Well, my son, said the hoary patriarch, with a deep groan, I must submit. God grant that you be not mistaken in the man."

"But, my sons, take double money along with you, besides that which was returned in your sacks and repay it; perhaps it might be done undesignedly by some of the overseers of the stores. And go not empty handed to the man, seeing a gift in the bosom pacifieth anger, but take with you an handsome present of the best produce of our land: such as balm, honey, spices, myrrh, nuts and almonds. And, O God Almighty, go thou with my sons, and give them favour in the sight of the governor."

The sons of Israel departed; the Lord appeared unto Jacob, in a vision of the night, and said unto him, "Jacob, what seest thou?" Jacob replied, "I see an almond tree, exceeding fair, smooth and strong in the trunk, branched out into twelve capital boughs, each

of which are subdivided into innumerable branches, and all laden with fruit of the most luxuriant growth." The vision answered, "Thou hast well seen, Jacob. Thou art the beautiful almond tree, from thee twelve branches are sprung, which shall bring forth seed innumerable as the sand of the sea. Ask not how it can be done, seeing one branch is lopped off from the native stem. Be satisfied in this, that what infinite wisdom hath purposed, almighty power can accomplish; leave thy Benjamin to the care of his God, for thou shalt embrace him in safety." So spake the vision, and departing left a glow of seraphic fervour in the patriarch's heart, something like that which he felt at Peniel, when like a prince, he prevailed with God.

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A R G U M E N T.

The sons of Israel arrive at Memphis with Benjamin—Judah apologiseth for the returned money—Offers the present Jacob had sent—They are invited to dine with the governor—Their jealousy of some design against them—Simeon's opinion is asked—Their meeting with Joseph—His struggle with natural affection—They dine with him—His scheme to try their affection to Benjamin—They are pursued by the steward—Searched, and Benjamin is convicted of stealing Joseph's cup—They all return to the palace—Judah confesseth their former guilt—Levi's lamentation for Benjamin—Judah's defence for Benjamin—Benjamin studieth to reconcile his brethren to his fate—Simeon and Levi resolve to rescue him or die with him—Joseph makes himself known to his brethren—He comforts and encourages them—Invites them and all his father's house to come to live in Egypt—They regale themselves with Joseph and depart from Egypt.

B O O K VII.

ARRIVED in Egypt, they were conducted into the governor's presence, who inwardly rejoiced to see the sons of his father safely returned in company with Benjamin his brother.—“Well said he, you have fulfilled the condition on your part, it behoves me to be equally faithful on mine ; I shall give orders for your brother's immediate release from prison.” When he saw them all together, he ordered his steward to kill a killing, and make plentiful provision ; for said he, these men shall be my guests to-day. Having given necessary orders for his household affairs, and having business to dispatch abroad, he left his brethren alone until noon. Now Judah approached the steward, and thus apologized for the

money that was returned in their sacks. "O my lord, we are under great difficulty at present, and have need of your friendship, as your influence with my lord the chancellor is great. When we came down at first, notwithstanding your lord was jealous of us, we had indeed no other business in Egypt but to buy food for our families. The corn we purchased and as we thought paid for, but to our great surprise and grief, when we opened our sacks every man found his money in full weight in the mouth of his sack. How it came there we cannot conceive. But willing to deal uprightly with all men, we have brought that money which was returned, again in our hand, besides the money which we would now lay out for fresh provision. Will it please my lord to accept the returned money, and pardon what oversight soever might occasion it? We have also brought a small present, of the fruits of our land, for my lord the chancellor, which we beg you would present to him in our name."

"Your present for my lord, said the steward.

steward, I willingly accept for him : but as for your money, I cannot receive it : as you paid the full value when you received your corn. As to the money ye found in your sacks, make yourselves very easy about it. It is a gift of your God, from which no evil is likely to ensue. Set your hearts at rest, and compose yourselves, for I have orders from my lord to inform you, that he expects you all to dine with him at noon in his palace." As they did not much relish this invitation, they would gladly have excused themselves from the honour designed, and with more peaceful thoughts have dined on an humble allowance in their inn ; but as no excuse could be admitted, they were obliged to submit to the governor's pleasure.

The steward withdrawn, and they left alone, they began thus to reason one with another. One said, "Simeon's release looks well upon the governor's side, but I like not this invitation.— There is oftentimes the most malignant design carried on under the mask of friendship.

friendship. Now we have convinced him that we are no spies, said another, I fear he is about devising some other plausible pretence to detain us as slaves in the land. I must confess said a third, that an invitation to such as we, to dine with the second person of the empire, looks very dubious. For my part, said young Benjamin, I am under no apprehension of any such thing; I see something in my lord-chancellor, that convinceth me that it is impossible for him to allow himself in unrighteousness.—What is your opinion, Simeon? You have had more acquaintance with the Egyptian manners than we have had.”

“Really, my brother, said Simeon, I know not what to think of the present invitation, any more than the rest of you. To me it must seem somewhat mysterious, to be brought from a prison to dine in a palace. Yet I assure you, I met with no ill-usage here, further than my confinement. I was bound you saw in your presence, but as soon as you were departed, I was led away to an apartment agreeable in all respects,

spects, except that I was confined to it. —I was daily supplied with plenty of excellent food, but from whence it came, I was never informed. The governor himself did me the honour of frequent visits, and conversed familiarly with me concerning the Hebrew lineage, (for he appears to be no stranger to Abraham, notwithstanding he is an Egyptian) concerning our father, and Benjamin, and especially concerning the death of Joseph; and I have observed, that when we have been conversing about these things, sometimes the tears would steal involuntarily from his eyes. I cannot say that I have any apprehension of evil, now you have fulfilled your engagements.”

As they were thus reasoning among themselves, Joseph came home and ordered them into the hall of his palace. The steward at their request, presented the balm, myrrh, &c. which he received with visible satisfaction, to the great pleasure of his brethren. Then ordered them all to sit down, and enquired after their welfare.

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“Have you been all well, my friends said he, since your departure hence? Did you find your good old father alive and well? Are your wives and children well?”

Judah replied, “We got well home, and found thy servant our father in as good health as his advanced age would permit, likewise our wives and children we found well. But we have cause to fear for our father at our return, for it cut him to the heart to part with his youngest son.”

“And this is your younger brother of whom ye spake! said he, God be gracious to thee my son. I hope thy father will have no cause to be sorrowful for sending thee hither.”

He said, but his swollen heart could bear no more. He knew not how to keep from his brother's embrace. Therefore he hasted from the hall, before his brethren should perceive his disorder, and sought a private apartment, where he might give vent to the overflowings of his heart. But that he would prove them whether they retained the same malignant

malignant disposition towards Benjamin that they had done towards him, he would have rushed to their embrace and bedewed them with fraternal tears. But, as before, his wisdom superseded his passion, and he concealed his affection for them till he could be satisfied of their temper towards Benjamin.

Having eased his almost bursted bosom, by the briny flood he shed, he washed off the tears from his face, went into dinner with the sons of his father, who all sat at table with him according to seniority, from Reuben down to Benjamin. Thus seated, Joseph sent messes from before him unto them all, beginning at Benjamin and leaving off at Levi, of whose repentance he had no particular proof. But little Benjamin's mess was a five fold portion, designed to inform him that he had found a friend in the governor of Egypt. So they eat and drank till they were merry in his presence.

But Joseph, in order to prove their regard to his brother Benjamin, contrived to have him arrested as an offender,

der, to see what an effect it would have upon them. Accordingly he commanded his steward, saying, "I have not yet done with these men, I must get you to assist me in a scheme which I have devised to put them to a more close trial than before. Go fill their sacks with corn, and put every man's money in the mouth of his sack, and take this silver cup of mine, and put it into that of the youngest, along with his corn money. But do it yourself, let none be privy to it but you and I."

They had not been long departed, before the steward was commanded to take a troop of light horse and pursue them, charge them with the theft, and bring them back unto the governor.—Great was their surprise when they looked behind them and saw a company of armed men closely pursuing them. They stopped their cattle and stood still to enquire the cause. "Is this, said the steward, the manner in which ye foreigners requite the kindness of my lord? Could not you partake of his hospitality, without stealing away his plate.

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You are possessed of my lord's cup, the silver cup out of which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth. This is basely done to requite his goodness to you with such evil."

"I am amazed, said Judah, to hear such a charge from the mouth of my lord. God forbid that any of the sons of Israel should be guilty of such baseness. Consider, Sir, how unlikely it is that we should be guilty of stealing your lord's cup. When our money was returned in our sacks unknown to us, we brought it back from the land of Canaan. Had we been dishonestly inclined, why kept we it not to ourselves? How then should we go to steal from thy master either silver or gold? But you are welcome to search and satisfy yourself. And if it be found with us, he with whom it is found shall die, and the rest of us will be content to become bondmen to your master."

"Be it so, replied the steward, he with whom the cup is found shall be detained a bondman to my master, but all the rest may proceed on their journey.

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ney. They hasted and unladed their cattle, and the steward began to search beginning at the sacks of the eldest till he came to Benjamin's sack, out of which to their utter confusion he took his master's silver cup, in the presence of them all, held it up, and said, "Are you now wrongfully charged?" In utter despair they rent their clothes, laded their cattle and returned to the city, for they would not go forward without their brother Benjamin.

Joseph was still in the hall waiting their return, and had collected all the sternness he was master of, into his countenance. "What is this, said he, that you have done: Did you suppose that I could not find out your treachery? Is it right in you thus to requite kindness?"

They all fell prostrate before him, with their faces to the earth, and Judah with humble submission thus addressed him: "Alas! my lord, it will be in vain for us to protest our innocence, seeing the cup was found in our possession: Though the God of governors will

will not charge us with putting it there. It is not for this, but old iniquity, for which thy servants suffer. It is not thy hand, but that of our God that is upon us. We confess his judgments to be just. We submit to his sentence, and yield ourselves bondmen in a strange land. Take us, my lord, and dispose of us as you please. Farewell aged and honourable Israel, may Abraham's God be thy divine support, for thou seest thy sons no more forever. Joseph is not, Benjamin is convicted of felony, and all thy sons are determined not to survive his fate. He shall not bear the guilt of his brethren alone. Farewell, beloved wives and tender prattling infants, no more you fly to the glowing embraces of your husbands and parents! Injured Joseph! never did the blood of Abel cry louder for vengeance, than thine doth! Er and Onan are both already fallen victims to avenge thee.— And now all the race of Jacob are required. Innocent Benjamin, why should he suffer with his guilty brethren?" So saying, his voice was stopped by his rising

ing sorrow, and he poured forth a flood of repentant and grievous tears ; and then proceeded : “ Keep us not in suspense, my lord. Let us know our doom, for we are prepared to meet the worst.”

“ God forbid that I should do injustice to you, said Joseph, in either putting you to death, or keeping you all for bondmen. Only he with whom the cup was found shall be liable to punishment. And as for the rest of you, go ye home to your father in peace : and come and traffic in the land, whenever you have occasion. There is a law of certain and punctual equity, which ought to be observed by all in power ; and that is on the one hand, not to let the offender pass with impunity ; nor on the other, to punish the innocent however nearly allied to the guilty. I fear God. His law is my rule, it warrants me to punish delinquency wherever it is found ; but forbids me at all to oppress the innocent. You ten are therefore at liberty to go where you will, my business is alone with the offender.”

“ Alas ! my brother Benjamin, said Levi ;

Levi ; is all your prepossession in favour of the governor come to this ? How was thy simple and honest heart beguiled ? O my brother, how delusive was thy dream that made, as thou thought, the governor's friendly embrace thrill with a warming glow throughout thy whole bosom ? Oh my brother, my brother ! I shall never return to Canaan without thee."

Judah came forward, and thus implored the chancellor's mercy. "Alas ! my lord ; spare the young man, our brother, from bonds, imprisonment, and death. But for the guilt of his brethren, his birth might seem to have promised better prospects. Much might be urged in our brother's defence. He is young, inexperienced, and has seen but little of the world. His conduct has hitherto been unimpeached ; and merciful governors do not usually punish with severity the first fault of any delinquent. It might be urged that the lad was not present when the sacks were filled ; and there is at least a possibility of the cup being conveyed into his

sack without his knowledge. Nevertheless, as appearances are strong against him, we stand not to justify ourselves but rely upon the clemency of my lord governor. Although the guilt may be charged but upon one, the punishment must of necessity fall upon the whole; for our fate is involved in his. Allow me to say it, for I now speak for life or death; that mercy is the brightest perfection of Deity, and must therefore be the glory of princes and governors: anger and resentment being passions fitted only for slaves and narrow contracted selfish spirits. We have here delivered up ourselves to your lordship, and I think it would not be for the honor of Egypt, for its governor to destroy a number of men, who are willing to become indebted for their lives to his mercy and favour. You have already relieved us when we otherwise must have perished for want? be pleased to exercise the same clemency in bestowing a free pardon upon these that are willing to be accounted guilty. What if the God of our fathers
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whose wisdom is unsearchable, and whose judgments are a great deep, should have suffered your servants to fall into these distressing circumstances, on purpose to furnish my lord with further opportunity of exercising his virtue. It will indeed shew a noble disposition in my lord governor, to delight in conferring life and mercy, rather than in taking strict vengeance for injuries sustained by himself.

“ Let my lord assure himself, that it is not for our own life and safety that we are thus solicitous. No, life has lost its principal charms, since such a reproach is brought upon the house of Israel. But it is tenderness for a good old father, already bowed down with a series of adverse providences. And the loss of his children will bring down his honourable grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. I know well what I say, my lord. I have felt the wringings of parental anguish on the sudden loss of my own children. I have seen the insupportable sorrow of my father's spirit upon the loss of his Joseph. And
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should he be bereaved of Benjamin, in whom his very life is wrapt up, it is easy to see what will follow. Perhaps, my lord, has an aged father alive. Suppose him, my lord, in the place of our father, and let his hoary hairs be an advocate for an unhappy youth, whose life is in your hand. You have sons, my lord. From your parental tenderness to them, conceive what our father must feel upon the loss of his children. — There is something sacred in the name of father, therefore the Most High hath chosen it, as one of the endearing names whereby he reveals himself to his people, and whereby he chooseth to be addressed by them. God your heavenly father, will certainly requite all the kindness which you shall shew to this young man, and unto us in him. I pray, my lord, by all that is tender and endearing in the bonds of nature : by all that is amiable in a member of society, and by the endearing obligations we are all under to the Father of Mercies, that you will spare the boy to be a comfort to his aged parent.”

“ I became bound to restore him to his father again, and shall not return without him. If he is to die, I offer myself in his stead. Or if the sentence is slavery, it is the same. Death and slavery are alike to me. In saying this, I speak but the sentiments of all my brethren, for they are all determined to stand or fall with Benjamin.”

So saying he cast himself at the governor's feet, and all the rest after him in joint mediation for their unhappy brother. All seemingly to no purpose.

Benjamin with an amiable serenity, and with a glow of brotherly affection, said, “ My brethren, if the governor's heart is a stranger to pity, I fear not what he can inflict. It is but to die, and he himself cannot escape it. But live ye, my brethren, for Israel's sake accept the life that is offered to you.— It will be some satisfaction for our good father to hear that his Benjamin is innocent of the crime for which he suffers. Let me repeat my request, my brethren, for I fear not death.”

With the greatest difficulty, Joseph suppressed

suppressed the gust of tender affection ready to burst forth so far as to be able with some degree of austerity, to command the guard to secure the prisoner.

Simeon and Levi sprung from their places, drew their well tried swords, rushed between the guards and their brother, and with all the vehemence of passion, cried out, "If Benjamin dies, he dies neither alone nor unrevenged. These swords have been bathed in the blood of hundreds, and hundreds yet shall perish ere Benjamin dies, an unmerited death. The children of Ham, shed not Hebrew blood at free cost. If we must die, let us sell our lives as dear as possible."

"Stay your hands upon both sides, cried Joseph, it is enough; let all depart the hall except the eleven brethren said he, and all departed. Left alone with his brethren, Joseph said, I have tried and proved your virtue, my brethren and rejoice to see it. I am Joseph, your own brother Joseph." He said, and burst into tears as he fell upon

on Benjamin's bosom, and wept aloud, that even the Egyptians heard him.—His brethren stood in the utmost amazement, and confusion glowed upon every countenance. The sight of their injured brother realized all the horrors of their guilt. They durst not approach him, however much they rejoiced at seeing him alive.

He went to them one by one, and embraced them with ardent affection, and in particular he assured Simeon and Levi that their generous valor in defence of his brother Benjamin, had effectually obliterated the last remains of his resentment, of their former conduct towards him.

When passion had subsided on both sides, and cooler reason had resumed her government, all being seated in the hall of the palace, Joseph thus harangued them.

“ My dear brethren, it is impossible for me to describe the pleasure you have this day given me, by your firm and zealous attachment to Benjamin your brother and mine. It was not without
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some ground, as you know, that I had suspicion of your regard to the descendants of my mother Rachel. To be satisfied in this, I devised the scheme by which your virtue has so eminently discovered itself. Reuben, you deserve my warmest acknowledgment for the service you intended me at Dothan; but it had been worse for us all to-day, if your well-meant scheme had succeeded. Whilst I was in the pit, I had a vision of an heavenly messenger that informed me of the mind and will of God concerning me, and perfectly reconciled me to my fate. Methinks the countenances of Simeon and Levi, are not free from cloudy apprehensions. O my brethren, dismiss your fears. I should be worse than an infidel, if your generous attachment to Benjamin did not wholly rivet you in my esteem.— Yes, my brethren, I will ever confide in the noble resolution of Simeon and Levi. I have seen so much of the hand of my God in my personal affairs, that I have really lost sight of second causes; or I love them with the greater tenderness

tenderness, knowing that there must be poignant remorse following after evil meanings. Your meaning was then evil I acknowledge, but the design of God was good. And I should be exceeding culpable before God, if I did not heartily approve of the means by which he has exalted me.

I assure you, my brethren, that all past injuries are with me, as if they had never been, and I rejoice to see the spirit of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob diffuse itself throughout all his seed.— Here in this cup of cordial friendship, let us drink an eternal oblivion of past injuries. And now my brethren, you see what God hath done, but perhaps as yet you know not the cause of it.— I am here advanced to power and dignity in Egypt : not for my own sake, but for yours, and that of my father's house, to preserve much people alive. Two years of the famine are already past. Last year the Nile did not arise to its usual height, by eight cubits ; and this present year, not by twelve cubits. Five years are yet to
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come, in which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. As this is the case, it may reconcile you to what cannot be recalled, or remedied; and you may see that God over-ruled your little prejudices for Israel's good. After you have regaled yourselves with me a day or two, I would have you return to Jacob my father, and tell him of all things that God hath done for me in the land of Egypt. How that he hath made me as a father to Pharaoh, and lord over all the land. Tell him that I invite the whole house of Israel down to Egypt to sojourn till the famine is over and gone. And lo, I send light carriages by you to carry my father, your wives and little ones, and bring them down to me."

By this time it was known in Joseph's palace, that his brethren were come; it got wind in the streets, and flew like lightning from one street to another, till it had spread itself all over the metropolis. The inhabitants in general, were in a rapture of joy, and to testify their regard to the lord-high-chancellor,

chancellor, there were bonfires made in every opening, bells ringing, water-works playing, and every other demonstration of joy that those ancient times admitted of. And even Pharaoh himself rejoiced, to hear of the brethren of his favourite being arrived in Memphis.

Now Joseph command Manasseh and Ephraim to be brought before him, and presented them to their eleven uncles; and the fair Asenath, greatly rejoiced in having found such a number of heroic brethren. Pharaoh commanded Joseph to send suitable provisions and carriages for Jacob and his children, and from the monarch himself to invite him to come to Egypt, and assure him of protection and provision all the time the famine should last. This the considerate monarch did, to prevent any envious mind from reflecting on Joseph, for any kindness shewn to the household of Israel.

Having regaled themselves two days with Joseph, and seen every thing curious and valuable in the metropolis,
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he sent them away, after he had given them friendly advice.

After supper, the evening before they began their journey, Joseph thus addressed them, “My dear brethren, you are now going to visit the best and most honourable of fathers, to carry him the unexpected news of having found his son, who has been so long lost. You will be prudent enough I hope, to take care how you divulge the matter to him; lest the news of my life should prove as fatal to him, as the former news of my death had likely to have done. Let it be done with caution, and by little and little. In all probability you will find yourselves under a necessity of disclosing the whole of the former plot against me, in order to account for my being yet alive.—But, my brethren, beware of reflecting upon each others conduct: remember that the hand of God was in it. I sympathize with you, my brother Judah, under the heavy loss of my youthful nephews. But I foresee that Judah shall yet be great in the house of his father,

father, and they shall descend from Judah, who are destined to rule. Let all thoughts of past things be forever banished from your minds, and cultivate amongst yourselves the strictest amity and friendship. Whilst you stand by one another, as you all nobly did the other day, by my brother Benjamin, no power on earth shall overcome you ; but if ye should disagree among yourselves, ye would become an easy prey to every enemy.

“ Ye depart to-morrow. But let me not send you empty away. You will be pleased to accept of this, as a small token of my regard to the children of my father. So saying, he presented each of them with a goodly sum of money and changes of raiment, but Benjamin’s present was three times as valuable as any of the rest : he likewise sent ten beasts of burden, laden with the best things of Egypt, as a present to his honourable father ; and other ten laden with healthful and delicate provision for them all by the way.—

Then he blessed them, took his leave of them, and retired to communicate the whole adventure to Asenath, his beloved consort.



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L I F E

OF

J O S E P H.

A R G U M E N T.

The sons of Jacob arrive at Canaan—He enquires after all that besel them in their absence—Judah relates the governor's kindness—Jacob expresseth his thankfulness on their account—Excuseth his backwardness to send Benjamin with them—Simeon confesseth their former treachery to Joseph—Judah informs the patriarch of his being alive—Benjamin confirms his report—Jacob faints, but is recovered by the sight of the waggons—Jacob hesitates about accepting Joseph's invitation—He is encouraged by a vision—They set out for Egypt—He meets with Joseph at Hieropolis—Their exceeding joy and endearing caresses—Joseph presents five of his brethren to the king—They are sent to Goshen—Jacob takes up his lodging in Joseph's palace for a time—presented to the king—Relates Abraham's victory over the four kings—The famine ended—Joseph restores the Egyptians to their estates—Sabrina on her death-bed requests a visit from Joseph, that she might implore his forgiveness—He meets unexpectedly with Alvah in distress, requites his former kindness to himself.

B O O K VIII.

THE venerable patriarch, impatient for his sons return, and solicitous for Benjamin's welfare, stood upon an eminence, near his rural dwelling, with his sanguine eye intently fixed upon the way of Egypt. When he beheld his sons afar off, and as fast as feeble age would admit, he hastened to embrace them. Have my sons, said he in his heart, found favour with the governor of Egypt, that they are safely and timely arrived. Blessed be the God of my fathers, who so graciously has returned you all my sons to my longing embrace. And blessed be the man, the lord of the land, who dealt friendly with tender Benjamin. Thus the good old man vented the gratitude of his heart, whilst his sons drew near and unladed their cattle. Very prudently had they left the carriages behind at a distance,

distance, under proper conductors, that their father's surprise might be the less, until they had gently insinuated the rapturous news into his aged ear. Every thing arrived, cattle, servants, and stores disposed of properly, till a fit opportunity, the sons presented themselves before their venerable parent, to join him in offering up an evening oblation to that God, who had led them forth in peace, and brought them home in safety; for in the days of yore, the pious race delighted to acknowledge God for every benefit. The solemn service devoutly attended to, whilst gratitude and humble adorations ascended with the smoke of the incense, the patriarch assembled all his family, sons, daughters and grand-children, and with an excess of parental fondness embraced them all again, and enquired after what had befallen them since their departure for Egypt. "Come Judah, said he, you became surety for your brother Benjamin; tell me my son, by what means you have been enabled to fulfil your engagement?"

"My

“ My father, replied Judah, it is with pleasure I can inform you, that we had a safe and pleasant journey down to Egypt, and as soon as we arrived there we were conducted to the presence of the governor, whom we found to be a sensible and humane person, capable of feeling the distresses of his fellow creatures. As soon as he had by proper enquiry found that we had fulfilled our agreement with him, he forthwith ordered our brother Simon to be released and delivered unto us. He asked with a great deal of affection after our welfare in our absence ; in particular for our aged father, our wives and tender offspring, in short he seemed to interest himself in our concerns, as much as if he had been our brother. You cannot think, my father, with what delight he gazed upon, and with what affection he embraced our brother Benjamin. He not only returned our money for our corn, but has been pleased to bestow a sum, and a suit of apparel upon each of us, and unto Benjamin he hath given
three :

three hundred pieces of silver, and five suits of rich apparel. Besides a very rich and valuable present which he has sent for you, my father, and which shall be laid before you to-morrow morning."

"Blessed be the Lord God, said Jacob, who gave you such favour in the sight of the man. And O may all his kindness to you, my sons, and to your father's house, be returned tenfold unto him, by the mighty God of Jacob. How causeless were my fears for you my Benjamin ! How did my heart tremble to think that peradventure evil might befall you ? and I concluded, my son, that I could not survive the loss of you. But you know, my sons, that my loss of Joseph might reasonably make me more fearful, than otherwise I might have been. I loved him for his mother's sake, I saw abundance of excellencies in his opening genius, and I thought I could see a spirit of prophesy in the dreams he related to us. Yet after all these things, Joseph was torn to pieces."

"No,

make? though not torn in pieces as I supposed, he may be enslaved in some foreign country, where I shall never embrace him." "No, Sir, replied Judah, he is not enslaved; we have seen him, we have embraced him, and have conversed with him. He it is that is lord over all the Egyptian monarchy." "Oh! what do you tell me?" replied the patriarch, and sunk down in his chair. A little come to himself, said he, "Does Joseph live? Can it be possible? If he lives, O that these withered arms could grasp him." "Yes, my father, returned Benjamin, he lives. Joseph my brother, lives! I embraced him. He wept upon my neck, and I on his; and he sends you an invitation by me, to come and sojourn with him in Egypt till the famine is gone; which he assures us will be five times twelve months."

"O Benjamin, what do you say? Are you assured that you now speak the truth? I saw his many coloured coat, torn in pieces and smeared with his blood. How then can he yet live?"

"Remember my father, said Benjamin, what Simeon has just now declared, that
they

they killed a young goat and dipt the coat in the blood thereof, rent it, and delivered it to you, my father. So that Joseph lives, and is lord-governor of all the kingdom of Egypt. He hath besides sent waggons and other light carriages, my father, to convey you and yours down into the land of Egypt; for he tells us, that there are yet five years more of the famine to come, in which there shall be neither earing nor reaping."

"That he lives I am thankful for, replied the patriarch; as to his grandeur it affects me not. But Joseph lives. That is enough. I will spend the small remains of life in taking a journey to embrace my son before I die. My Joseph, how have I wept over thy death my son! But O, my God, let me but embrace him, and I shall soon forget all the sorrow sustained upon his account. Yes, Joseph, I come to see thee my son. Israel comes to bow himself down upon the neck of him who was separated from his brethren. Make ready, my sons, for our speedy departure. The lamp of nature is already, with me, reeling in the socket. What I
do

do must be quickly done, lest death prevent me.

“But O my sons, for your sakes, and the sake of my grand-children, I dread to embrace my Joseph’s invitation.”—

“What objections, Sir, can you have to it? There is plenty in all the land of Egypt. There is corn, wine and oil, treasured up by Joseph’s provident care,” said Reuben. “It is that very plenty I dread, my son. And that I fear may be as injurious to your morals, as the famine might have been to your families. What, if the abundance of corn and flesh reported to be there, should incline my seed to settle in that strange land, and do what they can to frustrate the Lord’s design of putting you and your children in the land of Canaan. I fear for you, my children. Ye are young, and can relish the pleasures of sense.— Was I to go alone and visit my son, the danger might be less; as I am old, and the pleasure of enjoyment is departed from me.” Jacob however could not resist the importunity of his sons, especially Benjamin, who pleaded hard that
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he might go and spend his days near his brother Joseph. "Well my children, I go, said he, but I adjure you by the greatest of names, that ye entertain no thoughts of settling in Egypt, nor of mixing yourselves with the children of Ham"

So early next morning he arose, he and his sons, and his sons wives and children, and departed from the neighborhood of Shalem, having first offered a morning sacrifice upon the altar El-elohe Israel, and that day reached the well of the oath, where he pitched his tent, and rested that night in the grove which Abraham planted, and where he was accustomed to offer up his devotions, morning and evening, to the Lord his God. Here also the journeying patriarch, with his family, offered sacrifices unto, and invoked the unutterable name of Jacob's God. And lo! in the second watch of the night, the tent of Israel was irradiated with celestial brightness, far surpassing the sun in his strength, and a voice not foreign to Jacob's ear, was heard to cry aloud, "Jacob, Jacob."

The raptured parent of the chosen race,

replied. "Here am I. Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth.

The voice replied, "Fear not Jacob, for I am thy God, the God of thy fathers Abraham and Isaac. I have seen all thy solicitude for thy childrens' welfare, and approve thy pious regard for the promise of thy God. But know, O Jacob, that it was thy God who separated Joseph from thine embrace, to make him a nursing father to the house of Israel. I have given him glory, wealth and power in the land of Egypt for thy sake, Jacob; that by his means, I may save the people of my covenant. Fear not, therefore, to carry thy seed down unto that land of plenty. Even there shalt thou meet thy God, O Israel, for I will go down with thee, and for thy sake will visit Egypt. There will I greatly multiply thy seed, and fulfil all that I spake unto Abraham concerning them. When I have made of thee a great nation, I will bring thy seed forth with wonders and signs in the heavens above, and in the earth below: yea, with a mighty and stretched out arm will I save thy seed, Jacob. As

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for thee, thou shalt die in a good old age in a strange land, and thy exiled son shall bedew thy bed with tears of filial sorrow, and close thine eyes in death. Accept, therefore, of Joseph's invitation and go into Egypt, confident of the presence and protection of the God of thy fathers." Thus said, the vision departed. In the morning Jacob arose, took his sons and daughters and their little ones, their cattle and all the goods which they had procured in the land of Canaan, and journeyed towards Egypt. Greatly en-
vigorated by the late vision, the patriarch proceeded cheerfully on his journey, till got about half way between Shechem and Memphis, when he dispatched Judah and Naphtali to court, to inform Joseph of his father's approach: and he on his part, immediately set out with a numerous train of obedient servants to meet him, and the better to expedite the journey of the Hebrew caravan. They met at the city Hieropolis, where Joseph was well known and regarded, as the saviour of Egypt. Both father and son had endeavoured upon their journey

to fortify their hearts for the expected interview. Yet do what they would, they could not restrain nature from breaking through all the injunctions of reason.—

Joseph with lowly reverence advanced, fell down at his father's feet, and would have asked his blessing; but as his soul had not power to give action to his lips, Jacob would have raised up his son, but being overcome with rapturous joy, he sunk down beside him with his head upon Joseph's, and thus for a season father and son both continued speechless, to the great fear and surprize of all the kindred company, lest such a tide of joy, bursting in upon their hearts, should throw the wheels of nature off from the axis, and prove fatal to their desirable lives. At length each labouring heart vented itself in a flood of tears, which the father shed upon the son, and the son upon the father. When the use of speech was regained, nothing was to be heard, but O my son! O my father! my son, my father, till the tide of passion began to abate. Then both hearts were lifted up with grateful acknowledgments of
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the goodness of God's holy providence; that had blest them with a once unexpected interview. Loosed from his father's embrace, he flies to the arms of his brothers' wives, and O what endearing careſſes were there betwixt him and them. O my Joseph! my Shuah! my Joseph! my Tamar! my Joseph! my Zillah, &c. &c. was all the cry. And thus they would have gone on in exchanging endearing careſſes till the sun had gone down, if Judah had not put them in mind of the expediency of proceeding on their journey.

It was agreed that Jacob and his company should come on by easy marches, as their strength and the nature of their charge would best admit of; and that Joseph and some of his brethren should go forward to Memphis, and inform his majesty of the patriarch's arrival. Accordingly he chose five of his brethren and departed, and as soon as arrived, he presented them to the king, who rejoiced exceedingly at their arrival. If Egypt, said he, has been such a gainer by having only one of the Hebrew lineage, what
vast

vast advantages must accrue to the land by having all the family of Israel in its possession. "What is your several occupations, my friends?" said his majesty. Joseph replied for his brethren, "May it please your majesty, my brethren are all shepherds. From their youth up, their whole business has been about cattle." Joseph chose to answer for them, partly, that by his answer he might pave a way for their dwelling in Goshen, altogether with their father, separated from the Egyptians, and partly to prevent Pharaoh from conferring upon them honours of state, or employing them in matters of government to the dissatisfaction of the Egyptians.

"Then Joseph, said the king, if your brethren are shepherds, I would have you fix them in a place where they are most likely to find pastures for their flocks. What think you of Goshen, Joseph?" "Above all places, if it is your majesty's pleasure, I would chuse Goshen for their residence." "Very well, said the king, let them dwell in Goshen. And you shall have letters under my sign manuel, as your authority for so doing."

When Jacob and his family arrived at Memphis, they were sent to Goshen, where the good old prince Potipherah waited their arrival, and had provided suitable accommodations for them, in the city of Heliopolis. Jacob went into Joseph's palace, was most affectionately received by the princess Asenath, who humbly begged the patriarchal blessing on her knees. Manasseh and Ephraim likewise came and caressed their venerable grandfather, who pressed them to his glowing bosom.

Refreshment received after so long a journey, and balmy rest had a little re-animated his feeble frame, Joseph took his venerable father and presented him to the king, who was struck with solemn awe at the majesty of the patriarch's person. He continued speechless for a time, till Jacob himself broke silence in the following speech. "Blessed be the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, that has raised up Pharaoh to be at this day a nursing father to many nations.— And blessed be Pharaoh of the Lord my God, who has shewed regard to my banished

banished Joseph, and unto the seed of Israel for Joseph's sake. May thy reign be long and prosperous, and heaven inspired peace be the possessor of thy royal breast. And may that God by whom thou now reignest, bestow upon thee a crown of righteousness in the eternal skies, when thou art called to leave this uncertain diadem to thy next successor." "For Joseph's sake, replied the king, I embrace his father, and bid him welcome to the court of Memphis. But I pray thee, reverend old man, may I be so free as to ask thine age? I remember not that my eyes were ever struck with such a venerable form."

The patriarch replied, "But few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage; I am now in the hundred and thirtieth year of my age; but the many sorrows interwoven in my lot, the cross providences under which I have grieved, have drawn old age upon me before the time."

The astonished monarch replied, "What! do you not account an hundred and thirty years an old age? We should

should think it a very extraordinary thing to see a person live so long in Egypt."

"O king, answered Jacob, to some it may appear an old age, but unto me, whose ancestors, father and grandfather, lived beyond an hundred and seventy years, it appears otherwise. Abraham, my grandfather, lived to the age of an hundred and seventy five; and Isaac, my own father, to an hundred and eighty-five; so that I have not attained to the lives of my fathers.

"Abraham! said the king with some surprize; we have a tradition concerning one Abraham, a private man, who overthrew the united strength of several kings. Are you a descendant of his? If so, I should be glad to have an account of the truth of this affair. As I have always considered it as almost past belief, I have given little credit to it."

"It is no fiction, my lord, returned the patriarch, the case was this. In the days of Amraphel, king of Assyria, he with other princes in alliance with him, made war with Bera, king of Sodom and the princes in alliance with

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him;

him ; four kings joined their forces together and met the five Kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, &c. in the vale of Siddim, where they routed the army of the Sodomites, and made such a slaughter amongst them, that they, finding themselves unable to make head against the enemy, were obliged to sue for peace ; which could not be obtained but upon condition of becoming tributary to the conquerors. This they were obliged to submit to, however reluctant.—Twelve years they paid the stipulated sum, and in the thirteenth year, supposing themselves in a condition to resist, they refused to pay it any longer. Wherefore the confederated Assyrians, came again under arms and ravaged all the countries in friendship with Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. The Rephaims, Zuzims, Emims, Horites, Amalekites & Amorites, felt the severity of their rage. At last the kings of Sodom having levied a numerous army went forth against them, and joined battle in the valley of Brimstone-pits. But as before the effeminate inhabitants of Sodom, &c. could not stand before the warlike Assyrians.—

Many

Many of them fell in the action, and the rest were totally routed. Sodom plundered and sacked, and Lot, Abraham's nephew, was carried away captive. As soon as my grandfather heard of his kinsman's captivity, resolving upon his redemption, he armed three hundred and eighteen valiant young men, born in his own house, and pursued them unto Dan, where he found them in a careless and secure manner, rioting upon the spoils of their late conquest. Sable night, enveloping the land in darkness, greatly favoured his design; he divided his little army into three companies, two of which were ordered to fetch a compass round and attack the camp at different places, whilst Abraham attacked it on the side next unto him. No sooner had consternation spread itself among the Assyrians, than Lot heard and knew the voice of the Hebrews.— They set all the prisoners at liberty, and clothed them with the armour of the slaughtered Assyrians. When joining with Abraham's Hebrews, they dealt destruction throughout the whole camp, and thousands of the enemy bit the ground

ground in death. Those that escaped out of the camp sought for safety in flight, and were pursued as far as Damascus; so effectually did Abraham follow his blow, that he rescued from the spoilers every prisoner, and all the goods of which they had plundered the sacked cities, and utterly destroyed the four depredating tyrants." "It was always my opinion, said the monarch, that Joseph was descended of illustrious ancestors, and your account of Abraham sufficiently confirms it. Your family, my good old friend, has provided a saviour for Egypt in the person of Joseph, and it is the least thing we can do in return, to take care of his father's house during the scarcity. Go, good old man, and dwell in the land, the best of it is before you. And you, Joseph know it is the will of your king, that you amply provide for all your father's family and appoint their dwelling most agreeable to their own inclinations."

The severity of the famine was now felt in every part of the land, and no provision was to be met with but what was drawn from Joseph's granaries; whereby

whereby the king's exchequer became immensely rich. For first he gathered up all the money in Egypt in exchange for his corn; when money failed, he received their cattle instead thereof; and when their cattle were all become the king's property, they brought their slaves and bondmen, and exchanged them for corn. Then they sold every man his landed estate to procure bread for their mouths, and at last they gave up themselves for bondmen and bondwomen unto Pharaoh, in consideration of being fed with necessary food. Thus the whole land of Egypt, and all that it contained became Pharaoh's property, and no subject had any thing left which he could call his own.

The seventh year of the famine elapsed, Joseph issued a proclamation, inviting every person to take possession of his alienated estate, to come and receive seed corn at the king's granaries, wherewithal to sow their fields. Now he returned to every man his horses, camels, and black cattle, and all that the famine occasioned them to part with, except their money. Only requiring that the

fifth part of the increase of all their lands should be faithfully delivered up at the royal magazines. But surely never were people more astonished than at this unexpected restitution of their estates, and restoration of their liberty, after they and all that they had were become the sole property of the king. And never was a monarch better pleased with the conduct of a minister, than Pharaoh was to see his people, by Joseph's wisdom and moderation freed from slavery, in a manner which secured the lasting dignity and affluence of the crown. To the mutual satisfaction of both prince and people, it was established by an act of state into a law, that the people should enjoy their possessions unmolested, and that the fifth part of all the increase should be Pharaoh's for ever.

It was now that Sabrina, the wife of Potiphar, was taken sick unto death; and as she found herself confirmed in her virtue, she ventured to request a visit of Joseph, that she might have an opportunity to confess her folly to him in the presence of her husband, and implore forgiveness for the injuries he had sustained upon her account.

“ O Joseph ! said she, it is less shame to confess a crime than be guilty of it. I need not repeat the baseness of my former guilt to you, who have been so feelingly sensible. I wanted you now that I might unbosom myself to you, in the presence of my worthy lord, before I die. I admire that virtue which made you resist the temptation I laid for you. It has for some years been the object of my imitation, and I think I have felt something of its sweetness. I can tell you : that had you complied with my wild and unlawful desires, you would now have been the object of my aversion, Joseph, even as you yourself foretold. But Oh ! the virtue and honour were all yours, and the guilt, shame and confusion my own. And can my lord-chancellor indeed forgive the baseness of a woman who then criminally loved him to distraction ? May Sabrina hope that she dies under the friendship of injured Joseph ! That all resentment is departed from his generous bosom, and that he can freely forgive his most violent persecutor.”

“ Madam, replied Joseph, my mind

is a stranger to resentment : and was so from the first, even when I felt most the power of your revenge, you was the object of my warmest pity. I felt it as an evil of affliction, which it was better to submit to, than to an evil of sin. I judged that the omnipresent God would by some means bring good out of it to me, and therefore I cheerfully endured it. It would, madam, be impious in an high degree, did I forget the means by which my God has advanced me to power, and it would be little less than devilish, to retain revenge against the instruments he might see meet to make use of. By your means, madam, I was cast into prison, where I met with the butler and baker ; where also I first saw my lovely Asenath. By their means, I was made known unto Pharaoh, by whose goodness I was raised to power ; so that from the great good arising to me from the little inconvenience I suffered through my then mistle mistress, I should be worse than an infidel, if I did not from my heart, forgive the lady Sabrina. I rejoiced to hear of your virtue returning to its course, and your affections settled
upon

upon their proper object, and I now rejoice to see you in this penitent frame of spirit; for whosoever confess and forsake their sins, shall find mercy."

When Joseph returned home, he found a poor man at his gate, soliciting relief of his servants. By his appearance it seemed that he had heretofore been blessed with better days, for even the ruin was noble. The servants had each of them contributed liberally, and amongst them had made him up a purse of fifty pieces, and besides recommended him to the consideration of their lord.—Joseph's humanity was such, that he never shut his door upon the poor and needy; yet seldom did he relieve, before he had properly enquired with tenderness into the case. Always observing this rule, to put the suppliant to as little pain as possible.

The stranger being introduced into the governor's presence, he was desired to give some account of the cause of his misfortunes.

"I am by birth, said he, an Ishmaelite, who traded from the land of Gilead to Egypt. It is some few years since, that

that having greatly increased my substance, and added to the number of my servants, I ventured to separate myself from the Caravan, with which I usually had travelled; supposing I could make greater expedition when alone, than when tied to the rules of the company. But I soon found that he who maketh haste to be rich, shall presently come to poverty; for the very first journey I made with my own household train, I was beset on a fatal night by a band of thievish Arabs, against whom I was not able to make head. All my merchandize was seized, myself and servants taken prisoners, and basely treated whilst I continued with them. On the third night I found an opportunity of making my escape, which I effected, although not without danger. In the night I travelled, being well acquainted with the wilderness, and through the day I lurked in some lonesome thicket, till I got within the borders of Egypt. When I made the best of my way towards the metropolis, expecting to find relief in those who stood indebted to me for merchandize before then received.—

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But alas ! I found there was such an universal insolvency among my chapmen, that I could obtain no relief at their hands. The late famine, my lord, disables many an honest man from paying his just debts. I have been seeking throughout the capital, and all the neighbouring towns, for an amiable young man, an Hebrew, whom I bro't down into Egypt, and sold to his lordship the general, near twenty years ago. As I am persuaded, that if he lives, he fills some high department; could I meet with him, I doubt not but I should find a friend in the time of my necessity."

"What is your name, my friend?" said the governor, and what was the name of the young Hebrew?" "My name, replied he, is Alvah, and my friend's name was Joseph, the son of Jacob." "I am Joseph, returned the governor. You have found your Joseph, your young Hebrew, and I will befriend you Alvah. He said, and flew to his friend's embrace, saying, O my Alvah ! my friend, I grieve for your distresses, yet I rejoice that it is in the power of my hand to help you, But let me first

pay

pay my just debts, by returning the money you forced upon me at our parting, Alvah." Here he ordered seven hundred pieces to be counted down, and said, I insist upon it if you love me my friend, that you will accept of this as principal and interest, without making any words at all about it. And do give me a just state of all the debts owing to you by the Egyptians, and I will be your paymaster, Alvah." Overwhelmed with gratitude, the good old Ishmaelite could not speak a word. He hardly knew whether the whole was not a dream. At last, he gave vent to the swellings of his heart, by shedding a flood of tears. Then said, "Blessed be God, I have found you my son, and you are Joseph still. Riches and grandeur have not divorced virtue from your noble mind."

F I N I S.











