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**A Hundred Days in the East:**

A diary of a journey to Egypt, Palestine, Turkey in Europe,  
the Isles of the Archipelago, and Italy.

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(p. 189).....

The origin of the feud between the Jews and Samaritans to which the woman's first question referred, may be traced to (p. 190) events previously recorded, and also to the following: Whilst Nehemiah was engaged in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, the Samaritans used every effort to thwart him and arrest the enterprise, but failed. They having obtained leave of the Persian monarch to build a temple for themselves, erected it on Mount Gerizim, strenuously contending that this was the sacred locality designated by Moses, consecrated by Abraham, and that on its summit were the twelve stones which the priest removed at the command of Joshua from the divided and dried channel of the Jordan. Sanballat, the leader of the Samaritans on this occasion, consecrated his son-in-law "Manasses" high priest; their religion becoming thus established, the mutual hatred between the Samaritans and the Israelites was intensified. Afterwards Samaria became, as Home was in her early history, a resort of all the outlaws of Judea; criminals who had escaped from justice, the excommunicated, exiled, and discontented—were all received and welcomed to the district, to swell the numbers and augment the common security; thus further exasperating and widening the breach between the two nations. Another cause may be assigned: The Samaritans only acknowledged and received as inspired, the first five books of Moses, rejecting not only the prophetic writings, but the entire bulk of Jewish traditions; hence both in politics and religion a bitter festering jealousy was still further generated, giving birth in turn to strife and hate, the Jews regarding the Samaritans as Britain till of late years did the French, as implacable and natural enemies.

Our Lord, who came to break down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and heal the breaches of nations and peoples, not only preached the gospel of the kingdom to the despised Samaritans, but commended their character for gratitude, brotherly love, and hospitality, in two beautiful parables; one of them, that of the good Samaritan, perhaps the most perfect of all He uttered. ^; His apostles, after the resurrection, followed the example and obeyed the command of their Master, conveying the story of the cross down to the despised sons and daughters of Abraham in Samaria.

(p. 191)

A controversy has long been going on between travellers and authors, whether the place where I am now sitting be really the well of Jacob, at which our Lord had the interview above narrated; one party contending, as if inspiration depended on the issue, that its distance from the town is too great, or else the city has moved its position farther up the

valley to the west. The Koman name Neapolis—New City— corrupted into Nablous, the existing city of Shechein, seems to favour this view; to which is added by way of argument, that there are other fountains nearer and much more amply supplied than this one, which is a mile, if not more, from the city. On the other hand, it is urged and maintained with equal zeal, that this is the identical well, revered, honoured, and known as such by the Jews since the time of the patriarchs, and by Christians since the days of our Lord; moreover, that the Samaritans have ever regarded Jacob as their father with an earnestness equal to that of the Israelites, nor is the patriarch less honoured by the Moslem; consequently it is almost impossible that a locality so sacred to so many creeds could be mistaken; and again that distance is not of great moment in the East, where time is of little value, especially when religion and veneration come into play.

I am, therefore, of opinion, that the traditions last cited, being unbroken and universal, are well sustained; consequently that this is really and truly the well of the patriarch, and the scene of the event narrated by the evangelist. At all events, I have no hesitation in allowing my devotional impulses full liberty to luxuriate in the belief that I am on holy ground. From this sequestered glen between these mounts of blessing and cursing, a truth more sublime than either Plato, Socrates, or the Stagyrice ever knew, was enunciated, which may be comprised in the simple but comprehensive dogma:—"God is a Spirit," and the corollary —would that it were better appreciated or understood by Christendom!—is, "They who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Having concluded my meditations and devotions, I remount, and ride slowly up the glen. In the midst of the fields, about four hundred yards to the right, stands the tomb of Joseph—a (p. 192) white square structure, not unlike that of Rachel at Bethlehem. Here, I am informed, both Jews and Moslems, with equal devotion, repeat their prayers. I observe in passing, a cluster of houses on my right hand, and a few yards farther on a beautiful fountain, where flocks are being watered. The declivities of the hills in this end of the valley, though verdant, are bare of wood, and seemingly only fit for pasturing goats, of which I observe several herds, the tinkling bell of the leader of the flock and the cry of the shepherd ringing at times in the air. Traversing once more the grove of olives, I re-enter the city.

(p. 193) CHAPTER XXIV.  
NABLOUS.

THE population of Nablous numbers from seven to eight thousand, of whom only about five hundred are Christians, chiefly belonging to the Latin Church. For some years by-past there has been here a diocesan mission for the conversion and education of the Jews; but, like that at Jerusalem, it has had great difficulties to encounter. The enemy, I may say of God and His gospel, is ever active, assuming, as of old, different guises and using different instrumentalities to stay the progress and thwart the efforts of the Church. In the East this evil principle takes the-form of traducing and falsifying the intentions of the missionaries, chiefly by insinuating that every Jewish convert is bought at a stipulated price, rising or falling in proportion to the rank of the individual I heard of fabulous sums having been paid as a premium for a single convert, in order, it was said, that the conversion might grace a report or tell in a May meeting at Exeter Hall.

This is the old story; the same is ascribed to the Protestant missions in the west of Ireland, by the Roman Catholic party, who give the process the designation of *souperism*—I suppose, because food is sometimes distributed amongst the poor. A Jew

who resolves to become a Christian has his movements not only watched, but he is threatened and often persecuted by friends, relatives, and rabbis. Many of the Jews being indigent, as I mentioned in speaking of Jerusalem, are in receipt of relief, which comes in a great measure to them through the Synagogue; on the first breath of suspicion of attending the mission meetings, or of sending a child to the school, pecuniary aid ceases, and in the event of persistency (p. 194) is finally withdrawn. Sometimes more energetic measures are adopted, the culprit being whisked off no one can tell where. There are fewer difficulties in becoming a convert on the part of those Jews who are under the charge of the respective consuls, than those swayed by the rabbis; hence the majority of converts here, as far as I could learn, have been under the protection of the Prussian or English governments. Spanish, Austrian, or Portuguese Jews, scarcely ever become converts.

Here, as well as at Jerusalem, there are day schools, attended by between thirty and forty children, chiefly Jewish, the branches usually taught being writing and arithmetic, the reading, English, Italian, and Hebrew. The girls are taught sewing, whilst both sexes are employed in different kinds of indoor work. There is also connected with the establishment a dispensary, at which medicines may be obtained gratuitously every morning; a medical gentleman also visits the patients at their homes when required to do so. Prayer-books, Bibles, and Testaments are sold at a cheap rate, whilst tracts in Arabic and Turkish are freely distributed. Who, in regarding this and kindred missions, would not exclaim, "Thy kingdom come I" May the blessed gospel of God our Saviour soon become known to God's ancient people, and may the ingathering of our elder brother herald the fulness of the Gentiles!

A few families of Samaritans still linger about the cities of their fathers and the scenes of their solemnities around Mount Gerizim. On the latter there are still ruins of their once famous temple; and also a skeleton form of their no less famous worship. Three times a year the people proceed in solemn procession to the top of the mountain, reading the law whilst ascending; there they perform first the feast of the passover, sacrificing lambs—a ceremony that I learn was celebrated on the day preceding my arrival; I felt sorry I did not reach the town in time to be present. Next they have the feast of Pentecost; and finally that of Tabernacles, which is performed in booths formed of branches. They still retain the old seventh day of worship, and have two synagogues in the town, where they meet on Friday evening and Saturday morning. Like some worshippers I have seen, they seem to repeat their (p. 195) prayers mechanically in a hurried irreverent manner, bawling at the top of their voice, evincing none of the decorum observed by either Jew or Moslem in their devotional exercises, being even less decorous than those of the Jews in Duke Street, London. The Samaritans, being mostly poor, are held in small esteem by the proud Osmanli, and are seemingly as cordially hated now by the Jews as they were in the days of our Lord. In one of their synagogues there is a splendid copy of the Pentateuch in the original Samaritan character, together with a few Arabic MSS., which they say are as old as the days of Eliezer. These, with a few commentaries, are under the care of the high priest. I could not help feeling for their degraded condition, as well as for their poverty and ignorance. Like their brother the Jew, they are treated like strangers in their own land, which they have possessed since the days of Jeroboam; Shechem being the ancient metropolis of Samaria. Four centuries and a half before Christ, the Samaritans were a great and a distinct people; and in later ages they took with the Jews a conspicuous part in

the wars with imperial Rome. Though now small in numbers, being a mere handful of thirty families, scarcely rich enough to purchase victims for the yearly sacrifice, at one time they filled the world with the splendour of their renown, their fame and religion having spread from Memphis to Rome; but to all human appearance they will in the course of a few years have left little more than a name to mark their existence.

Mount Gerizim, the scene of the Samaritan religious festivities, is reached by a gently-inclined winding pathway about a mile from the town; the view from the crest of the height is not only interesting in itself, but embraces many remarkable objects. The Mediterranean is seen on the west, Hermon on the north, and on the east the mountains of Moab, rising like a wall of rock. A short distance eastward there is a rocky knoll, and about half a mile beyond that a level space or plateau, where some large stones are scattered about, resembling the ruins of an ancient building. Amongst these fragments is a small cleared area with a trough-like cavity, partially filled with ashes and bones. This is the *sanctum* of the (p. 196) Mount. Here the Samaritans for four thousand years have sacrificed the passover, in terms of the law. The lambs or cocks—for both are used in sacrifice—are killed and roasted in this trough, and all the people of both sexes and ages partake of the sacrifice, "having their loins girt and staves in their hands." A short distance farther off there are some ruins, composed chiefly of large bevelled stones, a few *in situ*, others prostrate; under the latter it is believed lie hidden the twelve stones taken from the Jordan, already referred to.

There are travellers and writers of note who contend that this is the true Mount Moriah, the spot where Abraham sacrificed the ram that was caught, instead of Isaac; where Jacob slept and had his vision of the ladder; and where the ark was set up. Amongst those who hold this opinion is Dean Stanley, who, in his admirable work on Palestine, not only broaches but argues in favour of this view. I have not been long enough here, nor have I an opportunity now, to examine calmly the grounds of this somewhat startling assertion, but to me with my present information it seems altogether preposterous. I arrive at this conclusion partly because of the distance Abraham, the lad, and the attendants would have to travel within a specified time, before arriving here; and partly because it is unlikely that tradition could have erred so far as to confound Mount Moriah on the Kedron, with Mount Gerizim in the valley of Shechem. Standing on the ground, I put the question: Can this really be the spot whereon was enacted the miraculous interposition that stayed the patriarch's hand and rescued the progenitor of one in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed? Am I really on the spot over which the angel hovered, and where Araunah had his thrashing-floor? This I cannot bring my mind to admit. The geographical arguments are as unfavourable as the argument of distance, in addition to which is opposed the almost uniform tradition upheld by the "voice of Israel." Better, I exclaim, let the Samaritans continue "to worship they know not what;" give to Mount Gerizim and Ebal all the glory of antiquity, the memory and associations of Old and New Testament history. Whatever may be gained by the new hypothesis, truth is neither to be reached nor secured by any reason- (p. 197) ing or theory, however plausible. Therefore, till more light be thrown upon the subject, let the scenes hallowed and the localities consecrated by Scripture, history, and tradition, remain *quo ante*.

The position of Nablous is one of rare beauty. Conceive a magnificent valley, a few hundred yards in width, enclosed on both sides by mountains rising at a sharp inclination to a height of 2500 feet. Fresh springs and fountains gushing, leaping, and sparkling in

every direction. Whatever else may be the character of Palestine, this at least is not a barren wilderness: here the grass is not stunted; the sward, green as an emerald, is as soft as velvet. A clear blue sky, and what is strange in Syria, a haze arising from the abundance of moisture, throwing a purple tinge over the distant hills, giving an air of enchantment to the landscape. Orchards and gardens near the town fill the width of the valley, and the olive with its silver-gray leaf creeps up the declivities, corn fields of delicate green and others of russet hue fill the eye, rich perfumes float on the breeze, while a flood of melody is poured from every tree. Every sense is gratified and delighted. Arcadia and the Vale of Tempe may be fertile and lovely, but Shechem is a paradise.

The city as seen through the foliage of the trees appears a fair vision of white-domed houses and tall gilded minarets, interspersed with the verdure of the mulberry, the fig, and the apricot, a sea of green below, an azure heaven above. But as in the case of Cairo and Jerusalem, enter within the walls, the charm dissolves, and the fairy spell is broken. The streets are merely narrow lanes, gloomy, dark, and tunnel-like, tainted, with the odour of stagnant water and redolent with filth. The houses are built of stone, tolerably lofty, many having piazzas in front, supported on arches; whether this peculiarity is for security or to raise the apartments high above the smells, I cannot say. No city is more abundantly supplied with water, nor is there any lack of fountains, many of which are the gifts of pious Mussulmans, but, as elsewhere in Syria, no use seems to be made of the commodity. Jaffa and Bethlehem no longer bear the palm of uncleanness. The street by which I first entered Nablous I supposed was the dung depot, until I discovered on further acquaintance, the whole city was alike. There are (p. 298) numbers of shops, not, however, *magazins*, in the European meaning of the term, but simply openings in the wall, or stalls on the pavement; they are supplied with the cheapest of wares, such as combs, knives, incense, pipes, paper for cigarettes, trinketry, and comestibles. The eggs are dyed a variety of colours, and sold at eight a piastre, (2d. ;) bread of excellent quality, at half a piastre a pound; coffee is reasonable in price, but sugar extravagantly dear. Rice forms the staple article of diet. Animal food seems to be rarely used; I observe no signs of beef, mutton, or butcher's shop. It is gratifying to notice a great many men busily occupied in cleaning cotton, using for that purpose a handbow, similar to that with which hatters disentangle hair or felt; women and girls are seated outside the doors dressing and otherwise manipulating cotton. I also notice silk and cotton weavers, a number of barbers' shops—not, however, for beard, but head shaving. There are an abundance of blacksmiths, whose anvil is a curiosity of its kind, the face being only five inches by two. There are two or three coppersmiths, who use neither mandril nor shape-block, simply beating the metal into form with the hammer. Vessels of this substance are used by the upper classes for both culinary and ablutory purposes.

But most pleasing of all, the modern Shechem has her factories, one in particular for the manufacture of olive oil. The mode of extracting the fluid is very simple: the fruit or berries are picked by children as cherries are in Kent, and immediately carried to the mill, which is merely a large stationary stone with a cavity, into which another, cut to fit the depression, revolves, turned by an ox or by the hand; the mass of pulp when withdrawn is wrapped in a mat, put under the pressure of a beam on the lever principle, sometimes with a screw; the oil is received into vessels, and after being heated is secured in jars, and thus ready for the market. There is also a soap work, employing a number of hands, the manufactured article finding its way to the principal towns of Syria. I have often thought

it would be an advantage to the persons and attire of the Shechemites if they would use a little more of it themselves. Next door to my lodging there is a large tannery, where are lying at this moment seven rows of tanned (p. 199) dog skins, upwards of twenty in each, of a black colour, and distended in the form of the animal; they are undergoing the process of drying, to be used, I presume, as water bags or bottles. There is no want of industry in the place, for I have seen more in a short time than I have observed in all the rest of Palestine put together.

The character of the Moslem inhabitants is anything but well-spoken of; some designate it as very bad, notorious for fanaticism and rudeness toward their Christian fellow-townsmen and strangers; their lawlessness and rebelliousness against their rulers has become proverbial. During the Rhamadan or annual festival, the poor Christians and Samaritans are often despoiled, their synagogues broken into, and their persons maltreated. It is only justice, however, to say that I have frequently ridden and walked through their streets, prying, as is my habit, into their windows, doors, and booths, handled the artisan's implements, doing my uttermost to make myself acquainted with their customs and modes of life, and yet everywhere I have been treated with kindness and urbanity.

It is not the beauty or fertility of situation, or the loveliness of the valley that lies beneath, that gives modern Nablous, the Shechem of old, its interest to the traveller; this arises more from its historic association, antiquity, and the many great and solemn events it has witnessed since Abraham first, on his way from Chaldea to Canaan, pitched his tent in its neighbourhood. Purchasing, as we read, a parcel of ground from Hamor for a hundred pieces of money, upon it he erected an altar, the first ever raised in the land, which he called El-el-ohé-Israel; at this period it was a wilderness, for no inhabitant had as yet built a dwelling therein. Nomadic tribes wandered about of their own sweet will, wherever pasture and water could be obtained for their flocks. From this being the first place of settlement when Israel dwelt in tents, it arose in course of time to be the capital of the kingdom, possessing natural advantages of shelter, easy of defence, fertile in an eminent degree, and abundantly watered; nothing was wanting but the presence and blessing of God; these, as already seen, were also ultimately conferred upon it. It is not to be forgotten that within these precincts a treacherous and cruel act was perpetrated by Jacob's two sons, Simeon and Levi, in the matter of their sister Dinah, and Shechem, Hemor's son, whose city they destroyed, taking the women, children, cattle, and wealth as a prey\* thereby bringing upon themselves the curse of their father in these words :—" Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitation. O my soul, come not thou into their secret. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel." f A little further down the tide of time a circumstance happened which tended to render the city of Shechem more noted still. At a period when the judges seemed to have ruled the nations with feeble rein, Abimelech had grasped at the throne, was crowned at the "pillar of Shechem," and in order still further to strengthen his position, he endeavoured to induce the princes or sheikhs of some other cities to make common cause with him in forming a league offensive and defensive. These projects, however, were seen and detected by Jotham, who stood on the top of Mount Gerizim and cried: "Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem," giving utterance to the first, and to this day the most beautiful of Old Testament parables, that in which the trees of the forest are spoken of as having met to

chose themselves a king. It is not to be overlooked in this sketch, brief though it be, that Shechem was not only a royal city, but the chief seat of Israel's assemblies, where prophets lived, and where kings were crowned and inaugurated. Kehoboam, after the death of his father Solomon, having taken the foolish advice of the young courtiers, who flattered and fawned, as they do at the present day, went with all Israel to Shechem, as the text says, "to be made king." Jeroboam also, who did more to cause Israel to sin than any king before or after him, threw around this city, for a short time, a large amount of splendour, by restoring its faded glory and dignity, and constituting it the capital of his new kingdom. How long it bore its honours alone, or at what time they were divided between it and Tirzah, another royal city, is unknown.

After this it politically languished, and only appeared as the centre of Samaritan worship, a rival of the higher and purer (p. 201) ritual prescribed at Jerusalem, the enmity and feud between it and Jerusalem, as already narrated, growing fiercer, and the breach becoming wider, until John Hyrcanus (B.C. 134) destroyed their temple on Mount Gerizim; their name and nation then became a reproach and a byword, and so it continued down till the Christian era. Justin Martyr, the celebrated Christian father, was born at Shechem or Neapolis, A.D. 89. In the dark ages the city was the seat of a bishop, and at last fell an easy prey to the Moslem when they conquered Syria, and would in all probability yield as readily as ever to any invader who might covet possession of the fertile district.

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#### **Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com**

This reference is not located in *A Bibliography of the Samaritans, Third Edition, Revised, Expanded, and Annotated*, by Alan David Crown and Reinhard Pummer, ATLA Bibliography, No. 51, **The Scarecrow Press, Inc.** Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford. 2005

The author makes a claim in the Preface that, 'the journey occupied seventeen weeks, and the total outlay was £185.'

The author met Mr. Rogers, the British consul on Friday, 6<sup>th</sup>, May

A Rev. Mr. Maury was his traveling companion.

His travels were in the year 1864.