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**THE
MODERN TRAVELLER.
A
POPULAR DESCRIPTION,
GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, AND TOPOGRAPHICAL
OF THE
VARIOUS COUNTRIES OF THE GLOBE
PALESTINE;
OR,
THE HOLY LAND.**

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(p. 245) Having procured a *Christian* boy for a guide, Mr. Buckingham left Nablous by the eastern gate, and after passing along the valley for about a quarter of an hour, he arrived at the spot where the pass opens into a more extensive vale, the mountains on the other side of the Jordan being in sight on the left. Here he had on each side grottoes and tombs, which we shall presently notice; and from hence, in another quarter of an hour, he reached the Well of Samaria.¹ "It stands," he says, "at the commencement of the round vale which is thought to be the parcel of ground bought by Jacob, and which, like the narrow valley west of Nablous, is rich and fertile. The mouth of the well itself had an arched or vaulted building over it; and the only passage down to it at this moment is by a small hole in the roof, scarcely large enough for a moderate-sized person to work himself through." Taking off his large Turkish clothes, our traveller descended with a lighted taper, but even then did not get down without bruising himself against the sides. "Nor was I," he says, "at all rewarded for such an inconvenience by the sight below. Landing on a heap of dirt and rubbish, we saw a large, flat, oblong stone, which lay almost on its edge across the mouth of the well, and left barely space enough to see that there was an opening below. We could not ascertain its diameter, but, by the time of a stone's descent, it was (p. 246) evident that it was of considerable depth, as well as that it was perfectly dry at this season (Feb.), the fall of the stone giving forth a dead and hard sound."² Maundrell removed the "broad flat stone" which lay on the mouth, and examined the well more minutely. "It is," he says, "dug in a firm rock, and contains about three yards in diameter and thirty-five in depth; *five of which we found full of water.*" This was the latter

¹ Maundrell makes "Jacob's Well" "about one third of an hour from Naplosa."

² Buckingham's Travels, 8vo. vol. ii. p. 460.

end of March. "This confutes a story," he adds, "commonly told to travellers, who do not take the pains to examine the well, viz. that it is dry all the year round, except on the anniversary of that day on which our blessed Saviour sat upon it, but then bubbles up with abundance of water." One would imagine, that the "old stone vault" built over the spot was designed to protect the legend, rather than the well, by concealing it from examination. If this were really the well to which the inhabitants of Sychar were accustomed to resort, it would be difficult to account for its having been thus abandoned.

Nablous (as it is pronounced by the Turks and Arabs, or Naplosa, as the Christians who speak Italian call it—a corruption of Neapolis, or New Town) is one of the few places in the Holy Land, the ancient name of which appears to be superseded by that which it has received from its foreign conquerors. Its position identifies the site, beyond all question, with the Shechem of the Old Testament³ and the Sychar (or Sichem, as Jerome contends it should be) of the New, the ancient capital of Samaria. Josephus Says, that the natives called it Mabarta, but by others it was commonly called Neapolis.⁴ Few places (p.247) exceed it in the romantic beauty of its position. It is situated in the narrow valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, having the former on the north, and the latter on the south; but it is correctly described by Maundrell as lying under Mount Gerizim, being built at the acclivity on the southern side of the valley. It was from Mount Gerizim that God commanded the blessings to be pronounced upon the children of Israel, and from Mount Ebal the curses, respectively annexed to obedience and disobedience, on their entering the promised land by way of Jericho and Ai : half of the tribes were to be encamped over against the one hill, and half over against the other.⁵ The modern town consists of two long streets, running through the centre of the valley, and intersected by several smaller ones, mostly crossing them at right angles. At the present time it is populous and nourishing, and the environs bear the marks of opulence and industry, being adorned with small gardens that skirt the banks of the stream by which the valley is watered. "We passed," says Dr. Richardson, "its scarcely moistened bed, and a little above the town saw an ancient bridge with twelve arches, which were still capable of maintaining the communication between the two sides of the valley." Dr. Clarke, in approaching it from Jennin, was struck with its nourishing appearance. "There is nothing in the Holy Land finer," he affirms, "than the view of Napolose from the heights around it. As the traveller descends towards it from the hills, it appears luxuriantly embosomed in the most delightful and fragrant bowers, half concealed by rich gardens, and by stately trees collected into groves all around the bold and (p. 248) beautiful valley in which it stands." "Within the town are six mosques, five baths, one Christian church of schismatic Greeks, an excellent covered bazar for fine goods, and an open one for provisions, besides numerous cotton-cloth manufactories, and shops of every description."⁶ Dr. Clarke says, the principal trade is. in soap; but the manufactures of the town supply a very widely extended neighbourhood. The water-melons too of Nablous are equal, he says, to those of Jaffa. The resident population is supposed to amount to 10,000, though Mr. Buckingham thinks this is rather over-rating the numbers. These are almost all Mahomedans, the Greek Christians scarcely amounting, he says, to fifty. But Mr.

³ Gen. xxxiiil. 18; xxxvii. 13. Josh. xxiv. 32. Judges ix,

⁴ Joseph. Wars, book iv. chap. 8; book v. chap. 4.

⁵ Deut. xi. 29; xxvii. 12, 13. Josh. Viii, 33.

⁶ Buckingham's Travels, vol. ii. p. 433.

Connor states that there are about a hundred. They have one church and two priests. Though the commerce is so considerable, there are few Jews,-owing perhaps to a religious prejudice against the place; Mr. Buckingham says, none among the permanent residents,—Mr. Connor says, "about fifteen individuals." Of the Samaritans, of whom a respectable remnant existed here so late as the time of Maundrell's journey, about a century ago,⁷ the reverend gentleman last mentioned gives the following interesting account. "I immediately made inquiry about the Samaritans. My host stepped out, and fetched their priest: he sat with me some time: his name is Shalmor ben Tabiah: he is a native of Napolose, and is about forty years of age.

(p. 249) "There are about forty Samaritans in Napolose. They have but one synagogue in the town, where they have service every Saturday. Four times a-year they go, in solemn procession, to the old synagogue on Mount Gerizim; and, on these occasions, they go up before sunrise, and read the law till noon. On one of these days they kill six or seven rams. The Samaritans have one school in Napolose, where their language is taught. The head of the sect resides in Paris.

"I accompanied the priest to his house, and sat a long time with him. There were several Jews present: they seem to live on friendly terms with the Samaritans here. The priest shewed me part of the first volume of the English Polyglott, mentioned by Maundrell: it consisted of about a dozen tattered leaves. He shewed me also a manuscript Samaritan Pentateuch, with an Arabic version at *it** side; this version, however, is not used in their synagogue. He afterward took me to see the synagogue, making me first take off my shoes: it is a small gloomy building. I observed a number of copies of the Samaritan Pentateuch, carefully enveloped in linen, and laid on a shelf in the synagogue. Expressing a wish to see the ancient manuscript, said by the Samaritans to be 3500 years old, the priest paused, and hesitated some time. I pressed him. Having laid aside his upper garments, he at length entered the sanctuary, and produced the venerated manuscript. It is well written on vellum, in the Samaritan character, and is preserved in a tin roller: it bears the marks of age, and is rather tattered. The priest would not permit me, nor any one present, to touch it. He was very inquisitive about the Samaritans who, he had heard, were in England."

(p. 250) The accounts which we have of the ancient Samaritans, (or Cuthaeans, as they are called by the Jewish writers, from the founder of the sect, Sanballad, a Cuthite,) have come to us chiefly through their inveterate enemies the Jews; whose contempt and hatred were apparently excited by their being a mixed race, of doubtful genealogy, and schismatical in their creed. In rejecting the whole of the Old Testament excepting the Pentateuch, they were countenanced by the Sadducees. Our Lord, however, declares, that they worshipped they knew not what;⁸ which seems to imply that, although they cherished, in common with the Jews, the expectation of a Messiah, their worship had still an idolatrous tincture: they "feared the Lord," but, if they did not still "serve graven images," like their ancestors,⁹ they did not worship God as a Spirit. Notwithstanding their enmity against the Jews, they joined in revolt against the Romans, and shared in the

⁷ In the Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin, Nablous is stated to contain above 100 Cutheans, or Samaritans. He mentions Cesarea as another place where there still remained a remnant (about 200) of this people. There are said to be still some descendants of the Samaritans at Gaza, Damascus, and Grand Cairo.

⁸ John iv. 22.

⁹ 2 Kings xvii. 41.

calamities of the guilty nation. After the fall of Jotapata and Jaffa, eleven thousand six hundred of them are stated to have posted themselves on Mount Gerizim; as if, like the Jews of Jerusalem, trusting to the protection of their temple, or resolved to perish on the sacred spot. The Roman general Cerealis, with 600 horsemen and 300 footmen, blockaded them here; and after inviting them to surrender, which they obstinately refused, put the greater part to the sword. Five centuries after the Christian era, the Samaritans, who still remained a distinct though motley race, had so increased in strength, that they rose in arms, under the standard of a desperate leader, to protect themselves against the persecution of the Emperor Justinian. They were, says Gibbon, "an ambiguous sect, rejected as Jews by the Pagans, (p. 251) by the Jews as schismatics, and by the Christians as idolaters. One hundred thousand, it has been computed, perished or were sold as captives in the Samaritan war, which converted the once fertile province into a wilderness."¹⁰ A remnant, however, have always rallied on this consecrated spot, under the shadow of Mount Gerizim. In 1676, a correspondence took place between their chief-priest at Nablous and the learned Scaliger, on the differences between the Samaritan and Hebrew Pentateuchs, in the course of which information was elicited respecting the opinions then held by this ancient sect. The summary of their creed was to this effect: That they believe in God, and in the laws of his servant Moses; they practise circumcision; keep the sabbath with all the rigour of a penance; observe the Passover, the Pentecost, the feast of tabernacles, and the great fast of expiation most strictly; and never offer any sacrifice but on Mount Gerizim. The head of their religion must reside at Shechem. In 1697, Mr. Maundrell had a personal conference with the Samaritan chief-priest, on the subject of a singular discrepancy between the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch and the received Hebrew text. The passage in question occurs Deut. xxvii. 4: "Therefore it shall be, when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day" (inscribed with the words of the law) "in *Mount Ebal*; and thou shalt plaster them with plaster; and there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God."¹¹ The Samaritan (p. 252) Pentateuch has *Mount Gerizim* in this place; and the chief-priest contended that the Jews had maliciously altered the Hebrew text out of odium to the Samaritans; "putting, for Gerizim, Ebal, upon no other account, but only because the Samaritans worshipped in the former mountain, which they would have for that reason not to be the true place appointed by God for his worship and sacrifice. To confirm this, he pleaded that Ebal was the mountain of cursing, Deut. xi. 29, and in its own nature an unpleasant place; but, on the contrary, Gerizim was the mountain of blessing, by God's own appointment, and also in itself fertile and delightful; from whence he inferred a probability that this latter must have been the true mountain appointed for those religious festivals, Deut. xxvii. 4, and not (as the Jews have corruptly written it) Hebal. We observed that to be in some measure true which he pleaded concerning the nature of both mountains; for, though neither of the mountains has much to boast of as to their pleasantness, yet, as one passes between them, Gerizim seems to discover a somewhat more verdant, fruitful aspect than Ebal. The reason of which may be, because fronting towards the north, it is sheltered from the heat of the sun by its own shade; whereas Ebal, looking southward, and receiving the sun that comes directly upon it, must,

¹⁰ Gibbon, vol. vi. chap. 47

¹¹ In agreement with this, Joshua is recorded to have subsequently built the altar in *Mount Ebal*. Josh. viii. 30. The alleged corruption of the text must, therefore, have been made in both places.

by consequence, be rendered more scorched and unfruitful. The Samaritan priest could not say that any of those great stones which God directed Joshua to set up, were now to be seen in Mount Gerizim; which were they now extant, would determine the question clearly on his side."

Both Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal deserve to be explored. Their altitude appeared to Mr. Buckingham to be nearly equal, not exceeding 7 or 800 feet (p. 253) from the level of the valley, which is itself elevated. Captains Irby and Mangles are the only modern travellers who appear to have ascended either. They say: "We went to the summit of Mount Gerizim, and found the ruins of a large town, with a tank near a conspicuous sheikh's tomb." They do not appear, however, to have bestowed much attention on these ruins, among which some traces of their boasted temple must, one would imagine, be still discernible; nor do they notice any synagogue there. Mount Ebal they did not ascend.¹² In the Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, the Cutheans are stated to offer sacrifice on Mount Gerizim, on an altar constructed of stones brought from the Jordan by the children of Israel. He describes this mountain as full of fountains and gardens, and Ghebal (Ebal) as arid and rocky. As a topographical authority, the Itinerary is unquestionable. With regard to the point at issue, it may be thought only to state the matter agreeably to the Samaritan tradition. There is certainly much plausibility in the arguments in favour of the Samaritan text; which, in many other instances of variation from the received text, is admitted by Biblical critics to preserve the genuine reading. It is very probable, that a further collation of Hebrew MSS. will throw some light on the question.

The town is governed by a Mutsellim, or Beg, subject to the Pasha of Damascus, and having under his command about 400 Arnaout soldiers. The prevailing costume is the Turkish dress: the women wear a coloured veil, concealing the whole face, as (p. 254) in the towns of the Yemen; the scarf thrown over the head and shoulders is of a yellowish white, with a deep red border. Nablous is in long. 35° 22' E. lat. 32° 16' N.; and is thirty-four miles N. of Jerusalem.

The only object of antiquity noticed by travellers within the town, is the eastern front of a ruined church, the site of which is now occupied by one of the mosques. It presents a fine pointed arch, supported by Corinthian columns, the upper part highly ornamented, in the style of some of the Saracen doors in Cairo: within are seen plain granite pillars; and the whole exhibits, Mr. Buckingham tells us, a singular mixture of orders, in the most grotesque taste.

Just without the city, towards Jerusalem, is a small mosque, said to have been built over the sepulchre purchased by the patriarch Jacob, and bearing the name of Joseph's Sepulchre: it is at the foot of Mount Gerizim. Mr. Buckingham, noticing the Mahoinmedan buildings here, "either mosques or tombs," says, they are now called *Mahmoodea*. "On the left," he adds, "at the foot of Mount Ebal, were several well-hewn grottoes in the rock, some with arched, and others with square doors, most probably ancient sepulchres." They were called *Khallat Rowghban*, which he interprets to mean, the *retreats of hermits*; *khallat* meaning properly a castle, and *rowghban* being a name given in Syria to monks. These he had no time to examine, although the most interesting antiquities of the place. That these caves may have been used as places of retreat or ascetic seclusion, is very probable; but there is no room to doubt their sepulchral

¹² Dr. Richardson says: "On Mount Ebal we saw a considerable village, and a large building like a ruined fort." But he did not ascend its summit.

character. They may, or may not, be of remote antiquity; but of this description, (p. 255) and not far distant, must have been the burial-place of Joseph, whose bones were brought up out of Egypt to be laid in Shechem. To the practice of burying in the sides of mountains, we have repeated references in the Old Testament. Abraham was buried in the Cave of Machpelah before Mamre; Joshua, on the north side of the Hill of Gaash in Ephraim ;¹³ Eleazar, the son of Aaron, in a hill within the same district; and Aaron himself in Mount Hor.¹⁴ The "parcel of ground" given by Jacob to his son, is generally supposed to be the "wide field," as Maundrell terms it, into which the Valley of Sichem opens at the Well of Samaria; and which he describes as "exceeding verdant and fruitful," being watered with a fresh stream, rising between it and the town. The precise limits of this purchase it would be ridiculous to attempt to ascertain. All that we know is, that it was near Sichar, "before," or eastward of the city; that it contained a well—a possession of the greatest importance in those parts; and, like "the field of Ephron" purchased by Abraham,¹⁵ a burying-place. A place of burial seems to have given a sacredness to the property in which it was situated, and to have rendered the inheritance inalienable; it established a right of proprietorship, and, connected with this, what we should call *a right of common* to the neighbouring pastures.¹⁶ Thus, we find the sons of Jacob leaving their father's residence in Hebron, to feed his flocks in Shechem,¹⁷ by virtue of this right, long after he had been compelled to remove from the neighbourhood. The burial-place was, no doubt, (as that of (p. 256) Abraham and that of Joshua were,) at the "end of the field," on the "border of the inheritance," which must have been Mount Gerizim itself; and, if the mosque should prove to conceal the entrance to a lateral excavation or grotto, of the kind universally chosen for sepulchres of distinguished persons by the ancient Jews, it may possibly mark the identical place "in Shechem where the bones of Joseph were laid."

Next to Jerusalem itself, this, is, perhaps, the most interesting spot in the Holy-Land, as connected with those events transacted in the fields of Sichem, which, from our earliest years, are remembered with delight. "Along the valley," says Dr. Clarke, "we beheld a company of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, as in the days of Reuben and Judah, 'with their camels, bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh,'¹⁸ who would gladly have purchased another Joseph of his brethren, and conveyed him, as a slave, to some Potiphar in Egypt. Upon the hills around, flocks and herds were feeding as of old; nor, in the simple garb of the shepherds of Samaria, was there any thing to contradict the notions we may entertain of the appearance formerly exhibited by the sons of Jacob." "The morning after our arrival, we met caravans coming from Grand Cairo, and noticed others reposing in the large olive-plantations near the gates."

Leaving Nablous, the road lies along the narrow vale, and, in about three quarters of an hour, conducts the traveller to a copious spring of good water, called Beer-sheba. This, Dr. Richardson says, is the broadest and best cultivated part of the valley; he saw the natives busily engaged (May) in reaping a (p. 257) scanty crop of barley. Maundrell notices a village on the left of the road (going northwards) called *Barseba*, deriving its

¹³ Gen. xxv. 9. Josh. xxiv. 22, 29.

¹⁴ Num. xx. 28. Djeut. x. 6.

¹⁵ Gen. xxiii. 17.

¹⁶ Gen. xxxiv. 5.

¹⁷ Gen. xxxvii. 12—14.

¹⁸ Gen. xxxvii. 25.

name, no doubt, from this well; and, half an hour further, another village which he calls *Sherack*. After leaving Beer-sheba, Dr. Richardson's account makes the road ascend. "In about a quarter of an hour," he says, "we reached the top of the hill; and as we wound our way down the other side, had an excellent view of the delightfully situated Sebaste. In a few minutes we passed a ruined aqueduct of Roman architecture, and pitched our tents at the bottom of the hill, nearly opposite to its unworthy successor, a poor village of the same name; having travelled this day about nine hours." This makes the distance from Khan Leban about twenty-seven miles, but, allowing for deviations from the direct track, twenty-four miles, and sixteen hours, or forty-eight miles, from Jerusalem. Josephus, however, makes it but one day's journey from the capital.¹⁹ It is six miles beyond Napolose; and if the distance of the latter place is correctly given by our authorities, it cannot exceed forty miles.

Sebaste is the name which Herod gave to the ancient Samaria, the imperial city of the ten tribes, in honour of Augustus (*Sebastos*) Caesar, when he rebuilt and fortified it, converting the greater part of it into a citadel, and erecting here a noble temple.²⁰ "The situation," says Dr. Richardson, "is extremely beautiful,²¹ and strong by nature; more so, I think, than Jerusalem. It stands on a fine, large, insulated (p. 258) hill, compassed all around by a broad deep valley; and when fortified, as it is stated to have been by Herod, one would have imagined that, in the ancient system of warfare, nothing but famine could have reduced such a place. The valley is surrounded by four hills, one on each side, which are cultivated in terraces up to the top, sown with grain, and planted with fig and olive trees, as is also the valley. The hill of Samaria likewise rises in terraces to a height equal to any of the adjoining mountains.

"The present village is small and poor, and after passing the valley, the ascent to it is very steep. Viewed from the station of our tents, it is extremely interesting, both from its natural situation, and from the picturesque remains of a ruined convent, of good Gothic architecture.

"Having passed the village, towards the middle of the first terrace, there is a number of columns still standing. I counted, twelve in one row, besides several that stood apart, the brotherless remains of other rows. The situation is extremely delightful, and my guide informed me, that they belonged to the serai, or palace. On the next terrace there are no remains of solid building, but heaps of stone and lime and rubbish mixed with the soil in great profusion. Ascending to the third or highest terrace, the traces of former building were not so numerous, but we enjoyed a delightful view of the surrounding country. The eye passed over the deep valley that encompasses the hill of Sebaste, and rested on the mountains beyond, that retreated as they rose with a gentle slope, and met the view in every direction, like a book laid out for perusal on a reading-desk. This was the seat of the capital of the short-lived and wicked kingdom of Israel; and on the face of these (p. 259) mountains the eye surveys the scene of many woody conflicts and many memorable events. Here those holy men of God, Elijah and Elisha, spoke their tremendous warnings in the ears of their incorrigible rulers, and wrought their miracles in the sight of all the people.

¹⁹ Joseph. *Antiq.* book xv. chap. 9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ "It is situated upon a long mount, of an oval figure; having first a fruitful valley, and then a ring of hills running round about it. This great city is now wholly converted into gardens."—MAUNDRELL.

"From this lofty eminence we descended to the south side of the hill, where we saw the remains of a stately colonnade that stretches along this beautiful exposure from east to west. Sixty columns are still standing in one row. The shafts are plain, and fragments of Ionic volutes, that lie scattered about, testify the order to which they belonged. These are probably the relics of some of the magnificent structures with which Herod the Great adorned Samaria. None of the walls remain."

Mr. Buckingham mentions a current tradition, that the avenue of columns formed a part of Herod's palace. According to his account, there were eighty-three of these columns erect in 1816, besides others prostrate; all without capitals. Josephus states, that, about the middle of the city, Herod built "a sacred place, of a furlong and a half in circuit, and adorned it with all sorts of decorations; and therein erected a temple, illustrious for both its largeness and beauty." It is probable that these columns belonged to it. On the eastern side of the same summit are the remains, Mr. Buckingham states, of another building, "of which eight large and eight small columns are still standing, with many others fallen near them. These also are without capitals, and are of a smaller size and of an inferior stone to the others."²² "In the walls (p. 260) of the humble dwellings forming the modern village, portions of sculptured blocks of stone are perceived, and even fragments of granite pillars have been worked into the masonry." The Gothic convent referred to by Dr. Richardson, is the ruined cathedral, attributed, like every thing else of the kind in Palestine, to the Empress Helena. It stands east and west, and is about 100 feet in length, by 50 in breadth. "On the south side are high, slender buttresses; and on a piece of building without this, is a sloping pyramidal mole, constructed of exceedingly large stones. The northern wall is quite plain; the eastern front is semi-circular, with three open and two closed windows, each contained in arches divided from each other by three Corinthian columns. The interior of the eastern front has a pointed arch, and columns of no known order; though the capitals approach nearer to the Corinthian than any other. The eight small arches which go round the tops of the widows within, are semi-circular, and have each at their spring the capital of a column, but no shaft attached to it; the great arch of the recess is pointed, and the moulding that passes round it is fantastic in the extreme. Among other things seen there, are the representations of scaly armour, an owl, an eagle, a human figure, and an angel, all occupying separate compartments, and all distinct from each other.

"The exterior of the eastern front presents a still more singular mixture of style, as the pointed and the round arch are both used in the same range, and the ornaments of each are varied. In the lower cornice (p. 261) are human heads, perhaps in allusion to the severed head of the Baptist; and there are here as fantastic figures as on the inside, the whole presenting a strange assemblage of incongruous ornaments in the most wretched taste.

"The masonry appears in some parts to have been exceedingly solid, in others only moderately good, and in some places weak and paltry; and at the west end, in a piece of building, apparently added since the original construction of the church itself, are seen

²² • Maunurell briefly says: ** All the tokens that remain to testify that there has ever been such a place, are only, on the *north* side, a (cont. p. 260) *large square piazza*, encompassed with pillars; and on the east, some poor remains of a great church, said to have been built by the Empress Helena, over the place where St. John Baptist was both imprisoned and beheaded,"

several blocks of sculptured stone, apparently taken from the ruins, and worked into the present masonry there.

"On the inside of this ruined edifice is a small mosque, erected over the supposed dungeon in which St. John was executed; and an Arab family, who claim the guardianship of this sanctuary, have pitched their dwelling on the south-west angle of the great church, where it has the appearance of a pigeon-house. On learning that I was a Moslem, we were all admitted into this mosque, which we entered with becoming reverence. They have collected here the white marble slabs, found amid the ruins of the church, to form a pavement; and in one part we noticed three large pieces, with sculptured circles and bands on them, which were set up in the wall as tablets.

"The mosque itself is a small oblong room, with steps ascending to an oratory, and its only furniture is a few simple lamps and some clean straw mats for prayer, the recess of the Caaba being in the southern wall. From the mosque, we descended by a narrow flight of steps to the subterranean chamber or dungeon of St. John, which had all the appearance of having been an ancient sepulchre. It was not more (p.262) than ten feet square; and had niches, as if for the reception of corpses, in arched recesses on each side. There was here, too, one of those remarkable stone doors, which seem to have been exclusively appropriated to tombs, resembling exactly in form and size those described in the Roman sepulchres at Oom Kais. The panneling, the lower pivot, and the sill in the ledge for receiving the bolt, were all still perfect; but the door was now unhung, and lay on its side against the wall."

In the court at the west end of the church are "two apertures leading down to a large subterranean reservoir for water, well stuccoed on the inside, and during the rains often filled to the brim."

The modern Sebaste is governed by its own shiekh, who is himself a husbandman: the natives pronounce the name of the place Subusta.

The route taken by Dr. Richardson now passes over the mountain to the east of Sebaste, and then descends to a ruined building called by the natives Beit Emireen (the house of the two princes), near a village of the same name, by a stream of water. "Leaving this valley," he continues, "we crossed the mountain to the left, and after travelling about an hour along a very rough and stony ravine, we came to the village of Gibba, which is surrounded with olive and pomegranate trees, the latter of which were in full blow, and occupies a lofty station to overlook a small valley. From Gibba, we proceeded along the valley to Sannour, which is a fort erected on an insulated mountain that springs up in the middle of the valley. It is commonly called Khallah Giurali, or Fort Jurali, from Giurali, (Jerar ?) the name of the chief who commands the country. A few miles further on, we came to Abata, a pleasant village on our right, and similarly (p. 263) situated to Gibba, among olive and pomegranate trees. The inhabitants are said to be particularly hospitable and kind to strangers. We did not stop to "put their hospitality to the test, but continued our route along the narrow dell, and having crossed another mountain on the left, opened the beautiful vale of Esdraelon, and the town of Jenin, pleasantly situated at the foot of the mountain. We descended to a level piece of stony ground which bore a tolerably good crop of thistles, and pitched our tents on the outside of the town, having travelled this day about eight hours and a half."

Note from this Editor of the SamaritanUpdate.com

The footnote symbols were changed in editing to numbers.

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

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