

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

The Great Feast of Khushrush.

- 1 It was in the period of Khushrush. The Khushrush who was Emperor from Houd¹ to Kush,²—a hundred and twenty-seven provinces. In those days whilst this king reigned Khushrush fixed the throne of his Empire in the Palace of Shushan.
- 3 In the third year of his reign he made a feast for all his Princes and Ministers, and the powerful Officers of the Medes and Persians, and the Governors of the Provinces who were present with him, when he displayed the splendid wealth of his Empire, and the most beautiful treasures of his dominions for a number of days,
- 5 —a hundred and eighty days. And when that period was run out, the King made one to all the people who were found at the palace of Shushan ; —a feast for seven days to the small and great, in the Garden-court of the King's residence.
- 6 Curtains of muslin and purple hung on white cords, with fringes, on rings of silver from columns of marble. The sofas were of gold and silver, on a pavement of porphyry, and marble, and alabaster, and greenstone. And they drank out of golden cups of various patterns, plentifully of the royal wine, at the cost of the King.—
- 8 And this was the rule of the feast,—there was no control,—for so the King had ordered to the Steward of his Palace, that every one should do as he wished.

The Queen sent for.—Vashti's Refusal to Obey.

- 9 Vashti, the Queen, also made a feast for women in the Royal Palace

1 NOTE.—Ch. I, v. I. "India," "Houd," as spelt in the Hebrew, was the ancient name of Indostan, and is now the Province of "Oudh," in Central India, East of the Punjaub, and seems to have been the Eastern Boundary of the Persian Empire.—F. F.

² North Arabia.

of King Khushrush. On its seventh day, when the King was elated by wine, he ordered Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven Chief Eunuchs, who attended King Khushrush, to bring the Queen Vashti to the royal presence, with her Queenly crown, to show the people and nobles her beauty,—for she was charming to look at. But the Queen Vashti refused to come at the order of the King by the hand of the Eunuchs. The King was consequently very furious, and his rage fired him. The King therefore asked for the Judges who understood the customs,—as the King was accustomed to do towards all who understood affairs, and law, —and Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, Memucan, seven Princes of Persia, and Media approached him. They were the privy counsellors of the King, and Presidents of the Empire.

"What should be done to Queen Vashti according to Law, because she has not obeyed the order of the King Khushrush, given through the Chamberlains?" he asked.

And Memucan replied before King Khushrush and the Princes, "Vashti the Queen has not only insulted the King, but all the Princes, and all the People who are in all the Dominions of King Khushrush, for the action of the Queen will excite all the women to despise their masters in their sight, when they are told that King Khushrush commanded Vashti the Queen to be brought to him,—and she would not come! And to-day it will be told to the ladies of Persia and Media. And when all the King's nobles hear of the action of Queen Vashti, there will be contempt and anger! Therefore, if it is pleasing to the King, let this be recorded in the laws of the Persians and Medes, —so that it may not be passed by,—that Vashti shall no more come into the presence of Khushrush, and that

- her Queendom be given by the King to the least amongst her companions.
- 20 Thus when the Decree that the King has made is published in all his Kingdoms,—for they are many,—then all the wives will respect their husbands from the greatest to the least.”
- 21 This advice was satisfactory in the opinion of the King and the nobles. So the King acted on the advice of
- 22 Memucan, and sent out letters to all the royal provinces. To province and province according to its writing; and to People and People, according to its language, that every man should be master in his own house. He also published it in the language of his own People.

Khushrush Grieves after Dismissing Vashti.

- 2 After these events the fury of King Khushrush having subsided, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what had been decreed
- 2 against her. So the personal attendants of the King advised the King to seek young girls of charming beauty
- 3 for the King. The King consequently appointed officers in all the provinces of his Empire, who collected all the charmingly beautiful maiden girls to the Palace of Shushan, to the women's apartments, under the control of Hegai, the eunuch of the King, the Guardian of the wives, to give them
- 4 baths; and the girl who might be pleasing to the eyes of the King was to reign instead of Vashti. This suggestion was good in the opinion of the King, and it was adopted.

History of Esther.

- 5 There was a man, a Jew, an attendant in the Palace of Shushan, whose name was Mordecai-ben-Jair-ben-Shimei-ben-Kish, a man of
- 6 Benjamin, who had been carried from Jerusalem with the transports, when Jeconiah, the King of Judah, was transported by King Nebukadnezzar to Babel, and he had brought up Hadassah,—who is Esther,—his
- 7 niece, for she had neither father nor mother, and the girl was exceedingly beautiful, and attractive to look at, and on the death of her father and mother Mordecai took her to his own
- 8 home. And when the command and decree of the King was published,

and many girls were collected at the Palace of Shushan under the care of Hegai, Esther was also taken to the Palace of the King, to the care of Hegai, the Guardian of the wives; and the girl was attractive in his

9 opinion, and she acquired kindness from him, and he hastened her preparations, and the appointments to be given to her, and selected seven girls to be given to her from the royal household. He also removed her and her maids to the house of the handsome women.

Esther, however, did not inform

10 her people or her relatives, for Mordecai had ordered her not to inform them. But every day Mordecai

11 walked before the Court of the women's house, to enquire about the health of Esther, and what was done with her.

The Royal Marriage Custom in Ancient Persia.

When a girl's turn came, and that

12 girl went to King Khushrush, at the end of her preparations according to the usage of the women, during twelve months,—for then the period of the baths were accomplished,—six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes, and female

13 baths. The girl went to the King in this way;—all that she asked for was given to her to accompany her from the women's apartments to the apartment of the King. She went in the

14 evening, and returned in the morning to the apartment of the secondary wives, to the care of Shashgaz, the Royal Eunuch, Guardian of the favourites. She never again went to the King, except the King was pleased with her, and might invite her by name.

Esther made Queen.

But when the turn of Esther, the

15 daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai, who had adopted her as a daughter, arrived to go to the King, she did not request anything, except what Hegai, the Royal Eunuch, the Guardian of women suggested. Yet Esther found admiration from the eyes of all who saw her. Thus Esther

16 was taken to the apartment of King Khushrush in the tenth month,—which is the month Tebeth,—in the seventh year of his reign. And

17 the King loved Esther more than all

the women, and she acquired favour and consideration with the King more than all the girls, so he placed the Queenly crown on her head, and she Queened instead of Vashti.

Mordecai Promoted to the Royal Court.

- 18 The King also made a great feast on the occasion to all his Nobles and Ministers,—the feast of Esther,—and made a remission to his provinces, and distributed presents from the King's hand. And when the girls were assembled again, then Mordecai was promoted to the Royal Court.
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- 20 Esther, however, had not disclosed this to her relatives, or her people, as Mordecai had instructed her;—for Esther did as Mordecai commanded her, the same as when she was brought up by him.

Mordecai Discovers a Conspiracy.

- 21 During the period when Mordecai sat in the Royal Court, two of the Royal Chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of the Guardians of the Gate, were insulted, so they conspired to assail King Khushrush. But Mordecai was informed of the affair, and reported it to the Queen Esther, and Esther told it to the King, in the name of Mordecai.
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- 23 So he enquired into the matter and discovered it, and hung both of them on a tree, and had it recorded in the record of the daily events before the King.

Haman made Prime Minister.— His History.

- 3 After these events King Khushrush promoted Haman-ben-Hammedatha, the Agagite, and ennobled him, and set his chair above all the Princes he had. So all the ministers of the King who were in the Royal Gate knelt and bowed to Haman, for the King commanded it. But Mordecai would not kneel or bow. Consequently the ministers of the King, who were at the Royal Gate, said to Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the King's order?"
- 4 And they repeated this to him day by day, but he would not listen to them. So they informed Haman to ascertain if Mordecai could retain his position, for he had informed them he was a Jew. When Haman learned that Mordecai did not kneel or bow to him, Haman was filled with fury.
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But it was despicable in his eyes to lay hand on Mordecai alone,—for they had informed him of the race of Mordecai,—so Haman plotted to destroy the whole race of the Jews who were in the whole empire of Khushrush, along with Mordecai.

Haman Conspires to Exterminate the Jews.

In the first month,—which is the month of Nisan,—in the twelfth year of King Khushrush, they threw the arrows (which are their lots,)—before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, until the twelfth, which is the month of Adar.—Then Haman said to King Khushrush, "There exists a single people dispersed and scattered amongst all the provinces of your Empire, with different customs from all the people, and they do not obey the Edicts of the King. Consequently it is no advantage to the King to protect them. If, therefore, the King approves of an edict to destroy them, I will pay ten thousand talents of silver for the hands of those who execute the business, and bring it to the King's treasury."

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So the King took his seal from off his finger and gave it to Haman-ben-Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. The King also said to Haman, "I will give the money to you. But as for that People,—do what you like with them!"

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A Proclamation Issued to Destroy the Jews.

Then the Royal Trumpet was blown on the thirteenth day of the first month, and it was written, exactly as Haman ordered, to the Viceroy, and the Governors who were over Province and Province; and to the Generals of the Forces, and the Peoples in their own languages, it was written in the name of King Khushrush, and sealed with the Royal seal. Letters were also sent by means of the post to all the provinces of the King, "To destroy, to kill, and exterminate, the whole of the Jews, from youths to old men, with the infants and women in a single day,—in the thirteenth day of the twelfth month,"—which is the month of Adar,—and to plunder their property. A copy of this letter to be published as a Decree in every Province, and the Provincial Authorities to distribute it

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to all the Peoples, for them to be prepared for that day." The Mails were sent out urgently as if by command of the King, and the Decree was published at the Palace of Shushan, while the King and Haman sat drinking. But the City of Shushan was thrown into confusion.

Mordecai prays God to Defeat the Jews' Enemy.

4 Mordecai, however, knew of all that was done. Mordecai, therefore, tore off his robes, and clothed in a sack, and went to the centre of the City, and shrieked with a great and bitter shriek! Then he went opposite the Royal Gate,—for he might not enter the Gate of the King clothed in a sack. 3 And in every Province and Provincial village where the Order of the King, and the Decree arrived, there was great depression among the Jews, who fasted, and wept, and mourned in sacking, and ashes were spread under many.

Esther is Informed of the Decree.

4 But Esther's maids and her eunuch came and informed her; and the Queen was in great anguish, and sent clothing to Mordecai to clothe himself, and to ask him to strip the sacking off him. But he would not accept it. 5 Esther consequently called to Hatak, one of the Royal Chamberlains, who waited on her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this meant, and what it was? Hatak accordingly went to Mordecai, into the Market-place of the town, which is opposite 7 the King's Gate, and Mordecai informed him of all that had happened, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the King's treasury for the extermination of the 8 Jews. He also gave him a copy of the enrolled Decree, which was deposited at Shushan, for their destruction, to show to Esther, and he commanded her to go to the King to arouse him, and to intercede with him for her People. 9 Hatak then returned and reported 10 the words of Mordecai to Esther. But Esther replied to Hatak and despatched him to Mordecai;—"All the servants of the King, and the People of the Royal Provinces know that any man or woman who goes to the King into the Inner Court, who has not been

invited, has one fate,—to die!—except the King extends to them his Golden Sceptre. So it will be with myself. I have not been invited to go to the King this three days."

So he reported the words of Esther 12 to Mordecai.

But Mordecai replied in return to 13 Esther, "Do not imagine in your mind that the household of the King will escape more than all the Jews!—For 14 if you keep silent at this period, yet life and deliverance will arise to the Jews from some other quarter, but you and your father's house will be destroyed.—But who knows if it was not for this occasion you were raised to the Queendom?"

Then Esther commanded to reply 15 to Mordecai, "Go! Collect the whole 16 of the Jews who are found in Shushan, and let them fast for me, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night and day, and I also and my maids will fast. I will then go to the King, although contrary to the law,—and if I perish I shall perish."

Mordecai accordingly went and did 17 all that Esther commanded.

Esther Intercedes with the King for her People.

And when the third day arrived 5 Esther the Queen dressed herself and appeared in the Inner Court of the Royal Palace, opposite the King's apartments; and the King sat on the royal throne in the Palace, under the verandah of the Palace. And when 2 the King saw Queen Esther, she raised admiration in his eyes,—and the King extended the Golden Sceptre to Esther. So Esther approached to the end of the sceptre, when the King 3 asked, "What is it Queen Esther? And what do you ask?—It shall be given to you, even if half of my Empire!"

When Esther answered, "If it 4 pleases the King that the King and Haman would come to a dinner which I have made for them?"

Then the King said, "Order Haman 5 to be quick, and accomplish the request of Esther."

The King and Haman dine with Esther.

The King and Haman consequently went to the dinner that Esther had prepared, and the King asked 6

Esther while drinking his wine, "Whatever you ask shall be given to you; even if you ask half of my Empire,—it shall be done."

- 7 And Esther replied and said, "If I have found favour in the sight of the King,—and if it pleases the King to grant my request, and to do what I ask,—let the King and Haman come to a dinner that I will make for them, and to-morrow I will make a request to the King."

Haman Determines to Hang Mordecai.

- 9 Haman consequently went out that day glad and delighted at heart. But when Haman saw Mordecai at the Gate of the King, and that he did not rise or tremble before him, Haman was filled with fury against Mordecai.
- 10 However, Haman restrained himself, and went to his home, where he sent and collected his friends and his wife
- 11 Zeresh, and Haman related to them his great wealth, and his numerous children, and how the King had advanced him, and how he had raised him above all the Princes and
- 12 Ministers of the King. "And," Haman continued, "Esther the Queen also did not admit with the King anyone to the Dinner that she made, except myself! And also to-morrow I am invited by her, together with
- 13 the King!—But all this is nothing to me, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sit in the Court of the King!"
- 14 So Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let them make a Gallows fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak to the King, and he will hang Mordecai upon it. Then go to the dinner with the King, happy and glad hearted!"

This advice was good in the opinion of Haman.

Khushrush cannot Sleep.

- 6 On that night sleep wandered from the King, so he ordered the records of the current events of his days to be brought, and they were read before
- 2 the King; and the record of the information given by Mordecai about Bigthan and Tharash the Royal Chamberlains who guarded the threshold, who conspired to lay hands on
- 3 King Khushrush, was lit upon. When the King asked, "What has been done

in value and advancement to Mordecai for that?"

And the young men who attended on the King replied, "Nothing has been done for him."

So the King asked, "Who is in the Court?"

Just then Haman had come to the Outer Court of the Royal Palace to ask the King to hang Mordecai on the gallows he had prepared for him; so the pages of the King said to him, "We see Haman standing in the Court;" and the King replied, "Let him enter!"

The Man the King delights to Honour.

Haman consequently entered, and the King asked him, "What should be done to the man whom the King delights to honour?"

But Haman said to his heart, "Whom would the King delight to honour, except myself?" Therefore Haman replied to the King,

"For the man whom the King may delight to honour, let them bring Royal Robes, such as the King himself has worn, and a horse that the King has ridden upon, and which has the Royal Plume on its head; and let them give the robes and the horse into the hand of a man among the most distinguished of the King's Nobles, and let them be put upon the man whom the King delights to honour with distinction, and let him ride on the horse through the streets of the City, and proclaim before him;

'It is done thus to the man whom the King delights to honour!'"

Haman Ordered to Honour Mordecai.

The King then said to Haman, "Make haste! Take the robes and the horse, as you have said, and do so to MORDECAI the JEW, who sits in the Royal Gate! Do not omit anything from all that you have suggested."

Haman therefore took the robes and the horse and clothed Mordecai, and he rode through the Squares of the City, and it was proclaimed before him,

"IT IS DONE THUS TO THE MAN WHOM THE KING DELIGHTS TO HONOUR!"

Then Mordecai returned to the Royal Court, but Haman went to his home depressed and with an aching head. And Haman related to Zeresh his wife, and to all his friends, all that had happened, when his advisers and his wife said to him ;

"If this Mordecai is of the Jewish race, before whom you have begun to fall, you cannot resist him,—but will fall before him."

Esther's Second Dinner.

14 While they were talking with him the King's Chamberlains approached and commanded Haman to come to the dinner that Esther had prepared.

7 So the King and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther.

Haman begs his Wife of Esther and is Refused.

2 Then the King said to Esther, on the second day, while drinking his wine, "What do you ask, Queen Esther, and it shall be given to you? Even if you ask for half of my Empire—it shall be done!"

3 And Queen Esther answered and said, "If I have found favour in your eyes, King;—and if it is the pleasure of the King—Give me my life, at my request, and my People's on my Petition! For we are sold,—I and my People,—to Destruction, to Murder, and to Extermination! And if we had only been sold for bondmen and women, I would have been silent; but there is no affliction comparable to the King's loss!"

5 But King Khushrush answered, and asked of Queen Esther, "Who is he,—and what is he,—who has planned in his heart to do this?"

6 And Esther replied, "A cruel and hateful man;—That wicked Haman!"

7 Then Haman was terrified at the faces of the King and Queen. And the King rushed in his fury from the wine table to the Palace Garden; but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Esther the Queen; for he saw that complete ruin from the King was before him.

8 When the King returned from the Palace Garden to the Wine-room, Haman was fallen on the sofa that Esther was upon, so the King exclaimed, "Will he also ravish the Queen before me in the Palace?"

So the word went out of the King's

mouth, and they covered Haman's face, and Harbonah, one of the Royal Chamberlains, said, "There is ready the gallows of fifty cubits high that Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good news to the King. It stands near the Palace of Haman!—If the King commands he can be hung upon it!"

So they hung Haman on the 10 Gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai! Then the fury of the King was appeased.

Haman's House given to Esther.

On the same day King Khushrush 8 gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman, the Jew-hater, and Mordecai was brought before the King, for Esther had informed him what he was to her, and the King took off 2 his ring,—that which he had recovered from Haman,—and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

Esther begs the Life of her People.

Then Esther again spoke to the 3 King, and fell at his feet, and wept, and besought him to redress the wickedness of Haman, the Agagite, and the conspiracy he had contrived against the Jews. And the King 4 extended the Golden Sceptre. So Esther arose and stood before the King, and said, "If it is good to the 5 King, and if I have found favour before him, and it is acceptable before the King, and I am pleasing in his eyes,—let it be written to reverse the letters that Haman-ben-Hammadatha the Agagite contrived, when he wrote to exterminate the Jews, who are in all the Provinces of the King. For how can I bear to 6 see the misery that will find my People? And how can I endure to look on the destruction of my relatives?"

King Khushrush, however, replied 7 to Esther the Queen, and to Mordecai the Jew, "You see I have given the Palace of Haman to Esther, and they have hung him upon the Gallows, because he stretched out his hand against the Jews.—But 8 you must write to the Jews, as seems best in your opinion, in the name of the King, and you can seal with the Royal Seal,—for a letter that has been written in the Royal Name, and sealed with the

Royal Seal, is not able to be reversed!"

The Imperial Order to the Jews to Defend Themselves.

- 9 They consequently summoned the Royal Secretaries for the purpose in haste, on the twenty-third day of the month Sivan,—the third month,—who wrote as they were instructed by Mordecai the Jew, to the Viceroy, and Governors, and Generals of the Provinces, which were from Houd to Kush, a hundred and twenty-seven Provinces, Province by Province, according to the writing of the People, and according to the language of the People, and to the Jews in their Alphabet and Language.
- 10 They wrote in the name of the King Khushrush, and sealed it with the Royal Seal, and sent the letters by the Posts on horseback, on Race-
- 11 horses, bred in the royal stud, by which the King granted to the Jews who were in every town to collect and stand for their lives, and to destroy, to kill, and exterminate all forces of the people or province who assailed them, to infant, and wife,
- 12 and to plunder their property, on the same day in all the Provinces of King Khushrush, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month,—which is the month of Adar.
- 13 A copy of this letter was also published as a decree in every Province and Government, openly, to all the Peoples, that the Jews might be ready against that day to defend themselves from their enemies.
- 14 The Posts therefore went out mounted on race-horses from the studs, hurried and impelled by command of the King. The Decree was also published at the Palace of Shushan.

Mordecai made Prime Minister of Persia.

- 15 Then Mordecai left the presence of the King completely clothed in Royal Robes of blue and white, and a great wreath of gold, and a shawl of muslin and purple; and the City of Shushan shouted and rejoiced.
- 16 And the Jews had light and delight,
- 17 and joy, and honour. And all over, Province by Province, and in every City, and Village where the Royal Message and Decree arrived, the Jews were glad and rejoiced, with festivity, and a good day, and many

from among the population of the country became Jews, for a terror of the Jews fell upon them.

The Jews Destroy their Assailants.

So in the twelfth month,—that is 9 the month of Adar,—on the twelfth day of it, when it approached to put the Royal Command and Decree into practice;—on the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to dominate them;—it then turned about that the Jews dominated those who hated them! And the 2 Jews collected in the towns, and in all the Provinces of King Khushrush, and assailed all who sought to injure them, and no man could resist them, for a terror had fallen on all the Peoples. And all the Generals of 3 the Provinces, and the Viceroy, and Governors, and Executive Officers of the Royal affairs, assisted the Jews, for the terror of Mordecai had fallen upon them. For Mordecai 4 was great in the Palace of the King, and his fame travelled to all the Provinces, for the man Mordecai advanced and was great.

The Jews therefore struck with the 5 edge of the sword all their enemies, and slew, and destroyed, and did to their enemies as they pleased. And 6 in the Palace of Shushan the Jews killed five hundred persons, and 7 Parshomdatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha, and Poratha, and Adalia, 8 and Aridatha, and Parmashta, and Arisal, and Aridal, and Vaizatha, 9 the ten sons of Haman-ben-Hamma- 10 datha, the Jews' enemy, they killed, but did not lay hands on their property.

On the same day the number of 11 the slain at the Palace of Shushan was brought before the King, when 12 the King said to Esther the Queen, "In the Palace of Shushan the Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred persons, and the ten sons of Haman;—What have they done in the rest of the Royal Provinces?—Now what is your request?—and it shall be given to you!—And what is your petition further?—and it shall be done!"

And Esther replied, "If it is the 13 King's pleasure, grant that the Jews may do to-morrow what they have done to-day in Shushan,—and let them hang the ten sons of Haman on the Gallows!"

14 And the King replied, "It shall be done." So a Decree was issued in Shushan, and the ten sons of
 15 Haman were hung up. The Jews also who were at Shushan collected on that day, and slew in Shushan three hundred persons, but laid not their hands upon their property.
 16 And the rest of the Jews who were in the Royal Provinces collected and stood for their lives, and for peace from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of their haters,
 17 but did not seize their property, on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, but rested on the fourteenth, and made it a day of festivity and rejoicing. The Jews in Shushan,
 18 however, collected on the thirteenth and fourteenth of it, but rested on the fifteenth, and made that a day
 19 of festivity and pleasure. Consequently he scattered Jews who resided in the scattered villages make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a delight and festivity, and a good day, and send presents to their neighbours.

The Feast of Purim Appointed to the Jews.

20 Mordecai afterwards recorded these events, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in the whole of the Dominions of King Khushrush,
 21 near or far, to ordain to them to celebrate the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and the fifteenth day of it, from year to year, as days upon which safety came to the Jews from their enemies, and as the month which was turned from agony to delight for them, and from despair to be a pleasant day, and to make them days of festivity and delight, and for sending presents everyone to his neighbour, and gifts to the poor.
 23 The Jews consequently undertook to continue it, as they had begun to do, and as Mordecai had written to them, for Haman-ben-Hammadatha, the Agagite, the oppressor of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to exterminate them, and he had thrown the arrow, (that was his lot), to defeat and exterminate them.
 25 However, when it came to be discovered, the King commanded by letters to turn the wicked plot, that

he had contrived against the Jews, upon his own head, and they hung him and his sons on a Gallows.

They consequently name those 26 days, "Purim,"¹ from the word for an Arrow. Therefore on the receipt of these letters, and an account of what they had experienced, and what had occurred to them, the Jews 27 decreed and imposed upon themselves and on their descendants and all who joined them, that they would not omit to do year by year on these two days as the letters directed. And that those days should be 28 remembered and practised from generation to generation, in every family, province, and town, and that these days of Purim should not be omitted amongst the Jews, nor the memory of them cease from their race.

Esther Confirms the Feast of Purim.

Esther, the Queen, also, wrote 29 with full authority to confirm the second Decree of Purim; and sent 30 letters to all the Jews of the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the Empire of Khushrush, as messages of peace and security. And confirmed 31 the fixed days of Purim as Mordecai and Queen Esther had appointed to them; and which they had taken upon the souls of themselves and their race, with acts of fasting and crying,—So the Command of Esther confirmed the affairs of the Purim, and it was recorded in this book.

The Greatness of Mordecai.

King Khushrush afterwards laid a 10 tax on the land and the isles of the sea. And as to all the result of his 2 authority and power, and the wide greatness of Mordecai, how great he was with the King, they are recorded in the history of the events of the days of the Kings of Media and Persia. For Mordecai the Jew was second 3 to King Khushrush, and great among the Jews, and delightful to the man of his countrymen. He sought to benefit his People, and made safety for all his race.

¹ NOTE.—Purim, "Arrow," from the Persian, "Pur," an arrow.—F. F.