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EDITED BY JOHN KITTO, D.D. F.S.A.

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EDINBURGH : W. OLIPHANT & SONS. DUBLIN: SAMUEL B. OLDHAM.
1853.

(p. 515)

'The accounts of the virtue and piety of these people are by no means exaggerated. I have no doubt they are the most religious and virtuous community in the world; and during the month I have been here, I have seen nothing approaching a quarrel, but perfect peace and good will amongst all.'—*Rev. Mr. Holman.*

Mr. Bayard Taylor, in one of his letters addressed to the 'New York Tribune,' gives the following account of the oldest Hebrew manuscript in the world:— 'Nablous is noted for the existence of a small remnant of the ancient Samaritans. The stock has gradually dwindled away, and amounts to only 40 families, containing little more than 150 individuals. They live in a particular quarter of the city, and are easily distinguished from the other inhabitants in the cast of their features. They have long but not prominent noses, like the Jews; small, oblong eyes, narrow lips, and fair complexions, most of them having brown hair. They appear to be held in considerable obloquy by the Moslems. Our attendant, who was of the low class of Arabs, took the boys we met very unceremoniously by the head, calling out, "Here is another Samaritan." He then conducted us to their synagogue to see the celebrated Pentateuch which is there preserved. We were taken to a small open court, shaded by an apricot-tree, where the priest, an old man in a green robe and white turban, was seated in meditation. He had a long gray beard and black eyes that lighted up with a sudden expression of eager greed when we promised him backshish for a sight of the sacred book. He rose and took us into a sort of chapel, followed by a number of Samaritan boys. Kneeling down at a niche in

the wall, he produced from behind a wooden case a piece of ragged parchment written with Hebrew characters. But the guide was familiar with this deception, and rated him so soundly that, after a little hesitation, he laid the fragment away, and produced a large tin cylinder covered with a piece of green satin embroidered in gold. The boys stooped down and reverently kissed the blazoned cover before it was removed. The cylinder, sliding open by two rows of hinges, opened at the same time the parchment scroll, which was rolled at both ends. It was indeed a very ancient MS., and in remarkable preservation: the rents have been carefully repaired, and the scroll neatly attached to another piece of parchment, covered on the outside with violet satin. The priest informed me that it was written by the son of Aaron; but this does not coincide with the fact that the Samaritan Pentateuch is different from that of the Jew⁶. It is, however, no doubt one of the oldest parchment records in the world, and the Samaritans look upon it with unbounded faith and reverence. The Pentateuch, according to their version, contains their only form of religion: they reject everything else which the Old Testament contains. Three or four days ago was their grand feast of Sacrifice, when they made a burnt-offering of a lamb on the top of Mount Gerizim. Within a short time, it is said, they have shewn some curiosity to become acquainted with the New Testament, and the high priest sent to Jerusalem to procure Arabic copies.'

The Rev. Dr. Robinson has returned from his recent visit to Syria and the East, and has resumed his duties as Professor in the Union Theological Seminary, New York. He remained only a few days in England. He has explored various parts of the Holy Land hitherto little known, and has obtained valuable materials for the new edition of his 'Geography of [Biblical Researches in] Palestine,' which he is about to publish.—*Literary Gazette*, Oct. 16.

Dr. Robinson was accompanied in his late travels by his old friend the Rev. Dr. Smith; and it is the purpose of Dr. Robinson to compress his 'Researches' into two volumes, and add a *third* of new matter.—*New York Literary World*, Nov. 20.

Note from this Editor of the SamaritanUpdate.com

This book is referenced # *has not been mentioned* 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