

Chapter 2

Inquirie being made of the best and fairest virgines, 5. Esther the vnknowne neece of Mardocheus a Iew is preferred, 18. and made Queene in place of Vafthi, a mariage feaft made, and presentes geuen. 21. Mardocheus detecteth traitors, and his seruice is recorded in the register.

These thinges so done, after the indignation of king Affuerus was affwaged, he remembred Vafthi, and what she had done, or what she had suffered: ² and the kings seruantes and his ministers said: Let there be maydens sought for the king, virgins and beautiful, ³ and let there be sent that may viewe through al prouinces beautiful maydens and virgins: and let them bring them to the citie of Susa, and deliuer them into the house of women vnder the hand of Egeus the eunuch, who is ouerfeer of the kings women: and let them receiue womens ornamentes, and other things necessarie to be vsed. ⁴ And which so euer among al shal please the kings eyes, let her reigne for Vafthi. The word pleased the king: and so as they had suggested, he commanded to be done. ⁵ There was a man in the citie of Susa a Iew, named Mardocheus, the sonne of Iair, the sonne of Semei, the sonne of Cis, of the stocke of Iemini, ⁶ who had bene transported from Ierusalem the same time, that Nabuchodonosor the king of Babylon transported Iechonias the king of Iuda, ⁷ who was the foster father of his brothers daughter Ediffa, which by an other name was called Esther: and she had lost both her parentes: exceeding beautiful, and of comely face. And her father and mother being dead, Mardocheus adopted her for his daughter. ⁸ And when the kings commandment was bruited abroad, and according to his commandment many faire virgins were

4. Reg. 24.

brought to Sufan, and were deliuered to Egeus the eunuch: ^a)Efther alfo among the reft of the maydens was deliuered to him, that fhe might be kept in the number of the wemen. ⁹ Who pleafed him, and found grace in his fight. And he commanded the eunuch, that he should haften the wemens ornamentes, and should deliuer her, her partes, & feuen the moft beautiful maydens of the kings houfe, and should adorne and decke both her and her wayting maydes. ¹⁰ Who would not tel him her people and countrie. For Mardocheus had commanded her, that of this thing she should altogether keepe filence: ¹¹ who walked daily before the entrance of the houfe, wherin the chofen virgins were kept, taking care of Efthers welfare, and defirous to know what should chance vnto her. ¹² And when the time of euerie virgin in order was come, that they should goe in to the king, al things accomplished that perteyned to wemens ornamentes, it was the twelfth moneth: yet fo, that for fix monethes they were anoynted with oyle of myrtle, and other fix monethes they vfed certayne payntings and fweete fpices. ¹³ And going in to the king, what foeuer they asked that perteyned to adorning they receiued: and being trimmed, as it pleafed them, they paffed from the chamber of the wemen to the kings chamber. ¹⁴ And she that went in at euening, came out in the morning, and from thence she was brought to the fecond houfe, that was vnder the hand of Sufagazus the eunuch, who was chiefe ouer the kings concubines: neither had she power to returne any more to the king, vnleffe the king had willed, and had commanded her to come by name. ¹⁵ And the time by order coming about, the day was at hand, that Efther the daughter of Abihail the brother of Mardocheus, whom he had adopted

^a *Deut. 7. v. 8.* Ifraelites are forbid to marie with Gentiles, yet when there was no danger to be peruerted, and great hope of good, Efther by Mardocheus counfel contented to marie king Affuerus, though otherwife she *detefted the bed of the incircumcised, and of euerie ftranger. ch. 14. v. 15.* K. Dauid alfo married the kings daughter of Geffur. *1. Reg. 3. v. 3.*

for his daughter, should goe in to the king. Who fought not wemens ornamentes, but whatfoeuer Egeus the eunuch the keper of the virgins would, thofe things he gaue her to her adorning. For she was exceeding fayre, and of incredible beautie, she femed to al mens eies gracious and amiable. ¹⁶ She therefore was brought to the chamber of king Affuerus the tenth moneth, which is called Tebeth, in the feuenth yeare of his reigne. ¹⁷ And the king loued her more then al the wemen, and she had grace and mercie before him aboue al the wemen, and he put the crowne of the kingdom on her head, and made her reigne in fteede of Vafthi. ¹⁸ And he commanded a verie magnificent feaft to be prepared to al the princes, and to his feruantes, for the coniunction, and mariage of Efther. And he gaue refte to al the prouinces, and beftowed giftes according to princely magnificence. ¹⁹ And when virgins were fought the fecond time and gathered together, Mardocheus taried at the kings gate, ²⁰ neither had Efther as yet vttered her countrie, & people, according to his cōmandment. For what foeuer he commanded, Efther obserued: and she did al thinges fo as she was wont at that time, when he nourished her a litle one. ²¹ At that time therefore, when Mardocheus abode at the kings gate, Bagathan, and Thares were angrie, two of the kings eunuches, that were porters, and were chiefe in the firft entrie of the palace: and they would make infurrection againft the king, and kil him. ²² Wherof Mardocheus ^a)gotte notice, and immediatly he told it to queene Efther: and fhe to the king in the name of Mardocheus, who had reported the thing vnto her. ²³ It was examined, and found: and they were both hanged on a gibbet. And it was put in the hiftories, and regiftred in the cronicles before the king.

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v. 1.

^a Mardocheus hearing fufpicious wordes and obseruing their actions fawe that they intended euel and informed the king, wherby their trefon was difcouered. *Rab. Calom. & Iofep.*