

George Alfred Henty



*For
the Temple*

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PREFACE

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IN all history, there is no drama of more terrible interest than that which terminated with the total destruction of Jerusalem. Had the whole Jewish nation joined in the desperate resistance made, by a section of it, to the overwhelming strength of Rome, the world would have had no record of truer patriotism than that displayed, by this small people, in their resistance to the forces of the mistress of the world.

Unhappily, the reverse of this was the case. Except in the defense of Jotapata and Gamala, it can scarcely be said that the Jewish people, as a body, offered any serious resistance to the arms of Rome. The defenders of Jerusalem were a mere fraction of its population—a fraction composed almost entirely of turbulent characters and robber bands, who fought with the fury of desperation; after having placed themselves beyond the pale of forgiveness, or mercy, by the deeds of unutterable cruelty with which they had desolated the city, before its siege by the Romans. They fought, it is true, with unflinching courage—a courage never surpassed in history—but it was the courage of despair; and its result was to bring destruction upon the whole population, as well as upon themselves.

Fortunately the narrative of Josephus, an eyewitness of the events which he describes, has come down to us; and it is the storehouse from which all subsequent histories of the events have been drawn. It is, no doubt, tinged throughout by his desire to stand well with his patrons, Vespasian and

Titus; but there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of his descriptions. I have endeavored to present you with as vivid a picture as possible of the events of the war, without encumbering the story with details and, except as regards the exploits of John of Gamala, of whom Josephus says nothing, have strictly followed, in every particular, the narrative of the historian.

G. A. Henty.

I. — THE LAKE OF TIBERIAS

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"DREAMING, John, as usual? I never saw such a boy. You are always in extremes; either tiring yourself out, or lying half asleep."

"I was not half asleep, mother. I was looking at the lake."

"I cannot see much to look at, John. It's just as it has been ever since you were born, or since I was born."

"No, I suppose there's no change, mother; but I am never tired of looking at the sun shining on the ripples, and the fishermen's boats, and the birds standing in the shallows or flying off, in a desperate hurry, without any reason that I can make out. Besides, mother, when one is looking at the lake, one is thinking of other things."

"And very often thinking of nothing at all, my son."

"Perhaps so, mother; but there's plenty to think of, in these times."

"Plenty, John; there are baskets and baskets of figs to be stripped from the trees, and hung up to dry for the winter and, next week, we are going to begin the grape harvest. But the figs are the principal matter, at present; and I think that it would be far more useful for you to go and help old Isaac and his son, in getting them in, than in lying there watching the lake."

"I suppose it would, mother," the lad said, rising briskly; for his fits of indolence were by no means common and, as a rule, he was ready to assist at any work which might be going on.

"I do not wonder at John loving the lake," his mother said to herself, when the lad had hurried away. "It is a fair scene; and it may be, as Simon thinks, that a change may come over it, before long, and that ruin and desolation may fall upon us all."

There were, indeed, few scenes which could surpass in tranquil beauty that which Martha, the wife of Simon, was looking upon—the sheet of sparkling water, with its low shores dotted with towns and villages. Down the lake, on the opposite shore, rose the walls and citadel of Tiberias, with many stately buildings; for although Tiberias was not, now, the chief town of Galilee—for Sepphoris had usurped its place—it had been the seat of the Roman authority, and the kings who ruled the country for Rome generally dwelt there. Half a mile from the spot where Martha was standing rose the newly-erected walls of Hippos.

Where the towns and villages did not engross the shore, the rich orchards and vineyards extended down to the very edge of the water. The plain of Galilee was a veritable garden. Here flourished, in the greatest abundance, the vine and the fig; while the low hills were covered with olive groves, and the corn waved thickly on the rich, fat land. No region on the earth's face possessed a fairer climate. The heat was never extreme; the winds blowing from the Great Sea brought the needed moisture for the vegetation; and so soft and equable was the air that, for ten months in the year, grapes and figs could be gathered.

The population, supported by the abundant fruits of the earth, was very large. Villages—which would elsewhere be called towns, for those containing but a few thousand

inhabitants were regarded as small, indeed—were scattered thickly over the plain; and few areas of equal dimensions could show a population approaching that which inhabited the plains and slopes between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean. None could then have dreamed of the dangers that were to come, or believed that this rich cultivation and teeming population would disappear; and that, in time, a few flocks of wandering sheep would scarce be able to find herbage growing, on the wastes of land which would take the place of this fertile soil.

Certainly no such thought as this occurred to Martha, as she re-entered the house; though she did fear that trouble, and ruin, might be approaching.

John was soon at work among the fig trees, aiding Isaac and his son Reuben—a lad of some fifteen years—to pick the soft, luscious fruit, and carry it to the little courtyard, shaded from the rays of the sun by an overhead trellis work, covered with vines and almost bending beneath the purple bunches of grapes. Miriam—the old nurse—and four or five maid servants, under the eye of Martha, tied them in rows on strings, and fastened them to pegs driven into that side of the house upon which the sun beat down most hotly. It was only the best fruit that was so served; for that which had been damaged in the picking, and all of smaller size, were laid on trays in the sun. The girls chatted merrily as they worked; for Martha, although a good housewife, was a gentle mistress and, so long as fingers were busy, heeded not if the tongue ran on.

"Let the damsels be happy, while they may," she would say, if Miriam scolded a little when the laughter rose louder

than usual. "Let them be happy, while they can; who knows what lies in the future?"

But at present, the future cast no shade upon the group; nor upon a girl of about fourteen years old, who danced in and out of the courtyard in the highest spirits, now stopping a few minutes to string the figs, then scampering away with an empty basket which, when she reached the gatherers, she placed on her head and supported demurely, for a little while, at the foot of the ladder upon which John was perched—so that he could lay the figs in it without bruising them. But, long ere the basket was filled she would tire of the work and, setting it on the ground, run back into the house.

"And so you think you are helping, Mary," John said, laughing, when the girl returned for the fourth time, with an empty basket.

"Helping, John! Of course I am—ever so much. Helping you, and helping them at the house, and carrying empty baskets. I consider myself the most active of the party."

"Active, certainly, Mary! but if you do not help them, in stringing and hanging the figs, more than you help me, I think you might as well leave it alone."

"Fie, John! That is most ungrateful, after my standing here like a statue, with the basket on my head, ready for you to lay the figs in."

"That is all very fine!" John laughed; "but before the basket is half full, away you go; and I have to get down the ladder, and bring up the basket and fix it firmly, and that without shaking the figs; whereas, had you left it alone, altogether, I could have brought up the empty basket and fixed it close by my hand, without any trouble at all."

"You are an ungrateful boy, and you know how bad it is to be ungrateful! And after my making myself so hot, too!" Miriam said. "My face is as red as fire, and that is all the thanks I get. Very well, then, I shall go into the house, and leave you to your own bad reflections."

"You need not do that, Mary. You can sit down in the shade there, and watch us at work; and eat figs, and get yourself cool, all at the same time. The sun will be down in another half hour, and then I shall be free to amuse you."

"Amuse me, indeed!" the girl said indignantly, as she sat down on the bank to which John had pointed. "You mean that I shall amuse you; that is what it generally comes to. If it wasn't for me I am sure, very often, there would not be a word said when we are out together."

"Perhaps that is true," John agreed; "but you see, there is so much to think about."

"And so you choose the time when you are with me to think! Thank you, John! You had better think, at present," and, rising from the seat she had just taken, she walked back to the house again, regardless of John's explanations and shouts.

Old Isaac chuckled, on his tree close by.

"They are ever too sharp for us, in words, John. The damsel is younger than you, by full two years; and yet she can always put you in the wrong, with her tongue."

"She puts meanings to my words which I never thought of," John said, "and is angered, or pretends to be—for I never know which it is—at things which she has coined out of her own mind, for they had no place in mine."

"Boys' wits are always slower than girls'," the old man said. "A girl has more fancy, in her little finger, than a boy in his whole body. Your cousin laughs at you, because she sees that you take it all seriously; and wonders, in her mind, how it is her thoughts run ahead of yours. But I love the damsel, and so do all in the house for, if she be a little wayward at times, she is bright and loving, and has cheered the house since she came here.

"Your father is not a man of many words; and Martha, as becomes her age, is staid and quiet, though she is no enemy of mirth and cheerfulness; but the loss of all her children, save you, has saddened her, and I think she must often have pined that she had not a girl; and she has brightened much since the damsel came here, three years ago.

"But the sun is sinking, and my basket is full. There will be enough for the maids to go on with, in the morning, until we can supply them with more."

John's basket was not full, but he was well content to stop and, descending their ladders, the three returned to the house.

Simon of Gadez—for that was the name of his farm, and the little fishing village close by, on the shore—was a prosperous and well-to-do man. His land, like that of all around him, had come down from father to son, through long generations; for the law by which all mortgages were cleared off, every seven years, prevented those who might be disposed to idleness and extravagance from ruining themselves, and their children. Every man dwelt upon the land which, as eldest son, he had inherited; while the

younger sons, taking their smaller share, would settle in the towns or villages and become traders, or fishermen, according to their bent and means.

There were poor in Palestine—for there will be poor, everywhere, so long as human nature remains as it is; and some men are idle and self indulgent, while others are industrious and thrifty—but, taking it as a whole there were, thanks to the wise provisions of their laws, no people on the face of the earth so generally comfortable, and well to do. They grumbled, of course, over the exactions of the tax collectors—exactions due, not to the contribution which was paid by the province to imperial Rome, but to the luxury and extravagance of their kings, and to the greed and corruption of the officials. But in spite of this, the people of rich and prosperous Galilee could have lived in contentment, and happiness, had it not been for the factions in their midst.

On reaching the house, John found that his father had just returned from Hippos, whither he had gone on business. He nodded when the lad entered, with his basket.

"I have hired eight men in the market, today, to come out tomorrow to aid in gathering in the figs," he said; "and your mother has just sent down, to get some of the fishermen's maidens to come in to help her. It is time that we had done with them, and we will then set about the vintage. Let us reap while we can, there is no saying what the morrow will bring forth.

"Wife, add something to the evening meal, for the Rabbi Solomon Ben Manasseh will sup with us, and sleep here tonight."

John saw that his father looked graver than usual, but he knew his duty as a son too well to think of asking any questions; and he busied himself, for a time, in laying out the figs on trays—knowing that, otherwise, their own weight would crush the soft fruit before the morning, and bruise the tender skins.

A quarter of an hour later, the quick footsteps of a donkey were heard approaching. John ran out and, having saluted the rabbi, held the animal while his father assisted him to alight and, welcoming him to his house, led him within. The meal was soon served. It consisted of fish from the lake, kid's flesh seethed in milk, and fruit.

Only the men sat down; the rabbi sitting upon Simon's right hand, John on his left, and Isaac and his son at the other end of the table. Martha's maids waited upon them, for it was not the custom for the women to sit down with the men and, although in the country this usage was not strictly observed, and Martha and little Mary generally took their meals with Simon and John, they did not do so if any guest was present.

In honor of the visitor, a white cloth had been laid on the table. All ate with their fingers; two dishes of each kind being placed on the table—one at each end. But few words were said during the meal. After it was concluded, Isaac and his son withdrew and, presently, Martha and Mary, having taken their meal in the women's apartments, came into the room. Mary made a little face at John, to signify her disapproval of the visitor, whose coming would compel her to keep silent all the evening. But though John smiled, he made no sign of sympathy for, indeed, he was anxious to

hear the news from without; and doubted not that he should learn much, from the rabbi.

Solomon Ben Manasseh was a man of considerable influence in Galilee. He was a tall, stern-looking old man, with bushy black eyebrows, deep-set eyes, and a long beard of black hair, streaked with gray. He was said to have acquired much of the learning of the Gentiles, among whom, at Antioch, he had dwelt for some years; but it was to his powers as a speaker that he owed his influence. It was the tongue, in those days, that ruled men; and there were few who could lash a crowd to fury, or still their wrath when excited, better than Solomon Ben Manasseh.

For some time they talked upon different subjects: on the corn harvest and vintage, the probable amount of taxation, the marriage feast which was to take place, in the following week, at the house of one of the principal citizens of Hippos, and other matters. But at last Simon broached the subject which was uppermost in all their thoughts.

"And the news from Tiberias, you say, is bad, rabbi?"

"The news from Tiberias is always bad, friend Simon. In all the land there is not a city which will compare with it, in the wrongheadedness of its people and the violence of its seditions; and little can be hoped, as far as I can see, so long as our good governor, Josephus, continues to treat the malefactors so leniently. A score of times they have conspired against his life and, as often, has he eluded them; for the Lord has been ever with him. But each time, instead of punishing those who have brought about these disorders, he lets them go free; trusting always that they will repent them of their ways, although he sees that his kindness is

thrown away, and that they grow even bolder and more bitter against him after each failure.

"All Galilee is with him. Whenever he gives the word, every man takes up his arms and follows him and, did he but give the order, they would level those proud towns Tiberias and Sepphoris to the ground, and tear down stone by stone the stronghold of John of Gischala. But he will suffer them to do nothing—not a hair of these traitors' heads is to be touched; nor their property, to the value of a penny, be interfered with.

"I call such lenity culpable. The law ordains punishment for those who disturb the people. We know what befell those who rebelled against Moses. Josephus has the valor and the wisdom of King David; but it were well if he had, like our great king, a Joab by his side, who would smite down traitors and spare not."

"It is his only fault," Simon said. "What a change has taken place, since he was sent hither from Jerusalem to take up our government! All abuses have been repressed, extortion has been put down, taxes have been lightened. We eat our bread in peace and comfort, and each man's property is his own. Never was there such a change as he has wrought and, were it not for John of Gischala, Justus the son of Piscus, and Jesus the son of Sapphias, all would go quietly and well; but these men are continually stirring up the people—who, in their folly, listen to them—and conspiring to murder Josephus, and seize upon his government."

"Already he has had, more than once, to reduce to submission Tiberias and Sepphoris; happily without

bloodshed for, when the people of these cities saw that all Galilee was with Josephus, they opened their gates and submitted themselves to his mercy. Truly, in Leviticus it is said:

"'Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'

"But Josephus carries this beyond reason. Seeing that his adversaries by no means observe this law, he should remember that it is also said that 'He that taketh the sword shall fall by the sword,' and that the law lays down punishments for the transgressors. Our judges and kings slew those who troubled the land, and destroyed them utterly; and Josephus does wrong to depart from their teaching."

"I know not where he could have learned such notions of mercy to his enemies, and to the enemies of the land," Simon said. "He has been to Rome, but it is not among the Romans that he will have found that it is right to forgive those who rise up in rebellion."

"Yes, he was in Rome when he was twenty-six years old," Solomon said. "He went thither to plead the cause of certain priests who had been thrown into bonds, by Felix, and sent to Rome. It was a perilous voyage, for his ship was wrecked in the Adriatic and, of six hundred men who were on board, only eighty were picked up—after floating and swimming all night—by a ship of Cyrene. He was not long in Rome for, being introduced to Poppaea, the wife of Caesar, he used his interest with her and obtained the release of those for whose sake he went there."

"No, if he gained these ideas from anyone, he learned them from one Banus—an Ascetic, of the sect of the Essenes, who lived in the desert with no other clothing than the bark and leaves of trees, and no other food save that which grew wild. Josephus lived with him, in like fashion, for three years and, doubtless, learned all that was in his heart. Banus was a follower, they say, of that John whom Herod put to death; and for ought I know, of that Jesus who was crucified, two years afterwards, at Jerusalem, and in whom many people believed, and who has many followers, to this day. I have conversed with some of them and, from what they tell me, this Jesus taught doctrines similar to those which Josephus practices; and which he may have learned from Banus, without accepting the doctrines which the members of this sect hold, as to their founder being the promised Messiah who was to restore Israel."

"I, too, have talked with many of the sect," Simon said; "and have argued with them on the folly of their belief, seeing that their founder by no means saved Israel, but was himself put to death. From what I could see, there was much that was good in the doctrines they hold; but they have exaggerated ideas, and are opposed to all wars, even to fighting for their country. I hear that, since there has been trouble with Rome, most of them have departed altogether out of the land, so as to avoid the necessity of fighting."

"They are poor creatures," Solomon Ben Manasseh said, scornfully; "but we need not talk of them now, for they affect us in no way, save that it may be that Josephus has learned somewhat of their doctrines, from Banus; and that he is thus unduly and, as I think, most unfortunately for the

country, inclined too much to mercy, instead of punishing the evildoers as they deserve."

"But nevertheless, rabbi, it seems to me that there has been good policy, as well, in the mercy which Josephus has shown his foes. You know that John has many friends in Jerusalem; and that, if he could accuse Josephus of slaughtering any, he would be able to make so strong a party, there, that he could obtain the recall of Josephus."

"We would not let him go," Solomon said, hotly. "Since the Romans have gone, we submit to the supremacy of the council at Jerusalem, but it is only on sufferance. For long ages we have had nothing to do with Judah; and we are not disposed to put our necks under their yoke, now. We submit to unity because, in the Romans, we have a common foe; but we are not going to be tyrannized. Josephus has shown himself a wise ruler. We are happier, under him, than we have been for generations under the men who call themselves kings, but who are nothing but Roman satraps; and we are not going to suffer him to be taken from us. Only let the people of Jerusalem try that, and they will have to deal with all the men of Galilee."

"I am past the age at which men are bound to take up the sword, and John has not yet attained it but, if there were need, we would both go out and fight. What could they do, for the population of Galilee is greater than that of Judah? And while we would fight, every man, to the death; the Jews would, few of them, care to hazard their lives only to take from us the man we desire to rule over us. Still, Josephus does wisely, perhaps, to give no occasion for accusation by his enemies.

"There is no talk, is there, rabbi, of any movement on the part of the Romans to come against us, in force?"

"None, so far as I have heard," the rabbi replied. "King Agrippa remains in his country, to the east; but he has no Roman force with him sufficient to attempt any great enterprise and, so long as they leave us alone, we are content."

"They will come, sooner or later," Simon said, shaking his head. "They are busy elsewhere. When they have settled with their other enemies, they will come here to avenge the defeat of Cestius, to restore Florus, and to reconquer the land. Where Rome has once laid her paw, she never lets slip her prey."

"Well, we can fight," Solomon Ben Manasseh said, sternly. "Our forefathers won the land with the sword, and we can hold it by the sword."

"Yes," Martha said quietly, joining in the conversation for the first time, "if God fights for us, as He fought for our forefathers."

"Why should He not?" the rabbi asked sternly. "We are still his people. We are faithful to his law."

"But God has, many times in the past, suffered us to fall into the hands of our enemies as a punishment for our sins," Martha said, quietly. "The tribes were carried away into captivity, and are scattered we know not where. The temple was destroyed, and the people of Judah dwelt long as captives in Babylon. He suffered us to fall under the yoke of the Romans."

"In his right time, He will fight for us again; but can we say that that time has come, rabbi, and that He will smite

the Romans, as He smote the host of Sennacherib?"

"That no man can say," the rabbi answered, gloomily. "Time only will show but, whether or no, the people will fight valiantly."

"I doubt not that they will fight," Simon said; "but many other nations, to whom we are but as a handful, have fought bravely, but have succumbed to the might of Rome. It is said that Josephus, and many of the wisest in Jerusalem, were heartily opposed to the tumults against the Romans, and that they only went with the people because they were in fear of their lives; and even at Tiberias many men of worth and gravity, such as Julius Capellus, Herod the son of Miarus, Herod the son of Gamalus, Compsus, and others, are all strongly opposed to hostility against the Romans.

"And it is the same, elsewhere. Those who know best what is the might and power of Rome would fain remain friendly with her. It is the ignorant and violent classes have led us into this strait; from which, as I fear, naught but ruin can arise."

"I thought better things of you, Simon," the rabbi said, angrily.

"But you yourself have told me," Simon urged, "that you thought it a mad undertaking to provoke the vengeance of Rome."

"I thought so, at first," Solomon admitted, "but now our hand is placed on the plow, we must not draw back; and I believe that the God of our fathers will show his might before the heathen."

"I trust that it may be so," Simon said, gravely. "In His hand is all power. Whether He will see fit to put it forth, now,

in our behalf remains to be seen. However, for the present we need not concern ourselves greatly with the Romans. It may be long before they bring an army against us; while these seditions, here, are at our very door, and ever threaten to involve us in civil war."

"We need fear no civil war," the rabbi said. "The people of all Galilee, save the violent and ill disposed in a few of the towns, are all for Josephus. If it comes to force, John and his party know that they will be swept away, like a straw before the wind. The fear is that they may succeed in murdering Josephus; either by the knife of an assassin, or in one of these tumults. They would rather the latter, because they would then say that the people had torn him to pieces, in their fury at his misdoings.

"However, we watch over him, as much as we can; and his friends have warned him that he must be careful, not only for his own sake, but for that of all the people; and he has promised that, as far as he can, he will be on his guard against these traitors."

"The governor should have a strong bodyguard," John exclaimed, impetuously, "as the Roman governors had. In another year, I shall be of age to have my name inscribed in the list of fighting men; and I would gladly be one of his guard."

"You are neither old enough to fight, nor to express an opinion unasked," Simon said, "in the presence of your elders."

"Do not check the boy," the rabbi said. "He has fire and spirit; and the days are coming when we shall not ask how

old, or how young, are those who would fight, so that they can but hold arms.

"Josephus is wise not to have a military guard, John, because the people love not such appearance of state. His enemies would use this as an argument that he was setting himself up above them. It is partly because he behaves himself discreetly, and goes about among them like a private person, of no more account than themselves, that they love him. None can say he is a tyrant, because he has no means of tyrannizing. His enemies cannot urge it against him at Jerusalem—as they would doubtless do, if they could—that he is seeking to lead Galilee away from the rule of Jerusalem, and to set himself up as its master for, to do this, he would require to gather an army; and Josephus has not a single armed man at his service, save and except that when he appears to be in danger many, out of love of him, assemble and provide him escort.

"No, Josephus is wise in that he affects neither pomp nor state; that he keeps no armed men around him, but trusts to the love of the people. He would be wiser, however, did he seize one of the occasions when the people have taken up arms for him to destroy all those who make sedition; and to free the country, once and for all, from the trouble.

"Sedition should be always nipped in the bud. Lenity, in such a case, is the most cruel course; for it encourages men to think that those in authority fear them, and that they can conspire without danger; and whereas, at first, the blood of ten men will put an end to sedition, it needs, at last, the blood of as many thousands to restore peace and order. It is good for a man to be merciful, but not for a ruler, for the

good of the whole people is placed in his hands. The sword of justice is given to him, and he is most merciful who uses it the most promptly against those who work sedition. The wise ruler will listen to the prayers of his people, and will grant their petitions, when they show that their case is hard; but he will grant nothing to him who asketh with his sword in his hand, for he knows full well that when he yields, once, he must yield always; until the time comes, as come it surely will, when he must resist with the sword. Then the land will be filled with blood whereas, in the beginning, he could have avoided all trouble, by refusing so much as to listen to those who spoke with threats.

"Josephus is a good man, and the Lord has given him great gifts. He has done great things for the land; but you will see that many woes will come, and much blood will be shed, from this lenity of his towards those who stir up tumults among the people."

A few minutes later the family retired to bed; the hour being a late one for Simon's household, which generally retired to rest a short time after the evening meal.

The next day the work of gathering in the figs was carried on, earnestly and steadily, with the aid of the workers whom Simon had hired in the town and, in two days, the trees were all stripped, and strings of figs hung to dry from the boughs of all the trees round the house.

Then the gathering of the grapes began. All the inhabitants of the little fishing village lent their aid—men as well as women and children—for the vintage was looked upon as a holiday; and Simon was regarded as a good friend by his neighbors, being ever ready to aid them when there

was need, judging any disputes which arose between them, and lending them money without interest if misfortune came upon their boats or nets, or if illness befell them; while the women, in times of sickness or trouble, went naturally to Martha with their griefs, and were assured of sympathy, good advice, and any drugs or dainty food suited to the case.

The women and girls picked the grapes, and laid them in baskets. These were carried by men, and emptied into the vat; where other men trod them down, and pressed out the juice. Martha and her maids saw to the cooking and laying out, on the great tables in the courtyard, of the meals; to which all sat down, together. Simon superintended the crushing of the grapes; and John worked now at one task, and now at another. It was a pretty scene, and rendered more gay by the songs of the women and girls, as they worked; and the burst of merry laughter which, at times, arose.

It lasted four days, by which time the last bunch, save those on a few vines preserved for eating, was picked and crushed; and the vats in the cellar, sunk underground for coolness, were full to the brim. Simon was much pleased with the result; and declared that never, in his memory, had the vine and fig harvest turned out more abundant. The corn had long before been gathered, and there remained now only the olives; but it would be some little time yet before these were fit to be gathered, and their oil extracted, for they were allowed to hang on the trees until ready to drop.

The last basket of grapes was brought in with much ceremony; the gatherers forming a little procession, and singing a thanksgiving hymn as they walked. The evening meal was more bounteous, even, than usual; and all who helped carried away with them substantial proofs of Simon's thankfulness, and satisfaction.

For the next few days Simon and his men, and Martha's maids, lent their assistance in getting in the vintage of their neighbors; for each family had its patch of ground, and grew sufficient grapes and fruits for its own needs. Those in the village brought their grapes to a vat, which they had in common; the measures of the grapes being counted as they were put in, and the wine afterwards divided, in like proportion—for wine, to be good, must be made in considerable quantities.

And now there was, for a time, little to do on the farm. Simon superintended the men who were plowing up the corn stubbles, ready for the sowing in the spring; sometimes putting his hand to the plow, and driving the oxen. Isaac and his son worked in the vineyard and garden, near the house; aided to some extent by John who, however, was not yet called upon to take a man's share in the work of the farm—he having but lately finished his learning, with the rabbi, at the school in Hippos. Still, he worked steadily every morning and, in the afternoon, generally went out on the lake with the fishermen, with whom he was a great favorite.

This was not to last long for, at seventeen, he was to join his father, regularly, in the management of the farm and, indeed, the Rabbi Solomon, who was a frequent guest, was

of opinion that Simon gave the boy too much license; and that he ought, already, to be doing man's work.

But Simon, when urged by him, said:

"I know that, at his age, I was working hard, rabbi; but the lad has studied diligently, and I have a good report of him; and I think it well that, at his age, the bow should be unbent somewhat.

"Besides, who knows what is before us! I will let the lad have as much pleasure from his life as he can. The storm is approaching; let him play, while the sun shines."

II. — A STORM ON GALILEE

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ONE DAY, after the midday meal, John said:

"Mary, Raphael and his brother have taken the big boat, and gone off with fish to Tiberias; and have told me that I can take the small boat, if I will. Ask my mother to let you off your task, and come out with me. It is a fortnight since we had a row on the lake, together."

"I was beginning to think that you were never going to ask me again, John; and, only I should punish myself, I would say you nay. There have you been, going out fishing every afternoon, and leaving me at home to spin; and it is all the worse because your mother has said that the time is fast coming when I must give up wandering about like a child, and must behave myself like a woman.

"Oh, dear, how tiresome it will be when there will be nothing to do but to sit and spin, and to look after the house, and to walk instead of running when I am out, and to behave like a grown-up person, altogether!"

"You are almost grown up," John said; "you are taller, now, than any of the maids except Zillah; but I shall be sorry to see you growing staid and solemn. And it was selfish of me not to ask you to go out before, but I really did not think of it. The fishermen have been working hard, to make up for the time lost during the harvest; and I have really been useful, helping them with their nets, and this is the last year I shall have my liberty.

"But come, don't let's be wasting time in talking; run in and get my mother's permission, and then join me on the

shore. I will take some grapes down, for you to eat; for the sun is hot today, and there is scarce a breath of wind on the water."

A few minutes later, the young pair stood together by the side of the boat.

"Your mother made all sorts of objections," Mary said, laughing, "and I do think she won't let me come again. I don't think she would have done it, today, if Miriam had not stood up for me, and said that I was but a child though I was so tall; and that, as you were very soon going to work with your father, she thought that it was no use in making the change before that."

"What nonsense it all is!" John said. "Besides, you know it is arranged that, in a few months, we are to be betrothed according to the wishes of your parents and mine. It would have been done, long ago, only my father and mother do not approve of young betrothals; and think it better to wait, to see if the young ones like each other; and I think that is quite right, too, in most cases—only, of course, living here, as you have done for the last three years—since your father and mother died—there was no fear of our not liking each other."

"Well, you see," Mary said, as she sat in the stern of the boat, while John rowed it quietly along, "it might have been just the other way. When people don't see anything of each other, till they are betrothed by their parents, they can't dislike each other very much; whereas, when they get to know each other, if they are disagreeable they might get to almost hate each other."

"Yes, there is something in that," John agreed. "Of course, in our case it is all right, because we do like each other—we couldn't have liked each other more, I think, if we had been brother and sister—but it seems to me that, sometimes, it must be horrid when a boy is told by his parents that he is to be betrothed to a girl he has never seen. You see it isn't as if it were for a short time, but for all one's life. It must be awful!"

"Awful!" Mary agreed, heartily; "but of course, it would have to be done."

"Of course," John said—the possibility of a lad refusing to obey his parents' commands not even occurring to him. "Still it doesn't seem to me quite right that one should have no choice, in so important a matter. Of course, when one's got a father and mother like mine—who would be sure to think only of making me happy, and not of the amount of dowry, or anything of that sort—it would be all right; but with some parents, it would be dreadful."

For some time, not a word was spoken; both of them meditating over the unpleasantness of being forced to marry someone they disliked. Then, finding the subject too difficult for them, they began to talk about other things; stopping, sometimes, to see the fishermen haul up their nets, for there were a number of boats out on the lake. They rowed down as far as Tiberias and, there, John ceased rowing; and they sat chatting over the wealth and beauty of that city, which John had often visited with his father, but which Mary had never entered.

Then John turned the head of the boat up the lake and again began to row but, scarcely had he dipped his oar into

the water, when he exclaimed:

"Look at that black cloud rising, at the other end of the lake! Why did you not tell me, Mary?"

"How stupid of me," she exclaimed, "not to have kept my eyes open!"

He bent to his oars, and made the boat move through the water at a very different rate to that at which she had before traveled.

"Most of the boats have gone," Mary said, presently, "and the rest are all rowing to the shore; and the clouds are coming up very fast," she added, looking round.

"We are going to have a storm," John said. "It will be upon us long before we get back. I shall make for the shore, Mary. We must leave the boat there, and take shelter for a while, and then walk home. It will not be more than four miles to walk."

But though he spoke cheerfully, John knew enough of the sudden storms that burst upon the Sea of Galilee to be aware that, long before he could cross the mile and a half of water, which separated them from the eastern shore, the storm would be upon them; and indeed, they were not more than half way when it burst.

The sky was already covered with black clouds. A great darkness gathered round them; then came a heavy downpour of rain; and then, with a sudden burst, the wind smote them. It was useless, now, to try to row, for the oars would have been twisted from his hands in a moment; and John took the helm, and told Mary to lie down in the bottom of the boat. He had already turned the boat's head up the lake, the direction in which the storm was traveling.