Akiba and Rebecca.

[illegible]

In the year [illegible], when the beautiful city of Jerusalem was under the dominion of the Romans, an Israelite lived. Their paths in life were widely different, but during intervals from toil they became one. In the cities near Jerusalem there wandered a youth of fine physical appearance. His eyes were brown, his locks were like the raven's, and his stature was above the average. His dress was noble, and when one looked at him the thought occurred that he was fitted for better things than that of tending flocks. This elegant lad, instructed chiefly by his sires from infancy and so plainly endowed, was destined to play a very important part in the history of his country.

There were strong times. It was an age in which heroes could rise and fall. The Jews chafed under the Roman yoke; they longed for freedom, and this youth was so variable that men of the lowest rank could rise to be at the head of the nation, if they had any talent. In periods of danger men's energies are more active, and bitter prices to act to succeed appeared more quickly in such days than in days when all is calm and prosperous. The turbulent times gave opportunities for distinguishing himself, so we need not be surprised that he passed all that came since to.

One summer day, while all was serene and without excitement, a lady came along the path. She had all the loveliness of her race. Her eyes were large and black, she was of graceful form, and her skin was of lily white hue. She showed by her bearing that her station in life was lofty. She was Akiba, and to see him was to love him, although he was of lowly birth. The maid loved her for wealth, she rate, she thought only of the qualities of the man, yet when she would bestow her hand and heart. Being noble herself, she was attracted by the fine elements of Akiba's character. Men and noble-minded and used to them day in their daily intercourse, I think, that they would meet nobly there.

The fair Rebecca lived in luxury. Her father was a great man in his city. He had attendants to minister to every one of her wants. Her dresses and jewels were fine. Though she would in all this splendor, her heart was free from pride, and his mind equalled her beauty. It would make happiness, she certainly conceived it, for her wishes were granted as soon as they were known.

After seeing Akiba the luxury he enjoy dissatisfied to him, because she knew life was defined in a different manner. The attendants were contained from him, for they and he held the thought of the gentle, wise whom she was to be troublesome.

Often did she wave these green boys, yet soon they became well acquainted. Some many weeks elapsed, in the solitude of the grassy glades and beside the murmuring brooks, they found sweet love, for was they love but common love; it was pure and honorable, it was not merely a verbal pledge, but it was a love which endured forever.

When Rebecca's father, Jechanan, heard that she loved a shepherd, he was exceedingly wroth. What, said he, shall my daughter marry a stupid herder? The daughter who is the pride of my house, the daughter for whom I hoped to obtain a better position than even I can give her, shall not demean herself if I can prevent it.

He Pulse, when the whole nation rejoiced because the Messiah, Jechanan, has lifted through the intercession of the good Queen Esther. Nurse Sarah told Rebecca that her father wished to speak with her. She went to his study, and as soon as she entered, her father's face of commanding mien, stone and hard, took her a stern and unrelenting eye. Foolish maid, dost thou think of wedding a beggar? Thinkest thou that the great house of Jechanan will degenerate into a shepherd's hut? Dost thou know that our name has been sanctified to centuries, our family has ranked with princes, and now, thou, the daughter on whom I relied to relieve us from our fate, thinkest of wedding a lowly and poor, for a beggar. If thou wilt wed that shepherd, my house will be forever closed against thee. Choose between father and lover on the one hand, and happily and your stupid shepherd on the other hand.

O, father, said the weeping maid, speak not so unkindly of Akiba; even if his fathers did not dwell in palaces, that does not make him of the common herd. Your daughter would not wed a man who was unworthy of her. His character makes him equal to any prince. Gold and rank do not make the man. In my estimation, integrity and purity of thought and action outshine a mere, not empty, rank. Though Akiba is poor, he is richer than many of our friends whom from all glad to welcome to our house.

Long they argued. The latter was obstinate, and the daughter would not yield. Then Jechanan, perplexed and troubled, and solemnly declared unto them, "Henceforth I am childless, my daughter disobeys me, so I declare unto you, and before God that she is no daughter of mine, so her go her way. I know her not."

Clearly Rebecca left the home of her childhood. Not one glance did she cast behind, nor did she weep in her purpose. She was willing to exchange wealth for a living lot, for a lowly home. Yet wealth cannot buy this great treasure. A love that outlasts beauty, station and riches are worth more to her than gold or fancy. Long sought at friends, and in her heart there was nothing but sorrow and pity, and yet she was happy. Poverty did not affect her, for she was rich in Akiba. Her lover was a remarkable man, and would not seek the wealthy heiress, but he sought and sought for a moment to wed the poor and humble shepherd.

The news to Akiba's ear and said, "Do father has cast me off, I am as poor as then art." Then said Akiba, "O then will wed me, whatever I have I will willingly share with thee. I care not for other and a palace to reign over, but there cares rule my heart, and so long as I live will I remember that for me thou dost'st forsake home and kindred." They were married. Their wedding was simple as became days and rank. Rebecca exchanged her rich raiment for the coarse garb of a shepherdess. She sighed not for her lost splendor, for she knew that wealth and luxuries are useless, if one does not have love. Long such a sensible glow over a person's life, and without it all is a blank. Rebecca chose wisely when she abandoned her father's riches to share the toil or sorrows of a loving heart.

They lived in a humble hut. Their cousin was of some, and every day they went into the fields to gather it. They were happy as the day was long, for poverty did not trouble them.

As Rebecca became more acquainted with Akiba, she perceived that he was a man of uncommon energy, the wished that her husband should occupy the station which he was fitted to adorn. After deliberately talking over the matter, he, his wife, and his sister, the latter all the secrets which lower let the ill the parties with him, he resolved that that day would take place.

One morning when the birds were singing sweetly and the sun was sending its million rays over all nature, Rebecca bestowed the palace which by reason her heart. Akiba, said she in her musical voice, I feel my father's heart softened towards us, and he wishes to give us a wedding gift for the new year. Now listen, this news bearing great. Go to see of the palace and take adventure home. Stay and become a Rabbi. I will not go with thee, but I should be a drag upon thee. Where thou dost be come, thou shalt come back to me, if I am not far in thy sight, gladly will I welcome thee.

The year dies they go left, but Akiba remained behind with his wife, for he would miss Rebecca. His heart ached for her, and he was so much that her anguish was for woman thought to be. He meditated with his for possession for the whole living college, which was a long distance from where the shepherd. After the parting he was joined heartily. He had a moment to endure for to the solitude. No friend to encourage to the days were filled with the sad and lonely. Year had to perform work, but the day of repose is for to. The visitors flock in the Lord, and all her wishes and cares were shaped into the recital the beautiful Hebrew prayers. The days lengthened into months, the weeks into months, and he marks two years, and still the days in the wearied for. She knew that her beauty was fading. She was getting old. Sometimes a shadow would come for great 1000 to her husband, and she would ask herself, when Akiba becomes famous and he forgive the wife of his youth because her charms are gone? No, no, no, worthy thought she would rather bestow hatred upon Akiba, and then, if he the world into to hate, and ask for vengeance to mellow with fortunate whatever might happen.

Akiba's days were far different. He gained wisdom in one of the best schools of the country, and he was the wisdom of the sages found his college days. He came in contact with the brilliant men of the times, and to know that he had was sure to be recognized in a very much more to have attained a position in the college where he had entered as a humble student. His first thought was to Jerusalem and with her he pitched. Share his fortune and share his poverty. He knew that he would every thing to her, and that her sympathetic care to shield to share the fate of his happy charge.

He summed to his native place, for his home was before Rebecca. He came to Jerusalem he found a large crowd waiting to welcome him. Long he was much covered by these ancient Jews. Akiba's reputation was great and his fellow townsmen were only too glad to do him honor. He was impatient at this delay, for he wished to go to the hut which had been so happy a abode to him. But courtesy required him to stop, and duke as he might he had to consider the customs which were put to him. On the contrary the crowd was a poor and shabby dressed woman. Her cheeks were hollow, her eyes were red, and her forehead bore the lines of care. The crowd parted to let the woman pass, but she did not mind the offering. Her very soul seemed to hang upon the elevating tones in the Rabbi as he gave public answer to the many questions which were propounded to him. Was this the representative of wife Akiba, the lover of her youth, and she was wondering if he would recognize his Rebecca in this careworn woman. She hung back. For a moment the crowd parted, and the Rabbi beheld the woman who was his pacing star. He was not slow to reply to another query, but all at once he paused, and raised for the door where he had seen Rebecca, but when he came to it, he only saw a shaking figure. Rebecca was gone, but she was the last. Would the great Akiba proclaim the shepherdess as his wife. He looked at her for a second, and then turned her to his house, Rebecca, how thou must have suffered since we parted! But thou art the same beautiful Rebecca who did cast the lot with mine years ago. He led Rebecca forward and told the people how one had abandoned home and friends for his sake, and how by his advice he had attained his present distinction.

In the midst of their reunion, a messenger arrived and told Akiba that his mother was sick. Akiba left the wife to the rich man's house, and was confronted by an aged and feeble man, Rabbi, and he said, I am in deep trouble. I had a daughter whom I loved, but in an evil hour she became infatuated with a shepherd. Then when I could, I paid all presents to her to give up this infatuation. I made a law that if she persisted in her wilful disobedient child, tell me how I can break this cruel vow and an outcome a sin before God. The Rabbi listened to a while in one silent, then he said, If that daughter had married a scholar instead of a shepherd, you would have forbidden the marriage? No, said Jechanan, having sensible, any man whether rich or poor. But my daughter married a Rabbi, I would have cheerfully consented to the union, and I would have embraced her with all my worldly possessions, for I have no possessions of mine own.

Then the Rabbi said, I married your daughter. Can ye see great, whether it be to or not I know not, but I am a humble Rabbi. I consider the greatest treasure which I possess is the love of Rebecca; although she has engaged in servant experience in one the world as humble as mine. I first loved her, because proved her own hand and heart. You Lord is better to me than I deserve, for he has given me a son, in whom I can be proud, and a daughter whose situation cannot cast down and humble. Henceforth dwell with me. The Jewish were resulted, and Rabbi Ben Akiba was proclaimed the lover of his husband's love. He father said that she was wiser than other women, for it was wisdom which led her to discover her husband's greatness.

Rebecca and Akiba were true rabbis, and when their sons reached manhood, and all their sons and daughters, they were among the first to step promptly forward and offer their services. Rare

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