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DEUTERONOMY 24:1 When a man takes a wife and marries her, then it shall be, if she finds no favour in his eyes, because he has found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorce, and put it in her hand, and send her out of his house.

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The case of a divorced wife, Deu 24:1-4. No man shall be obliged to undertake any public service for the first year of his marriage, Deu 24:5. The mill-stones shall not be taken as a pledge, Deu 24:6. The man-stealer shall be put to death, Deu 24:7. Concerning cases of leprosy, Deu 24:8, Deu 24:9. Of receiving pledges, and returning those of the poor before bed-time, Deu 24:10-13. Of servants and their hire, Deu 24:14, Deu 24:15. Parents and children shall not be put to death for each other, Deu 24:16. Of humanity to the stranger, fatherless, widow, and bondman, Deu 24:17, Deu 24:18. Gleanings of the harvest, etc., to be left for the poor, stranger, widow, fatherless, etc., Deu 24:19-22.

#### Verse 1

Some uncleanness - Any cause of dislike, for this great latitude of meaning the fact itself authorizes us to adopt, for it is certain that a Jew might put away his wife for any cause that seemed good to himself; and so hard were their hearts, that Moses suffered this; and we find they continued this practice even to the time of our Lord, who strongly reprehended them on the account, and showed that such license was wholly inconsistent with the original design of marriage; see Mat 5:31 (note), etc.; Mat 19:3 (note), etc., and the notes there.

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DEUTERONOMY 24:2 When she has departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.

DEUTERONOMY 24:3 If the latter husband hates her, and write her a bill of divorce, and puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, who took her to be his wife;

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#### Verse 3

And write her a bill of divorcement - These bills, though varying in expression, are the same in substance among the Jews in all places. The following, collected from Maimonides and others, is a general form, and contains all the particulars of such instruments. The reader who is curious may find a full account of divorces in the Biblioth. Rab. of Bartolucci, and the following form in that work, vol. iv., p. 550. "In - day of the week, or day - of the month A., in - year from the creation of the world, or from the supputation (of Alexander) after the account that we are accustomed to count by, here, in the place B., I, C., the son of D., of the place B., (or if there be any other name which I have, or my father hath had, or which my place or my father's place hath had), have voluntarily, and with the willingness of my soul, without constraint, dismissed, and left, and put away thee, even thee, E., the daughter of F., of the city G., (or if thou have any other name or surname, thou or thy father, or thy place or thy father's place), who hast been my wife heretofore; but now I dismiss thee, and leave thee, and put thee away, that thou mayest be free, and have power over thy own life, to go away to be married to any man whom thou wilt; and that no man be refused of thine hand, for my name, from this day and for ever. And thus thou art lawful for any man; and this is unto thee, from me, a writing of divorcement, and book (instrument) of dismission, and an epistle of putting away; according to the Law of Moses and Israel.

A., son of B., witness.C., son of D., witness."

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DEUTERONOMY 24:4 her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD. You shall not cause the land to sin, which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance.

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Verse 4

She is defiled - Does not this refer to her having been divorced, and married in consequence to another? Though God, for the hardness of their hearts, suffered them to put away their wives, yet he considered all after-marriages in that case to be pollution and defilement; and it is on this ground that our Lord argues in the places referred to above, that whoever marries the woman that is put away is an adulterer: now this could not have been the case if God had allowed the divorce to be a legal and proper separation of the man from his wife; but in the sight of God nothing can be a legal cause of separation but adultery on either side. In such a case, according to the law of God, a man may put away his wife, and a wife may put away her husband; (see Mat 19:9); for it appears that the wife had as much right to put away her husband as the husband had to put away his wife, see Mar 10:12.

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DEUTERONOMY 24:5 When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out in the army, neither shall he be assigned any business. He shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer his wife whom he has taken.

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Verse 5

When a man hath taken a new wife - Other people made a similar provision for such circumstances. Alexander ordered those of his soldiers who had married that year to spend the winter with their wives, while the army was in winter quarters. See Arrian, lib. i.

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DEUTERONOMY 24:6 No man shall take the mill or the upper millstone as a pledge; for he takes a life in pledge.

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Verse 6

The nether or the upper mill-stone - Small hand-mills which can be worked by a single person were formerly in use among the Jews, and are still used in many parts of the East. As therefore the day's meal was generally ground for each day, they keeping no stock beforehand, hence they were forbidden to take either of the stones to pledge, because in such a case the family must be without bread. On this account the text terms the millstone the man's life.

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DEUTERONOMY 24:7 If a man is found stealing any of his brothers of the children of Israel, and he deals with him as a slave, or sells him; then that thief shall die. So you shall remove the evil from your midst.

DEUTERONOMY 24:8 Be careful in the plague of leprosy, that you observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites teach you. As I commanded them, so you shall observe to do.

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Verse 8

The plague of leprosy - See on Leviticus 13 (note), and Leviticus 14 (note).

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DEUTERONOMY 24:9 Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam, by the way as you came out of Egypt.

DEUTERONOMY 24:10 When you lend your neighbour any kind of loan, you shall not go into his house to get his pledge.

DEUTERONOMY 24:11 You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge outside to you.

DEUTERONOMY 24:12 If he is a poor man, you shall not sleep with his pledge.

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Verse 12

And if the man be poor, etc. - Did not this law preclude pledging entirely, especially in case of the abjectly poor? For who would take a pledge in the morning which he knew, if not redeemed, he must restore at night? However, he might resume his claim in the morning, and have the pledge daily returned, and thus keep up his property in it till the debt was discharged; see the note on Exo 22:26. The Jews in several cases did act contrary to this rule, and we find them cuttingly reprov'd for it by the Prophet Amos, Amo 2:8.

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DEUTERONOMY 24:13 You shall surely restore to him the pledge when the sun goes down, that he may sleep in his garment, and bless you. It shall be righteousness to you before the LORD your God.

DEUTERONOMY 24:14 You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brothers, or one of the foreigners who are in your land within your gates.

DEUTERONOMY 24:15 In his day you shall give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down on it; for he is poor, and sets his heart on it; lest he cry against you to the LORD, and it be sin to you.

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Verse 15

He is poor, and setteth his heart upon it - How exceedingly natural is this! The poor servant who seldom sees money, yet finds from his master's affluence that it procures all the conveniences and comforts of life, longs for the time when he shall receive his wages; should his pay be delayed after

the time is expired, he may naturally be expected to cry unto God against him who withholds it. See most of these subjects treated at large on Exo 22:21-27 (note).

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DEUTERONOMY 24:16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers. Every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

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Verse 16

The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, etc. - This law is explained and illustrated in sufficient detail, Ezekiel 18.

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DEUTERONOMY 24:17 You shall not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, nor take a widow's clothing in pledge;

DEUTERONOMY 24:18 but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you there. Therefore I command you to do this thing.

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Verse 18

Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman - Most people who have affluence rose from comparative penury, for those who are born to estates frequently squander them away; such therefore should remember what their feelings, their fears, and anxieties were, when they were poor and abject. A want of attention to this most wholesome precept is the reason why pride and arrogance are the general characteristics of those who have risen in the world from poverty to affluence; and it is the conduct of those men which gave rise to the rugged proverb, "Set a beggar on horseback, and he will ride to the devil."

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DEUTERONOMY 24:19 When you reap your harvest in your field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go again to get it. It shall be for the foreigner, for the fatherless, and for the widow; that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

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Verse 19

When thou cuttest down thine harvest - This is an addition to the law, Lev 19:9; Lev 23:22. The corners of the field, the gleanings, and the forgotten sheaf, were all the property of the poor. This the Hebrews extended to any part of the fruit or produce of a field, which had been forgotten in the time of general ingathering, as appears from the concluding verses of this chapter.

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DEUTERONOMY 24:20 When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs again. It shall be for the foreigner, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

DEUTERONOMY 24:21 When you harvest your vineyard, you shall not glean it after yourselves. It shall be for the foreigner, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

DEUTERONOMY 24:22 You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt. Therefore I command you to do this thing.

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