

Job

The father of Job, a great leader of the nations, was brother to Phaleg, the son of Heber. Shortly before his time occurred the dispersion of men at the building of the Babylonian Tower. Job was the youngest of thirteen sons. They dwelt north of the Black Sea near a mountain chain which was warm on one side, and on the other cold and covered with ice. Job was forefather of Abraham. Abraham's mother was a great granddaughter of Job, who had married into the family of Heber. Job may have still been alive at the time of Abraham's birth. He dwelt

in different places, and his afflictions came upon him in three different abodes. Between the first and the second, there intervened a period of nine years' prosperity; between the second and the third, seven years; and after the third, twelve years. His sufferings always befell him in a different dwelling place. But he never was so absolutely ruined as to have nothing left; he merely became quite poor when compared with his former circumstances.

He always had enough left to pay all his debts.

Job could not remain in his parents' house. His ideas and inclinations did not accord with theirs. Job adored in nature the one only God, especially in the stars and in the change from day to night. He spoke frequently of God's wonderful works, and offered to Him a worship purer than that of those around him. He moved with his followers northward from the Caucasus to a very miserable swampy region. I think it is now inhabited by a nation distinguished by their flat noses, high cheekbones, and small eyes. Here Job first settled, and things went well with him. He gathered around him all kinds of poor, abandoned creatures who dwelt in caves and bushes, and who lived exclusively upon the raw flesh of birds and animals taken in hunting. Job was the first who taught them how to cook their food. With their help he dug up and cultivated the land. He and his people wore at that time but little clothing and they dwelt in tents. Job soon found himself the owner of immense herds in this place, among them numerous striped asses and spotted animals. Once three sons were born to him at one birth, and three daughters at another. He had as yet no city here, but went around among his fields which extended to a distance of seven leagues. No grain was cultivated in those marshy districts; but they raised a large sedge, which grows also in



water, and whose pith was eaten either boiled or roasted. They dried their meat in holes dug in the earth, and exposed to the sun, until Job taught them how to cook it. They planted many species of gourds for food. Job was unspeakably gentle, affable, just, and benevolent. He assisted all in need. He was, too, exceedingly pure and very familiar with God, who communicated with him through an angel, or "a white man," as the people of that period expressed it. These angelic apparitions were like radiant, but beardless, youths in long white garments that fell in heavy folds or strips around them, I could not distinguish which. They were girded, and they took food and drink. God consoled Job during his sufferings by means of these apparitions, and they passed sentence on his friends, his nephews, and his other relatives. He did not, like the nations around him, worship idols. They made for themselves images of all kinds of animals and adored them. But Job fabricated for himself a representation of the Almighty God, the figure of a child crowned with rays. The hands were held one above the other, and in one was a globe upon which was depicted a little vessel riding on the waves. I think it was to represent the Deluge of which, as well as of the wisdom and mercy of God, Job often spoke to his two confidential servants. The figure was portable and shone like metal. Job prayed before it, and burned grain before it as a sacrifice. The smoke arose from the top of it as through a funnel. It was in this place that Job's first affliction befell him. The time that intervened between the different misfortunes recorded of him, was not for him a time of peace. He always had to combat and struggle against the wicked races by whom he was surrounded. After his first affliction, he removed further up the mountain range, the Caucasus, where he again began anew and where prosperity again followed him. He and his followers now began to clothe themselves less scantily, and their mode of life exhibited more refinement.

From this, his second dwelling place, Job went, accompanied by a numerous train of followers, to Egypt where at that time strangers called shepherd kings, and who were from his own native land, governed a part of the country. These shepherd kings were afterward expelled by an Egyptian monarch. Job's mission to Egypt was to conduct thither one of his own relatives, who was to be the bride of one of the shepherd kings. He took with him rich presents, about thirty camels, and many servants. When I saw him in Egypt, Job was a large, powerful man of agreeable appearance; he had a yellowish-brown complexion and reddish hair. Abraham was fairer. The Egyptians were of a dirty brown. Job was not contented in Egypt. I used to see him looking back longingly toward the east, toward his fatherland which lay more to the south than the most distant

country of the Three Kings. I heard him complaining bitterly to his servants telling them that he would rather live with wild beasts than with the people of Egypt. The horrible idolatry that everywhere prevailed in that country afflicted him. The Egyptians worshipped a frightful idol with an upraised head, like that of an ox, and broad open jaws. They heated it intensely, and laid living children as offerings on its glowing arms.

The shepherd king, for whose son Job conducted the bride into Egypt, would fain have kept him there, and he assigned to him Matarea as a dwelling place. The region was at that time very different from what it was at a later period when the Holy Family sojourned there. Still I saw that Job dwelt on the spot afterward occupied by them, and that the Fountain of Mary was already shown him by God. When Mary discovered this well, it was already lined with stone, though still covered over. Job used the stone by the well for religious worship. By prayer he freed the country around his dwelling place from wild and venomous animals. Visions referring to man's salvation were vouchsafed him here, and he saw, too, the trials in store for him. With burning zeal he exclaimed against the infamous practices of the Egyptians and their human sacrifices. I think these latter were in consequence abolished.

When Job had returned to his native country, his second misfortune overtook him; and when, after twelve years of peace, the third came upon him, he was living more toward the south and directly eastward from Jericho. I think this country had been given to him after his second calamity, because he was everywhere greatly revered and loved for his admirable justice, his knowledge, and his fear of God. This country was a level plain, and here Job began anew. On a height, which was very fertile, noble animals of various kinds were running around, also wild camels. They caught them in the same way as we do the wild horses on the heath.

Job settled on this height. Here he prospered, became very rich, and built a city. The foundations were of stone; the dwellings were tents. It was during this period of great prosperity that his third calamity, his grievous distemper, overtook him. After enduring this affliction with great wisdom and patience, he entirely recovered, and again became the father of many sons and daughters. I think Job did not die till long after, when another nation intruded itself into the country.

Although in the Book of Job this narrative is given very differently, yet many of Job's own words are therein recorded. I think I could distinguish them all. Where the story says that the servants came quickly one after another to Job with news of his losses, it must be remarked that the words: "And as he still spoke of it," signify, "And while the last calamity was not yet effaced from

the mind of men," etc.

That Satan appeared before God with the sons of God and brought an action against Job, is told in this way only for the sake of brevity. There was at that time much communication between the evil spirits and idolaters to whom they appeared in angelic form. In this way, Satan incited his wicked neighbors against Job, and they calumniated him. They said that he did not serve God properly, that he had a superfluity of possessions, and that it was very easy for him to be good. Then God resolved to show that afflictions are often only trials, etc.

The friends who spoke around Job symbolized the reflections of his kinsmen upon his fate. But Job longingly awaited the Saviour, and he was one of the ancestors of the race of David. He was to Abraham, through the mother of the latter (who was one of his descendants), what the ancestors of Anne were to Mary.

The history of Job, together with his dialogues with God, was circumstantially written down by two of his most trusty servants who seemed to be his stewards. They wrote upon bark, and from Job's own dictation. These two servants were named respectively Hai and Uis, or Ois. These narratives were held very sacred by Job's descendants. They passed from generation to generation down to Abraham. In the school of Rebecca, the Canaanites were instructed in them on account of the lessons of submission under trials from God that they inculcated.

Through Jacob and Joseph, they descended to the children of Israel in Egypt. Moses collected and arranged them differently for the use of the Israelites during their servitude in Egypt and their painful wanderings in the wilderness; for they contained many details that might not have been understood, and which would have been of no service in his time. But Solomon again entirely remodeled them, omitting many things and inserting many others of his own. And so, this once authentic history became a sacred book made up of the wisdom of Job, Moses, and Solomon. One can now only with difficulty trace the particular history of Job, for the names of cities and nations were assimilated to those of the land of Canaan, on which account Job came to be regarded as an Edomite.