

HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL.¹

FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

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VIII.—From Simon the Maccabean to Herod the Great.

IN THE YEAR 141 the Maccabeans had accomplished all that could be accomplished. Judea was actually independent of the Syrian Empire and this independence was formally acknowledged also by the Syrians, King Antiochus VII. Sidetes having conceded to Simon even the right to coin money, the outward sign of sovereignty. Simon, the last of the five heroic brothers, had become hereditary prince and high priest, the clerical revolt had finally led to the establishment of a secular state. If the incongruity in this was not felt at first it was due to the personality of Simon.

Simon was a genuinely pontifical and at the same time a genuinely royal figure. Upon his venerable gray head tiara and crown could be joined without any evident impropriety. Of absolutely pure character and genuine piety, he exercised his sway in an episcopal spirit as the protector of right and faith, of law and justice: one recalls spontaneously the ideal figures of the clerical princes of the early Middle Ages before the Church had grown worldly. But Simon also conducted his civil rule with circumspection and on a large scale, as is proved by the fact that he conquered Joppa and developed and improved the harbor there with great pains and expense, in order thus to open for his people a direct outlet to the sea. True, Antiochus VII., the last vigorous ruler on the throne of the Seleucidæ, with shameful disregard of his royal promise,

¹ Translated from the manuscript of Prof. C. H. Cornill, by W. H. Carruth of the University of Kansas.

tried again to force Judea into the former subjection to the Syrian Empire ; but his general, Kendebeus, was so decisively defeated by Simon's sons at Modein, the birthplace of the Maccabean family that Simon was left unmolested.

Among the Maccabean rulers Simon is the most brilliant figure and the noblest personality, and his reign one of the happiest periods ever experienced by Israel. And yet it was to close with a harsh dissonance, and Simon, like all four of his brothers, was to die a violent death.

Simon had given to a certain Ptolemy, commandant of the fortress of Dok, near Jericho, one of his daughters in marriage ; while on an inspection trip he visited his son-in-law, accompanied by his two sons, and during a banquet which Ptolemy gave for their reception he had his father-in-law and his two brothers-in-law assassinated in February, 135.

Ptolemy also sent out assassins against Simon's other son, John, surnamed Hyrcanus ; but news of the murder had already reached him ; he immediately threw himself with all his troops into Jerusalem and thus saved the dominion of his house. His first enterprise was of course to avenge the murder of his father and his brothers. He marched to Dok ; but his aged mother was also there, and upon this fact Ptolemy based a fiendish scheme.

When Hyrcanus opened the siege, this monster brought his mother-in-law upon the walls half naked, had her scourged before the eyes of her son till the blood ran, and threatened to throw her from the wall unless Hyrcanus immediately desisted from the siege. The mother, indeed, conjured her son to ignore her torment : she would gladly endure the most terrible death if only the deserved punishment might overtake the murderer of her husband and her sons ; but Hyrcanus desisted from the siege and contented himself with investing the fortress. And as the sabbatical year began soon after, he raised the siege entirely and withdrew.

Ptolemy now slew the mother also and fled the land of Judea, where of course he was no longer safe. But Hyrcanus was to suffer an even heavier visitation and keener sorrow. Antiochus Sidetes had only deferred his plans, not given them up ; in the very first year of Hyrcanus's rule, 135, he began a war against him which must have lasted several years and brought Judea to the verge of the abyss.

As far as we can conclude from incidental allusions, Antiochus reconquered the whole country and finally besieged Jerusalem for more than a year. A terrible famine ensued and all was given up

for lost when Hyrcanus determined to treat, and obtained reasonable terms. Such moderation toward one utterly vanquished is always suspicious: indeed it is not difficult to infer that it was an utterance from Rome that saved the Jews. Hyrcanus in his great straits had turned toward Rome, and Rome did not wish to let Antiochus grow too mighty; he had to renounce the anticipated prize of his victory, but Hyrcanus became again wholly subject to the Syrian empire; the walls of Jerusalem were razed and Hyrcanus had to pay tribute and furnish troops.

Thus we see that he accompanied Antiochus in the year 129 on his great campaign against the Parthians, and Antiochus, out of consideration for his Jewish troops, had his whole army rest for two days because Pentecost and a Sabbath came that year in immediate succession and the Jews refused to march on these two days. But Antiochus fell the following year, 128, and from that moment Hyrcanus is again practically independent.

The last sixty years of Syrian history offer a disgusting picture of contemptible tricks and crimes, of quarrels over the succession and of civil wars; these degenerate kings were no longer a real danger for Judea. Hyrcanus now became a victorious aggressor. He was convinced that the mere popular militia was no longer sufficient; therefore he kept a standing army of mercenaries who, obedient to his every nod, were an ever ready tool in his hand. Plainly he contemplated renewing the kingdom of David. First he advanced victoriously upon the east bank of the Jordan and in the ancient land of Moab; then he captured Sichem and destroyed the Samaritan sanctuary upon Mount Gerizim; then he turned southward against the old land of Edom, subdued this too and compelled the Idumeans to receive circumcision and the Jewish law.

Finally he advanced upon Samaria. The Samaritans appealed for aid to the neighboring Seleucid, Antiochus IX. Cyzicanus, and Judea was laid waste by Syrian and Egyptian troops; but at last Hyrcanus prevailed, advanced victoriously as far as Scythopolis, and took Samaria after a long and hard siege; the city was razed to the ground and the neighboring brooks diverted across the site.

This is all that we know of the thirty years' reign of Hyrcanus, and we cannot refuse our admiration and recognition for what he accomplished: after the days of Solomon no Israelite ruled over so great and powerful a state as John Hyrcanus.

But what of the high priest? is the involuntary question. The answer is found in the fact, reported by Josephus and the Talmud alike, that under him the conflict with the Pharisees arose. We are

told that Hyrcanus at first favored the Pharisees in every way, and sought their favor. On one occasion when he had them all at his table he begged them to remind him openly and honestly when he did anything contrary to the law. Thereupon all the Pharisees were full of his praise; only one *enfant terrible*, Eleazar, said: "If you wish to know the truth, be content with the principality, and give up the high-priesthood." At the suggestion of a Sadducee named Jonathan, Hyrcanus asked the Pharisees what punishment Eleazar deserved for that utterance, and the Pharisees replied: "Forty stripes less one." Hyrcanus, who had expected that they would condemn him to death for blasphemy against his prince, conceived from this moment on a deep distrust of the Pharisees, renounced them utterly and threw himself into the arms of the Sadducees.

Even though the anecdote form of the tradition betray it as unhistorical, the fact itself is beyond question, and results with absolute necessity from the circumstances. The inner incongruity which the extraordinary personality of Simon had hidden was revealed even under his son. In the whole nature of Jewish conditions the priesthood was the capital matter. But for Hyrcanus the tiara had fallen to the rank of a mere decoration; he was a secular prince just like the neighboring heathen kings, his state was a purely secular realm which was no longer able to pursue spiritual aims, no longer had spiritual cares.

But the most awkward self-contradiction lay in the point which Eleazar had ruthlessly laid bare. The Maccabeans were the champions and pioneers of the law: zeal for the law of Moses had impelled and advanced them; even their political aims and objects found in the law and religion not a pretext, but their real foundation. And now they themselves were violating the law: the very pinnacle of the structure which was founded on the law was a violation of the law. Inasmuch as the Maccabees were not Aaronites, eligible to the high-priesthood, their whole occupancy of the office was illegal, a perpetual violation and mockery of the law, which could be made endurable only by extraordinary ethical merit and personal qualities. As soon as these failed the dilemma was precipitated.

The Pharisees, wholly proof against all political or national opportunism, remained true to the foundation principles, and on this basis antagonised the Maccabean state and the Maccabean princes, and so these in sheer self-defence were constrained to suppress the spirit which had created and elevated them. Hyrcanus, indeed, was a ruler of such force that he remained master of the

situation ; but it was a "mene tekel" for the future. The conflict was inevitably to become more violent and burst forth more tremendously just in proportion as the Maccabean rulers developed fewer priestly qualities, and the more baldly and undisguisedly the secular sway became their sole aim and ambition.

And indeed the degeneration of the family that had begun so gloriously made colossal progress ; dominion had demoralised and poisoned them. While the contrast between Hyrcanus and his great father Simon is immense, we find in his two sons and successors personages who remind us of the most corrupt popes of the Renaissance period, of Sixtus IV., Innocence VIII., and Alexander VI.

Hyrcanus died in the year 105. By will he left the rule to his widow ; the oldest of his two sons, Judas Aristobulus (all the Maccabeans henceforth bear double names, one Jewish and the other Greek) was to succeed him in the high-priesthood only. But Aristobulus let his mother die of hunger in prison, and was the first to adopt with the rule also the royal title, calling himself "King of the Jews." Three of his brothers he had imprisoned ; the fourth he at first trusted blindly, but later, as his distrust was aroused, had him murdered.

In the face of these reports of the Jewish historian Josephus it strikes us as very strange when a Greek historian calls Aristobulus a humane man and a good ruler. But the puzzle can be explained. Aristobulus called himself officially "Phil-Hellene," the friend of the Greeks, thus boldly denying the principles and the traditions of his family : this explains the partiality of the Greek as well as the dislike of the Jew.

The chief event of his short reign is the conquest and Judaizing of Galilee, whereby he rounded out the realm of the Maccabees and reunited under his sceptre all the territories formerly belonging to Israel. But after one short year he died of a hemorrhage. As he left no children, his widow, Alexandra-Salome, merely observed the law in bestowing her hand after her husband's death upon the eldest of his brothers, Jonathan-Alexander. Thus Alexander Jannæus, the third son of Hyrcanus, became king and high priest, 104. One brother who was said to be striving for the throne was immediately executed ; the fifth, who was quite harmless, was honored as a prince of the blood.

Alexander Jannæus is perhaps the most unattractive and worthless personage in all Jewish history. Even his father, Hyrcanus, despised him, and there was nothing great or good about him to

reconcile us to him: his entire reign of twenty-six years was one succession of raids and wars in which he did not even manifest strategic gifts, and of outrages which rank him with the most reprobate characters in history.

He first made a campaign of conquest toward the sea-coast. There Ptolemais, Gaza, and Strato's Tower, ruled over by a certain Zoilus, had not yet been incorporated with the Jewish kingdom. Alexander first attacked Ptolemais. The inhabitants in their need turned for aid to the Egyptian prince, Ptolemy Lathuros, who, expelled from Egypt by his mother, Cleopatra, had established a dominion in Cyprus, and Alexander was obliged to raise the siege. But soon he made friends with Ptolemy, who was a fellow spirit, and promised him a large sum if he would slay Zoilus and turn the latter's little coast realm over to him. But at the same time Alexander opened negotiations with Cleopatra whereby she was to drive his new bosom friend out of the country. Ptolemy learned of this and began a fearful persecution of unhappy Judea. Alexander was utterly defeated, and Ptolemy gave his troops orders to butcher and cook in the camp-kettles the captive Jewish women and children, in order that the Jews might believe them to be cannibals and have a proper fear of them. But mother Cleopatra actually did come upon the scene and expelled her son from Palestine, compelling him to withdraw to Cyprus. But then Cleopatra wished to confiscate the former Egyptian province, and could be dissuaded from this purpose only by her Jewish general Ananias. Scarcely was Alexander fairly relieved from this danger when he undertook new conquests toward the north, the south, the east and the west, the details of which are of no interest to us.

Rather is our gaze attracted to the deep domestic difficulties. That this man who passed his whole life in camp among harlots and rowdies was high priest and actually officiated as such on high holidays was too cruel a mockery of every religious sentiment to continue any length of time; the contradiction between idea and reality had become so sharp that it could no longer be ignored. While officiating at the Feast of Tabernacles the king even went so far as to express a blasphemous ridicule of the sacred ceremony, whereupon the patience of the people gave out and they threw at the contemptible high priest the lemons which they were carrying for the celebration; the king gave command to his troops to use their swords, and six thousand people perished in the temple on the sacred holiday. Alexander then had a wooden barrier built

about the altar to secure him in the future against such material testimonials of the sentiments of his subjects.

The heaped-up tinder needed only a spark to flash out into vivid flames. Alexander began a quarrel with an Arab sheik named Obedas, and in the course of time fell into an ambush from which he barely saved his life. When he arrived in Jerusalem thus, a deserted fugitive, an open rebellion broke out and a six years' war resulted, in which fifty thousand Jews are said to have perished.

Now Alexander thought the time had come to offer the hand of peace, and he asked what was wanted of him, whereupon the Pharisees answered: "Your head." At the same time they appealed for help to the neighboring Seleucid, Demetrius III. Eucairus. Matters came to an issue at Sichem. On the one side stood the Pharisees and the national party in alliance with the Syrians, on the other side the Jewish king and high priest with an army consisting almost exclusively of Greek mercenaries; Alexander was totally defeated, his army was scattered, and he himself wandered about in the mountains a hunted fugitive.

But now there came a reaction. The Pharisees were ready to accept again subjection to the Syrian Empire. Against this, however, the national instinct rebelled: they deserted to Alexander in troops, Demetrius withdrew from the country, and now the Pharisees were exposed defenceless to the vengeance of the tyrant. They threw themselves into the fortress of Bethome, which, however, was soon captured. Now Alexander led his captives in triumph to Jerusalem, where a terrible judgment awaited them. Eight hundred crosses were set up and all the chiefs of the party were crucified; before their eyes as they were dying Alexander's executioners butchered their wives and children, while the tyrant, carousing and feasting in the midst of his harlots and dancers, looked on at the horrible spectacle. And this was the Jewish high priest!

Now all who were in any way compromised left the country, and for the remainder of his reign Alexander had domestic peace.

But wars did not cease; however, we shall pass over their shifting issues. When Alexander had succeeded in conquering the whole of the country east of the Jordan he was received in triumph by the people at Jerusalem. The regions and cities conquered there were almost wholly Greek, and this is the only point in which Alexander manifested his Judaism: he compelled the conquered Greek cities to submit to circumcision and the Jewish religion; if

they refused to submit he destroyed them, as we have evidence in a large number of cases.

But soon his wild and dissolute life brought upon him a severe illness. Even then he did not rest, until at last at the siege of Ragaba his fate overtook him; only forty-eight years old, he died in the year 78, and is said to have given his widow on his dying bed the advice to make peace with the Pharisees and be guided by them.

If this tradition is correct it means that Alexander himself perceived that the work of his life squandered in adventures was in vain. True, at the close there was no lack of outward success: the kingdom which Alexander left at his death equalled in extent the kingdom of David, but it is easy to understand that a glory acquired by such means bore within itself no guaranty of permanency. There were two ways of maintaining it: either the whole must be placed upon an ethical basis and thus be conquered morally after the physical conquest, or what had been acquired by violence must be maintained by violence.

At first they tried the first way. Alexander left two youthful sons: the elder, Hyrcanus, was an indolent, narrow, and incompetent person, the younger, Aristobulus, shrewd, impetuous, and energetic, the image of his father. Alexander had provided in his will that Hyrcanus should succeed him only in the high-priesthood, while the government was to be in the hands of his widow, and this provision was obeyed: Alexandra-Salome was in uncontested possession of the royal power for nine years until her death (78-69). She is said to have been a sister of the celebrated Simon ben Shetach, the head at the time of the school of the Pharisees, and there is no question that she was a really pious woman and a sincere adherent of the Pharisaic party.

Thus a complete change of system came about: she had only the name of ruler, the Pharisees the actual rule. For this reason this queen is celebrated and praised by Jewish tradition more than any member of the house of the Maccabees; her reign is said to have been outwardly a truly Golden Age for Judea.

But now the Pharisees began a reign of terror, and held such bloody reckoning with their ancient enemies that finally a deputation of the Sadducean nobility, led by the queen's own son Aristobulus went to her to remonstrate and declare that things could not continue thus, and Alexandra actually checked the vengeance of her friends. Aristobulus and his friends asked for an honorable exile from court in such a form that they might serve their father-

land in the army, and Alexandra turned over to them all the fortresses of the country save three. Moreover Aristobulus waged in her name a war against Damascus, in which, however, he won no laurels.

The great danger to which Judea was exposed from Tigranes, king of the Armenians, who had conquered the shadowy empire of the Seleucidæ, was happily averted. After nine years Alexandra was taken mortally ill. Now Aristobulus thought that the moment for action had come: he withdrew secretly from Jerusalem, made a league with his Sadducean friends and prepared to secure by force the succession to his mother. Before there was any outbreak Alexandra died. Hyrcanus now assumed the crown, but was decisively beaten by Aristobulus at Jericho and compelled to retreat to Jerusalem. Here he had the wife and children of his brother in his power, and thus a compromise was finally concluded by which Hyrcanus retained all his revenues but formally resigned the high-priesthood and the crown to Aristobulus; to seal the compact Alexandra, the only child of Hyrcanus, was betrothed to Alexander, the eldest son of Aristobulus.

Hyrcanus was satisfied with the settlement and would probably have led a life of peace and quiet until his end if fate had not destined him to be forever the plaything of others' passions, a dummy for the intrigues and plans of others. In spite of his abdication he was after all and remained the legitimate heir of the house of the Maccabees, and that was his doom.

The Jewish general who served as prefect in Idumea was a certain Antipater, whose father, of the same name, had enjoyed the especial confidence of Alexander Jannæus. This man, for whose ambitious plans the weakling Hyrcanus was better adapted than the energetic Aristobulus, devoted himself to a systematic instigation of the abdicated ruler and to making sentiment for him among the people. At first Hyrcanus would not hear of the matter, but finally Antipater represented so persistently that his life was in danger at the hands of his brother, that he actually permitted himself to be persuaded to flee from Jerusalem to the Arab sheik Aretas, who proposed in consideration of a promise to restore the Arabian territory conquered by Alexander Jannæus, to re-establish him in his kingdom. In fact a war resulted and Aristobulus was utterly defeated, being compelled to take refuge in the temple at Jerusalem, where Aretas and Hyrcanus besieged him.

In this connexion Josephus reports two characteristic details. There lived at that time an especially pious man named Onias, to

whose prayers miraculous efficacy was attributed. He was brought before the temple to pronounce a curse upon Aristobulus. But Onias said: "Almighty God! Those beside me are thy people, the besieged are thy priests; therefore neither hear those nor help these." But this conciliatory mood was not in accord with the wishes of his employers, and Onias was forthwith stoned to death.

But now Pascha came on. The beleaguered priests wished most urgently to celebrate Pascha, and begged the besiegers humbly to admit to them the necessary animals for sacrifice. For each separate animal the immense sum of one thousand silver shekels was demanded, and the requisite sum was actually let down over the walls. The besiegers pocketed the money but did not furnish the animals.

But the last word already belonged to Rome, which was just preparing to give the "sick man" in Syria the finishing stroke. Pompey had conquered Mithradates and subdued Tigranes of Armenia, and was now making a clean sweep of Asia. He first sent a legate, Scaurus, into Syria to look after things. The legate went also into Judea. Aristobulus, who well knew how to treat the Romans of that day, promised Scaurus a large sum of money; Hyrcanus could not fall behind his brother, and promised a like sum. But Scaurus decided in favor of Aristobulus and commanded the Arabian king to raise the siege of Jerusalem forthwith. Aretas ventured no opposition, and on his retreat Aristobulus inflicted upon him a severe defeat.

This was a great temporary success for Aristobulus, but the final decision still lay in the hands of Pompey. Next year he came in person. Aristobulus tried to win his favor by a valuable present; in Damascus the two brothers appeared before his tribunal, and at the same time a Jewish delegation which urged Pompey to abolish the royal dignity altogether and to restore the old sacerdotal constitution in accordance with the law. Pompey was dilatory in the matter and directed all parties for the present to keep the peace; but Aristobulus had no confidence in the truce and prepared for resistance. Now Pompey marched into Judea; when the Romans appeared before Jerusalem Aristobulus lost courage; he surrendered to Pompey and promised also to turn the city over to him, but the lieutenant general, Gabinius, who was to make the entry, found the gates closed. Although there was no evidence of a breach of faith on the part of Aristobulus, Pompey, angered by this, threw him into chains and prepared to take the city by force.

In Jerusalem the parties were not harmonious. The adherents

of Hyrcanus saw in the Romans allies, while the adherents of Aristobulus were determined to resist to the utmost; they withdrew into the temple, while the city surrendered to the Romans. Three months the siege of the temple lasted; finally, on the Day of Atonement in the year 63, the younger Sulla, a son of the dictator, led the scaling of the wall, and then began a frightful massacre; the priests, who refused to desist from their ceremonies, were cut down at the altar, and twelve thousand persons met their death in the temple.

Pompey held his entry, and, despite the most urgent protests, entered the Holy of Holies, though he left the treasures of the temple untouched. The heads of the war party were executed, the walls of Jerusalem razed, and all lands not hereditary Jewish possessions were sequestrated and added to the new Roman province of Syria; over what remained was placed the reappointed high priest Hyrcanus, as tributary Roman vassal without the royal title.

Aristobulus and his four children were taken to Rome; the eldest son, Alexander, succeeded in escaping on the way; the other three, together with their father, were compelled to walk in front of the chariot of the imperator as a spectacle for the Roman populace on the occasion of the great triumph of Pompey in the year 61.

In Judea the all-powerful man was now Antipater, who managed to make himself ever more indispensable to Hyrcanus, and actually exercised whatever authority the Romans thought best to leave in their hands. The sole ambition of both these men was to make themselves popular with their new lords and useful to them.

We have little positive knowledge of the whole succeeding period. In the year 57 Aristobulus, the son of Alexander who escaped, undertook a revolutionary incursion into Judea, and actually gained some successes at first; but when the Romans took the matter seriously he had to surrender. The fortresses were razed, but Alexander himself got off easily, probably because he treated the Roman general in the right way, that is, with clinking arguments.

In order to repress any new disposition to revolt Gabinius divided the country into five independent districts, each of which had its own sanhedrin like that at Jerusalem; all that was now left to Hyrcanus was the high-priesthood. But in the very next year, 56, Aristobulus himself with his younger son Antigonus, succeeded in escaping from Rome and raising the standard of revolt. He was received with rejoicings, but was soon once more a Roman pris-

oner; he was sent to Rome and kept now in close confinement, while his children were liberated. The following year young Alexander tried his fortune again, but accomplished nothing, despite the enthusiastic support which he found.

The next year, 54, was to show the Jews what they might expect from the Romans. The triumvir Crassus visited Jerusalem and actually sacked the temple: he is said to have carried off partly in coin, partly in other valuables, ten thousand talents, that is, about nine million dollars. Now there broke out under the lead of a certain Pithalaus a new rebellion the only results of which were that the ringleader was executed and thirty thousand Jews sold into slavery.

With the year 49 begins the great crisis in ancient history marked by the Roman civil wars. The fate of Judea is henceforth dependent on the destinies of Rome, and is the mere echo of the latter's fluctuant events. Cæsar, in order to make trouble for Pompey in the Orient, released the captive Aristobulus and was about to send him to Judea at the head of two legions, but the adherents of Pompey poisoned him; his body was embalmed and deposited later in the tomb of the Maccabees. Now his son, the old enemy of Rome, became an object of suspicion, although he had made no move as yet; at the express command of Pompey he was prosecuted and beheaded at Antiochia on account of his former crimes against the Roman people.

When the destiny of Rome was decided at Pharsalia, Hyrcanus and Antipater immediately went over to the victor, and were able to render him such material service on his Egyptian campaign that the full favor of Cæsar rested upon them in the rearrangement of Syrian affairs. True Antigonus, the younger son of Aristobulus, appeared and called attention to the fact that his father and his elder brother had lost their lives in the service of Cæsar; but Cæsar was too practical a politician to be accessible to the suggestions of sentiment. Antigonus withdrew with empty hands.

Cæsar abolished the division of the country proposed by Gabinus, confirmed Hyrcanus in the high-priesthood, and appointed him ethnarch of the whole country; Antipater received the title of procurator as well as Roman citizenship and exemption from taxation. Cæsar also permitted the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem which had been destroyed by Pompey, and in general showed the Jews especial favor in order to attach to himself and his cause this race which was already an international power. Thus it is ex-

pressly reported that the death of Cæsar was mourned by no other people so sincerely as by the Jews.

Who the actual ruler was in Judea was soon to appear through a striking instance. Antipater had appointed his two sons, Phasaël and Herod, as generals. In this capacity Herod had defeated and captured in Galilee Hezekiah, a so-called robber chief, that is, a volunteer soldier hostile to Rome, and had executed the whole band in short order. The sanhedrin saw in this an infringement of its rights. Herod was summoned to Jerusalem. He came, indeed, but at the head of a strong military force, and appeared defiantly before the sanhedrin. For Hyrcanus, who presided over the sanhedrin, had received from Sextus Cæsar, the legate in Syria, an explicit command to acquit Herod. But the Pharisee Shammai, the most distinguished member of the sanhedrin, was not to be intimidated; he declared openly that Herod deserved death, and that the sanhedrin, if it acquitted him, would incur a heavy guilt which Herod himself would some day severely punish. After this speech, which made a deep impression upon the sanhedrin, Hyrcanus adjourned the session and advised Herod to withdraw secretly from Jerusalem. Herod did so, but soon returned with a still greater force, and could be dissuaded from an attack upon Jerusalem only with the greatest difficulty.

At this point the death of Cæsar changed the whole situation instantly. One of the murderers of Cæsar, Cassius, went to Asia, and soon all the Roman troops there swore allegiance to him. Then Antipater and Herod made haste to show the new master their devotion, and were especially steadfast in satisfying the financial wants of the ever impecunious Cassius. Suddenly Antipater died of poison. A certain Malichus had been endeavoring to acquire the same influence over Hyrcanus that Antipater exercised, and so had the latter poisoned; but he was not to reap the reward of his deed, for soon assassins hired by Herod put an end to him.

In the midst of this general confusion there were again new disturbances in Judea. In Jerusalem a certain Helix rebelled against Phasaël, and in the north Antigonus, the youngest surviving son of Aristobulus, made an incursion into Galilee; both uprisings were suppressed only with difficulty. Then came the day of Philippi: the glory of Cassius was past and Antony was ruler of Asia. The position of Herod, who owed everything to Cæsar, was critical, and made worse by the fact that a delegation of Jews was marching to meet Antony, bearing most serious charges against Herod and Phasaël. But Antony had known Herod personally in earlier days,

and in them were two congenial souls who could not fail to please each other. Antony dismissed the accusers and appointed Herod and Phasael as tetrarchs, thereby merely legalising the actual situation; Hyrcanus retired altogether into his high-priesthood.

But soon a remarkable chain of circumstances was to call once more a Maccabee to the throne of Judea. In the year 40 occurred that fearful invasion of the Parthians which brought all Asia into their hands. Antigonus now entered into negotiations with the Parthians and promised them a thousand talents of gold and five hundred of the fairest Jewish maidens if they would restore him to the kingdom of his father, Aristobulus. Against these hosts all resistance was in vain. Herod found safety in a daring flight, Phasael and Hyrcanus fell into the power of the Parthians. Phasael dashed out his brains in prison; Hyrcanus, after his ears had been cut off at the command of his nephew in order to permanently disqualify him for the high-priesthood, was dragged away into captivity by the Parthians.

Thus Antigonus was king and high priest by the grace of the Parthians, and maintained himself in his position for three years, from 40 to 37. His Hebrew name was Mattathias, so that this last degenerate descendant bore the same name as the glorious founder of the family. The history of his reign is really only the history of its loss.

Herod had succeeded in escaping to his friend Antony in Rome. Antony managed also to interest Octavius in him, and thus there was issued in the year 39 a decree of the senate appointing Herod king of Judea. True, he had first to conquer his kingdom. He immediately went thither, and would probably have taken Jerusalem directly had not the Roman generals, who by Antony's direction were to support him, bribed by Antigonus, hindered him in every way. Not even in the year 38 had he attained entire success. But now Antony himself went to Asia and sent his legate, Sosius, with explicit commands to Judea, where meantime a great massacre had taken place among the adherents of Herod. Aided by Socius, Herod overcame all opposition, and only the approach of winter gave Antigonus a brief respite.

In the spring of 37 the siege of Jerusalem was undertaken with all vigor. While it was going on Herod married Mariamne, the grandchild of both Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, thus uniting in himself the claims of both brothers and their families. After a siege of forty days the first wall was taken, after fifteen days more the second; but Antigonus still maintained himself in the temple. Finally

in the third month, on a Sabbath, the temple was stormed and a fearful slaughter began, for the Romans, embittered by the long resistance, spared neither age nor sex.

Thus King Herod entered his capital. In womanish distress Antigonus threw himself at the feet of the Roman legate, begging for his life; Sosius exclaimed in scorn: "Arise, Antigona," using the feminine form of the name, and had him put into chains. At Antiochia his head fell under the ax of the Roman lictor—it was the first captive ruling monarch whom the Romans had ever executed like a common criminal.

Herod's first care was to get rid of his friends and assistants without trouble: he actually bribed Sosius and the Roman troops, at great personal sacrifice, to abstain from the plundering of Jerusalem and the entering and desecration of the temple, and so they marched away, leaving Herod behind in his kingdom.

First Herod made a clean sweep of his enemies and opponents, and sought to keep the people, who feared and hated him, in terror and subjection. In order to show that he did not shrink from the memories of the Maccabees, he recalled to Jerusalem old Hyrcanus, who was honored as a prince by the Jews in Babylon, and at the same time selected a Jew of the race of the high priests, Ananiel by name, then living in Babylon, in order that the high-priesthood should be conferred upon him. But Herod's mother-in-law, Alexandra, demanded this office for her son Aristobulus, although he was as yet very young. She managed to work every lever, especially with the Egyptian Cleopatra, who completely dominated the all-powerful Antony, and so Herod was obliged to remove Ananiel and appoint in his place as high priest his own seventeen-year-old brother-in-law, Aristobulus. This was in the year 35.

But when Aristobulus, on the occasion of his first appearance as high priest, at the Feast of Tabernacles, was received by the people with demonstrative rejoicing Herod had him stifled in his bath. True, Antony called him to account for this; but Herod knew how to manage Antony, and again they parted as the best of friends. It was a less agreeable matter when Antony made a present to Cleopatra of the best part of Herod's land, and Herod was obliged to rent it of her at a high rate. Soon after this Cleopatra paid a visit to Herod in Jerusalem, and planned to snare him in her net in order thus through the resulting jealousy of Antony to destroy him; but Herod saw through the fine plan and acted

toward his guest like a perfect cavalier indeed, but with such reserve and propriety as to afford not the least ground for suspicion.

In the year 32 the war between Antony and Octavius broke out. Fortune spared Herod from participation, for he was compelled by the command of Antony to wage a war in the interest of Cleopatra against the Arabian king Aretas, and when this war was over it was also all over with Antony: the battle of Actium was fought on the 2nd of September, 31, and Antony was a dead man.

Now the game was to win the new ruler, and in this again Herod showed his whole cunning and knowledge of men: he visited Augustus in person at Rhodes, having first put old Hyrcanus out of the way to meet contingencies. And thus the last Maccabee was gone, and the family that had begun so gloriously less than a hundred and forty years before had perished most ignobly at least as much by the fault of its younger and unworthy members as by what we must admit was a harsh destiny. Herod managed to win over Augustus entirely, and returned to Jerusalem confirmed as king; he held the throne without opposition until his death in the year 4 before the birth of Christ.

The history of the reign of Herod is a history of palace details. Events of universal importance did not occur, and Herod followed his single principle---the favor and friendship of the Romans at any cost---so successfully and skilfully that not even the slightest cloud threatened him. But the history of his court is such a bottomless sea of filth and blood that I spare myself and the reader the narration of things at which the guardian genius of humanity can only veil his face. A wife who was passionately loved, his mother-in-law and three sons fell victims to his suspicion and tyranny, and in the country as well every motion or hint of opposition was suppressed with barbarous severity.

Herod was certainly an extraordinary man, decidedly the first really important personage in Jewish history since Simon. He was a born ruler, and his rule might and indeed must have been a blessing for his land and people if there had not been a lack of mutual confidence and love. Even in the best acts and undertakings of the hated monarch the Jews saw only evil intentions and selfish motives, and they hampered him in every possible way. He was simply the Idumean semi-Jew, the friend of the Romans, whose heart was on the side of the heathen anyway, and who would gladly have made them all heathen. Herod in turn repaid this hatred with the fiercest hostility and the most implacable vengeance.

ance; he knew that his own subjects were his worst enemies, and he acted accordingly.

It would be folly to deny that the outward condition of Judea under his rule was fortunate: he secured peace within and without, commerce flourished, prosperity increased visibly, and the great popularity which the king enjoyed everywhere else cast also a ray upon the people he ruled, and Herod used his very considerable influence everywhere for their benefit: wherever a wrong was done the Jews he interfered in their behalf and protected them in their rights and privileges.

So there would have been every outward reason for content; Judea under the government of Herod enjoyed in abundance what in the common view constitutes the happiness of nations—but he received no thanks for this because the people could not believe that it came from pure motives, and because they did not wish to accept, or at least to acknowledge, benefits from the hand of the friend of the heathen. Even repeated remission of taxes and extravagant aid in cases of public misfortune could bring forth no love where none had been sown; not even by the splendid restoration of the temple could he win the hearts of the Jewish people, because they were convinced that he would much rather have built in Jerusalem a heathen temple.

Aftertimes called Herod, the Great. He had the making of a great man; he was of the wood from which great men are carved, and in more favorable circumstances he would have been one perhaps; but as it was he wore out his strength and his life upon a hopeless task and thus brought upon his people and himself indescribable misery.

The reign of Herod is perhaps the most convincing evidence that there are powers which are stronger than crown and sword, and that violence avails nothing against the spirit. When Herod died in the spring of the year 4 before the birth of Christ, unlamented by his own, cursed by his people, a far-seeing eye could already perceive unmistakable signs of the end.

At home a mass of hatred and hostility had accumulated which only the iron hand of the old king had been able to restrain, and the real ambition of his life, to make the Roman rule tolerable to the Jews and to absorb them into the Greco-Roman world, had been an utter failure; contempt and loathing of everything Roman and Greek had become deeper seated than ever—when these two opposites clashed, the result could not fail to be a life and death struggle. Could it have been avoided? To do so would in any case have required on the part of the Romans more than human wisdom and moderation, and on the part of the Jews more than angelic patience and self-denial. But neither side wished to avoid it. We shall see how arbitrary injustice and wicked arrogance made the already difficult situation absolutely intolerable, so that at last the hopelessly tangled knot had to be cut by the sword.