

**THE DAYS OF
JEZEBEL: AN
HISTORICAL DRAMA**

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The Days of Jezebel: An Historical Drama by Peter Bayne

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AN HISTORICAL DRAMA.

By PETER BAYNE.

AUTHOR OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: "SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL," "ESSAYS IN
BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM," ETC.

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1872.



DEAR PROFESSOR BLACKIE,

I dedicate to you this Drama: first, because well-remembered words of yours prevented my utterly abandoning poetical composition; and secondly and chiefly, because I wish to tell you, as expressively as I can, that the affectionate admiration with which your genius and kindness inspired me when a student in your class is as boyishly warm as ever.

PETER BAYNE.

HARLINGTON, MIDDLESEX, May 1, 1872.





P R E F A C E .

THE historical significance and great and varied interest of the period, whose delineation is attempted in the following drama, have attracted to it an extraordinary degree of attention ; but in none of the books upon the subject which I have seen has adequate importance been assigned, or, to speak with more precision, sufficient space been allotted, to the part played by Queen Jezebel. Elijah, one of the most picturesque figures in history, revered alike by Jews and Christians, "the grandest and most romantic character that Israel

ever produced," has thrown the other personages of the time into the shade. Treatises, orations, sermons innumerable have celebrated Elijah; Jezebel has received but that cursory mention which might be required to render the principal passages in the life of the prophet intelligible. Even Professor Ewald and Dean Stanley devote no more than a few words to the queen. To both of these writers I have, in the composition of this work, been largely indebted. Ewald's searching and masterly investigation may be considered decisive as to the outline of historical fact, and Dean Stanley furnishes the scenery amid which the events took place and the actors lived. To him and others who have recently described Syria and Palestine it is due that the transactions in which Elijah, Jezebel, and Ahab took part can be represented with a topographical accuracy and a panoramic

vividness on a par with those which we expect in a description of the campaigns of Sadowa or Waterloo. In reading Dean Stanley's account of the sacrifice upon Mount Carmel, we seem to see the very ground under Elijah's feet. But each of these eminent writers has, as I observed, only a few words to say of Jezebel. She was nevertheless the central figure in the historical group in which she appears. It was by the presence of Jezebel, as Queen of Israel, with a determinate, well-considered policy, carried out with inflexible resolution, that the activity of Elijah was called forth. Paradoxical as the statement looks, the transcendent importance of the part played by Jezebel, and the implacable resentment which she inspired, were among the chief causes why we hear so little about her. The records we possess of her reign were composed by Hebrews

for whom it was both patriotism and religion to hate her with a perfect hatred. This hatred did not, I believe, induce them to deviate from strict veracity; but it made Jezebel's character and actions a supremely disagreeable subject, and they said as little of her as they could. When the shadow of Jezebel falls upon their page, it announces itself in black, but it flits by with spectre-like swiftness. Only in the instances of her message to Elijah, her interference against Naboth, and her death, have we minute details. She issued, apparently at an early period in her reign, an edict for the slaughter of the prophets of Jehovah. This was manifestly a cardinal event in the history of the time. It probably initiated Jezebel's policy of exterminating persecution, and it is a reasonable supposition that the profound agitation which it would occasion reached Elijah