

**JULIAN: OR,
SCENES IN JUDEA**

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Julian: Or, Scenes in Judea by William Ware

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WILLIAM WARE

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BY THE AUTHOR OF

LETTERS FROM PALMYRA AND ROME.

1842.

1333.

NOTE.

THESE "Scenes," it is thought proper to say, are purely fictitious, with no foundation whatever in historical fact, except where an obvious agreement will be found with the Scriptures. Wherever the story deviates from the straight course of the New Testament record, it is to be taken as imaginary—illustrative merely of the period chosen.

For the part assigned to Herod there is a show of authority; and it will be found to conflict with the conjecture of those who, to meet the difficulty presented by Luke, xv. 1, suppose the tetrarch to have been absent from his dominions during all the early part of our Saviour's ministry, engaged in a war with the King of Arabia.

In respect to Scripture antiquities no more has been attempted than not to do them violence. Geographical and Topographical details will be found to agree essentially with the best authorities.

JULIAN;

OR,

SCENES IN JUDEA.

PRaise to the God of Abraham. The locusts are flown. The land which they found flourishing and verdant as a garden, they have changed to the barrenness of a desert. The cities and the villages, but now so full of people, are become the region of desolation and death. Even the very city and house of God are level with the dust, and the ploughshare has gone over them. And here, upon the hill of Olives, I sit, a living witness of the ruin. By reason of the wonderful compassions of God, which never fail, I am escaped as a bird from the net of the fowler. Yet I take little joy in this. For why should the days of one like me be lengthened out, when the mighty and excellent of the land are cut off? I rather rejoice in this, that the spoiler is gone; the armies of the alien have ceased to devour; and they who are fled, and hidden in caves and dens of the rocks, may come forth again to inhabit the land and build up the waste places. A multitude, which no man could number, have fallen before the edge of the sword, or by famine, and the air is full of the pestilential vapours that steam up from their rotting carcasses. But a greater multitude remains; and it may well be that ere many years have passed, they shall fill the land as before, and gathered into one by Him who, though long delaying, will come, pay back, and more, the measure they have received. That time will surely come. Even as the Assyrian could not finally destroy, but the hand of the Almighty was put forth, and the city and the temple grew again from their ruins to a greater glory than before, so shall it be now. The Roman triumph shall be short. Messiah shall yet appear; and Jerusalem clothed in Her beautiful garments shall sit upon her hills, the joy and crown of the whole earth.

But for me, my eyes shall not behold it. Before that day, these aged limbs shall rest in the sepulchres of Beth-Harem, and these walls will have fallen and mingled with the common earth. It is not to-morrow, nor the day after, that the kingdom shall come. Impatient Israel will not wait the appointed hour; she will not remember that with the Lord a thousand years are as a day, and a day as a thousand years. She will reign to-day or never. It is her mad haste has drawn upon her this wide destruction. Deceivers, and they who have deceived themselves, fools and wicked men, have led her to the precipice, down which she hath fallen, and now lies, as a potter's vessel, broken in fragments. And I, also, am not clear in the great transgression. The rage which filled the people was in my heart also. I too gave heed to lying words, and bent my knee before him who, in my darkness, seemed to me as in very truth the King of Israel, and bound myself to his chariot wheels. May He whose compassions are infinite, pity and forgive his servant. It is with my soul low in the dust before him, that I turn to the long past, and remember the early errors of my life.

And why will ye of Rome press upon me the unwelcome task? My kinsmen might well forego any pleasure they may reap, for the pain that will be my only harvest. Yet not my only harvest. The memory of the days spent where Judith and Onias dwelt will bring with it pleasant thoughts,—if many bitter and self-reproachful also. Happily, of this portion of my life, of which you are chiefly desirous to hear, the record already exists; from which I need but draw in such fragments as shall impart all that I may care to reveal. That record lies before me just as it went forth from my full heart, and was

poured into the bosom of that more than woman,—my protecting angel, rather,—Naomi the blessed. As the scenes of my earlier life rise before me out of these leaves, distinct as the outlines of these barren hills, so too does the image of my mother come up out of the obscurity of the past, and stand before me, clear and beautiful to the eye as when clothed in flesh. It was to thee, thou true mother in Israel, that I made myself visible and plain to read as a parchment scroll, and from thee in return received those holy counsels, charged with a divine wisdom, which were a pillar of light to my path; and had I heeded them, had saved me from every error, as they did from more than I can now remember or recount.

Concerning my birth and childhood in Rome, and the years which preceded my departure for the East, it needs not that I speak; for of that part of my life enough is known, and I can take no pleasure in re-perusing it. From the letters and other writings transmitted to me long since by my mother from Rome, I now draw what shall give you a somewhat living picture of those days in Judæa about which you are chiefly desirous to hear.

I.

I THUS addressed my mother, soon after reaching Caesarea:

You who know your son so well will not doubt that I took my departure from Antioch with pain. Nowhere since I passed the gates of Rome have I been entertained with such magnificence. Nowhere have the hours proved themselves so short-lived. After the dulness of Athens, and the worse than dulness of Smyrna, Ephesus and Rhodes, it was refreshing to witness the noise and stir of the mistresses of the East. So frequent were the theatres, baths, and porticos, the shows, the games, the combats of wild beasts, that I felt myself almost in the Elysium of my own Rome. What added, too, as you will believe, to my happiness, was this, that I passed everywhere for a Roman of undoubted Roman blood; or, at least, if my descent were seen, with a civility which seems native to these orientals, the knowledge of it was not betrayed by a word or look. I perceive you to smile at this, as also to utter a few words expressive of a gentle contempt for an unworthy scion of an ancient house. The contempt from you I can bear; but the smile by which you seem to enjoy what you are pleased to term my credulity, I must say and believe is wasted. For, more than once have I been assured by some of my own tribe that, but

for a something in my eye, they should not suspect me to be other than a Roman. Neither my mother, was this flattery; it was from some incapable of that meanest vice; from my real friends. But whoever were so blind as to take me for a Roman, you may be assured I was not careful to undeceive them. I enjoyed the perfect fidelity while I might. And the dream was undisturbed during the whole of my sojourn there, except in a single instance, when, once as I was walking in front of the baths of Tiberius, I saw approaching from an opposite point the lordly Drusus, who, as I gave signs of saluting him, turned his face in another direction, and swept along without recognizing me. What think you of that? at this distance I can see your colour change. But if you even feel the insult, who live so shut out from the great world, how much more must I who am in it. I think your censure is too sharp upon me, when at such moments I, somewhat hastily perhaps, with the twelve tribes had found the fate of Pharaoh, seeing that to little else than scorn and curses, hatred and oppression, are they born who come of their lineage. Willingly would I renounce all the wisdom I have ever found in Moses and the prophets, for a little of that equal honour in the eyes of men, which more methinks than questions of philosophy or religion concerns a man's well-being. My eye is not far reaching enough to discern a single advantage in the position the Jew fills in this great theatre of life. He cherishes in his soul his faith, which he holds to be nobler and purer than that of Pythagoras or Cicero. But however much nobler and purer in his own eye, when did other than a Jew so esteem it? Who ever has heard of Romans, Greeks, or Egyptians becoming Jews and receiving—save in numbers most inconsiderable—the Jewish faith? Yet is it likely that through so many ages a religion given of God should have remained in the world, and not have convinced men of its divinity? I, alas, have not even a conviction of its truth to sustain me under this burden of contempt and reproach. I am a Jew outwardly, carrying the signs of my descent and origin in my face and form, branded in by the Hand that made me, and by the hand that reared me, and this I cannot help. But with readiness would I lose one half my limbs, if from what remained these scars and seams of ignominy were fairly erased. You say that in Rome I mix freely with the Roman youth, that I sit at their tables and they at mine, that I join them at the games, and in every amusement of our city life. It is true; yet still I am a Jew. I am beloved of many because I am Julian; yet by the very same am I abhorred because I am a Jew. The Roman beggar who takes my gold,—for gold is

gold,—begs pardon of the gods, and as he turns the corner scours the coin upon the sand. Yet, my mother, I see not why one people should thus proscribe another; nor do I look upon the wrong but with indignation. You justly accuse me with indifference to the religion of my fathers. But I have never beheld with patience the slights, insults and oppressions, which, by the stronger, have been heaped upon the weaker; nor, truly, when I reflect, can I see why the worship of a people should be charged upon them as a crime. It is these injuries which have roused within me, at times, the Jew—however for the most part in my search after pleasure, I have been too ready to forget all but what ministered directly to that end. If thou art filled with wonder at so serious a vein in me I will soon give thee the reasons thereof; but let me first speak of my passage hither, and of that which happened immediately on my arrival.

I left Antioch, as I have said, with regret. At the mouth of the Orontes I embarked in a trader, bound to Caesarea, and then to Joppa and Alexandria. We at first were driven out to sea by an east wind, and ran quite along the shores of Cyprus; but this soon subsiding, we crossed over again to the Syrian coast, and were afterwards enabled to keep our vessel so near,—the breezes being gentle and from a safe quarter,—that I enjoyed a continued prospect of the country, with as much distinctness and satisfaction, methinks, as if I had been travelling by land; at least with distinctness enough, for every pleasure of this sort is increased by a certain degree of obscurity and dimness. Painters understand this, and over their works throw a sort of haze by some mysterious process of their divine art, which imparts to them their principal charm. No prospect and no picture is beautiful which is clear and sharp as if cut in metal. Truth itself is to me improved by a veil of this same mistiness thrown around it. But if any fault is to be found with this Syrian atmosphere, it is that of this all-involving dimness there is something too much, to that degree, indeed, that the eye is often cheated of the distant features of the landscape,—the mountains which, drawn upon the chart before us, we know to be not far distant, not too far for the eye to reach with ease, being cut off entirely by this purple wall of partition. Happily as we drew near the port of Berytus, beyond which lay the mountains of the Libanus and Anti-Libanus, there was not so much of the quality of which I speak in the air, as to deprive us of a view of their summits, crowned with their snowy caps, filling the whole eastern horizon. It was a magnificent mountain scene, a fitting vestibule, you will say, my mother, through

which to enter the holy land of Moses and Abraham. It was, I am obliged to confess, with emotions such as I had never experienced before, that I found myself now for the first time gazing upon the shores of this wonderful people, the home of my fathers. It was beautiful to the eye, as we skirted the coast, as one long continued garden. The rich agriculture of the husbandman was pushed out to the very sands of the sea-beach, and every cape, and promontory, and lofty peak, showed, sparkling in the sun, the white walls of a village or some insulated dwelling, proving how thickly peopled must be the country, which could spare its inhabitants for the cultivation of spots naturally barren and inhospitable, but now by the hand of industry changed to a soil not less fertile than that of Italy. I could not but wish that, if it were decreed I must be a Jew, I had been born and had lived in these sunny regions; and in truth, that it had pleased heaven to have retained my parents on their native soil, seeing that there, among our own hills and plains, we could not but have been a people more respected than we now are, or ever can be, wandering over the earth, forcing ourselves upon every nation and every city, unwelcome guests,—among them but never of them.

We had not long lost sight of the ridges of Lebanon, when we passed successively those ancient seats of opulence and renown, Sidon and Tyre; then doubling a lofty cape, formed by a part of Mount Carmel shooting into the sea, a few hours' sail revealed a distant prospect of Caesarea. As we drew near, I was astonished at the magnificence of the port. It is a harbour of an immense capacity as to vessels of all kinds and sizes, yet has it been formed wholly by the hand of art. The shore presents at this part of the coast an almost even line of sandy banks running from south to north, with none of those alternate projections and inlets which are proper for the security of ships against both the current of the sea and storms of wind. Wherefore, at the cost of an immense sum, did Herod the Great construct this artificial basin,—larger than the famous one at Athens,—wherein vessels can ride in perfect safety, protected especially against the violence of the southern gales, which in this region are chiefly to be feared. The water is enclosed by a mole in the shape of a half moon, which, bending round from the south, presents its open mouth to the north, whose gentle winds allow vessels at all times to obtain an entrance. This mole, wholly of marble, and of enormous proportions, offers to the eye on the outer side a continuous range of edifices, also of marble, which seemed to me palaces as I approached at a

distance, but are designed for the reception of merchandise; while on the inner side, for its entire length, it affords a broad and spacious pavement, where the ships are lightened of their burdens, and, lashed to iron rings or pillars, ride securely till their cargoes for another voyage have been received. At the entrance of the harbour, and at the very extremity of the mole, there rises a lofty tower, upon the summit of which you behold a Colossus of Asia, while on the opposite side of the entrance, upon a similar tower which terminates the shorter arm of the mole, stands a Colossus of Rome, of the like huge proportions. Towers of the same height and size shoot up along the whole length of this vast wall, intended partly as an additional feature of magnificence, and partly as a defence against the assaults of an enemy. From the inner shore of this wide basin,—which for vastness seems a lake,—rises by a gradual ascent the city, the streets which lead from the water being crossed at regular intervals by others of the same width, which run in an opposite direction.

As our vessel,—its decks thronged with passengers—floated, driven by a gentle northern breeze, within the embrace of this spacious haven and the crowd of shipping, the long range of lofty towers, the city with its palaces, temples, and theatres, all open at once to my view, I thought I had never seen anything of a more impressive grandeur. I could with difficulty persuade myself that this was a city of Judea; that, where I had expected to behold a barbarous and uncultivated people, I should thus meet instead, all the signs of elegance and taste which had marked the cities of Greece and Syria, or are to be observed in the chief towns of Italy. I remembered, indeed, the magnificence and boundless wealth of Herod, but I do not think, my mother, that even you yourself are aware of the greatness of his achievements, not only here in Casarea, but, as I have heard, in many other of the cities of Judea. From some of my own nation, who have been fellow-passengers, and with whom I have enjoyed much pleasant intercourse, I have learned this; and in addition, more of the present condition and recent history of the country than I could have obtained from any sources whatsoever in Rome. Of these things I shall impart what knowledge I have gathered at my future leisure. Let me, at present, return to our arrival.

We thus floated into this beautiful harbour, making our way slowly along amongst vessels of all nations, which, like ourselves, were coming in or departing, or riding securely at their anchors. The noise and confusion were scarcely less than in the Tiber. I enjoyed the scene greatly, as I do every where

whatever leads to uproar and contention. Particularly was I delighted with the quarrels which arose among the sailors, when the vessels either could not easily pass each other, or became entangled, when it frequently came to blows, and more or fewer were over-set into the water. If they who were thus thrust overboard did not readily recover themselves by clinging to the sides of the vessel, or laying hold upon some rope, the combatants then ceased till the drowning men were drawn up again. Yet are many daily lost in these rude encounters, and I myself saw blows given and taken, which seemed to me more than enough to demolish the head on which they fell. But when the governor of a people is full of quarrel and violence and injustice, how can anything better be expected from the very lowest of the populace? As I stood watching what was thus going on about me, I was surprised to find ourselves suddenly brought up against a vessel, which, from the howlings that proceeded from it, I perceived to be crowded with wild beasts, and indeed the deck was covered with their cages. As I expressed to one who stood by me, and with whom I had had frequent intercourse during the voyage, my wonder to see such a cargo making its way into a port of Judea, where the customs and religion of the people differ so widely from those of Rome and other heathen cities, he replied, that they, who knew anything of the manner in which Judea had been governed by Herod, and after him by the Ethnarch, would see, in what had occasioned surprise to me, nothing but what agreed exactly with the now altered character of the population. I answered, that I was obliged to confess great ignorance of all that related to the Jews, as I was Roman born, and my reading and studies had lain in a quite different direction.

At this flourish, which I had hoped should pass with him, he quickly rejoined, "You may be Roman born, but, if so, your Hebrew blood wears well, for the Jew looks out at your eyes as plainly as the Roman out of your cloak and your speech. Never hope to play Roman with those eyes in your head."

I was somewhat taken down, as you may suppose, by this; but I put the best face upon the matter, and said that I could not but acknowledge that, although I had been born in Rome, my parents had removed thither from the upper part of Judea. My education had, however, been so completely Roman, owing to my father's early abandonment of all outward observance of his faith, that it was strictly true, as I had stated, that my ignorance was great of all that related to the present condition and late history of the country of my ancestors.

"The more the pity," replied my com-