

HISTORY OF THE JEWS

By Josephus

Book Twelve

CONTAINING THE INTERVAL OF A HUNDRED AND SEVENTY YEARS.

FROM THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT TO THE DEATH OF JUDAS MACCABEUS.

CHAPTER ONE

HOW PTOLEMY THE SON OF LAGUS TOOK JERUSALEM AND JUDEA BY DECEIT AND TREACHERY, AND CARRIED MANY THENCE, AND PLANTED THEM IN EGYPT.

Now when Alexander, king of Macedon, had put an end to the dominion of the Persians, and had settled the affairs in Judea after the forementioned manner, he ended his life. And as his government fell among many, Antigonus obtained Asia, Seleucus Babylon; and of the other nations which were there, Lysimachus governed the Hellespont, and Cassander possessed Macedonia; as did Ptolemy the son of Lagus seize upon Egypt. And while these princes ambitiously strove one against another, every one for his own principality, it came to pass that there were continual wars, and

those lasting wars too; and the cities were sufferers, and lost a great many of their inhabitants in these times of distress, insomuch that all Syria, by the means of Ptolemy the son of Lagus, underwent the reverse of that denomination of Savior, which he then had. He also seized upon Jerusalem, and for that end made use of deceit and treachery; for as he came into the city on a sabbath day, as if he would offer sacrifices he, without any trouble, gained the city, while the Jews did not oppose him, for they did not suspect him to be their enemy; and he gained it thus, because they were free from suspicion of him, and because on that day they were at rest and quietness; and when he had gained it, he ruled over it in a cruel manner. Nay, Agatharchides of Cnidus, who wrote the acts of Alexander's successors, reproaches us with superstition, as if we, by it, had lost our liberty; where he says thus: "There is a nation called the nation of the Jews, who inhabit a city strong and great, named Jerusalem. These men took no care, but let it come into the hands of Ptolemy, as not willing to take arms, and thereby they submitted to be under a hard master, by reason of their unseasonable superstition." This is what Agatharchides relates of our nation. But when Ptolemy had taken a great many captives, both from the mountainous parts of Judea, and from the places about Jerusalem and Samaria, and the places near Mount Gerizzim, he led them all into Egypt, and settled them there. And as he knew that the people of Jerusalem were most faithful in the observation of oaths and covenants; and this from the answer they made to Alexander, when he sent an embassy to them, after he had beaten Darius in battle; so he

distributed many of them into garrisons, and at Alexandria gave them equal privileges of citizens with the Macedonians themselves; and required of them to take their oaths, that they would keep their fidelity to the posterity of those who committed these places to their care. Nay, there were not a few other Jews who, of their own accord, went into Egypt, as invited by the goodness of the soil, and by the liberality of Ptolemy. However, there were disorders among their posterity, with relation to the Samaritans, on account of their resolution to preserve that conduct of life which was delivered to them by their forefathers, and they thereupon contended one with another, while those of Jerusalem said that their temple was holy, and resolved to send their sacrifices thither; but the Samaritans were resolved that they should be sent to Mount Gerizzim.

CHAPTER TWO

HOW PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS PROCURED THE LAWS OF THE JEWS TO BE TRANSLATED INTO THE GREEK TONGUE AND SET MANY CAPTIVES FREE, AND DEDICATED MANY GIFTS TO GOD.

WHEN Alexander had reigned twelve years, and after him Ptolemy Soter forty years, Philadelphus then took the kingdom of Egypt, and held it forty years within one. He procured the law to be interpreted, and set free those that were come from Jerusalem into Egypt, and were in slavery there, who were a hundred and twenty thousand. The occasion was this: Demetrius Phalerius, who was library keeper to the king, was now endeavoring,

if it were possible, to gather together all the books that were in the habitable earth, and buying whatsoever was any where valuable, or agreeable to the king's inclination, (who was very earnestly set upon collecting of books,) to which inclination of his Demetrius was zealously subservient. And when once Ptolemy asked him how many ten thousands of books he had collected, he replied, that he had already about twenty times ten thousand; but that, in a little time, he should have fifty times ten thousand. But he said he had been informed that there were many books of laws among the Jews worthy of inquiring after, and worthy of the king's library, but which, being written in characters and in a dialect of their own, will cause no small pains in getting them translated into the Greek tongue; that the character in which they are written seems to be like to that which is the proper character of the Syrians, and that its sound, when pronounced, is like theirs also; and that this sound appears to be peculiar to themselves. Wherefore he said that nothing hindered why they might not get those books to be translated also; for while nothing is wanting that is necessary for that purpose, we may have their books also in this library. So the king thought that Demetrius was very zealous to procure him abundance of books, and that he suggested what was exceeding proper for him to do; and therefore he wrote to the Jewish high priest, that he should act accordingly.

Now there was one Aristeus, who was among the king's most intimate friends, and on account of his modesty very acceptable to him. This Aristeus resolved frequently, and that before now, to

petition the king that he would set all the captive Jews in his kingdom free; and he thought this to be a convenient opportunity for the making that petition. So he discoursed, in the first place, with the captains of the king's guards, Sosibius of Tarentum, and Andreas, and persuaded them to assist him in what he was going to intercede with the king for. Accordingly Aristeus embraced the same opinion with those that have been before mentioned, and went to the king, and made the following speech to him: "It is not fit for us, O king, to overlook things hastily, or to deceive ourselves, but to lay the truth open. For since we have determined not only to get the laws of the Jews transcribed, but interpreted also, for thy satisfaction, by what means can we do this, while so many of the Jews are now slaves in thy kingdom? Do thou then what will be agreeable to thy magnanimity, and to thy good nature: free them from the miserable condition they are in, because that God, who supporteth thy kingdom, was the author of their laws as I have learned by particular inquiry; for both these people, and we also, worship the same God the framer of all things. We call him, and that truly, by the name of GREEK, [or life, or Jupiter,] because he breathes life into all men. Wherefore do thou restore these men to their own country, and this do to the honor of God, because these men pay a peculiarly excellent worship to him. And know this further, that though I be not of kin to them by birth, nor one of the same country with them, yet do I desire these favors to be done them, since all men are the workmanship of God; and I am sensible that he is well-pleased with those that do good. I do therefore put up this petition to

thee, to do good to them.”

When Aristeus was saying thus, the king looked upon him with a cheerful and joyful countenance, and said, “How many ten thousands dost thou suppose there are of such as want to be made free?” To which Andreas replied, as he stood by, and said, “A few more than ten times ten thousand.” The king made answer, “And is this a small gift that thou askest, Aristeus?” But Sosibius, and the rest that stood by, said that he ought to offer such a thank-offering as was worthy of his greatness of soul, to that God who had given him his kingdom. With this answer he was much pleased; and gave order, that when they paid the soldiers their wages, they should lay down [a hundred and] twenty drachmas for every one of the slaves? And he promised to publish a magnificent decree, about what they requested, which should confirm what Aristeus had proposed, and especially what God willed should be done; whereby he said he would not only set those free who had been led away captive by his father and his army, but those who were in this kingdom before, and those also, if any such there were, who had been brought away since. And when they said that their redemption money would amount to above four hundred talents, he granted it. A copy of which decree I have determined to preserve, that the magnanimity of this king may be made known. Its contents were as follows: “Let ail those who were soldiers under our father, and who, when they overran Syria and Phoenicia, and laid waste Judea, took the Jews captives, and made them slaves, and brought them into our cities, and into this country, and then sold them; as also all those that were in my

kingdom before them, and if there be any that have been lately brought thither, - be made free by those that possess them; and let them accept of [a hundred and] twenty drachmas for every slave. And let the soldiers receive this redemption money with their pay, but the rest out of the king's treasury: for I suppose that they were made captives without our father's consent, and against equity; and that their country was harassed by the insolence of the soldiers, and that, by removing them into Egypt, the soldiers have made a great profit by them. Out of regard therefore to justice, and out of pity to those that have been tyrannized over, contrary to equity, I enjoin those that have such Jews in their service to set them at liberty, upon the receipt of the before-mentioned sum; and that no one use any deceit about them, but obey what is here commanded. And I will that they give in their names within three days after the publication of this edict, to such as are appointed to execute the same, and to produce the slaves before them also, for I think it will be for the advantage of my affairs. And let every one that will inform against those that do not obey this decree, and I will that their estates be confiscated into the king's treasury." When this decree was read to the king, it at first contained the rest that is here inserted, and omitted only those Jews that had formerly been brought, and those brought afterwards, which had not been distinctly mentioned; so he added these clauses out of his humanity, and with great generosity. He also gave order that the payment, which was likely to be done in a hurry, should be divided among the king's ministers, and among the officers of his treasury. When this was over, what

the king had decreed was quickly brought to a conclusion; and this in no more than seven days' time, the number of the talents paid for the captives being above four hundred and sixty, and this, because their masters required the [hundred and] twenty drachmas for the children also, the king having, in effect, commanded that these should be paid for, when he said in his decree, that they should receive the forementioned sum for every slave.

Now when this had been done after so magnificent a manner, according to the king's inclinations, he gave order to Demetrius to give him in writing his sentiments concerning the transcribing of the Jewish books; for no part of the administration is done rashly by these kings, but all things are managed with great circumspection. On which account I have subjoined a copy of these epistles, and set down the multitude of the vessels sent as gifts [to Jerusalem], and the construction of every one, that the exactness of the artificers' workmanship, as it appeared to those that saw them, and which workman made every vessel, may be made manifest, and. this on account of the excellency of the vessels themselves. Now the copy of the epistle was to this purpose: "Demetrius to the great king. When thou, O king, gavest me a charge concerning the collection of books that were wanting to fill your library, and concerning the care that ought to be taken about such as are imperfect, I have used the utmost diligence about those matters. And I let you know, that we want the books of the Jewish legislation, with some others; for they are written in the Hebrew characters, and being in the language of that

nation, are to us unknown. It hath also happened to them, that they have been transcribed more carelessly than they ought to have been, because they have not had hitherto royal care taken about them. Now it is necessary that thou shouldst have accurate copies of them. And indeed this legislation is full of hidden wisdom, and entirely blameless, as being the legislation of God; for which cause it is, as Hecateus of Abdera says, that the poets and historians make no mention of it, nor of those men who lead their lives according to it, since it is a holy law, and ought not to be published by profane mouths. If then it please thee, O king, thou mayst write to the high priest of the Jews, to send six of the elders out of every tribe, and those such as are most skillful of the laws, that by their means we may learn the clear and agreeing sense of these books, and may obtain an accurate interpretation of their contents, and so may have such a collection of these as may be suitable to thy desire."

When this epistle was sent to the king, he commanded that an epistle should be drawn up for Eleazar, the Jewish high priest, concerning these matters; and that they should inform him of the release of the Jews that had been in slavery among them. He also sent fifty talents of gold for the making of large basons, and vials, and cups, and an immense quantity of precious stones. He also gave order to those who had the custody of the chest that contained those stones, to give the artificers leave to choose out what sorts of them they pleased. He withal appointed, that a hundred talents in money should be sent to the temple for sacrifices, and for other uses. Now I will give a

description of these vessels, and the manner of their construction, but not till after I have set down a copy of the epistle which was written to Eleazar the high priest, who had obtained that dignity on the occasion following: When Onias the high priest was dead, his son Simon became his successor. He was called Simon the Just because of both his piety towards God, and his kind disposition to those of his own nation. When he was dead, and had left a young son, who was called Onias, Simon's brother Eleazar, of whom we are speaking, took the high priesthood; and he it was to whom Ptolemy wrote, and that in the manner following: "King Ptolemy to Eleazar the high priest, sendeth greeting. There are many Jews who now dwell in my kingdom, whom the Persians, when they were in power, carried captives. These were honored by my father; some of them he placed in the army, and gave them greater pay than ordinary; to others of them, when they came with him into Egypt, he committed his garrisons, and the guarding of them, that they might be a terror to the Egyptians. And when I had taken the government, I treated all men with humanity, and especially those that are thy fellow citizens, of whom I have set free above a hundred thousand that were slaves, and paid the price of their redemption to their masters out of my own revenues; and those that are of a fit age, I have admitted into them number of my soldiers. And for such as are capable of being faithful to me, and proper for my court, I have put them in such a post, as thinking this [kindness done to them] to be a very great and an acceptable gift, which I devote to God for his providence over me. And as I am desirous to do what will be grateful to these,

and to all the other Jews in the habitable earth, I have determined to procure an interpretation of your law, and to have it translated out of Hebrew into Greek, and to be deposited in my library. Thou wilt therefore do well to choose out and send to me men of a good character, who are now elders in age, and six in number out of every tribe. These, by their age, must be skillful in the laws, and of abilities to make an accurate interpretation of them; and when this shall be finished, I shall think that I have done a work glorious to myself. And I have sent to thee Andreas, the captain of my guard, and Aristeus, men whom I have in very great esteem; by whom I have sent those first-fruits which I have dedicated to the temple, and to the sacrifices, and to other uses, to the value of a hundred talents. And if thou wilt send to us, to let us know what thou wouldst have further, thou wilt do a thing acceptable to me."

When this epistle of the king was brought to Eleazar, he wrote an answer to it with all the respect possible: "Eleazar the high priest to king Ptolemy, sendeth greeting. If thou and thy queen Arsinoe, and thy children, be well, we are entirely satisfied. When we received thy epistle, we greatly rejoiced at thy intentions; and when the multitude were gathered together, we read it to them, and thereby made them sensible of the piety thou hast towards God. We also showed them the twenty vials of gold, and thirty of silver, and the five large basons, and the table for the shew-bread; as also the hundred talents for the sacrifices, and for the making what shall be needful at the temple; which things Andreas and

Aristeus, those most honored friends of thine, have brought us; and truly they are persons of an excellent character, and of great learning, and worthy of thy virtue. Know then that we will gratify thee in what is for thy advantage, though we do what we used not to do before; for we ought to make a return for the numerous acts of kindness which thou hast done to our countrymen. We immediately, therefore, offered sacrifices for thee and thy sister, with thy children and friends; and the multitude made prayers, that thy affairs may be to thy mind, and that thy kingdom may be preserved in peace, and that the translation of our law may come to the conclusion thou desirest, and be for thy advantage. We have also chosen six elders out of every tribe, whom we have sent, and the law with them. It will be thy part, out of thy piety and justice, to send back the law, when it hath been translated, and to return those to us that bring it in safety. Farewell."

This was the reply which the high priest made. But it does not seem to me to be necessary to set down the names of the seventy [two] elders who were sent by Eleazar, and carried the law, which yet were subjoined at the end of the epistle. However, I thought it not improper to give an account of those very valuable and artificially contrived vessels which the king sent to God, that all may see how great a regard the king had for God; for the king allowed a vast deal of expenses for these vessels, and came often to the workmen, and viewed their works, and suffered nothing of carelessness or negligence to be any damage to their operations. And I will relate how rich they

were as well as I am able, although perhaps the nature of this history may not require such a description; but I imagine I shall thereby recommend the elegant taste and magnanimity of this king to those that read this history.

And first I will describe what belongs to the table. It was indeed in the king's mind to make this table vastly large in its dimensions; but then he gave orders that they should learn what was the magnitude of the table which was already at Jerusalem, and how large it was, and whether there was a possibility of making one larger than it. And when he was informed how large that was which was already there, and that nothing hindered but a larger might be made, he said that he was willing to have one made that should be five times as large as the present table; but his fear was, that it might be then useless in their sacred ministrations by its too great largeness; for he desired that the gifts he presented them should not only be there for show, but should be useful also in their sacred ministrations. According to which reasoning, that the former table was made of so moderate a size for use, and not for want of gold, he resolved that he would not exceed the former table in largeness; but would make it exceed it in the variety and elegance of its materials. And as he was sagacious in observing the nature of all things, and in having a just notion of what was new and surprising, and where there was no sculptures, he would invent such as were proper by his own skill, and would show them to the workmen, he commanded that such sculptures should now be made, and that those which were delineated should be most accurately formed by a

constant regard to their delineation.

When therefore the workmen had undertaken to make the table, they framed it in length two cubits [and a half], in breadth one cubit, and in height one cubit and a half; and the entire structure of the work was of gold. They withal made a crown of a hand-breadth round it, with wave-work wreathed about it, and with an engraving which imitated a cord, and was admirably turned on its three parts; for as they were of a triangular figure, every angle had the same disposition of its sculptures, that when you turned them about, the very same form of them was turned about without any variation. Now that part of the crown-work that was enclosed under the table had its sculptures very beautiful; but that part which went round on the outside was more elaborately adorned with most beautiful ornaments, because it was exposed to sight, and to the view of the spectators; for which reason it was that both those sides which were extant above the rest were acute, and none of the angles, which we before told you were three, appeared less than another, when the table was turned about. Now into the cordwork thus turned were precious stones inserted, in rows parallel one to the other, enclosed in golden buttons, which had ouches in them; but the parts which were on the side of the crown, and were exposed to the sight, were adorned with a row of oval figures obliquely placed, of the most excellent sort of precious stones, which imitated rods laid close, and encompassed the table round about. But under these oval figures, thus engraven, the workmen had put a crown all round it, where the nature of all sorts of fruit was represented, insomuch that the

bunches of grapes hung up. And when they had made the stones to represent all the kinds of fruit before mentioned, and that each in its proper color, they made them fast with gold round the whole table. The like disposition of the oval figures, and of the engraved rods, was framed under the crown, that the table might on each side show the same appearance of variety and elegance of its ornaments; so that neither the position of the wave-work nor of the crown might be different, although the table were turned on the other side, but that the prospect of the same artificial contrivances might be extended as far as the feet; for there was made a plate of gold four fingers broad, through the entire breadth of the table, into which they inserted the feet, and then fastened them to the table by buttons and button-holes, at the place where the crown was situate, that so on what side soever of the table one should stand, it might exhibit the very same view of the exquisite workmanship, and of the vast expeses bestowed upon it: but upon the table itself they engraved a meander, inserting into it very valuable stones in the middle like stars, of various colors; the carbuncle and the emerald, each of which sent out agreeable rays of light to the spectators; with such stones of other sorts also as were most curious and best esteemed, as being most precious in their kind. Hard by this meander a texture of net-work ran round it, the middle of which appeared like a rhombus, into which were inserted rock-crystal and amber, which, by the great resemblance of the appearance they made, gave wonderful delight to those that saw them. The chapiters of the feet imitated the first buddings of lilies, while their leaves were bent

and laid under the table, but so that the chives were seen standing upright within them. Their bases were made of a carbuncle; and the place at the bottom, which rested on that carbuncle, was one palm deep, and eight fingers in breadth. Now they had engraven upon it with a very fine tool, and with a great deal of pains, a branch of ivy and tendrils of the vine, sending forth clusters of grapes, that you would guess they were nowise different from real tendrils; for they were so very thin, and so very far extended at their extremities, that they were moved with the wind, and made one believe that they were the product of nature, and not the representation of art. They also made the entire workmanship of the table appear to be threefold, while the joints of the several parts were so united together as to be invisible, and the places where they joined could not be distinguished. Now the thickness of the table was not less than half a cubit. So that this gift, by the king's great generosity, by the great value of the materials, and the variety of its exquisite structure, and the artificer's skill in imitating nature with graying tools, was at length brought to perfection, while the king was very desirous, that though in largeness it were not to be different from that which was already dedicated to God, yet that in exquisite workmanship, and the novelty of the contrivances, and in the splendor of its construction, it should far exceed it, and be more illustrious than that was.

Now of the cisterns of gold there were two, whose sculpture was of scale-work, from its basis to its belt-like circle, with various sorts of stones enchased in the spiral circles. Next to which

there was upon it a meander of a cubit in height; it was composed of stones of all sorts of colors. And next to this was the rod-work engraven; and next to that was a rhombus in a texture of network, drawn out to the brim of the basin, while small shields, made of stones, beautiful in their kind, and of four fingers' depth, filled up the middle parts. About the top of the basin were wreathed the leaves of lilies, and of the convolvulus, and the tendrils of vines in a circular manner. And this was the construction of the two cisterns of gold, each containing two firkins. But those which were of silver were much more bright and splendid than looking-glasses, and you might in them see the images that fell upon them more plainly than in the other. The king also ordered thirty vials; those of which the parts that were of gold, and filled up with precious stones, were shadowed over with the leaves of ivy and of vines, artificially engraven. And these were the vessels that were after an extraordinary manner brought to this perfection, partly by the skill of the workmen, who were admirable in such fine work, but much more by the diligence and generosity of the king, who not only supplied the artificers abundantly, and with great generosity, with what they wanted, but he forbade public audiences for the time, and came and stood by the workmen, and saw the whole operation. And this was the cause why the workmen were so accurate in their performance, because they had regard to the king, and to his great concern about the vessels, and so the more indefatigably kept close to the work.

And these were what gifts were sent by Ptolemy to

Jerusalem, and dedicated to God there. But when Eleazar the high priest had devoted them to God, and had paid due respect to those that brought them, and had given them presents to be carried to the king, he dismissed them. And when they were come to Alexandria, and Ptolemy heard that they were come, and that the seventy elders were come also, he presently sent for Andreas and Aristens, his ambassadors, who came to him, and delivered him the epistle which they brought him from the high priest, and made answer to all the questions he put to them by word of mouth. He then made haste to meet the elders that came from Jerusalem for the interpretation of the laws; and he gave command, that every body who came on other occasions should be sent away, which was a thing surprising, and what he did not use to do; for those that were drawn thither upon such occasions used to come to him on the fifth day, but ambassadors at the month's end. But when he had sent those away, he waited for these that were sent by Eleazar; but as the old men came in with the presents, which the high priest had given them to bring to the king, and with the membranes, upon which they had their laws written in golden letters he put questions to them concerning those books; and when they had taken off the covers wherein they were wrapt up, they showed him the membranes. So the king stood admiring the thinness of those membranes, and the exactness of the junctures, which could not be perceived; (so exactly were they connected one with another;) and this he did for a considerable time. He then said that he returned them thanks for coming to him, and still greater thanks to him that sent them; and, above all, to that God whose laws they

appeared to be. Then did the elders, and those that were present with them, cry out with one voice, and wished all happiness to the king. Upon which he fell into tears by the violence of the pleasure he had, it being natural to men to afford the same indications in great joy that they do under sorrows. And when he had bid them deliver the books to those that were appointed to receive them, he saluted the men, and said that it was but just to discourse, in the first place, of the errand they were sent about, and then to address himself to themselves. He promised, however, that he would make this day on which they came to him remarkable and eminent every year through the whole course of his life; for their coming to him, and the victory which he gained over Antigonus by sea, proved to be on the very same day. He also gave orders that they should sup with him; and gave it in charge that they should have excellent lodgings provided for them in the upper part of the city.

Now he that was appointed to take care of the reception of strangers, Nicanor by name, called for Dorotheus, whose duty it was to make provision for them, and bid him prepare for every one of them what should be requisite for their diet and way of living; which thing was ordered by the king after this manner: he took care that those that belonged to every city, which did not use the same way of living, that all things should be prepared for them according to the custom of those that came to him, that, being feasted according to the usual method of their own way of living, they might be the better pleased, and might not be uneasy at any thing done to them from which they

were naturally averse. And this was now done in the case of these men by Dorotheus, who was put into this office because of his great skill in such matters belonging to common life; for he took care of all such matters as concerned the reception of strangers, and appointed them double seats for them to sit on, according as the king had commanded him to do; for he had commanded that half of their seats should be set at his right hand, and the other half behind his table, and took care that no respect should be omitted that could be shown them. And when they were thus set down, he bid Dorotheus to minister to all those that were come to him from Judea, after the manner they used to be ministered to; for which cause he sent away their sacred heralds, and those that slew the sacrifices, and the rest that used to say grace; but called to one of those that were come to him, whose name was Eleazar, who was a priest, and desired him to say grace; who then stood in the midst of them, and prayed, that all prosperity might attend the king, and those that were his subjects. Upon which an acclamation was made by the whole company, with joy and a great noise; and when that was over, they fell to eating their supper, and to the enjoyment of what was set before them. And at a little interval afterward, when the king thought a sufficient time had been interposed, he began to talk philosophically to them, and he asked every one of them a philosophical question and such a one as might give light in those inquiries; and when they had explained all the problems that had been proposed by the king about every point, he was well-pleased with their answers. This took up the twelve days in which they were treated; and he that pleases

may learn the particular questions in that book of Aristeus, which he wrote on this very occasion.

And while not the king only, but the philosopher Menedemus also, admired them, and said that all things were governed by Providence, and that it was probable that thence it was that such force or beauty was discovered in these men's words, they then left off asking any more such questions. But the king said that he had gained very great advantages by their coming, for that he had received this profit from them, that he had learned how he ought to rule his subjects. And he gave order that they should have every one three talents given them, and that those that were to conduct them to their lodging should do it. Accordingly, when three days were over, Demetrius took them, and went over the causeway seven furlongs long: it was a bank in the sea to an island. And when they had gone over the bridge, he proceeded to the northern parts, and showed them where they should meet, which was in a house that was built near the shore, and was a quiet place, and fit for their discoursing together about their work. When he had brought them thither, he entreated them (now they had all things about them which they wanted for the interpretation of their law) that they would suffer nothing to interrupt them in their work. Accordingly, they made an accurate interpretation, with great zeal and great pains, and this they continued to do till the ninth hour of the day; after which time they relaxed, and took care of their body, while their food was provided for them in great plenty: besides, Dorotheus, at the king's command, brought them a great deal of what was provided for the

king himself. But in the morning they came to the court and saluted Ptolemy, and then went away to their former place, where, when they had washed their hands, and purified themselves, they betook themselves to the interpretation of the laws. Now when the law was transcribed, and the labor of interpretation was over, which came to its conclusion in seventy-two days, Demetrius gathered all the Jews together to the place where the laws were translated, and where the interpreters were, and read them over. The multitude did also approve of those elders that were the interpreters of the law. They withal commended Demetrius for his proposal, as the inventor of what was greatly for their happiness; and they desired that he would give leave to their rulers also to read the law. Moreover, they all, both the priest and the ancientest of the elders, and the principal men of their commonwealth, made it their request, that since the interpretation was happily finished, it might continue in the state it now was, and might not be altered. And when they all commended that determination of theirs, they enjoined, that if any one observed either any thing superfluous, or any thing omitted, that he would take a view of it again, and have it laid before them, and corrected; which was a wise action of theirs, that when the thing was judged to have been well done, it might continue for ever.

So the king rejoiced when he saw that his design of this nature was brought to perfection, to so great advantage; and he was chiefly delighted with hearing the Laws read to him; and was astonished at the deep meaning and wisdom of the legislator. And he began to discourse with Demetrius, "How it

came to pass, that when this legislation was so wonderful, no one, either of the poets or of the historians, had made mention of it." Demetrius made answer, "that no one durst be so bold as to touch upon the description of these laws, because they were Divine and venerable, and because some that had attempted it were afflicted by God." He also told him, that "Theopompus was desirous of writing somewhat about them, but was thereupon disturbed in his mind for above thirty days' time; and upon some intermission of his distemper, he appeased God [by prayer], as suspecting that his madness proceeded from that cause." Nay, indeed, he further saw in a dream, that his distemper befell him while he indulged too great a curiosity about Divine matters, and was desirous of publishing them among common men; but when he left off that attempt, he recovered his understanding again. Moreover, he informed him of Theodectes, the tragic poet, concerning whom it was reported, that when in a certain dramatic representation he was desirous to make mention of things that were contained in the sacred books, he was afflicted with a darkness in his eyes; and that upon his being conscious of the occasion of his distemper, and appeasing God [by prayer], he was freed from that affliction.

And when the king had received these books from Demetrius, as we have said already, he adored them, and gave order that great care should be taken of them, that they might remain uncorrupted. He also desired that the interpreters would come often to him out of Judea, and that both on account of the respects that he would pay them, and on account of the presents he would make them;

for he said it was now but just to send them away, although if, of their own accord, they would come to him hereafter, they should obtain all that their own wisdom might justly require, and what his generosity was able to give them. So he then sent them away, and gave to every one of them three garments of the best sort, and two talents of gold, and a cup of the value of one talent, and the furniture of the room wherein they were feasted. And these were the things he presented to them. But by them he sent to Eleazar the high priest ten beds, with feet of silver, and the furniture to them belonging, and a cup of the value of thirty talents; and besides these, ten garments, and purple, and a very beautiful crown, and a hundred pieces of the finest woven linen; as also vials and dishes, and vessels for pouring, and two golden cisterns to be dedicated to God. He also desired him, by an epistle, that he would give these interpreters leave, if any of them were desirous of coming to him, because he highly valued a conversation with men of such learning, and should be very willing to lay out his wealth upon such men. And this was what came to the Jews, and was much to their glory and honor, from Ptolemy Philadelphus.

CHAPTER THREE

HOW THE KINGS OF ASIA HONORED THE NATION OF THE JEWS AND MADE THEM CITIZENS OF THOSE CITIES WHICH THEY BUILT.

THE Jews also obtained honors from the kings of Asia when they became their auxiliaries; for Seleucus Nicator made them citizens in those

cities which he built in Asia, and in the lower Syria, and in the metropolis itself, Antioch; and gave them privileges equal to those of the Macedonians and Greeks, who were the inhabitants, insomuch that these privileges continue to this very day: an argument for which you have in this, that whereas the Jews do not make use of oil prepared by foreigners, they receive a certain sum of money from the proper officers belonging to their exercises as the value of that oil; which money, when the people of Antioch would have deprived them of, in the last war, Mucianus, who was then president of Syria, preserved it to them. And when the people of Alexandria and of Antioch did after that, at the time that Vespasian and Titus his son governed the habitable earth, pray that these privileges of citizens might be taken away, they did not obtain their request. in which behavior any one may discern the equity and generosity of the Romans, especially of Vespasian and Titus, who, although they had been at a great deal of pains in the war against the Jews, and were exasperated against them, because they did not deliver up their weapons to them, but continued the war to the very last, yet did not they take away any of their forementioned privileges belonging to them as citizens, but restrained their anger, and overcame the prayers of the Alexandrians and Antiochians, who were a very powerful people, insomuch that they did not yield to them, neither out of their favor to these people, nor out of their old grudge at those whose wicked opposition they had subdued in the war; nor would they alter any of the ancient favors granted to the Jews, but said, that those who had borne arms against them, and fought them, had suffered

punishment already, and that it was not just to deprive those that had not offended of the privileges they enjoyed.

We also know that Marcus Agrippa was of the like disposition towards the Jews: for when the people of Ionia were very angry at them, and besought Agrippa that they, and they only, might have those privileges of citizens which Antiochus, the grandson of Seleucus, (who by the Greeks was called The God,) had bestowed on them, and desired that, if the Jews were to be joint-partakers with them, they might be obliged to worship the gods they themselves worshipped: but when these matters were brought to the trial, the Jews prevailed, and obtained leave to make use of their own customs, and this under the patronage of Nicolaus of Damascus; for Agrippa gave sentence that he could not innovate. And if any one hath a mind to know this matter accurately, let him peruse the hundred and twenty-third and hundred and twenty-fourth books of the history of this Nicolaus. Now as to this determination of Agrippa, it is not so much to be admired, for at that time our nation had not made war against the Romans.:But one may well be astonished at the generosity of Vespasian and Titus, that after so great wars and contests which they had from us, they should use such moderation. But I will now return to that part of my history whence I made the present digression.

Now it happened that in the reign of Antiochus the Great, who ruled over all Asia, that the Jews, as well as the inhabitants of Celesyria, suffered greatly, and their land was sorely harassed; for while he was at war with Ptolemy Philopater, and

with his son, who was called Epiphanes, it fell out that these nations were equally sufferers, both when he was beaten, and when he beat the others: so that they were very like to a ship in a storm, which is tossed by the waves on both sides; and just thus were they in their situation in the middle between Antiochus's prosperity and its change to adversity. But at length, when Antiochus had beaten Ptolemy, he seized upon Judea; and when Philopater was dead, his son sent out a great army under Scopas, the general of his forces, against the inhabitants of Celesyria, who took many of their cities, and in particular our nation; which when he fell upon them, went over to him. Yet was it not long afterward when Antiochus overcame Scopas, in a battle fought at the fountains of Jordan, and destroyed a great part of his army. But afterward, when Antiochus subdued those cities of Celesyria which Scopas had gotten into his possession, and Samaria with them, the Jews, of their own accord, went over to him, and received him into the city [Jerusalem], and gave plentiful provision to all his army, and to his elephants, and readily assisted him when he besieged the garrison which was in the citadel of Jerusalem. Wherefore Antiochus thought it but just to requite the Jews' diligence and zeal in his service. So he wrote to the generals of his armies, and to his friends, and gave testimony to the good behavior of the Jews towards him, and informed them what rewards he had resolved to bestow on them for that their behavior. I will set down presently the epistles themselves which he wrote to the generals concerning them, but will first produce the testimony of Polybius of Megalopolis; for thus does he speak, in the sixteenth book of his

history: "Now Scopas, the general of Ptolemy's army, went in haste to the superior parts of the country, and in the winter time overthrew the nation of the Jews?" He also saith, in the same book, that "when Seopas was conquered by Antiochus, Antiochus received Batanea, and Samaria, and Abila, and Gadara; and that, a while afterwards, there came in to him those Jews that inhabited near that temple which was called Jerusalem; concerning which, although I have more to say, and particularly concerning the presence of God about that temple, yet do I put off that history till another opportunity." This it is which Polybius relates. But we will return to the series of the history, when we have first produced the epistles of king Antiochus.

KING ANTIOCHUS TO PTOLEMY, SENDETH GREETING.

"Since the Jews, upon our first entrance on their country, demonstrated their friendship towards us, and when we came to their city [Jerusalem], received us in a splendid manner, and came to meet us with their senate, and gave abundance of provisions to our soldiers, and to the elephants, and joined with us in ejecting the garrison of the Egyptians that were in the citadel, we have thought fit to reward them, and to retrieve the condition of their city, which hath been greatly depopulated by such accidents as have befallen its inhabitants, and to bring those that have been scattered abroad back to the city. And, in the first place, we have determined, on account of their piety towards God, to bestow on them, as a pension, for their sacrifices of animals that are fit for sacrifice, for wine, and oil, and

frankincense, the value of twenty thousand pieces of silver, and [six] sacred artabrae of fine flour, with one thousand four hundred and sixty medimni of wheat, and three hundred and seventy-five medimni of salt. And these payments I would have fully paid them, as I have sent orders to you. I would also have the work about the temple finished, and the cloisters, and if there be any thing else that ought to be rebuilt. And for the materials of wood, let it be brought them out of Judea itself and out of the other countries, and out of Libanus tax free; and the same I would have observed as to those other materials which will be necessary, in order to render the temple more glorious; and let all of that nation live according to the laws of their own country; and let the senate, and the priests, and the scribes of the temple, and the sacred singers, be discharged from poll-money and the crown tax and other taxes also. And that the city may the sooner recover its inhabitants, I grant a discharge from taxes for three years to its present inhabitants, and to such as shall come to it, until the month Hyperheretus. We also discharge them for the future from a third part of their taxes, that the losses they have sustained may be repaired. And all those citizens that have been carried away, and are become slaves, we grant them and their children their freedom, and give order that their substance be restored to them."

And these were the contents of this epistle. He also published a decree through all his kingdom in honor of the temple, which contained what follows: "It shall be lawful for no foreigner to come within the limits of the temple round about; which

thing is forbidden also to the Jews, unless to those who, according to their own custom, have purified themselves. Nor let any flesh of horses, or of mules, or of asses, be brought into the city, whether they be wild or tame; nor that of leopards, or foxes, or hares; and, in general, that of any animal which is forbidden for the Jews to eat. Nor let their skins be brought into it; nor let any such animal be bred up in the city. Let them only be permitted to use the sacrifices derived from their forefathers, with which they have been obliged to make acceptable atonements to God. And he that transgresseth any of these orders, let him pay to the priests three thousand drachmae of silver." Moreover, this Antiochus bare testimony to our piety and fidelity, in an epistle of his, written when he was informed of a sedition in Phrygia and Lydia, at which time he was in the superior provinces, wherein he commanded Zenxis, the general of his forces, and his most intimate friend, to send some of our nation out of Babylon into Phrygia. The epistle was this:

KING ANTIOCHUS TO ZEUXIS HIS FATHER, SENDETH GREETING.

"If you are in health, it is well. I also am in health. Having been informed that a sedition is arisen in Lydia and Phrygia, I thought that matter required great care; and upon advising with my friends what was fit to be done, it hath been thought proper to remove two thousand families of Jews, with their effects, out of Mesopotamia and Babylon, unto the castles and places that lie most convenient; for I am persuaded that they will be well-disposed guardians of our possessions,

because of their piety towards God, and because I know that my predecessors have borne witness to them, that they are faithful, and with alacrity do what they are desired to do. I will, therefore, though it be a laborious work, that thou remove these Jews, under a promise, that they shall be permitted to use their own laws. And when thou shalt have brought them to the places forementioned, thou shalt give everyone of their families a place for building their houses, and a portion of the land for their husbandry, and for the plantation of their vines; and thou shalt discharge them from paying taxes of the fruits of the earth for ten years; and let them have a proper quantity of wheat for the maintenance of their servants, until they receive bread corn out of the earth; also let a sufficient share be given to such as minister to them in the necessaries of life, that by enjoying the effects of our humanity, they may show themselves the more willing and ready about our affairs. Take care likewise of that nation, as far as thou art able, that they may not have any disturbance given them by any one." Now these testimonials which I have produced are sufficient to declare the friendship that Antiochus the Great bare to the Jews.

CHAPTER SIX

HOW ANTIOCHUS MADE A LEAGUE WITH PTOLEMY AND HOW ONIAS PROVOKED PTOLEMY EUERGETES TO ANGER; AND HOW JOSEPH BROUGHT ALL THINGS RIGHT AGAIN, AND ENTERED INTO FRIENDSHIP WITH HIM; AND WHAT OTHER THINGS WERE DONE BY JOSEPH, AND HIS SON HYRCANUS.

AFTER this Antiochus made a friendship and league

with Ptolemy, and gave him his daughter Cleopatra to wife, and yielded up to him Celesyria, and Samaria, and Judea, and Phoenicia, by way of dowry. And upon the division of the taxes between the two kings, all the principal men framed the taxes of their several countries, and collecting the sum that was settled for them, paid the same to the [two] kings. Now at this time the Samaritans were in a flourishing condition, and much distressed the Jews, cutting off parts of their land, and carrying off slaves. This happened when Onias was high priest; for after Eleazar's death, his uncle Manasseh took the priesthood, and after he had ended his life, Onias received that dignity. He was the son of Simon, who was called The Just: which Simon was the brother of Eleazar, as I said before. This Onias was one of a little soul, and a great lover of money; and for that reason, because he did not pay that tax of twenty talents of silver, which his forefathers paid to these things out of their own estates, he provoked king Ptolemy Euergetes to anger, who was the father of Philopater. Euergetes sent an ambassador to Jerusalem, and complained that Onias did not pay his taxes, and threatened, that if he did not receive them, he would seize upon their land, and send soldiers to live upon it. When the Jews heard this message of the king, they were confounded; but so sordidly covetous was Onias, that nothing of things nature made him ashamed.

There was now one Joseph, young in age, but of great reputation among the people of Jerusalem, for gravity, prudence, and justice. His father's name was Tobias; and his mother was the sister of Onias the high priest, who informed him of the

coming of the ambassador; for he was then sojourning at a village named Phicol, where he was born. Hereupon he came to the city [Jerusalem], and reproved Onias for not taking care of the preservation of his countrymen, but bringing the nation into dangers, by not paying this money. For which preservation of them, he told him he had received the authority over them, and had been made high priest; but that, in case he was so great a lover of money, as to endure to see his country in danger on that account, and his countrymen suffer the greatest damages, he advised him to go to the king, and petition him to remit either the whole or a part of the sum demanded. Onias's answer was this: That he did not care for his authority, and that he was ready, if the thing were practicable, to lay down his high priesthood; and that he would not go to the king, because he troubled not himself at all about such matters. Joseph then asked him if he would not give him leave to go ambassador on behalf of the nation. He replied, that he would give him leave. Upon which Joseph went up into the temple, and called the multitude together to a congregation, and exhorted them not to be disturbed nor afrighted, because of his uncle Onias's carelessness, but desired them to be at rest, and not terrify themselves with fear about it; for he promised them that he would be their ambassador to the king, and persuade him that they had done him no wrong. And when the multitude heard this, they returned thanks to Joseph. So he went down from the temple, and treated Ptolemy's ambassador in a hospitable manner. He also presented him with rich gifts, and feasted him magnificently for many days, and then sent him to the king before him, and told him that

he would soon follow him; for he was now more willing to go to the king, by the encouragement of the ambassador, who earnestly persuaded him to come into Egypt, and promised him that he would take care that he should obtain every thing that he desired of Ptolemy; for he was highly pleased with his frank and liberal temper, and with the gravity of his deportment.

When Ptolemy's ambassador was come into Egypt, he told the king of the thoughtless temper of Onias; and informed him of the goodness of the disposition of Joseph; and that he was coming to him to excuse the multitude, as not having done him any harm, for that he was their patron. In short, he was so very large in his encomiums upon the young man, that he disposed both the king and his wife Cleopatra to have a kindness for him before he came. So Joseph sent to his friends at Samaria, and borrowed money of them, and got ready what was necessary for his journey, garments and cups, and beasts for burden, which amounted to about twenty thousand drachmae, and went to Alexandria. Now it happened that at this time all the principal men and rulers went up out of the cities of Syria and Phoenicia, to bid for their taxes; for every year the king sold them to the men of the greatest power in every city. So these men saw Joseph journeying on the way, and laughed at him for his poverty and meanness. But when he came to Alexandria, and heard that king Ptolemy was at Memphis, he went up thither to meet with him; which happened as the king was sitting in his chariot, with his wife, and with his friend Athenion, who was the very person who had been ambassador at Jerusalem, and had been entertained

by Joseph. As soon therefore as Athenion saw him, he presently made him known to the king, how good and generous a young man he was. So Ptolemy saluted him first, and desired him to come up into his chariot; and as Joseph sat there, he began to complain of the management of Onias: to which he answered, "Forgive him, on account of his age; for thou canst not certainly be unacquainted with this, that old men and infants have their minds exactly alike; but thou shalt have from us, who are young men, every thing thou desirest, and shalt have no cause to complain." With this good humor and pleasantry of the young man, the king was so delighted, that he began already, as though he had had long experience of him, to have a still greater affection for him, insomuch that he bade him take his diet in the king's palace, and be a guest at his own table every day. But when the king was come to Alexandria, the principal men of Syria saw him sitting with the king, and were much offended at it.

And when the day came on which the king was to let the taxes of the cities to farm, and those that were the principal men of dignity in their several countries were to bid for them, the sum of the taxes together, of Celesyria, and Phoenicia, and Judea, with Samaria, [as they were bidden for,] came to eight thousand talents. Hereupon Joseph accused the bidders, as having agreed together to estimate the value of the taxes at too low a rate; and he promised that he would himself give twice as much for them: but for those who did not pay, he would send the king home their whole substance; for this privilege was sold together with the taxes themselves. The king was pleased to

hear that offer; and because it augmented his revenues, he said he would confirm the sale of the taxes to him. But when he asked him this question, Whether he had any sureties that would be bound for the payment of the money? he answered very pleasantly, "I will give such security, and those of persons good and responsible, and which you shall have no reason to distrust." And when he bid him name them who they were, he replied, "I give thee no other persons, O king, for my sureties, than thyself, and this thy wife; and you shall be security for both parties." So Ptolemy laughed at the proposal, and granted him the farming of the taxes without any sureties. This procedure was a sore grief to those that came from the cities into Egypt, who were utterly disappointed; and they returned every one to their own country with shame.

But Joseph took with him two thousand foot soldiers from the king, for he desired he might have some assistance, in order to force such as were refractory in the cities to pay. And borrowing of the king's friends at Alexandria five hundred talents, he made haste back into Syria. And when he was at Askelon, and demanded the taxes of the people of Askelon, they refused to pay any thing, and affronted him also; upon which he seized upon about twenty of the principal men, and slew them, and gathered what they had together, and sent it all to the king, and informed him what he had done. Ptolemy admired the prudent conduct of the man, and commended him for what he had done, and gave him leave to do as he pleased. When the Syrians heard of this, they were astonished; and having before them a sad example in the men of

Askelon that were slain, they opened their gates, and willingly admitted Joseph, and paid their taxes. And when the inhabitants of Scythopolis attempted to affront him, and would not pay him those taxes which they formerly used to pay, without disputing about them, he slew also the principal men of that city, and sent their effects to the king. By this means he gathered great wealth together, and made vast gains by this farming of the taxes; and he made use of what estate he had thus gotten, in order to support his authority, as thinking it a piece of prudence to keep what had been the occasion and foundation of his present good fortune; and this he did by the assistance of what he was already possessed of, for he privately sent many presents to the king, and to Cleopatra, and to their friends, and to all that were powerful about the court, and thereby purchased their good-will to himself.

This good fortune he enjoyed for twenty-two years, and was become the father of seven sons by one wife; he had also another son, whose name was Hyrcanus, by his brother Solymius's daughter, whom he married on the following occasion. He once came to Alexandria with his brother, who had along with him a daughter already marriageable, in order to give her in wedlock to some of the Jews of chief dignity there. He then supped with the king, and falling in love with an actress that was of great beauty, and came into the room where they feasted, he told his brother of it, and entreated him, because a Jew is forbidden by their law to come near to a foreigner, to conceal his offense; and to be kind and subservient to him, and to give him an opportunity of fulfilling his desires. Upon

which his brother willingly entertained the proposal of serving him, and adorned his own daughter, and brought her to him by night, and put her into his bed. And Joseph, being disordered with drink, knew not who she was, and so lay with his brother's daughter; and this did he many times, and loved her exceedingly; and said to his brother, that he loved this actress so well, that he should run the hazard of his life [if he must part with her], and yet probably the king would not give him leave [to take her with him]. But his brother bid him be in no concern about that matter, and told him he might enjoy her whom he loved without any danger, and might have her for his wife; and opened the truth of the matter to him, and assured him that he chose rather to have his own daughter abused, than to overlook him, and see him come to [public] disgrace. So Joseph commended him for this his brotherly love, and married his daughter; and by her begat a son, whose name was Hyrcanus, as we said before. And when this his youngest son showed, at thirteen years old, a mind that was both courageous and wise, and was greatly envied by his brethren, as being of a genius much above them, and such a one as they might well envy, Joseph had once a mind to know which of his sons had the best disposition to virtue; and when he sent them severally to those that had then the best reputation for instructing youth, the rest of his children, by reason of their sloth and unwillingness to take pains, returned to him foolish and unlearned. After them he sent out the youngest, Hyrcanus, and gave him three hundred yoke of oxen, and bid him go two days' journey into the wilderness, and sow the land there, and yet kept back privately the yokes

of the oxen that coupled them together. When Hyrcanus came to the place, and found he had no yokes with him, he contemned the drivers of the oxen, who advised him to send some to his father, to bring them some yokes; but he thinking that he ought not to lose his time while they should be sent to bring him the yokes, he invented a kind of stratagem, and what suited an age older than his own; for he slew ten yoke of the oxen, and distributed their flesh among the laborers, and cut their hides into several pieces, and made him yokes, and yoked the oxen together with them; by which means he sowed as much land as his father had appointed him to sow, and returned to him. And when he was come back, his father was mightily pleased with his sagacity, and commended the sharpness of his understanding, and his boldness in what he did. And he still loved him the more, as if he were his only genuine son, while his brethren were much troubled at it.

But when one told him that Ptolemy had a son just born, and that all the principal men of Syria, and the other countries subject to him, were to keep a festival, on account of the child's birthday, and went away in haste with great retinues to Alexandria, he was himself indeed hindered from going by old age; but he made trial of his sons, whether any of them would be willing to go to the king. And when the elder sons excused themselves from going, and said they were not courtiers good enough for such conversation, and advised him to send their brother Hyrcanus, he gladly hearkened to that advice, and called Hyrcanus, and asked him whether he would go to the king, and whether it was agreeable to him to go or not. And upon his

promise that he would go, and his saying that he should not want much money for his journey, because he would live moderately, and that ten thousand drachmas would be sufficient, he was pleased with his son's prudence. After a little while, the son advised his father not to send his presents to the king from thence, but to give him a letter to his steward at Alexandria, that he might furnish him with money, for purchasing what should be most excellent and most precious. So he thinking that the expense of ten talents would be enough for presents to be made the king, and commending his son, as giving him good advice, wrote to Arion his steward, that managed all his money matters at Alexandria; which money was not less than three thousand talents on his account, for Joseph sent the money he received in Syria to Alexandria. And when the day appointed for the payment of the taxes to the king came, he wrote to Arion to pay them. So when the son had asked his father for a letter to the steward, and had received it, he made haste to Alexandria. And when he was gone, his brethren wrote to all the king's friends, that they should destroy him.

But when he was come to Alexaudria, he delivered his letter to Arion, who asked him how many talents he would have (hoping he would ask for no more than ten, or a little more); he said he wanted a thousand talents. At which the steward was angry, and rebuked him, as one that intended to live extravagantly; and he let him know how his father had gathered together his estate by painstaking, and resisting his inclinations, and wished him to imitate the example of his father: he assured him withal, that he would give him but

ten talents, and that for a present to the king also. The son was irritated at this, and threw Arion into prison. But when Arion's wife had informed Cleopatra of this, with her entreaty, that she would rebuke the child for what he had done, (for Arion was in great esteem with her,) Cleopatra informed the king of it. And Ptolemy sent for Hyrcanus, and told him that he wondered, when he was sent to him by his father, that he had not yet come into his presence, but had laid the steward in prison. And he gave order, therefore, that he should come to him, and give an account of the reason of what he had done. And they report that the answer he made to the king's messenger was this: That "there was a law of his that forbade a child that was born to taste of the sacrifice, before he had been at the temple and sacrificed to God. According to which way of reasoning he did not himself come to him in expectation of the present he was to make to him, as to one who had been his father's benefactor; and that he had punished the slave for disobeying his commands, for that it mattered not whether a master was little or great: so that unless we punish such as these, thou thyself mayst also expect to be despised by thy subjects." Upon hearing this his answer he fell a laughing, and wondered at the great soul of the child.

When Arion was apprized that this was the king's disposition, and that he had no way to help himself, he gave the child a thousand talents, and was let out of prison. So after three days were over, Hyrcanus came and saluted the king and queen. They saw him with pleasure, and feasted him in an obliging manner, out of the respect they

bare to his father. So he came to the merchants privately, and bought a hundred boys, that had learning, and were in the flower of their ages, each at a talent apiece; as also he bought a hundred maidens, each at the same price as the other. And when he was invited to feast with the king among the principal men in the country, he sat down the lowest of them all, because he was little regarded, as a child in age still; and this by those who placed every one according to their dignity. Now when all those that sat with him had laid the bones Of the several parts on a heap before Hyrcanus, (for they had themselves taken away the flesh belonging to them,) till the table where he sat was filled full with them, Trypho, who was the king's jester, and was appointed for jokes and laughter at festivals, was now asked by the guests that sat at the table [to expose him to laughter]. So he stood by the king, and said, "Dost thou not see, my lord, the bones that lie by Hyrcanus? by this similitude thou mayst conjecture that his father made all Syria as bare as he hath made these bones." And the king laughing at what Trypho said, and asking of Hyrcanus, How he came to have so many bones before him? he replied, "Very rightfully, my lord; for they are dogs that eat the flesh and the bones together, as these thy guests have done, (looking in the mean time at those guests,) for there is nothing before them; but they are men that eat the flesh, and cast away the hones, as I, who am also a man, have now done." Upon which the king admired at his answer, which was so wisely made; and bid them all make an acclamation, as a mark of their approbation of his jest, which was truly a facetious one. On the next day Hyrcanus went to every one of the king's

friends, and of the men powerful at court, and saluted them; but still inquired of the servants what present they would make the king on his son's birthday; and when some said that they would give twelve talents, and that others of greater dignity would every one give according to the quantity of their riches, he pretended to every one of them to be grieved that he was not able to bring so large a present; for that he had no more than five talents. And when the servants heard what he said, they told their masters; and they rejoiced in the prospect that Joseph would be disapproved, and would make the king angry, by the smallness of his present. When the day came, the others, even those that brought the most, offered the king not above twenty talents; but Hyrcanus gave to every one of the hundred boys and hundred maidens that he had bought a talent apiece, for them to carry, and introduced them, the boys to the king, and the maidens to Cleopatra; every body wondering at the unexpected richness of the presents, even the king and queen themselves. He also presented those that attended about the king with gifts to the value of a great number of talents, that he might escape the danger he was in from them; for to these it was that Hyrcanus's brethren had written to destroy him. Now Ptolemy admired at the young man's magnanimity, and commanded him to ask what gift he pleased. But he desired nothing else to be done for him by the king than to write to his father and brethren about him. So when the king had paid him very great respects, and had given him very large gifts, and had written to his father and his brethren, and all his commanders and officers, about him, he sent him away. But when his brethren heard that Hyrcanus had received

such favors from the king, and was returning home with great honor, they went out to meet him, and to destroy him, and that with the privity of their father; for he was angry at him for the [large] sum of money that he bestowed for presents, and so had no concern for his preservation. However, Joseph concealed the anger he had at his son, out of fear of the king. And when Hyrcanus's brethren came to fight him, he slew many others of those that were with them, as also two of his brethren themselves; but the rest of them escaped to Jerusalem to their father. But when Hyrcanus came to the city, where nobody would receive him, he was afraid for himself, and retired beyond the river Jordan, and there abode, but obliging the barbarians to pay their taxes.

At this time Seleucus, who was called Soter, reigned over Asia, being the son of Antiochus the Great. And [now] Hyrcanus's father, Joseph, died. He was a good man, and of great magnanimity; and brought the Jews out of a state of poverty and meanness, to one that was more splendid. He retained the farm of the taxes of Syria, and Phoenicia, and Samaria twenty-two years. His uncle also, Onias, died [about this time], and left the high priesthood to his son Simeon. And when he was dead, Onias his son succeeded him in that dignity. To him it was that Areus, king of the Lacedemonians, sent an embassy, with an epistle; the copy whereof here follows:

“AREUS, KING OF THE LACEDEMONIANS, TO ONIAS,
SENDETH GREETING.

“We have met with a certain writing, whereby we

have discovered that both the Jews and the Lacedemonians are of one stock, and are derived from the kindred of Abraham It is but just therefore that you, who are our brethren, should send to us about any of your concerns as you please. We will also do the same thing, and esteem your concerns as our own, and will look upon our concerns as in common with yours. Demoteles, who brings you this letter, will bring your answer back to us. This letter is four-square; and the seal is an eagle, with a dragon in his claws."

And these were the contents of the epistle which was sent from the king of the Lacedemonians. But, upon the death of Joseph, the people grew seditious, on account of his sons. For whereas the elders made war against Hyrcanus, who was the youngest of Joseph's sons, the multitude was divided, but the greater part joined with the elders in this war; as did Simon the high priest, by reason he was of kin to them. However, Hyrcanus determined not to return to Jerusalem any more, but seated himself beyond Jordan, and was at perpetual war with the Arabians, and slew many of them, and took many of them captives. He also erected a strong castle, and built it entirely of white stone to the very roof, and had animals of a prodigious magnitude engraven upon it. He also drew round it a great and deep canal of water. He also made caves of many furlongs in length, by hollowing a rock that was over against him; and then he made large rooms in it, some for feasting, and some for sleeping and living in. He introduced also a vast quantity of waters which ran along it, and which were very delightful and ornamental in the court. But still he made the entrances at the

mouth of the caves so narrow, that no more than one person could enter by them at once. And the reason why he built them after that manner was a good one; it was for his own preservation, lest he should be besieged by his brethren, and run the hazard of being caught by them. Moreover, he built courts of greater magnitude than ordinary, which he adorned with vastly large gardens. And when he had brought the place to this state, he named it Tyre. This place is between Arabia and Judea, beyond Jordan, not far from the country of Heshbon. And he ruled over those parts for seven years, even all the time that Seleucus was king of Syria. But when he was dead, his brother Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes, took the kingdom. Ptolemy also, the king of Egypt, died, who was besides called Epiphanes. He left two sons, and both young in age; the elder of which was called Philometer, and the youngest Physcon. As for Hyrcanus, when he saw that Antiochus had a great army, and feared lest he should be caught by him, and brought to punishment for what he had done to the Arabians, he ended his life, and slew himself with his own hand; while Antiochus seized upon all his substance.

