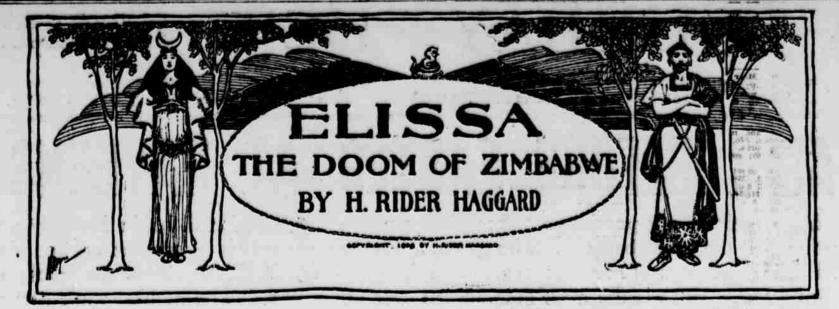
THE OMAHA DAILY BERIJ SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 1898.



(Copyright, 1898, by 'H. Rider Haggard.) CHAPTER XII .-- Continued.

10

Having passed the gate, Aziel and Issachar crept down the winding passages of stone, groping their path by such light as fell from the narrow line of sky above them, till at length they reached the court of the sanctuary. Here the place was as silent as death, for the noise from the city without could not pierce the towering walls of massive granite.

"It is the very pit of Tophet," murmured Issachar, peering through the dense shadows, "the house of Besizebub, where his presence dwells. Whither now, Aziel?"

The prince pointed to two objects that were visible in the starlight, and answered: "Thither, at the foot of the pillar of El."

"Ah, I remember," said Issachar, "where the accurged woman would have offered sacrifice, and the priests cut me down because I prophesied to them of the wrath to come, and that is now at, hand. An fil-omened spot, indeed, and an ill-omened tryst with the fiends for witnesses. Well, lead on, and I pray you he as brief as may be, for this place weighs down my soul, and I feel danger in it-danger to the body and the spirit."

So they went forward. "Be careful," whispered Aziel presently. "The pit of sacrifice is at your feet."

'Yes, yes," he answered, "we walk upon the edge of the plt, and in truth, I grow fearful, for at the threshold of such build-ings the angel of the Lord deserts us." There are none here to fear," said Aziel,

but even as he spoke, though he could not see it, a white face rose above the edge of the pit, like that of some ghost struggling from the tomb, watched them a moment with cold eyes, then disappeared again. Now they were near the greater pillar, and now from its shadows glided a black-

veiled shape. "Elissa," murmured Aziel.

"Elissa," murmured Aziel. "It is I," whispered a soft voice, "but who comes with you?" "I, Issachar," sold the Levite, "who would not suffer that he of whom I am given charge should seek such company alone. Now, priestess, say your say with the prince yonder and let us be gone swiftly from this blood-stained place."

'You speak harsh words to me, Issachar,' whe said, gently, "yet I am most glad you have come, for, believe me, I sought no lovers' meeting with Prince Aziel. Listen, both of you. You know they have conseboth of you. You know they have conse-crated me high priestess of Baaltis against my will, but I tell you I have already told my will, but I tell you I have already told Prince Aziel that I am no longer a wor-shipper of Baaltis. Yes, here in her very temple I renounce her, even though she take my life in vengeance. Of since they made me priestess I have been forced to learn all her worship and to see sights that learn all her worship and to see sights that would chill the blood to hear them, and I would chill the blood to hear them, and i tell you, Prince Azlei and Issachar, that I will bear no more of it. From El and Baaltis I turn to him you worship, though, alas, little time is left to me in which to

plead with him." "Why in little time left?" broke in Azlel. "Because my death is very near me, prince, for if I live, see what a fate is

been light still, were heavy with the pres-

age of new sorrow to come. Scarcely could they have been heavier, indeed, had they seen a white-faced woman creep from the pit of death and follow them stealthily until they had passed their doors, then turn and run at full speed toward the college of the pricets of El.

In the chamber of Aziel they found Metem. "I rejoice to see you back again in safety, since it is more than I thought to do," he said, as they entered, then added, as the black-veiled shape of Elissa followed them into the room, "but who is the third? Ah, I see, the Lady Elissa. Does the Boaltis accompany us upon our journey?" "Yes," answered Aziel shortly.

"Then with her on one side and the holy Issuchar on the other, it should not lack

for blessings, since the evil must be great from which separately or together they are unable to defend us. But, lady, if I may ask it, have you but f. rewelt to your most honored father? "Torment me not," murmured Elissa.

"Indeed, I did not wish to, though you may remember that not so long ago you face.' threatened to silence me forever. Well doubtless your departure is too hurried for furewells, and, fortunately, foresceing it, I

"It is Metem with the mules," said Aziel. "I hope so," answered Elissa.

Again there was a silence, which, after asked the a while, was broken by a loud knocking at know her. the door.

and princiesses before him were their judges. Indeed, he remembered that the place had been pointed out to him as that where these who had offended against the gods were carried for judgment, to be hurled, if found guilty, down the face of the precipice and left, a shapeless mass of broken bones, to After a long and solemn pause, at a sign from the shadid, he who had been the hus-band of the dead Baaltis, the veil was re-

moved from Elissa, who looked at Aziel and smiled sadly. "Do you know the fate that waits us??"

the prince asked Issachar in Hebrew. "I know, and I am ready," answered the d Levite, "for since my soul is safe I care old Levite, bittle what these dogs do to my body; but, ob, my son, I weep for you, and cursed be

the hour when first you saw that woman's "Spare to reproach me in my misfortune." murmured Elissa. "Have I not enough to bear, knowing that I have brought death have provided spare mules, so that my bave provided spare mules, so that my deeds are kinder than my words. I go to see that all is prepared. Now eat before you start; presently I will return for you," Issachar more gently, "seeing that, "That I will do gladly, daughter," replied Issachar more gently, "seeing that, al-though you seem to be the cause of them,

these things can have happened only by the will of God, and therefore I was wrong to revile you. Before she could answer, the shadid com-

effigy of the goddess. "Who are you, and what do you here?" asked the shadid, as though he did not

"I am Mesa, the daughter of her who was escape the legal consequences of their crime

the altar stood a shrine containing a sym-bolic effigy of Baaltis fashioned of gold and ivory and wood in the shape of a woman with a hundred breasts. Seeing all this, Aziel understood that they three had been brought here for trial and that the priests you should die, since for you there is a way of escape that leads to safety and great honor, and che who was the cause of your ain is the mistress of its gale. Elissa, holder of the spirit of Bealtis upon earth, if it be your pleasure to name this man husband before us all, then as the apouse of Banltis he goes free, for he whom the Baaltis chooses cannot refuse her gift of love, but for so long as she chall live must rule with her as shadid of El. But if you name him not, then, as I have said, he must die, and now. Speak.'

"It seems that my choice is small," said Elissa, with a faint smile. "Praying you to pardon me for the deed, to save your life, Prince Aziel, I name you my husband." Now, Aziel was about to answer her when Now, Aziel was about to answer lief where it," the shadid broke in hurriedly. "So be it," he said. "Lady, we hear your choice, and we accept it as we must, but not yet, Prince

Aziel, can you take your wife and with her my place and power. Your life is safe, inmy place and power. deed, for since the Baaltis, being unwed, names you as her mate, you have done no sin. Yet she has sinned, and doom awalts

her, for against the law she has chosen as husband one who worships a strange god, and of all crimes that is the greatest. Therefore, either you must take incense and before us all make offering to El and Baaltis and her white and ghastly face turned up-upon worder allar, thus renouncing your ward to the sky. Then they paused, waiting but upon yonder altar, thus renouncing your and entering into ours, or she must faith die, and you, your rank having passed from

Now Aziel understood the trap that had been laid for him and saw in it the fandi-work of Sakon and Metem. Elissa having flagrantly violated the religious law, and he

being the cause of her crime, even the authority of the governor of the city could not prevent his daughter and his guest from

being put upon their total. Therefore he had arranged this farce, for so it would seem to him, whereby both of them might

ened to murder me three days ago. I can-not bear to see this one come to such an end. Prince, do not heed the howlings of that old fancile, but remember that after all you are the cause of this lady's plight, and be a man. Can you for the sake of your own scruples, however worthy, doom a woman to such an cud?" and he nodded toward the precipice and shuddered. "Is there no other way?" Axiel asked him

"Is there no other way ?" Aziel asked him hearsely. ne, I swear it. They did not wish to

kill ber, except that wildcat Mesa, who seeks her place, but, having put her on her trial, if you persist, they must, because this is one of the laws that cannot be broken for favor or for gold. Perhaps we might have found some other plan, but none of us dreamed that you would refuse so small a thing for the sake of a woman whom you swore you loved. Remember, this offering of incerse is but a form to which you are forced against your will-you can do penance for it afterward, when I Cave arranged for both of you to escape the city. If your God can be angry with you for burning a pinch of

ust to save a woman, who at the least has dared much for you, then give me Baal, for he is less cruel. Now Aziel looked toward him who held

the bowl of incense, when Elissa, who all this while had stood silent, stepped forward and spoke.

"Prince Aziel," she said in a calm and culet voice, "I named you husband to save your life, but with all my strength I pray of you, do not this thing to save mine, which of little value and perhaps best ended. Remember, Prince Aziel, that being what you are, a Jew, this act of offering, however small it seems, is yet the greatest of sins, and one with which you should not dare to stake your soul for the sake of a woman who has chanced to love you to your sorrow. Be guided, therefore, by the true wisdom of Issachar, and by my humble prayer. Make an end of your doubts and let me die, knowing that we do but part a while, cluce in the gates of death I shall wait for you,

Prince Aziel.' Before Aziel could answer the Shadid, either because his patience was outworn, or because he wished to put him to a sharper trial, uttered a command. Thereupon four trial, uttered a command. Thereupon tout priests seized Elissa by the wrists and anteed to give perfect satisfaction or money ankles, and carrying her to the edge of the anteed to give perfect satisfaction or money ankles, and carrying her to the edge of the back till che hung over refunded. Price 25 cents per box. For sale it, her long hair streaming on the wind, by Kuhn & Co.

ward to the sky. Then they paus for the signal to let her go. The Shadid raised his wand and said: "Is it your pleasure that this

woman should die cr live, Prince Aziel? Decide swiftly, for my arm is weak, and when the should die or live. Prince Aziel? Decide swiftly, for my arm is weak, and when the wand fails opportunity will have passed from you." Now all eyes were fixed upon the wand, and the intense silence was broken only by Sakon's cry of despair. Metem wrung his hands in grief, Issachar veiled his eyes with his robe to shut out the sight of dread, and

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hearted and there are so many young women in the world that one more or less can scarcely matter; still, although she threat-ened to murder me three days ago. I can-not bear to see this one come to such an end. Prince, do not heed the howlings et doomed woman, and just as the wand began to bend, his human love and pity conquered

to you and worship you, El and Baaltis, the only true gods." The echo of Azisi's voice died away and the fumes of the incense rose in a dense column in the quiet air. To his tormented

mind it seemed as though the smoke of it took the form of an avenging angel, holding in its hand a sword of flame, wherewith to drive away his perjured soul from heaven, as our forefathers were driven from gates of Paradise.

(To be continued.) How the Eyesight Tires.

People speak of their eyes being tired, says the Philadelphia Ledger, meaning that the retina or seeing portion of the eye li fatigued, but such is not the case, as the fatigued, but such is not the case, as the retina hardly ever gets tired. The fatigue is in the inner and other muscles attached to the erebalt, and the muscle of accommo-dation which surrounds the lens of the eye. When a near object is to be looked at this muscle relaxes and allows the lens to bicker increasing its portective near MARIANI WINE THE IDEAL FRENCH TONIC. at Druggists and Panuy Grocers. Avaid Sul

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muscle relaxes and allows the lens to thicken, increasing its refractive power. The inner and outer muscles are used in cov-ering the eye on the object to be looked at, the inner one being especially used when a near object is looked at. It is in the three muscles mentioned that the fatigue is felt, and relief is secured temporarily by closing the eyes or gazing at far-distant objects. The usual indication of strain is a redness of the rim of the eyelid, betokening a com-gested state of the inner surface, accom-panied by some pain. Sometimes this wearl-ness indicates the need of glasses rightly adapted to the person, and in other cases the true remedy is to massage the eye and its surroundings as far as may be with the hand wet in cold water. hand wet in cold water.

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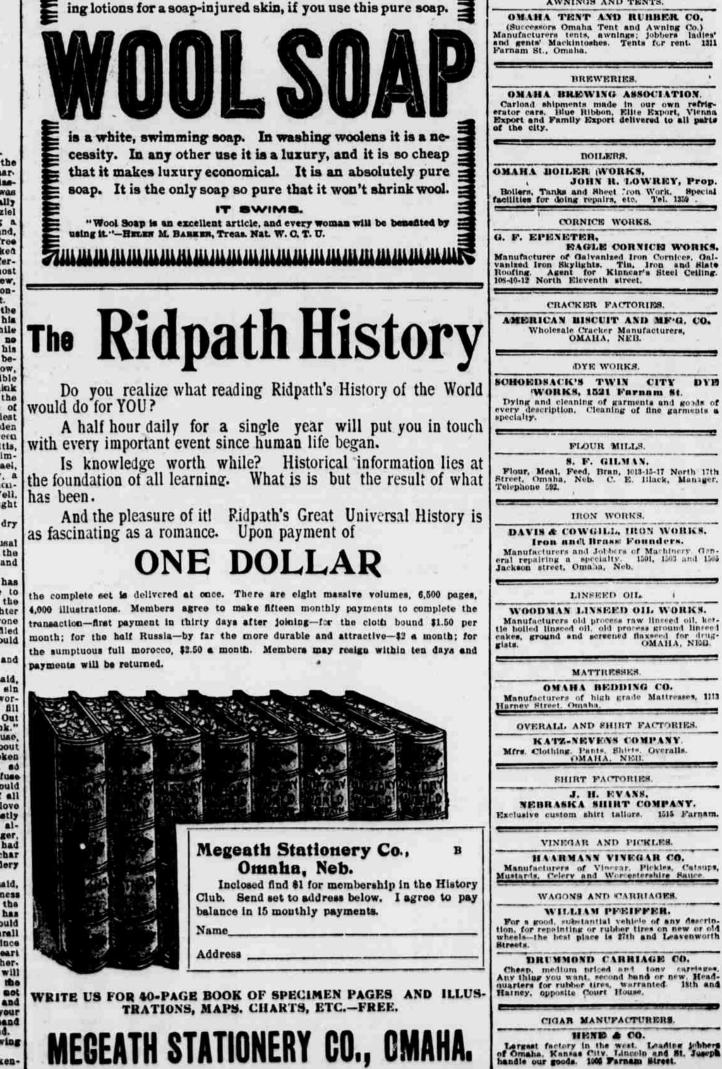


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and he left the chamber. When he had gone they gathered round the tables, on which stood food, but could touch little, for the hearts of all three of them were filled with sid foreboding. Soon manded silence, and at the same moment the woman Mesa stepped from behind the they heard a noise as of people talking excitedly outside the palace gates.

prince, for if I live, see what a inte is mine, either to remain high priestess of Baalits and to her day by day to bow the knee and month by month to make sacri-ces of what think you? Well, of the blood of maids and children, or, perhaps, should their fears overcome their scruples, to be given by the council as a peace offering to lithobal. Well, I will bear neither of these burdens of blood or shame. They are too heavy for me, but as soon as you are gone I, too, shall leave this city, not in the body, but in the spirit, searching for peace or sleep. It was for this reason that I sought to speak with you in farewell, for in my wonkness I desired that you should know the truth of the cause and manner of my end. And now, since for me there is no escape, farewell forever, Prince Aziel, whom I have loved and whom I can scarce hope to meet again, even beyond the grave," and with a Hitle despairing motion of her hand with a little despairing motion of her hand she turned to go. "Stay," sold Aziel, hoarsely, "for we can

not be parted thus; since by your own act you can dare to leave the world, will you ot dare fly with me?"

"Perchance, prince," she answered with a little lugh. "But would you dare to take me, and, if so, would issachar here suffer it?

No, no; go your own path in life and leave me death—it is the easier way." "In this matter I am master and not Essachar," said Aziel, "though it is true that, should it please him, he can warn the priests of El. Listen, Elissa: Elther you leave this city with me or I stay in it with you. You hear me, Issachar?'

You hear me, Issachar?" "I hear you," said the Levite, "but per-chance before you throw more sharp words at my head you will suffer me to speak. iself-murder is a crime, yet I honor this woman, who would shed her own blood rather than the blood of the innocent in sacrifice to Baal, and who refuses to be given in marriage to one she hates; who, moreover as found strength and grace to tramp on her devil worship, if so in truth she has. If, therefore, she will come with us, and we can escape with her, why, let her come; only swear to me, Aziel, that you will make no wife of her until Solomon has heard this tale and give judgment on it."

"That I will swear for him," exclaimed "That I will swear for min., exclaimed Bilinsa; "is it not so, Aziel?" "As you will, kdy," he answered. "Issachar, you will have my word that until then she shall be as my sister and no more."

"I hear and I believe you," said Issachar "And the hour is good, for I shall adding: not be missed until dawn.

So they turned to leave the temple, but although they reached the chambers of Azie in safety, their hearts, which should have



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"MAY HE WHOM I BLASPHEME FORGIVE ME.

"Rise," said Astel, "Metem comes no," cried Elissa, "it is doom that "No,

knocks. knocks, not Metern." As the words passed her lips the door was burst open, and through it poured a mob of armed priests, at the head of whom marched the shadid. By his side was his daughter Mess, in whose pale face the eyes burned angrily like lamps in a wind. "Did I not tell you so?" she cried in a shrill voice, pointing at the three. "Be-hold the fact Restlis and her lover, and

called down curses upon our city." "You told us, indeed, daughter," were loath to believe that such a thing could be." Then with a cry of rage he added, Seize them and away to the dungeons." Now Aziel drew his sword and sprang in thrown front of Eliese to protect her, but before of sacris

the gag and bandages were removed. "Where am I?" he asked.

"In the dungeons of the temple," answered the pricate as they left the vault, barring the great door behind them.

CHAPTER XIII. THE SACRILEGE OF AZIEL.

How long he lay in the dungeon, lost in bitter thought and tormented by fears of Elissa, Aziel could not tell, for no light came there to mark the passage of the hours. In the tumult of his mind one terrible thought grew clear; he and Elissa had been taken red-handed, and must pay the price of their sin against the religious customs of the city. For the Baaltis to be found with any man who was not her husband meant death to her and to him, a doom meant death to her and to him, a doom from which there was little chance of es-cape. To his own fate he was indifferent, but for Elissa and Issachar he mourned bit-terly. Truly the Levite and Metem had been wise when they cautioned him, for her sake and his own, to have nothing to do with a priestess of Baal. But he had not be here the set would not he him litter.

listened, his heart would not let him listen, and now to the fullness of their youth and love the lives of both of them were for-

Worn out with sore and vain regrets Aziel fell at length into a heavy sleep, from which he was awakened by the opening of the door ter at length into a heavy sleep, from which he was awakened by the opening of the door of his dungeon and the entry of priests, grim raid silent men, who selzed and blindfolded him. Then they led him away up many stairs and along paths so steep that from time to time they paused to rest, till at length he knew, by the sound of volces, that he had reached some place where people were assembled. Here the bandage was re-moved from his eyes and he stepped back-ward, recoiling involuntarily from the glare of light, whereon, uttering an exclamation, those who stood near selzed and held him. Presently he saw why they had done so, for he was standing on the brink of a great precipice at the back of and dominating the city, while far beneath him was a rocky rift along which ran the trade road to tho coast. Here upon this dizzy spot was a wide space of rock, walled in upon three sides, the precipice forming the fourth side of the square, in which, seated upon stones that seemed to have been set there in seminim. Then they led him away up many stairs and along paths so steep that for time to time they paused to rest, till at length he knew, by the sound of voices, that he had reached some place where people were assembled. Here the bandage was re-moved from his eyes and he stepped back-ward, recoiling involuntarily from the giar of light, whereon, uttering an exclamation, those who stood near seized and held him. Presently he saw why they had done so for he was standing on the brink of a great precipice at the back of and dominating the city, while far beneath him Was a rock. The space of rock, walled in upon three sides, the precipice forming the fourth side of the square, in which, seated upon stone that seemed to have been set there in semi-circles to zerve as judgment chairs, were state seemed to have been set there in semi-circles to zerve as judgment chairs, were state seemed to have been set there in semi-circles to zerve as judgment chairs, were state seemed to have been set there in semi-circles to zerve as judgment chairs, were state seemed from bim by armed priestesses of El and Baalitis, ciad in their sacerdota robes. To the right and left of these were knots of spectators, among whom he recog-nized Motem and Skkon, while at the side, but separated from bim by armed priestes, were Eliass herself, wrapped in a dark veil, and imachar. Lastly, in front of him, a fire burned upon a little altar, and behind

rank is that of mother of the priortesnes of Baal. I appear to give true evidence against

The witness let her eyes wander toward Metem, then hesitated. Evidently, for some reason of her own, she did not wish to im-plicate him.

"I was suspicious," she enswered, "be-cause of certain words that came from the lips of the Lady Baaltis when she had been thrown into the holy trance before the altar ried away through long passages, till at of El in the courty and of the temple. There length he reached an airless place, where after for several nights, as was my duty after for several nights, as was my duty I hid myself in the pit of offerings in the courtyard and watched. Last night, at an

was joined by the Jew, Aziel, and the Levits, who spoke with her. "What they said I could not hear, because they were too far from me, but at length they left the temple and I traced them to the chambers of the Jew, Aziel. Then, ehadid, I warned you and the pricets, and you came with me and took them. Now, as mother of the pricetesees, I demand that justice be done upon these wicked ones, according to the ancient custom, lest the justice be done upon these wicked ones, according to the ancient custom, lest the curse of Baaltis should fall upon this city." When she had finished her evidence with

further testimony?" "Nay," answered their spokesman, "for

the Lady Baaltis only elected, met mem secretly in the courts of the temple, and ac-companied them, or one of them, to the chamber of Aziel, a prince of lerael, the guest of Sakon. Whether or no she was about to fly with him from the city, which he should have left last night, we cannot tall sadd it is maddless to inourse. At least

for the Ludy Baaltis," she answered, "and my trusting, doubtless, to accident and the rank is that of mother of the pricatesness of future to unravel this web of forced mar-that Baal. I appear to give true evidence against riage, and to free Aziel from an ecclesias-Baal. I appear to give true evidence against her, who is Lady Bealtis, against the Israelitish stranger named Aziel, and the priest of the God of the Jews." "Speak on and beware what you speak," said the shadid. Mesa bowed her head and began. "From the time that she was anointed I have been suspicious of the Lady Bealtis." "Why wore you suspicious?" asked the shadid. The witness let her eyes wander toward Metem, then hesimted. Evidently, for some

When the prince heard the decree and the full terror of the choice came home to his mind, his blood turned cold and for a while his scness were bawlidered. There was no cacape for him; either he must abjure his faith at the price of his own coul, or, befront of Elissa to protect her, but before he could strike a blow it was struck down from behind, and he was gripped by many hands, gagged, bound and blindfolded. Then, ike a man in a dream, he felt himself car-him one hour before moonrise by the pillar satan? The moment was at hand; a priest held out to him a bowl of incence, a golden bowl, he noticed idly, with handles of green stone fashloned in the likeness of Baaltis, courtyard and watched. Last high, at an hour before the moories, the Lady Baaltia came, disguised, by the secret way and waited at the pillar, where presently sho was joined by the Jew, Aziel, and the Levite, who spoke with her. "What they said I could not hear, because the wast for the secret way and self. He Aziel of the royal house of Israel, a servant of the Baal and Baaltis, nay, a high pricest of their worship! It was mou-she must die; her life could not be bought

at such a price. "I cannot do it," he gasped, with dry lips, thrusting aside the bowl. Now all looked astonished, for his refusal

had not been foreseen, and once more the woman Mesa appeared before the altar and

said in her cold voice; "The Jew whom the Lady Baaltis has chosen as humband will not do homage to her gods. Therefore, as mother of the priestesses, I demand that Elissa, daughter "You have heard," said the shadid, ad-dressing his fellow judges. "Do you need further testimony?" It, lest the vengeance of the goddess should fall upon this city.". The shadid motioned her to be silent and

"Nay," answered their spokesman, "for with you we took them together in the chamber of the Prince Aziel. Set out the law of this matter. Oh shadid, and let jus-tice be done according to the strict letter of the law-justice without fear or favor." "Hearken," said the shadid. "Last night this woman, the daughter of Sakon, being the Lady Baaltis only elected, met men secretly in the courts of the temple, and ac-Aziel's knees, implosed him, in heart-broken accents, to save his only child from as accents, to save his only child from ad horrible a fate, soying that did he refuse because of his religious scruples he would be a dog and a goward and the scorn of all honest men forever, since it was for love of him that she had broken the priestly law, to violate which was death, and, al-though she had been warned of her danger, yet in his wickedness and folly he had brought her to this pass. But Issachar thrust him aside and broken in with flery words. words.

"Harken not to this man, Aziel," he said, "who strives to work upon your weakness to the ruin of your soul. What! to save the life of the woman, whose fair face has brought so much trouble upon us all, would you deny your God and become the thrall of Baal and Ashtoreth? Let her die, since of Baal and Ashtoreth? Let her die, since die she must, and keep your own heari pure, for, be assured, should you do other-wise, Jehovah, whom you renounce, will swiftly be avenged on you and her. At the beginning I warned you and her. Meanwhile Metern, who had been drawing near, spoke in a low voice. "Prince," he said, "I am not chicken-