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**A Journey to Egypt and the Holy Land, in 1869-1870**

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(p. 178)...My donkey-driver was to take me to the convent in Nablus. But this convent, having been recently established, was unknown to him, and to the inhabitants generally I should judge. He put me down at a locanda, hotel; I soon saw that this was no convent. But what was I to do? Where could I get information? I found a man who could speak German ; he directed us to a house where tanning was carried on, but here a boy went with us to the convent. Knocking at the door that opens into the street, we soon gained admittance. The accommodations were not extensive, and the priest was not in; the steward, as I shall call him, received me, and got me something to eat. In the room in which I ate was two or three beds, separated from the other part by curtains. The priest returned in the afternoon. A boy from the convent went with me to the house of Rev. El-Karey, to whom I had a letter of introduction from our consul in Jerusalem. Rev. El Karey is an Arab, born in Nablus, but educated in England; he married an English lady. He is the missionary of the United Palestinian Society of England. There is nothing sectarian in him, though in principle he is a liberal Baptist. He received me very kindly, and showed me every attention. As it was Saturday afternoon, we hastened off to the synagogue of the Samaritans to see their worship. We found forty or fifty men and boys engaged in prayer. They seemed very (p. 179) earnest. Rev. El-Karey introduced me to the highpriest of the Samaritans, whom we met there. Mr. El-Karey regards him as the embodiment of Samaritan learning. He was about sixty years of age.

On Sunday morning I heard Rev. El-Karey preach an earnest, and perhaps I should call it an eloquent, sermon in Arabic, of which I understood just about five words. His hearers were scarcely a dozen, of which the native portion sat on mats on the floor, with shoes off.

On Sunday afternoon I went in company with Revs. El-Karey and McIntosh to Jacob's Well, about a mile distant at the east end of the valley. By letting pebbles fall into the well, and observing the time of falling, two and a half seconds apparently, I inferred the well might be a hundred feet deep; but it has been several times actually measured, and found to be over seventy feet deep, fully justifying the language of the Samaritan woman, "the well is deep." Around the mouth of the well is an artificial elevation. The upper part of the well for about eight or ten feet is perhaps eight feet wide, then the entrance to the lower part is almost closed with a stone. The well is now dry. It is evident that in ancient times there was more rain in Palestine than there is now. That this is the identical well at which our Saviour stopped, no one, so far as we know, doubts. The site speaks for itself, and tradition, in which, as Dr. Robinson remarks, Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans agree, confirms it. Here, then, we can feel assured that our blessed Redeemer once sat and taught, and uttered that profoundest passage in the New Testament, with which paganism has nothing to compare: "God is a (p. 180) Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 24). Close by the well, on the north side, is Mount Gerizim; "our fathers worshiped in this mountain," said the woman of Samaria; " and ye (Jews) say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh

when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." East of the well, close to it, and lying but little lower than it, is a valley running north and south, which was set in wheat when we were there, and from time immemorial has doubtless been sowed with this grain. To this field our Saviour beautifully alludes in his remarks to the apostles at the same well: " Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." We read at the well, with some remarks, the part of the fourth chapter of John's gospel, in which the conversation of our Saviour occurs. The language seemed very natural.

It has seemed to some to be singular that the woman should have come so far to draw water, when there was abundance of water in the town. But the ancient town of Shechem probably stood nearer to the well than the modern one; nor is it certain that the woman came from Shechem. It has been supposed, and not without some reason, that Sychar is to be identified with Askar, the ruins of which are found on the southeast shoulder of Mount Ebal. And it seems to us that if the well-known town Shechem had been intended, John would not have been so careful to (p. 181) state, "near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph."

In confirmation of this, it may be observed that some Greek manuscripts write the name Esychar. Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, not more than thirty miles from Jacob's well, remarks,—in the fourth century,—respecting Sychar: "in front of the new city near the place which Jacob gave his son Joseph, in which Christ, according to John, discoursed with the Samaritan woman at the fountain; and still now it—the city—is shown." But the fact that the well was Jacob's might have been a sufficient reason for the woman's drawing water from it, even if she had water more convenient.

From Jacob's Well, we went to the Wely, or tomb, of Joseph, an inclosure of wall without roof. It is in the middle of the valley, between Gerizim and Ebal. Whether Joseph's bones were buried here or not is difficult to say; yet the burial-place could not have been far from this spot. From Joseph's tomb, we returned to Nablus. Monday morning, we paid, in company with Rev. El-Karey, a visit to the judge of Nablus; we did not find him at home, however, but his son and brother were there. They treated us very kindly, and brought us coffee. Rev. El-Karey gave the judge's brother, who was blind, an account of my method of ascertaining the depth of Jacob's Well by letting pebbles fall into it, and noting the time required in their descent; he seemed greatly interested in this. We also visited the house of the high-priest of the Samaritans. He was not at home; but they (p. 182) showed us the five Books of Moses in a large volume, written in three languages, Samaritan, Chaldee, and Arabic, on the same page, in the Samaritan characters.

On Monday afternoon I went, in company with Rev. Mr. McIntosh, to the summit of Mount Gerizim. The road is quite steep, and generally rough and stony. We rode horseback part of the way. The top of Gerizim is quite broad. Not far from the summit, on the south side, was some grain growing; but, generally speaking, the mountain is sterile. I observed on the summit the remains of breastworks, and the flat rock was pointed out to me where the Samaritans kill the sacrificial lamb at the passover. The Samaritans assert that the tabernacle was pitched on this rock. Just below the summit I saw the place where the Samaritans roast the sacrificial lamb, and where they encamp on the occasion. Mount Ebal appeared to be about one hundred feet higher than Gerizim. It was on Mount Ebal that the Lord commanded the Israelites to build—when they should enter the promised land—an altar of stones, and to offer thereon burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and to write upon the stones all the words of the law: Deut. xxvii. 4-8. Here the Samaritan Pentateuch has Gerizim instead of Ebal, which change the Samaritans seem to have made to justify themselves in building their

temple on the top of Gerizim. On Gerizim six tribes were to stand to bless the people, and on Ebal six tribes to pronounce the curse upon the disobedient. These commands were carried out by Joshua: Joshua viii. 30-34.

The valley at Nablus, between the foot of Gerizim and Ebal, is about a quarter of a mile wide, or per- (p. 183) haps, something more. The view from the top of Gerizim was wide, but I have no recollection of having seen Mount Hermon from that point.

We returned the same afternoon to Nablus. That evening, the high-priest of the Samaritans paid us a visit at the house of the Rev. El-Karey. There were present, Revs. El-Karey and McIntosh, Mr. Barker, mineralogist for the Turkish government, and the son of the judge of the town, a Mohammedan. In our interview with the high-priest, Rev. El-Karey acted as interpreter, the priest's vernacular being Arabic.

I asked the high-priest if he expected a Messiah; he answered that he did, and that he based that expectation on Deuteronomy xviii. 15: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." He also referred to one other passage in Deuteronomy. He stated that the Messiah would be like Moses, but inferior to him, and that he would reaffirm the Mosaic law. I asked him how he explained Genesis xlix. 10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come," etc. He answered that Solomon was the Shiloh with whom the sceptre departed from Judah, for Solomon, by his course, had ruined everything. This explanation is quite ingenious, and well suited to the purposes of the Samaritans, who deny that the people of Judah, after the time of Solomon, were the people of God, and thus the claim of the Samaritans to be considered the theocratic people is made plausible. Respecting the Hebrew prophets, he remarked that they were learned men, but not in- (p. 184) spired,—and that the Jews in many tilings act contrary to the Divine law, in short, are a species of heretics.

I asked him whether he did not think that Christianity would become universal. He answered, "No." I then asked him whether he thought Samaritanism would become universal; his answer was, "God knows." I pressed him further upon this point, and he replied that it would. To this I objected that the Mosaic law required all the males to go up three times a year (Deut. xvi. 16) to Gerizim, as the Samaritans understand it, and that it is impossible for all mankind to keep this commandment. He evidently felt the force of this, for he indulged in reflections on the miraculous conception of Christ, scarcely less indecent than those of Paine. The Mohammedan strongly objected to the language of the high-priest, but he was delighted with my objections to the universality of the Mosaic law, which he declared to be conclusive. But the high-priest was not to be refuted so easily, and he quoted a passage, little to the purpose, that the tithes were to be brought every three years, from which he inferred that the convening of the people every three years might be sufficient. I next referred to the prohibition in Exodus xxxv. 3: "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day," as being suitable enough for a people inhabiting a mild country like Palestine, but wholly unfit for a people dwelling in a cold country, where they would freeze without fire. He replied, he did not think that any one would freeze to death in keeping God's commandments, and asked me what the Jews in the United States do. I answered, "Employ Christians to kindle their fires."

(p. 185) He observed that the learned men of his nation informed him that the Jews crucified Jesus, the son of Mary. He said he thought it a strange idea that learned men had taken up, that Jesus was the son of God. I asked him if he did not think that Christ had exhibited supernatural power; he said he did not know, but the Mohammedan taking exception to this statement declared that he had. He considered himself alone to be right, and

all the rest of the world wrong. I opposed to him the judgment of the learned world, but he said that learning was of no use in judging of matters of inspiration, and that Abraham once stood alone.

I asked him about the distinguished Christian father, Justin Martyr, who lived in Nablus in the first half of the second century. He replied that he had never heard of him.

He stated that the number of the Samaritans is one hundred and fifty, and that their translation of the Pentateuch into Chaldee was made eighteen hundred years ago, and the Arabic version about six hundred years ago.

He expressed a wish that two hundred Americans or American families (for I do not remember which expression he used) would come to Nablus and settle. I expressed to him the pleasure I felt in being permitted to take him by the hand, the representative of the ancient Samaritans.

But it was a singular spectacle to see the high-priest of a people who had dwindled down to one hundred and fifty, shut up in a narrow vale between Gerizim and Ebal, — a striking emblem of his intellectual and moral condition,—taking the ground that he (p. 186) alone of all mankind was right, and talking about the universality of Samaritanism! Yet I could not but admire the man's pluck.

In personal appearance the high-priest was quite prepossessing. He was of medium size, his face rather round and full, and his complexion quite fair; there was nothing in him that would indicate a Jewish origin. He was dressed in a loose robe. He has a son, thirteen or fourteen years of age, who was to be married in a few months.

Rev. El-Karey bargained with him to have transcribed for me, from their Chaldee translation, the first ten verses of the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis, and also a copy of their alphabet. At first, he demanded several pounds for them, but at length consented to furnish them for about a dollar and a quarter. The alphabet differs greatly from any printed Samaritan alphabet that I have seen. The language of their Targum differs both from the Chaldee of the Targum of Onkelos and the Peshito Syriac.

The Samaritans are descendants principally of the heathen tribes which the king of Assyria transplanted into Samaria, in the place of the ten tribes that he had carried away captive. (2 Kings xvii. 24.) But it is not likely that the king of Assyria actually carried away captive all the Israelites. The remnants of the ten tribes were incorporated with these heathen. A priest was sent by the king of Assyria to instruct them in the knowledge of the law of Moses. The copy of the law of Moses obtained from the Jewish priests was the basis of the present Samaritan Pentateuch, which differs but little from that of the Jews, but is not of equal authority. They have no other (p. 187) books of the Old Testament canon. When the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity, and were engaged in building the temple at Jerusalem, the Samaritans offered to assist them; but their offer was promptly rejected by the Jews, who could not acknowledge their claim to be considered a part of the holy people. From this source sprung the enmity existing between the Samaritans and Jews. Alexander the Great gave Sanballat, a Persian satrap, permission to build a temple on Mount Gerizim, for the Samaritans. Sanballat appointed his son-in-law, Manasseh, brother of Jaddus,—high-priest of the Jews,—priest.

Josephus tells us that when the Jews were in prosperity, the Samaritans claimed relationship with the Jews; but when the Jews were in adversity, they denied any affinity with them.

In the apocryphal Book of Jesus Sirach, written most probably in the first half of the third century B.C., the writer says: "There are two nations with which my soul is vexed; and the third is no nation at all: those who dwell in the mountain of Samaria, the Philistines, and the

foolish people dwelling in Shechem" (Samaritans).<sup>f</sup> In the time of our Saviour, the enmity between the Jews and Samaritans still continued. Of this we have several indications in the New Testament. "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?" was the language of the Jews to Christ; "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." (John iv. 9.)

The modern town Nablus is the ancient Shechem. Shechem is first mentioned in the time of Abraham (p. 188) (Gen. xii. 6). When the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, Shechem was appointed one of the cities of refuge. Here Joshua assembled the tribes of Israel (Josh. xxiv. 1); and here, in the time of the judges, Abimelech was made king. Shechem was captured, and the temple on Gerizim was destroyed by John Hyrcanus, B.C. 129.\* The town is called Sychem by Stephen. (Acts vii. 16.) In one place Josephus calls the town Neapolis.<sup>f</sup> Justin Martyr (A.D. 139), in his first "Apology," says of himself: "Of Flavia Neapolis in Palestine, in Syria." This name, given the town by the Romans soon after the time of Christ, has come down to the present time in the abbreviated, or, rather, corrupted form, Nabulus, or Nablus.

Nablus is built on the south side of the valley at the foot of Gerizim. The houses of the town are generally high, and the streets narrow. The city has an abundance of good water. It is surrounded by a wall. The number of its inhabitants is estimated at sixteen thousand. The great business of the town is the manufacture of soap, an article much needed in the East. West of the town we noticed a large mound of ashes.

At Nablus we met two gentlemen—an Austrian and a Prussian, accompanied by a dragoman—who were going to take the same route as ourselves. We made arrangements to leave Nablus on Tuesday morning, the nth of January. Rev. El-Karey bargained with the donkey-driver that brought me from Jerusalem, to conduct me to Nazareth, Tiberias, and Caipha: we were to reach Caipha on Saturday afternoon. He agreed (p. 189) to give the donkey-driver about fourteen dollars for his services and for the donkey and horse. The donkey-driver furnished his own provisions and provender for the animals. This provender was nothing but straw, cut or broken into small pieces, which the animal ate out of the sack. In various places of the Old Testament, mention is made of straw [*teben*, broken straw] and provender for camels and asses: "One of them opened his sack, to give his ass provender, in the inn." (Gen. xlii. 27.) "There is both straw and provender for our asses." (Jud. xix. 19.)

We left Nablus at half-past eight A.M.; the Austrian, the Prussian, the dragoman, and myself. The donkey-drivers, with the baggage, were to go direct to Jenin. We took a road leading through the west end of Nablus for the ruins of Samaria. The day was rainy. ....

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

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