

Chapter 21

The tribe of Benjamin is repayred, 8. by foure hundred virgins referued in the slaughte of Iabes Galaad: 19. and by other virgins taken, that come forth of Silo to daunce.

The children of Ifrael fware alfo in Mafpha, and faid: None of vs shal geue of his daughters to the children of Benjamin to wife. ² And they came al to the houfe of God in Silo, and fitting in his fight vntil euening, lifted vp their voice, and with great wayling beganne to weepe faying: Wherfore ô Lord God of Ifrael is this euil done in thy people, that this day one tribe fhould be taken away out of vs? ³ And on the morrow rifing early, they built an altar: and offered there holocaustes, and pacifique victimes, and faid: ⁴ Who hath not afcended in the hofte of our Lord of al the tribes of Ifrael? For they had bound them felues with a great othe, when they were in Mafpha, that they fhould be flayne which had bene wanting. ⁵ And the children of Ifrael being ^a)moued with repentance vpon their brother Benjamin, beganne to fay: One tribe is taken away out of Ifrael, ⁶ whence shal they take wiues? For we haue al fworne in common, that we wil not geue our daughters to them. ⁷ Therefore they faid: Who is there of al the tribes of Ifrael, that went not vp to our Lord into Mafpha? And behold the inhabitantes of Iabes Galaad were found not to haue bene in that armie. (⁸ At that time alfo when they were in Silo, none of them was found there.) ⁹ They fent therefore ten thoufand the ftrongeft men, and commanded them: Goe, and ftrike the inhabitantes of Iabes Galaad in the edge of the fword, as wel their wiues as their litle ones. ¹⁰ And this fhall be it which you fhall obferue: Al of the male kinde, and wemen, that haue knowen men, kil ye, but the virgins referue. ¹¹ And there were found of Iabes Galaad foure hundred virgins,

^a Left either iuftice be ouer fharpe, or mercie too relaxe, with great art of difcretion, gouernours muft obferue *mercie iuftly aduifing, and difcipline pioufly chafticing.* *S. Greg. li. 1. Epift. 24.*

that knew not mans bedde, and they brought them to the campe in Silo, into the Land of Chanaan. ¹² And they fent meffengers to the children of Benjamin, that were in Rocke Remmon, and commanded them that they should receiue them in peace. ¹³ And the children of Benjamin came at that time, and there were geuen vnto them wiues of the daughters of Iabes Galaad: but others they found not, which they might geue them in like maner. ¹⁴ And al Ifrael was very forie, and repented for the killing of one tribe out of Ifrael. ¹⁵ And the ancientes faid: What shal we doe to the reft, that haue not taken wiues? For al the wemen in Benjamin are dead. ¹⁶ And we muft very carefully, and with great ftudie prouide, that one tribe be not deftroyed out of Ifrael. ¹⁷ For our owne daughters we can not geue them, being bound with an oath and a curfe, wherby we faid: Curfed be he that shal geue to Benjamin anie of his daughters to wife. And they tooke counfail, and faid: Behold there is an anniueraire folemnie of our Lord in Silo, which is fituate on the North of the citie of Bethel, on the Eaft fide of the way, that goeth from Bethel to Sichem, and on the South of the towne of Lebona. ¹⁸ And they commanded the children of Benjamin, and faid: Goe, and lie hidde in the vineyardes. ¹⁹ And when you shal fee the daughters of Silo come forth after the maner to lead daunfes, iffue forth fodenly out of the vineyardes, and catch of them euerie one his wife, and goe into the Land of Benjamin. ²⁰ And when their fathers shal come, and their brethren, and shal beginne to complaine againft you, and to chide, we wil fay to them: Haue pittie on them: for they tooke them not away by the right of warryers and conquerours, but when they defired to receiue them, you gaue them not, and on your part the fault was committed. ²¹ And the children of Benjamin did, as it had beene commanded them: and according to their number, they tooke away to them felues of thofe that ledde the daunfes, euerie one his wife: and they went into their poffeffion, building cities, and dwelling in them. ²² The children of Ifrael alfo returned by their tribes, and families into their tabernacles. In thofe daies there was not

a King in Ifrael: but euerie one did that ^{a)}which femed
right to him felfe.

^a In the time of the Iudges the people prefumed more to do *that femed to them felues right*, or good, though it was nought; which afterwarde the kinges more refrained and punifhed.