

БЕН-ТОВИТ

В тот страшный день, когда совершилась мировая несправедливость и на Голгофе среди разбойников был распят Иисус Христос – в тот день с самого раннего утра у иерусалимского торговца Бен-Товита нестерпимо разболелись зубы. Началось это еще накануне, с вечера: слегка стало ломить правую челюсть, а один зуб, крайний перед зубом мудрости, как будто немного приподнялся и, когда к нему прикасался язык, давал легкое ощущение боли. После еды боль, однако, совершенно утихла, и Бен-Товит совсем забыл о ней и успокоился, – он в этот день выгодно выменял своего старого осла на молодого и сильного, был очень весел и не придавал значения зловещим признакам.

И спал он очень хорошо и крепко, но перед самым рассветом что-то начало тревожить его, как будто кто-то звал его по какому-то очень важному делу, и, когда Бен-Товит сердито проснулся – у него болели зубы, болели открыто и злобно, всюю полнотою острой сверлящей боли. И уже нельзя было понять, болел ли это вчерашний зуб, или к нему присоединились и другие: весь рот и голова полны были ужасным ощущением боли, как будто Бен-Товита заставили жевать тысячу раскаленных докрасна острых гвоздей. Он взял в рот воды из глиняного кувшина, – на минуту ярость боли исчезла, зубы задергались и волнообразно заколыхались, и это ощущение было даже приятно по сравнению с предыдущим. Бен-Товит снова улегся, вспомнил про нового ослика и подумал, как бы был он счастлив, если бы не эти зубы, и хотел уснуть. Но вода была теплая, – и через пять минут боль вернулась еще более свирепая, чем прежде, и Бен-Товит сидел на постели и раскачивался, как маятник. Все лицо его сморщилось и собралось к большому носу, а на носу, побледневшем от страданий, застыла капелька холодного пота. Так, покачиваясь и стеная от боли, он встретил первые лучи того солнца, которому суждено было видеть Голгофу с тремя крестами и померкнуть от ужаса и горя.

Бен-Товит был добрый и хороший человек, не любивший несправедливости, но, когда проснулась его жена, он, еле разжимая рот, наговорил ей много неприятного и жаловался, что его оставили одного, как шакала, выть и корчиться от мучений. Жена терпеливо приняла заслуженные упреки, так как знала, что не от злого сердца говорятся они, и принесла много хороших лекарств: крысиного очищенного помета, который нужно прикладывать к щеке, острой настойки на скорпионе и подлинный осколок камня от разбитой Моисеем скрижали Завета. От крысиного помета стало несколько лучше, но ненадолго, так же от настойки и камешка, но всякий раз после кратковременного улучшения боль возвращалась с новой силой. И в краткие минуты отдыха Бен-Товит утешал себя мыслью об ослике и мечтал о нем, а когда становилось хуже – стонал, сердился на жену и грозил, что разобьет себе голову о камень, если не утихнет боль. И все время ходил из угла в угол по плоской крыше своего дома, стыдясь близко подходить к наружному краю, так как вся голова его была обвязана платком, как у женщины. Несколько раз к нему прибегали дети и что-то рассказывали торопливыми голосами о Иисусе Назорее. Бен-Товит останавливался, минуту слушал их, сморщив лицо, но потом сердито топал ногой и прогонял: он был добрый человек и любил детей, но теперь он сердился, что они пристают к нему со всякими пустяками.

Было также неприятно и то, что на улице и на соседних крышах собралось много народу, который ничего не делал и любопытно смотрел на Бен-Товита, обвязанного платком, как женщина. И он уже собирался сойти вниз, когда жена сказала ему:

- Посмотри, вон ведут разбойников. Быть может, это развлечет тебя.
- Оставь меня, пожалуйста. Разве ты не видишь, как я страдаю? – сердито ответил Бен-Товит.

Но в словах жены звучало смутное обещание, что зубы могут пройти, и нехотя он подошел к парапету. Склонив голову набок, закрыв один глаз и подпирая щеку рукою, он сделал брезгливо-плачущее лицо и посмотрел вниз.

По узенькой улице, поднимавшейся в гору, беспорядочно двигалась огромная толпа, окутанная пылью и несмолкающим криком. По середине ее, сгибаясь под тяжестью крестов, двигались преступники, и над ними вились, как черные змеи, бичи римских солдат. Один,— тот, что с длинными светлыми волосами, в разорванном и окровавленном хитоне,— споткнулся на брошенный под ноги камень и упал. Крики сделались громче, и толпа, подобно разноцветной морской воде, сомкнулась над упавшим. Бен-Товит внезапно вздрогнул от боли,— в зуб точно вонзил кто-то раскаленную иглу и повернул ее,— застонал: "У-у-у",— и отошел от парапета, брезгливо-равнодушный и злой.

— Как они кричат!— завистливо сказал он, представляя широко открытые рты с крепкими неболеющими зубами, и как бы закричал он сам, если бы был здоров.

И от этого представления боль освиrepела, и он часто замотал обвязанной головой и замычал: "М-у-у..."

— Рассказывают, что Он исцелял слепых, — сказала жена, не отходявшая от парапета, и бросила камешек в то место, где медленно двигался поднятый бичами Иисус.

— Ну конечно! Пусть бы Он исцелил вот мою зубную боль,— иронически ответил Бен-Товит и раздражительно, с горечью добавил: — Как они пылят! Совсем как стадо! Их всех нужно бы разогнать палкой! Отведи меня вниз, Сара!

Жена оказалась права: зрелище несколько развлекло Бен-Товита, а быть может, помог в конце концов крысиный помет, и ему удалось уснуть. А когда он проснулся, боль почти исчезла, и только на правой челюсти вздулся небольшой флюс, настолько небольшой, что его едва можно было заметить. Жена говорила, что совсем незаметно, но Бен-Товит лукаво улыбался: он знал, какая добрая у него жена и как она любит сказать приятное. Пришел сосед кожевник Самуил, и Бен-Товит водил его посмотреть на своего ослика и с гордостью выслушивал горячие похвалы себе и животному.

Потом, по просьбе любопытной Сары, они втроем пошли на Голгофу посмотреть на распятых. Дорогою Бен-Товит рассказывал Самуилу с самого начала, как вчера он почувствовал ломоту в правой челюсти и как потом ночью проснулся от страшной боли. Для наглядности он делал страдальческое лицо, закрывал глаза, мотал головой и стонал, а седобородый Самуил сочувственно качал головою и говорил:

— Ай-ай-ай! Как больно!

Бен-Товиту понравилось одобрение, и он повторил рассказ и потом вернулся к тому отдаленному времени, когда у него испортился еще только первый зуб, внизу с левой стороны. Так в оживленной беседе они пришли на Голгофу. Солнце, осужденное светить миру в этот страшный день, закатилось уже за отдаленные холмы, и на западе горела, как кровавый след, багрово-красная полоса. На фоне ее неразборчиво темнели кресты, и у подножия среднего креста смутно белели какие-то коленапреклоненные фигуры.

Народ давно разошелся; становилось холодно, и, мельком взглянув на распятых, Бен-Товит взял Самуила под руку и осторожно повернул его к дому. Он чувствовал себя особенно красноречивым, и ему хотелось досказать о зубной боли. Так шли они, и Бен-Товит под сочувственные кивки и возгласы Самуила делал страдальческое лицо, мотал головой и искусно стонал,— а из глубоких ущелий, с далеких обожженных равнин поднималась черная ночь. Как будто хотела она сокрыть от взоров неба великое злодеяние земли.

LEONID ANDREYEV

ON THE DAY OF THE CRUCIFIXION

Translated by Herman Bernstein

On that terrible day, when the universal injustice was committed and Jesus Christ was crucified in Golgotha among robbers – on that day, from early morning, Ben-Tovit, a tradesman of Jerusalem, suffered from an unendurable toothache. His toothache had commenced on the day before, toward evening; at first his right jaw started to pain him, and one tooth, the one right next the wisdom tooth, seemed to have risen somewhat, and when his tongue touched the tooth, he felt a slightly painful sensation. After supper, however, his toothache had passed, and Ben-Tovit had forgotten all about it – he had made a profitable deal on that day, had bartered an old donkey for a young, strong one, so he was very cheerful and paid no heed to any ominous signs.

And he slept very soundly. But just before daybreak something began to disturb him, as if some one were calling him on a very important matter, and when Ben-Tovit awoke angrily, his teeth were aching, aching openly and maliciously, causing him an acute, drilling pain. And he could no longer understand whether it was only the same tooth that had ached on the previous day, or whether others had joined that tooth; Ben-Tovit's entire mouth and his head were filled with terrible sensations of pain, as though he had been forced to chew thousands of sharp, red-hot nails, he took some water into his mouth from an earthen jug – for a minute the acuteness of the pain subsided, his teeth twitched and swayed like a wave, and this sensation was even pleasant as compared with the

LEONID ANDREYEV

BEN TOBIT

Translated by W. H. Lowe

On that terrible day when the world's act of injustice was consummated, and Jesus Christ was crucified at Golgotha between two thieves, on that day from the earliest morning Ben Tobit, a merchant of Jerusalem, had been suffering from an unendurable toothache.

It had begun the evening before, when it attacked slightly the right jaw. The tooth, the last before the wisdom-tooth, felt as though it protruded a little beyond the others, and when he touched it with his tongue it produced a slight feeling of pain. However, after eating the pain left him entirely, and Ben Tobit forgot all about it, and became quite at his ease. He had only that day made a profitable exchange of his old ass for a strong young one, and so he was in a remarkably good humour, and paid no attention to the ominous symptoms. He slept well and soundly; but just before dawn something began to arouse him, as though some one was calling him to go about some important business, and when Ben Tobit woke in a rage his teeth were aching, aching openly and viciously, with all the plenitude of a sharp wimbling pain. It was no longer possible to decide whether it was only yesterday's tooth, or whether the others were joining in the aching. His whole mouth and head were filled with a terrible feeling of pain, as though he had been compelled to chew a thousand sharp red-hot nails. He put some water into his mouth from the earthen ewer, and for a time the fierceness of the pain went away. His teeth twinged, indeed, and seemed to

LEONID ANDREYEV

BEN-TOBITH

Translated by Archibald J. Wolfe

On that dread day, when the cosmic injustice was perpetrated, and Jesus Christ was crucified in the midst of robbers on Golgotha, Ben-Tobith, a tradesman of Jerusalem, had been suffering since the early hours of the morning the agonies of an excruciating toothache.

It had started the day before, toward evening; at first his right jaw had commenced to ache slightly, and one tooth, the extreme tooth next to the wisdom tooth, seemed to rise a little, and felt painful when coming in contact with the tongue. After the evening meal, however, the pain had entirely subsided; Ben-Tobith had forgotten it altogether and felt no worry about it; that day he had profitably traded his old ass for a young and strong animal, at a profit, and he was in a merry mood and did not attach any significance to an evil omen.

And he had slept well and soundly, but before the dawn of day something commenced to disturb him, as if someone sought to rouse him to attend to an important matter, and when Ben-Tobith woke up wrathfully, his teeth were aching, aching defiantly and fiercely, with the excruciating fury of sharp and throbbing pain. And now it was impossible to tell whether it was still the tooth of the day before, or whether others had joined it as well; his mouth and his head were wholly filled with the dreadful agonizing pain, as though someone forced him to masticate a thousand red-hot sharply pointed nails.

He took in his mouth a swallow of water from an

other.

Ben-Tovit lay down again, recalled his new donkey, and thought how happy he would have been if not for his toothache, and he wanted to fall asleep. But the water was warm, and five minutes later his toothache began to rage more severely than ever; Ben-Tovit sat up in his bed and swayed back and forth like a pendulum. His face became wrinkled and seemed to have shrunk, and a drop of cold perspiration was hanging on his nose, which had turned pale from his sufferings. Thus, swaying back and forth and groaning for pain, he met the first rays of the sun, which was destined to see Golgotha and the three crosses, and grow dim from horror and sorrow.

Ben-Tovit was a good and kind man, who hated any injustice, but when his wife awoke he said many unpleasant things to her, opening his mouth with difficulty, and he complained that he was left alone, like a jackal, to groan and writhe for pain. His wife met the undeserved reproaches patiently, for she knew that they came not from an angry heart – and she brought him numerous good remedies: rats' litter to be applied to his cheek, some strong liquid in which a scorpion was preserved, and a real chip of the tablets that Moses had broken. He began to feel a little better from the rats' litter, but not for long, also from the liquid and the stone, but the pain returned each time with renewed intensity.

During the moments of rest Ben-Tovit consoled himself with the thought of the little donkey, and dreamed of him, and when he felt worse he moaned, scolded his wife, and threatened to dash his head against a rock if the pain should not subside. He kept pacing back and forth on the flat roof of his house from one corner to the other, feeling ashamed to come close to the side facing the street, for his head was tied

surge like waves; but even this feeling was pleasant compared with the former. Ben Tobit lay down again, called to mind his new donkey, and thought how fortunate he would have been but for his teeth, and was at the point of falling to sleep. But the water had got warm, and in the course of five minutes the pain returned worse than ever, and Ben Tobit sat up in his bed, and rocked himself like a pendulum. His whole face became wrinkled, and gathered up to his big nose, on which, paled as it was with suffering, had settled a drop of cold sweat. Thus rocking himself, and groaning with pain, he met the first rays of that sun, which was doomed to see Golgotha with its three crosses, and to grow dark with horror and grief.

Ben Tobit was a good and kind man who hated injustice, still, when his wife awoke, scarcely opening his mouth he rated her very unpleasantly, and complained that he had been left alone like a jackal to howl and huddle in agony. His wife bore patiently with his undeserved reproaches, since she knew that they did not proceed from badness of heart; and she brought many excellent nostrums : clarified rats' dung, to be laid upon the cheek, a sharp extract of scorpion, and a genuine fragment of the Tablets of the Law, which were broken by Moses. After the application of the rat's dung he became a little better; but not for long. And so, too, after the extract and the piece of stone; but each time after a brief respite the pain returned with renewed force. During the short minutes of rest Ben Tobit consoled himself with thinking about his donkey, and built castles in the air about it; but when he became worse again he groaned, and was angry with his wife, and threatened to dash his head against a stone if the pain did not cease. And all the time he kept walking from corner to corner on the flat roof of his house, ashamed to go near to the outer edge

earthen pitcher; for an instant the fury of the pain subsided; the teeth twitched with undulating throbs, and this new sensation seemed even agreeable in comparison with the pain that had preceded it.

Ben-Tobith lay down again; he bethought himself of his newly purchased ass; he mused how happy he would it be if it were not for his teeth, and tried to sleep. But the water was warm; within five minutes the pain returned, with greater fury than ever, and Ben-Tobith sat up in his bed, rocking back and forth like a pendulum.

His face was all wrinkles, and something seemed to draw it toward his huge nose and from his nose, that had turned livid with agony, hung a drop of cold perspiration. Thus, rocking back and forth, groaning with agony, he faced the first rays of that sun which was fated to see Golgotha with its three crosses and then to be dimmed with horror and grief.

Ben-Tobith was a good and kindly man, who disliked injustice, but when his wife woke up, he said to her many disagreeable things, barely able to open his mouth, and complained that he had been left alone like a Jackal to howl and to writhe in pain. His wife bore the undeserved reproaches with patience, for she knew that they came not from an angry heart, and she brought him many good remedies: some purified rat dung to be applied to his cheek, a sharp elixir of scorpion, and a genuine fragment of the tablets of the law broken by Moses.

A little improvement followed the application of rat dung, though it did not last long, and the same happened after the use of the elixir and the stone, but each time the pain returned with added vigor. But in the brief moments of respite Ben-Tobith comforted himself with the thoughts of the ass, and mused about him; and when the pain grew worse, he groaned,

around with a kerchief like that of a woman. Several times children came running to him and told him hastily about Jesus of Nazareth. Ben-Tovit paused, listened to them for a while, his face wrinkled, but then he stamped his foot angrily and chased them away. He was a kind man and he loved children, but now he was angry at them for bothering him with trifles.

It was disagreeable to him that a large crowd had gathered in the street and on the neighbouring roofs, doing nothing and looking curiously at Ben-Tovit, who had his head tied around with a kerchief like a woman. He was about to go down, when his wife said to him:

"Look, they are leading robbers there. Perhaps that will divert you."

"Let me alone. Don't you see how I am suffering?" Ben-Tovit answered angrily.

But there was a vague promise in his wife's words that there might be a relief for his toothache, so he walked over to the parapet unwillingly. Bending his head on one side, closing one eye, and supporting his cheek with his hand, his face assumed a squeamish, weeping expression, and he looked down to the street.

On the narrow street, going uphill, an enormous crowd was moving forward in disorder, covered with dust and shouting uninterruptedly. In the middle of the crowd walked the criminals, bending down under the weight of their crosses, and over them the scourges of the Roman soldiers were wriggling about like black snakes. One of the men, he of the long light hair, in a torn blood-stained cloak, stumbled over a stone which was thrown under his feet, and he fell. The shouting grew louder, and the crowd, like coloured sea water, closed in about the man on the ground. Ben-Tovit suddenly shuddered for pain; he felt as though some one had pierced a red-hot needle into his tooth and turned it there; he groaned and walked away from the

of it, because his head was all bound up in a handkerchief like a woman's. Several times children ran close to him and talked in hurried voices something about "Jesus of Nazareth." Ben Tobit stopped and listened to them for a little, screwing up his face, but soon he would angrily stamp his feet, and make them go. He was a kind man and loved children, but just then he was angry that they should worry him with such trifles. It was also annoying that in the streets and on the neighbouring roofs much people were gathered together, who had nothing to do but to look with curiosity at Ben Tobit, who was muffled in a handkerchief like a woman. He was just on the point of going down-stairs, when his wife said to him

"Look; they are leading the robbers to execution, perhaps that will distract you."

"Do let me alone, please. Don't you see how I am suffering." angrily replied Ben Tobit.

But in his wife's words there sounded a vague promise, that his toothache might leave him, and so he unwillingly drew near to the parapet. Inclining his head on one side, shutting one eye, and leaning his cheek on his hand, he made a fastidiously sorrowful face, and looked down below.

In the narrow street which led up to the hill an immense crowd was surging, enveloped in dust and incessant cries. In the midst of it, bending under the weight of the crosses, moved the criminals, and over them the whips of the Roman soldiers twisted like black serpents. One, He with the long light locks in a torn blood-stained shirt, stumbled against a stone in His path and fell. The shouts became louder, and the crowd, like a many-coloured wave of the sea, closed over the prostrate one. Ben Tobit was suddenly convulsed with a twinge of pain. It felt as if some one had thrust a red-hot needle into his tooth and given it a

scolded his wife and swore that he would dash his brains out against a stone if the pain did not subside. And all the time he walked back and forth upon the flat roof of his house, from one corner to another, ashamed to come close to the edge because his head was all tied up in a kerchief like a woman's.

Several times during the morning his children came to him on the run telling him something with hurried voices about Jesus the Nazarene. Ben-Tobith stopped and listened to them for a moment, with wrinkled face, but then angrily stamped his foot and drove them away. He was a kindly man, fond of children, but now it annoyed him to be pestered with all sorts of trivial things.

It was also annoying to him that the streets and the neighboring roofs were crowded with people who seemed to have nothing to do but gaze curiously upon Ben-Tobith whose head was tied with a kerchief like a woman's. And he was already on the point of going downstairs, when his wife said to him:

"Look, they are leading the robbers. Perhaps this might take your mind away from your pain."

"Leave me alone, please. Don't you see how I suffer?" angrily retorted Ben-Tobith. But the words of his wife held out a vague promise that his toothache might pass, and he reluctantly walked over to the edge of the roof. Inclining his head to one side, he shut one eye, held a hand to his cheek, made a wry, sniveling grimace and looked down.

Up the steep ascent of the narrow street moved a confused and enormous mob of people in a cloud of dust and with a ceaseless uproar. In the midst of it, bowed under the burden of their crosses, marched the evildoers, and over their heads swished the whips of the Roman soldiers like sinuous dark-skinned serpents. One of them, he with the long, light locks, in

parapet, angry and squeamishly indifferent.

"How they are shouting!" he said enviously, picturing to himself their wide-open mouths with strong, healthy teeth, and how he himself would have shouted if he had been well. This intensified his toothache, and he shook his muffled head frequently, and roared: "Moo-Moo...."

"They say that He restored sight to the blind," said his wife, who remained standing at the parapet, and she threw down a little cobblestone near the place where Jesus, lifted by the whips, was moving slowly.

"Of course, of course! He should have cured my toothache," replied Ben-Tovith ironically, and he added bitterly with irritation: "What dust they have kicked up! Like a herd of cattle! They should all be driven away with a stick! Take me down, Sarah!"

The wife proved to be right. The spectacle had diverted Ben-Tovith slightly – perhaps it was the rats' litter that had helped after all – he succeeded in falling asleep. When he awoke, his toothache had passed almost entirely, and only a little inflammation had formed over his right jaw. His wife told him that it was not noticeable at all, but Ben-Tovith smiled cunningly – he knew how kind-hearted his wife was and how fond she was of telling him pleasant things.

Samuel, the tanner, a neighbour of Ben-Tovith's, came in, and Ben-Tovith led him to see the new little donkey and listened proudly to the warm praises for himself and his animal.

Then, at the request of the curious Sarah, the three went to Golgotha to see the people who had been crucified. On the way Ben-Tovith told Samuel in detail how he had felt a pain in his right jaw on the day before, and how he awoke at night with a terrible toothache. To illustrate it he made a martyr's face, closing his eyes, shook his head, and groaned while the

twist there. He groaned, "Oh! oh! oh!" and left the parapet, fastidiously indifferent, and angry.

"How they shout!" he said in envy, picturing to himself their wide-open mouths with strong, sound teeth, and how he would have shouted too if only he had been well. And that picture caused his tooth to pain him more fiercely, and he kept shaking his enveloped head and bellowing, "Moo! moo!"

"They talked of His having healed the blind," said his wife. She had not left the parapet, and threw a small stone down to the place where Jesus, who had been got on to His feet by blows of the whip, was now moving slowly on.

"Oh, indeed! Then He might as well cure my toothache," Ben Tobit replied in irony, and irritably added, with bitterness, "What a dust they do make! Just like a herd of cattle! They ought to be dispersed with a stick! Help me down, Sarah."

His wife turned out to be right. The spectacle had somewhat distracted Ben Tobit, and possibly the rat's dung had done some good in the end; at all events, he managed to get to sleep. When he woke the pain was almost gone, only his right jaw was a little bit swollen, so little as to be scarcely noticeable. Indeed, his wife said that it was quite imperceptible; but Ben Tobit smiled slyly, as knowing how kind his wife was, and how she liked to say what was agreeable. A neighbour, Samuel the tanner, arrived, and Ben Tobit took him to see his new donkey, and listened proudly to the glowing encomiums of himself and his beast.

Afterwards, at the request of the curious Sarah, they all three went to Golgotha to look at those who had been crucified. On the way Ben Tobit kept recounting to Samuel from the very beginning how yesterday he had felt a twinge in his right jaw, and how he had woke afterwards in the night with a

a torn and blood-stained cloak, stumbled over a stone which someone had thrown before his feet and fell. The shouts increased in loudness, and the crowd closed in about the fallen man like a sea of motley waves.

Ben-Tobith suddenly shuddered with the pain ; it seemed as though someone had pierced his tooth with a red-hot needle and twisted it around; he groaned "oo-oo-oo," and walked away from the edge of the roof, wryly indifferent and wrathful.

"How they yell!" he enviously muttered, picturing to himself their wide-opened mouths with strong and pain-free teeth, and thinking how he might yell himself if he were only well. This mental picture added fury to his pain, and he shook his bandaged head vehemently and howled "moo-moo-moo."

"They say that he healed the blind," observed his wife clinging to the edge of the roof and casting a stone at the spot where Jesus was slowly moving onward, having been raised to his feet by the soldiers whips.

"Or course! Of course! He might have cured my toothache," replied Ben-Tobith sarcastically and with irritation, adding bitterly: "Just look at the dust they are raising! Like a herd of cattle. They should be scattered with rods. Lead me downstairs, Sarah!"

The wife was right; the spectacle had diverted him somewhat, or perhaps the rat dung remedy finally proved its efficacy, and he managed to go to sleep. And when he woke up, the pain was almost gone, only a swelling had formed on his right cheek, so slight a swelling, in fact, as to be hardly noticeable. His wife said that it could not be seen at all, but Ben-Tobith smiled craftily, he knew what a good wife he had and how ready she was to say agreeable things. His neighbor, Samuel, the tanner, had come

grey-bearded Samuel nodded his head compassionately and said:

"Oh, how painful it must have been!"

Ben-Tovit was pleased with Samuel's attitude, and he repeated the story to him, then went back to the past, when his first tooth was spoiled on the left side. Thus, absorbed in a lively conversation, they reached Golgotha. The sun, which was destined to shine upon the world on that terrible day, had already set beyond the distant hills, and in the west a narrow, purple-red strip was burning, like a stain of blood. The crosses stood out darkly but vaguely against this background, and at the foot of the middle cross white kneeling figures were seen indistinctly.

The crowd had long dispersed; it was growing chilly, and after a glance at the crucified men, Ben-Tovit took Samuel by the arm and carefully turned him in the direction toward his house. He felt that he was particularly eloquent just then, and he was eager to finish the story of his toothache. Thus they walked, and Ben-Tovit made a martyr's face, shook his head and groaned skilfully, while Samuel nodded compassionately and uttered exclamations from time to time, and from the deep, narrow defiles, out of the distant, burning plains, rose the black night. It seemed as though it wished to hide from the view of heaven the great crime of the earth.

terrible pain. By way of illustration, he made a face of suffering, shut his eyes, nodded his head and groaned, and the grey-bearded Samuel wagged his head in compassion, and said, "Dear, dear! how painful!"

Ben Tobit was pleased with the appreciation, and went through the whole story again; and then referred to the long-distant time, when he had lost his first tooth, one of the lower ones on the left side. Thus engaged in lively conversation they arrived at Golgotha. The sun, which had been doomed to illumine the world on that dreadful day, was already sinking behind the distant hills, and a narrow bright red stripe, like a track of blood, glowed in the west. Against this, as a background, the dark crosses were faintly distinguishable, and at the foot of the centre cross some kneeling figures formed a vague patch of white.

The crowd had long ago dispersed. It became cold, and Ben Tobit, with a casual glance at the figures on the crosses, took Samuel by the hand and gently turned him in the direction of his home. He felt especially voluble, and he wanted to tell all about his toothache. Thus they walked, and Ben Tobit, at Samuel's sympathetic head-shakes and exclamations, made a face of suffering, shook his head, and groaned artistically. And out of the deep clefts and from the distant parched plains rose the dark night. It was as though it wished to hide from the sight of heaven the earth's great crime.

meanwhile, and Ben-Tobith took him to see the new ass; he proudly listened to his neighbor's words of praise for the animal and for its master.

Then, at the suggestion of his curious wife Sarah, the three of them walked over to Golgotha to see the crucified. On the way Ben-Tobith related to Samuel about his tooth ache from its very beginning, how the day before he had felt a twitch of pain in his right jaw, and how during the night he had been awakened by an agonizing pain. By way of illustration he made a wry face, shutting his eyes, shook his head and groaned, and the grey-bearded Samuel sympathyingly nodded and said:

"Tss-tss-tss, what suffering!"

Ben-Tobith was gratified by this expression of sympathy and he repeated his tale and reverted to that distant past when his first tooth had commenced to turn bad, the left tooth in the lower jaw. In such animated conversation they reached Golgotha. The sun which was fated to shine upon the world on that dread day had meanwhile set behind the distant hillocks, and in the west glowed like a bloody stain a narrow band of ruddy crimson. Against this background dimly darkled the crosses, and kneeling at the foot of the cross in the center some white-garbed figures glistened vaguely in the gathering dusk.

The people had long since dispersed; it was growing cold; casting a fleeting glance upon the crucified figures, Ben-Tobith took Samuel by his arm and cautiously turned him in the direction of their homes. He felt unusually eloquent and he was anxious to tell him more about the toothache. Thus they walked homeward, and Ben-Tobith, to the accompaniment of Samuel's sympathizing nods and exclamations, made once more a wry face, shook his head and moaned artfully, while from the deep crevices and the distant

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		arid plains rose the blackness of night. As though it sought to cover from the sight of heaven the great misdeed of the earth.
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