

talents. But as this was included in Cæsar's grant to Herod, the Arabians contested the point, sometimes by law, and sometimes by force; and, to render the latter means more coercive, they engaged a party of soldiers, of desperate fortunes, who were willing to exert themselves in any cause that might retrieve them. Herod was well apprized of the design, but deemed it expedient to counteract it rather by mild than rigorous measures, in order to prevent fresh commotions.

The Arabians intended to molest Herod.

Agrippa the younger came into Syria.

The Gadarenes accuse Herod.

In the seventeenth year of Herod's reign Cæsar came into Syria, where he was immediately applied to by the greater part of the inhabitants of Gadara, with clamorous accusations against Herod, as a most insupportable tyrant and oppressor. They were instigated to prefer these complaints by Zenodorus, who had bound himself by oath never to quit the prosecution of Herod, till he was dispossessed of his dominions, and they reverted to Cæsar. Thus instigated by Zenodorus, they became more and more vehement in their exclamations, and especially because those prisoners, that were delivered up to Herod by Agrippa, continued unpunished. Indeed, lenity towards the injuries of strangers was a striking trait in Herod's character, however inexorable he might have been towards the delinquents of his own subjects. The misdemeanours with which he was charged were, rapine, oppression, the violation and demolition of temples, with others of a similar nature.

Their conduct is considered as an evidence of guilt, and Herod is acquitted by Cæsar.

Herod boldly presented himself in justification, and was treated with every token of respect and honour by Cæsar, notwithstanding the clamours of the multitude; inasmuch that the Gadarenes, finding his powerful interest with the emperor, and thence expecting that they would fall into his hands, had recourse to suicide, by various means, to prevent the infliction of severer torments; and Cæsar thence inferring they had condemned themselves, acquitted Herod of every part of the accusation.

Death of Zenodorus.

Cæsar's further bounty to Herod.

A combination of events, at this time, seemed to favour Herod, and particularly the death of his implacable enemy Zenodorus, by a violent dysentery, at Antioch, in consequence of which he obtained, from Cæsar, a considerable part of his domains between Galilee and Trachon, comprising Ulatha, Panuim, and the adjacent country. He was also vested with a sovereign command over the governors of Syria, who were accordingly under his sole rule and direction.

Herod erects a temple to Augustus.

Herod was now advanced to such a pitch of good fortune, that whereas there were but two men that governed the vast Roman empire, first Cæsar, and then Agrippa, who was his principal confidant. Cæsar preferred no man to Herod besides Agrippa, nor did Agrippa any one to Herod besides Cæsar. By virtue of this interest, Herod obtained a tetrarch's commission, in Judæa, from Augustus, for his brother Pheroras, upon whom he bestowed an annual income of an hundred talents out of his own proper revenue, to obviate the consequences of any contingencies that might reduce him to a dependance on his children. After this, Herod waited upon Cæsar, till he saw him embarked; and, on his return, erected, to his honour, a most beautiful temple, of white marble, upon the domains of Zenodorus, near the cave they call Panias, which is at the bottom of a mountain famous for being the source of the river Jordan. The cavern is very steep, and the springs of water in it perpetually bubbling. The mountain is famous for a delightful prospect, but more especially so for the magnificent temple of Augustus Cæsar.

Herod means to prevent suits.

The king took an opportunity, at this time, of ingratiating himself with his people, by remitting a third part of their taxes, under pretence of compassionating the distresses they had undergone during the time of the late famine, but, in reality, to conciliate their good will. The innovations he had introduced, in violation of their laws and religion, gave universal disgust, and were loudly complained of; so that, to preserve order and decorum, he enjoined every man diligently to attend to his own

concerns, prohibiting select assemblies, and fixing spies in all places of resort, to take into custody all who should disobey these orders, and cause them to be punished with the utmost rigour. The very roads, streets, and avenues, were beset: nay, so anxious was he for the detection of any that might violate his injunctions in this particular, that, in the night, he would mix himself, in disguise, with the rabble, in order to learn how they stood affected. Those who could by no means be brought to acquiesce with his scheme of government, were prosecuted with the greatest severity; while such as were more moderate, were put to an oath of allegiance, and dismissed. By this means he brought the majority, out of fear, to a compliance with him; but those who had the resolution to contend the point, and stigmatize his conduct, were taken off by some device or other. He endeavoured to impose this oath upon Pallio, the Pharisee, and Sameas, together with their disciples; but though they peremptorily refused it, he declined urging it by any harsh means, out of the regard he bore to Pallio. The Essenes were also exempted from this oath. These Essenes were a sect in some respects resembling the Pythagoreans among the Greeks; and though we have already described the peculiar tenets they hold, it will be necessary, on this occasion, to point out the causes for which they were paid so distinguished a regard by Herod.

Prediction of Manahem, an Essene.

There was one amongst these Essenes whose name was Manahem, a man of singular piety and virtue, who was endowed with the gift of prophecy. This person meeting Herod in his puerile days, going to school, greeted him with the salutation of "Hail! king of the Jews." Herod, either not knowing him, or thinking him in jest, told him he was not descended from a family to attain such a dignity. Manahem, smiling, and laying his hand gently on his shoulder, replied, "You are to be king, and you shall rule happily; for it is the Divine will that it shall be so. Retain these words of Manahem in your memory, as they give you to understand the change of your fortune. It will be your duty to govern with justice and equity; but, by a secret impulse, I learn that your conduct will not be regulated by those excellent maxims; as, in divers instances, you will swerve from them; though, in other respects, you will be fortunate, and worthy of much commendation. Remember your crimes cannot be concealed from the pervading eye of the Almighty, who will most severely punish you for them."

Herod, at that time, was totally regardless of what Manahem predicted, having no reasonable view of such advancement. But when he afterwards came to the throne, and attained to the summit of his glory, he sent for Manahem, and asked him how long he thought he should reign? Manahem returning an indefinite answer, Herod put the question whether he thought he should reign ten years? He replied, yes, and twenty, and thirty, but did not assign the determinate limits of his reign. Herod, resting satisfied with what he had heard, dismissed him in a friendly manner; and, from that time forwards, paid great honour to the sect of Essenes. We have related this circumstance, strange as it may appear, as another proof of the many instances in which the secret purposes and counsels of the Divine Being have been revealed to men of simple piety and virtue.

C H A P. XIV.

*Herod rebuilds the temple, raises it higher, and renders it more magnificent than it was before.*

AFTER so many signal transactions, and the finishing of so many sumptuous edifices, Herod, in the eighteenth year of his reign, turned his attention towards the erecting of a temple in honour of the true God, in every respect larger and more stately than the former. This work he was persuaded would perpetuate his memory beyond all

Herod proposes to rebuild the temple.

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