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**THE LATE DR. CHARLES BEKE'S
DISCOVERIES OF
SINAI IN ARABIA
AND OF MIDIAN**

WITH PORTRAIT GEOLOGICAL, BOTANICAL, AND CONCHOLOGICAL REPORTS, PLANS, MAP., AND
THIRTEEN WOOD ENGRAVINGS

EDITED BY HIS WIDOW
LONDON, TRUBNER & CO. LUDGATE HILL 1878

(Page 168).....Dec. 24...(Editor of TSU adds 1873 in Cairo)....

On my way to Messrs, Oppenheim, I called on (page 169) our friend Mr. Rogers, who lives next door but one to Shephard's Hotel. He returned home last night from his trip up the Nile, and was gone out riding; so I left my card. But here a most curious thing occurred. The person to whom I spoke in the courtyard of the Consulate, was a large, portly, well-dressed native, a Syrian, whom I took for the Consul's dragoman, or something of the sort.

He asked me if I knew the Consul, how long I had been here, where I had made Mr. Rogers's acquaintance, &c., speaking in very good English; and then on my telling him, as if recognizing me, he asked who was my dragoman? On my mentioning *Mikhail Hene's* name, he asked whether I had ever been at Shechem (Nablus), and to the Samaritan synagogue; to which I replied, Yes, I had, and that I had to remember it, for that I had tumbled down the steps; whereupon he exclaimed, "Give me your hand, sir: you are the gentleman to whom I gave some brandy after your fall." I learned afterwards from Mr. Rogers that he is Yakub esh Shellaby (يبلش بوق عي), the head of the Samaritan community, who is come here on a visit to him! Of course we had a long chat together, and on my telling him I was going in (page 170) search of the true Mount Sinai, he said he would go with me; to which, of course, I replied, Inshallah! But, seriously speaking, he would not make a bad dragoman. Rogers tells me he is highly respectable man. It would be a curious thing if, supported by the Jews, and accompanied by the chief of the Samaritans, I went to correct the error of the Christian tradition respecting the position of the Mountain of the Law. I really should be very glad for this Yakub esh Shellaby to go with us. You know there are only a few Samaritans remaining, and their history is most remarkable.¹ Their version of the Pentateuch- it is not a

¹ The following interesting description of the Samaritans of Nablus is given by Mrs. Isabel Burton in her "Inner Life of Syria" (published in 1876):- "In the afternoon we rode up to Mount Gerizim, by far the most interesting. It is a difficult ascent of an hour and a half. On the top are the ruins of a Christian church, and a temple, marked by a little 'wely,' as English travelers say, and an immense *debris*. The mountain is entirely covered with stones. Here are encamped at the top all the Samaritans now existing on the face of the earth. They number 135, and are governed by their Chief and High Priest, Ya'akub Shalabi."

[Miss M.E. Rogers writing to me upon this subject says: "Mrs Burton calls Yakub the Chief and 'High Priest' of the Samaritans. He is certainly the *Chief* or Sheikh of his people. Jacob *Cohen* is the Priest, but as he is a younger man than Yakub esh Shellaby; he looks up to him and is guided by him."]

"Here live, entirely apart from the rest of the world, eighty males and fifty females, including children, and here they celebrate their Passover on the 3rd of May. We were invited, and wished for an excuse to remain, but if I felt well before the 3rd of May we were bound to proceed.

"They showed us a small Square with stone walls, where they celebrate their Passover exactly as the Old Testament dictates (cont. on page 171) (Exod. Xii. 1-13). From here there is a beautiful view of the Sea, and Moab, and the Plain;

version, but a *text*- (page 171) is generally believed to be more correct than that of the Jews. Both are in Hebrew, the Samaritan being in the older character. As long ago as 1836 I published in the 'British Magazine' my opinion in favour of the former, which is nearly, if not quite, the text from which the Septuagint Greek version was made.

After leaving Oppenheim's I took....

(Conti on p 185)... There were present only the artist, Carl Haag, who has been up the Nile with Rogers, a Madame Buchner, and Yakub esh Shellaby.

(conti on page 189)... When I came back to the hotel, I saw a dragoman recommended by Yakub, and afterwards Cook's (the tourist's) manager, Alexander Howard, a Syrian.....

(conti on page 198)Yonis Ibrahim, a dragoman, recommended to me by Yakub esh Shellaby, has been with me to-day to let me know his terms. He has the modesty to talk of £ 8 per day, for one month, that is £ 248.....

(cont. page 223)

(conti on page 229)Abu Nabut had told Yakub that three mountains were to be seen from the plain of Arabah near Akaba, of which the Djebel-en-Nur is one, and that.....

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Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

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also of Jacob's Well and Joseph's Tomb beneath. The Samaritans were very hospitable. I noticed that they did not like my dog to go near them; and suspecting that it rendered them 'unclean,' according to their faith, I tied him up. "I will describe the Samaritan women's dress, and I will take for a model the wife of Ya'akub Shalabi" [who is now in England, and who writes to me to say how charmed he is with Mrs. Burton's graphic description of his wife's costume, and adds that her name is 'Shemseh,' i.e., sunny], "who was more richly dressed than the others. She wore large leather shoes, cotton trousers gathered in at the ankle, red-striped silk petticoat to the knee, a jacket or bodice over it. She had on five jackets of different colours, open at the bosom, and each was so arranged as to let the border of its neighbour be seen. A girdle was around her waist, a necklace of chains clasped her throat, and another of large gold coins hung round her neck. Her hair was not shaved or tucked under like our Jewesses, but dressed in a thousand little plaits down her back, a thousand worsted plaits to imitate hair covered her own hair, and hung down her back below the waist, and were fastened off with and covered (cont. page 172) with spangles and coins of value. Upon her head she wore a cost of mail of gold, and literally covered with gold coins, of which a very large one dangled on her forehead. She wore diamond and enamel earrings, and a string of pearls coquettishly arranged on one side of her head in a festoon. A yellow handkerchief covered her head, but hung down loose upon her shoulders. Her eyebrows were plunked out, and in a straight line in their place patterns were thickly marked in ink. I thought wrongly that they were in Hebrew characters, but they presented that appearance. A silver charm, like a jewel *etui*, and a little silver book containing a charm, she wore upon her heart. I forgot to add a third chain of gold around her neck, and that all the head ornaments were surmounted by a large crescent studded with jewels.... We then went to Ya'skub Shablabi's house in the town. He took us to their present synagogue, a miserable small groined room, hung with a few indifferent lamps. A recess was hidden by a long white counterpane, which had a Hebrew inscription worked upon it in gold, hiding another curtain 350 years old, also inscribed. He then sent out of the room a few Samaritans, and showed us a cupboard containing several old MSS., kept in gold and silver cases, ancient Jewish law, written on vellum, and said to be 3374 years old. This venerable Pentateuch dates 1500 B.C., to Abishua, son of Phineas, son of Eliezar, son of Aaron (Ezra vii. 5)."