

**IN THOSE DAYS;
THE STORY OF AN
OLD MAN. [1915]**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649615100

In Those Days; The Story of an Old Man. [1915] by Jehudah Steinberg & George Jeshurum

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JEHUDAH STEINBERG & GEORGE JESHURUM

**IN THOSE DAYS;
THE STORY OF AN
OLD MAN. [1915]**

IN THOSE DAYS

IN THOSE DAYS
THE STORY OF AN OLD MAN

BY

JEHUDAH STEINBERG
TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW BY
GEORGE JESHURUN



AMH23600

PHILADELPHIA

THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA

1915

IN THOSE DAYS

THE STORY OF AN OLD MAN

I

When the time drew near for Samuel the Beadle to let his son begin his term of military service, he betook himself to the market, purchased a regulation shirt, a knapsack, and a few other things needed by a soldier—and he did not forget the main item: he ran and fetched a bottle of liquor. Then he went home.

And there, in the presence of his neighbors, of whom I had the privilege of being one, he drank a glassful to "long life," and offered another to Rebekah, his good wife.

"Drink, madam," said he, merrily. At this Rebekah turned up her nose, as if ready to blurt out with, "How often have you seen me drink liquor?"

Indeed, it was an affront which she would not have passed over in silence at any other time, but she had no heart for an open quarrel just then, when about to part with her son, and was satisfied with a silent refusal.

"Woman," said Samuel, angrily, "take it, and do as you are told!" But Rebekah was not impressed by his angry tone, for in fact Samuel was an easy "lord and master." As to his loudness, it was but part of an old habit of his, dating from the days of his own military service, to bully his inferiors and to let those above him in authority bully him.

"So are they all of his kind," she would often explain to her neighbors. "They just fuss, to blow off their tempers, and then—one may sit on them."

Rebekah persisted in her refusal, and Samuel began in a softer tone:

"But why does it worry you so much?"

Woman, woman, it is not to Shemad, God forbid, that he is going!"

At the mention of conversion, Rebekah burst into tears, for Samuel had unintentionally touched her sore spot: there were rumors in the town that her family was not without blemish.

"Now that you are crying," exclaimed Samuel, thoroughly angry, "you are not only hard-headed, but also silly, simply silly! 'Long of hair but short of sense.' To cry and cry, and not know wherefore!" With this Samuel turned towards us, and began to plead his case.

"Have you ever seen such a cry-baby? Five times in her life she filled the world with a hue and cry, when she bore me a child, and every time it was but an empty bubble: five girls she brought me! Then, beginning with the sixth birth, she was fortunate enough to get boys, the real thing. Three sons she gave me as my

old age was approaching. And now, when she ought to thank Heaven for having been found worthy of raising a soldier for the army, she cries! Think of it—your son enters the army a free man; but I, in my time,—well, well, I was taken by force when a mere youngster!”

Here the old man settled his account with the bottle, and took leave of his crying wife and his good neighbors, and in the company of his son mounted the coach waiting outside, ready to go to H., the capital of the district, where the recruits had to report.

By special good fortune I was going to H. by the same coach, and so I came to hear the story of old Samuel's life from the beginning till that day.

It was the rainy season; the roads were muddy, and the horses moved with difficulty. The driver made frequent stops, and whenever the road showed the slightest inclination to go