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Days in Galilee and Scenes in Judaea:
together with some account of a
Solitary Cycling Journey in Southern Palestine
By Rev. **Alexander Alfred Boddy**
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(p. 124)

With Selim el Gomri I walked in the bazaars of this, one of the oldest cities in the world. I noticed again the unfriendly looks of many of the more fanatical of the people.

In the Samaritan quarter of Nablus, between Ebal and Gerizim, there are some forty families of "Samaritans." In walks through Nablus I came to this quarter, and soon met one of their priests in his scarlet turban. Passing along dark roadways, arched over by the houses above, we found the house of the High Priest, who received us courteously in an upper chamber, where we sat or reclined on carpets and conversed together.

Yakoub (Jacob) Aaron, the present High Priest of the Samaritans, is a fine looking man, perhaps over fifty years of age, with Semitic features, and with considerable self-possession. After an interchange of civilities we entered upon an interesting conversation, of which I can give some fragments.

"What is the hope of the Samaritans?" I asked the High Priest. (p. 125)

"We believe that Messiah will appear on Mount Gerizim, and then all religions will join us, and all will be one."

"We are the true Israel. We accept the first five books of Moses, the true Torah, and receive no traditions of men. We sacrifice the Passover every year on Mount



JACOB AARON, THE HIGH PRIEST OF THE SAMARITANS.
From a photo given by him to the Author. The ancient roll of the Law and its covers.

Gerizim, where the Tabernacle is buried, and where Abraham offered Isaac."¹ (?)
The High Priest took me into the small synagogue of the Samaritans and showed me two old rolls of the Torah, or Law, which he brought from behind the veil (p. 126) of yellow silk which hangs in front of the "Mizbah.' One, which he said was twelve centuries old, is kept in a brass cover on which is engraved a plan of the Tabernacle.

Then as a greater privilege, not often accorded, he brought out a second roll, not generally shown, which he assured me dated from the days of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron. This is only shown, even, to his own people, once a year—on the Day of Atonement. I owed my good fortune to the presence of Selim el Gomri.

I have among my cards this one which Jacob Aaron gave me with his photograph:
JACOB AARON,
SAMARITAN HIGH PRIEST.
NABLUS.

I catechised a number of their children in our Missionary school, which they gladly attend, and I found them familiar with the New Testament, and perhaps especially with the story of the Good Samaritan.

The Samaritans are a dwindling race. They only intermarry among themselves, and do not exceed now (p. 127) some forty families. At the time of our Lord's visit they would number many thousands.

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

These references are not listed 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

¹ Dean Stanley in his "Jewish Church" inclines, it will be remembered, to this view, as to Gerizim being the place of Isaac's offering.