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UNDERGROUND JERUSALEM.
AN ACCOUNT OF SOME OF
THE PRINCIPAL DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN ITS EXPLORATION AND
THE RESULTS OBTAINED.
WITH A NARRATIVE OF
AN EXPEDITION THROUGH THE JORDAN VALLEY AND A VISIT TO THE
SAMARITANS.
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(p. 206)

CHAPTER X.

SAMARITANS.

"Smokes on Gerizim my sacrifice." *Milton*.

April 16th.—Though miserably ill, I was obliged this day to go through all the ceremonies of visiting in a strange town and make preparations for my visit to the Samaritans now encamped on top of Mount Gerizim, getting ready for the Passover, to which I had been invited by Yacoob esh Shellaby, their spokesman.

I called upon the Protestant schoolmaster, Mr. Felscher: as usual an industrious German working for an English Society, and obtained most valuable information from him. He was not on very good terms with my friend Jacob, and had no opinion of any of the Samaritans except Amram the priest; he spoke much of the difficulties of his position in so fanatical a place, where his congregation were only lukewarm. In fact, the members of his sect were very small in number, so small that they were not allowed a seat on the Mejlis or town council, as were the other Christians, and this seemed to rankle in their minds.

The Moslems in Nablus number about 10,000, (p. 207)
the Christians, Greeks, Latins and Protestants, 500 together, the Jews 200, and the Samaritans 150. Thus the Moslems were more than ten to one of the other sects, and were not slow in exhibiting that bigotry which their superior numbers allowed them to display with impunity. Whether it is the air of the surrounding district, or the blood of the inhabitants, or some other subtle cause, I cannot say, but certain it is that of all fanatical towns in Syria, Nablus stands out conspicuous.

Iems, Christians, Samaritans, all show that turbulent carping spirit so characteristic of old among the dwellers of Mount Ephraim. "Why hast thou served us thus that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites?" may not be the language they now use, but the spirit is the same. Dissatisfied with everything, they are found,

above all other people of Palestine, to give trouble to the Turkish Government, which tries in vain to curb their independent habits, but finds to its cost that they still retain the old spirit of the dwellers in Ephraim.

But it is the Samaritans whose existence in Nablus makes the place so interesting. A few years back this strange people had outposts in Damascus and other cities of Syria : but now persecution, want, or natural causes have made them dwindle in numbers and gather together under their holy mountain at Shechem, where " they have also a different clothing and outward appearance from the people, for they wrap their heads in red linen cloth, as a distinction from the others; and the Saracens wrap their heads in white linen cloth; and the Christian men that dwell (p. 208) in the country wrap theirs in blue of India, and the Jews in yellow cloth." This we find written in the fourteenth century, and it is even so at the present day; red or brown turbans are the distinguishing badges of the Samaritans, except when at prayer.

This account of the colours appertaining to, the several sects may perhaps remind my readers of the twenty-fifth of the 'Thousand and One Nights,' in which the King of the Isles, half marble, half man, continues his miserable story to the Caliph, who had discovered him in his palace, and states that his wife, a sorceress, "by enchantment, abolished the houses, the public places and markets, and reduced it to the ground and desert field you may have seen. The fishes of four colours in the pond are the four sorts of people, of different religions, who inhabited the plain. The white are the Moslem, the red the Persians, who worshipped the fire; the blue the Christians, and the yellow the Jews."

The Samaritans have thus in the 14th century taken the place, as to colour, of the fire-worshipping Persians. But who are these people; can they trace back their history to early times? Benjamin of Tudela, a Jew, visited this interesting colony in the 12th century and thus writes: "It is the abode of about 100 Cutheans, who observe the Mosaic law only, and are called Samaritans. They have priests descended from Aaron of blessed memory, whom they call Aaronim, who offer sacrifices and burnt offerings in their synagogues on Mount Gerizim. They do this in accordance with the words of Scripture: 'Thou shalt put the blessing on Mount (209) Gerizim,' and they pretend that this is the holy temple. On Passover and holidays they offer burnt offerings on the altar which they have erected on Mount Gerizim, from the stones put up by the children of Israel after they had crossed the Jordan. They pretend to be of the tribe of Ephraim."

Going further back to the time of Josephus we again find the same accounts of these people; they were Cutheans from the land of Cuth, sent to replace the tribe of Ephraim transported into Assyria. Owing to their having brought their strange gods with them, they were troubled with wild beasts, and obtained from the King of Assyria captive priests of the Israelites who taught them to worship the living God. They pretended to derive their genealogy from the posterity of Joseph.

Although only mentioning the salient points, we have a direct line of history of these people back to the time when it is related (2 Kings xvii. 24-28) that the King of Assyria brought men from Cuthah instead of the Israelites, and placed them in the cities of Samaria, and gave them a priest of the children of Israel, because of the lions.

"So these nations feared the Lord, and served their own graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day."

It seems clear then that from the earliest times they went through the Jewish ceremonials, but served their own graven images: and even down to the present day there have not been wanting persons who have imputed to them a continuance of this custom. (p. 210) But it is not their inner life that we can study, it is the outward ceremonies which they alone of the descendants of Abraham (if we may so name them) have carried down year by year from the period when they were inaugurated.

The Jews since the destruction of the Temple have celebrated the Passover with mutilated ceremony; but the Samaritans, mindful of the injunction—Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of the gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee; but at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place His name in—have (excepting a lapse of forty years) celebrated on Mount Gerizim, which, as I shall mention, they believe to be the Holy Mount.

Their return to Gerizim after the Moslems had prohibited their worship there for forty years was brought about through the instrumentality of M. Finn the active and energetic English Consul, since deceased, who well upheld British influence in Palestine. This evening we moved our camp to the cooler heights of Gerizim.

April 17th.—I tossed about with fever all last night, and whenever sleep favoured me, dreamed that I had three chronometers tied round my throat whose strings choked me whenever the hands came round to the hour: burning one moment, chilled with cold the next; ear-ache, tooth-ache and face-ache—quite unable to swallow anything, I was in a pitiable state. I got up at dawn and found it very chilly after the Ghor, thermometer down to 45° Fahr. and a thick mist overspreading everything and making our tent quite wet. We were now 3000 feet above the ocean, (p. 211) while in the Ghor we had been 1000 feet below it. The Samaritans were all encamped in a depression on the mountain top, and we close to them. I was getting so seriously ill that I endeavoured to run my penknife into the roof of my mouth and lance the gatherings, but I only made them bleed furiously, and knowing that there is a large vein in the direction I was cutting, I did not like to plunge it too far. I sent in Esau, post haste, to Jerusalem for some caustic, beer, claret, and a bottle of arrack, and to ask instructions from Dr. Chaplin as to what I was to do. At this time I felt very much the disadvantage of not having a fellow labourer who might take up my duties while I lay ill.

Explorers, if possible, should work in couples: in this instance, I had thus, while ill, to make all arrangements for my work; fortunately Corporal Phillips was with me. A good Samaritan (who hailed from Manchester) and happened to be passing through Nablus, came up to see me and sent me some beer. Mr. Felscher also called, and we conversed with regard to the Samaritan Pentateuch, which I was anxious to photograph. To my great delight I was much relieved this evening on one side of my throat.

April 18th.—The second gathering also relieved me during the night, and in the morning I felt much better, my head being now not quite such an enormous size; but I was getting very weak from not being able to touch any food whatever. In spite of my feeble condition, I was, however, obliged to get about and see to business.

(p. 212) From the earliest ages that city of many waters, Nablus (Shechem) has held prominent position in the history of Syria. From the time when Jacob "bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent," and "erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe—Israel," perhaps from an earlier period, when Abraham, by faith offered Tip Isaac on the high places in the land (Morah), this place was a centre of attraction. In later times the

historical associations around the spot, the beauty of the position, the fertility of the soil, were so familiar to the Arab mind, that Mahomet has said: "The land of Syria is beloved of Allah beyond all lands, the part of Syria which he loveth most is the district of Jerusalem, and the place which he loveth most in the district of Jerusalem is the Mountain of Nablus."

Thus even to Mahomet, while Jerusalem was most holy, Nablus was most beloved. Mejr-ed-din relates that the Samaritans even apply to it the epithet El-Kuds (The Holy), but he adds "they lie and disagree in this matter with all other people. May the wrath of Allah be upon them!" For to Jerusalem alone in Syria should the term El-Kuds be applied. What were the exceptional advantages possessed by Shechem to cause it to have been chosen as the spot where the law of Moses should be read before the assembled tribes of Israel, on the gathering together after their triumphant attack upon the inhabitants of the promised land, is not very apparent.

No reason is assigned for the pronouncement of the blessings and curses before that city on Gerizim and Ebal, or for the altar of burnt offerings erected (p. 213) on Ebal: but it would appear that the site was chosen by the mouth of Moses after the return of the twelve chiefs from their forty days' sojourn in the land spying out its resources.

As Caleb set his heart upon Hebron for his portion, so may Joshua have reported to Moses on the advantageous position of Shechem as a rallying centre for the tribes. Is it not then natural that Joshua, who led the people into the land, should have arranged that the central position might fall to his tribe, the powerful and warlike people of Ephraim, whose seed shall become a multitude of nations? At least we find the children of Joseph being served first, and indeed it would appear a simple act of justice, that the children of Joseph should inherit that portion of the land from whence their forefather was sold as a slave by his brethren, including the inheritance purchased by Jacob in which Joseph's bones were laid. Thus were the two possessions belonging to the Hebrew family given to the two chiefs who alone lived through the wanderings to enter the promised land. Judah, through Caleb, obtained the Sepulchres at Machpelah; Ephraim, through Joshua obtained the parcel of ground bought by Jacob and which "he gave to his son Joseph."

It is interesting to note that the Moslem traditions are against the bones of Joseph having remained at Shechem; for Mejr-ed-din relates, "Joseph died in Egypt and remained buried there until the time of Moses and Pharaoh, but when Moses quitted this country and led the children of Israel through the wilderness, he exhumed the body of Joseph and (p. 214) transported it with him through the wilderness until his own death. Joshua, having come into Syria with the Israelites, buried it near Nablus, or rather at Hebron, following a tradition much spread among the people. It is in reality at Hebron that his tomb may be seen, and it is well known that this belief is current among the people and it has not been controverted.

"His tomb may be found in the *sacred ground* within the inclosure of Solomon, face to face with the tomb of Jacob, and in the vicinity of his two ancestors, Abraham and Isaac."

At the present time Nablus is a peculiarly favoured spot, for here alone in Palestine, water pours forth in abundance; here alone does it ripple in the ducts throughout the town in sufficient quantities, at all seasons of the year, to enable the inhabitants to use it liberally, instead of regarding it as a luxury. Whether it be in the drought of summer, or at the close of autumn, the springs, whether they be thirty-three or eighty-three in number, gush forth in never-failing plenty.

The situation of Nablus is lovely; it lies in a gorge running east and west between the two hills Ebal and Gerizim: Ebal on the north, Gerizim on the south. Clinging to the steep northern slopes of the latter, it enjoys a certain protection from the sun's rays during a portion of the day; in front to the east the cleft opens out into the rich plain of Mukhna, whose verdure visitors are never weary of extolling; on either side of this gorge rise the steep slopes of the rival mounts 1000 feet above the city; (p. 215) and indenting their sides, just east of the city are the twin theatres in which the assembled hosts of Israel face to face met together at the ceremony of reading the Law by their leader Joshua.

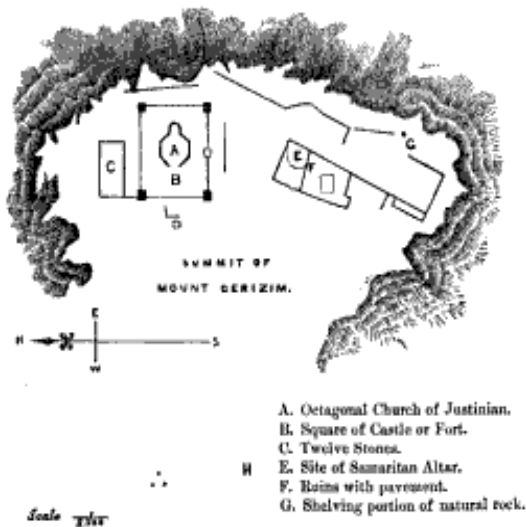
The plain at the foot of these two theatres is about half a mile in diameter, and together they form around it almost one amphitheatre; the entrances being the openings of the gorge east and west. No more fitting place can be found throughout Palestine for the ceremony there enacted. Was I wrong, then, in suggesting that Joshua chose this site for the occasion, or was it chosen for him when lots were cast—for "the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord"?

Beyond this amphitheatre further east, at the mouth of the gorge, on either side, about a mile and a half from the city, are the two traditional sites, the tomb of Joseph and the well of Jacob, about half a mile distant one from the other,—the tomb below Ebal, the well below Gerizim. The existence of a well of great depth, so near the many fountains about the city is a peculiarity for which a good reason should be assigned, and though there is no allusion to it in the Pentateuch, yet it is certain (John iv. 5) that Jacob dug a well in his parcel of ground at Shechem, and that in the time of our Lord it was in ordinary use. Dean Stanley has suggested that it is an "existing monument of the prudential character of the old patriarch," the fresh springs near at hand being in the grasp of the hostile Canaanite in whom he could put no trust. This well is one of the most authentic remains existing (p. 216) in Palestine, being undoubted by Jew, Samaritan, Moslem or Christian, and we may hope ere long to find that it has been cleaned out and is again in use: for a liberal-minded Englishman has undertaken the expense of so doing. Of the tomb of Joseph little can be said; as before mentioned, the Moslem, the only existing tradition, places his body at Hebron, so that at the most the tomb would be but a monument; besides this, the present site would cause Jacob's parcel of ground to have taken up the whole mouth of the gorge, so that the inhabitants of Shechem would have had no means of free egress. In the seventeenth century the site appears to have been in the gorge just outside the town, close to the present cemetery where Major Wilson, in 1866, found the tomb of Sheikh (Joseph) Iusuf.

Much has been said by writers regarding the sterile Ebal and fertile Gerizim ; but in reality there is on the whole very little difference between the two: the southern slopes of each are barren, both on account of the dip of the strata, and their facing to the mid-day sun: the northern sides of each, for the opposite reasons, are fruitful; as the fruitful side of Gerizim and the barren side of Ebal present themselves towards the town of Nablus, their characters have been judged by the appearances they there present; nevertheless the springs which supply Nablus undoubtedly come from Gerizim, the springs of Ebal being far too northerly and are less plentiful.

There are two paths up to Gerizim, the Mount of Blessing: one a scrambling route by the eastern side of the town, past the great theatre, over ledges of rocks and boulders; the other a mule track from the western end of the city up to the head of the springs, thence along a zigzag path up the steep hillside, and then on the crest of an ascending ridge, on

the one side falling towards Nablus in a series of small precipices, and on the other side sloping gently to the south. Passing through the ruins of El Louzeh (identified as



the second Luz), we arrive at the sacred portion of the mount where once stood the temple of the Samaritans, where now the ruins are exposed.

The site of this temple is remarkable. It stands on the edge of a steep cliff running north and south; at the end of the spur, already mentioned as falling on one side to Nablus on the other side to the south. (p. 218) It is thus on the highest point of the range, and has a superb prospect in all directions, and stands 3000 feet above the ocean,—this border of the sanctuary, which the right hand of God had purchased.

The excavations conducted by Major Wilson and Captain Anderson in 1866, have laid bare the foundations of the several buildings which crown the summit of the mountain. In the centre of the ruins of a square castle or fort, flanked by towers at each angle, stands what remains of the octagonal church of Justinian with an apse at its eastern end. To the south of this are ruins with a pavement, where the Samaritans assert their temple once stood: at the eastern end of which is a shelving portion of the natural rock, dipping to the north-west, the traditional site of the Samaritan altar. This is their sacred rock, their Kibleh, to which they turn in prayer, wherever they may be. To the west of the castle are the twelve stones, which the Samaritans suppose to have been put in their present position by *King* Joshua, but which to European eyes appear to be a portion of the natural rocks. The Samaritan sacred books do not extend beyond Joshua: he was the prophet, priest, and king; to them the Temple of Jerusalem is a myth.

On the southern side of the sacred rock is a hollow which they call the Holy of Holies, and on the brink of the slope of the mountain to the south is the place where Abraham offered up Isaac. The present place of sacrifice used by the Samaritans is some yards to the west of the sacred rock, so that during the Passover the worshippers face both east and to (p. 219) their Kibleh. As with the Christian sites about the Holy Sepulchre, the Moslem sites about the Sakhrah, so with the "Blessed Mount" of the Samaritans, historical events are quite crowded in upon the small space available, allowing the pilgrim in a few minutes to pay his devotion at each shrine: should there be any Israelite Cutheans yet in the world who can avail themselves, as pilgrims, of the opportunity. It

has before been mentioned that here Abraham offered up Isaac, here, also, Melchizedek met Abraham and received his tithes.

Here Jacob dreamed his dream, "and he called the name of that place, Bethel; but the name of that city was called Luz, at the first," and so in close proximity to the summit do we find the ruins of El Louzeh. Here, also, was the altar that Jacob built on his return from Padan-aram, and called it Elelohe Israel. Here, also, the Samaritans lay many of the scenes narrated of *King* Joshua, as they style him. On the Holy of Holies the ark rested, a few feet below the summit is the Cave of Makkedah, where Joshua found the five kings immured. The tombs of the prophets throng the mountain. Such are some of the sacred associations which the Samaritans connect with their holy mountain, "Makdas."

With such reverence for their own mountain, such contempt for the Jews that they jibe at them for having left no regular order of priesthood, can it be wondered at that the old spirit of rivalry should still exist among the people? Even now, browbeaten, demoralised, diminished in numbers, they still fiercely hold their own and despise others. Dean Stanley has (p. 210) pronounced the Samaritans as distinguished by their noble physiognomy and stately appearance from all other branches of the race of Israel; this did not strike me. With one exception (Jacob the Handsome) the Samaritans have a mean, sensual cast of countenance, well-depicted on our photograph, and have not the free air of the Jews, whether Sephardim or Ashkenazim: it is, however, scarcely fair to compare them with the Hebrew race, who have for hundreds of years been exiles from Palestine; compare them with the native Christians, city Moslems, fellahin and Bedouin, they present no superior characteristics, and appear very much on a level. There are strikingly handsome men and women among other natives of Palestine; I saw none among the Samaritans.

Before my arrival, a division had taken place among the Samaritans; it had been settled that families should sacrifice their sheep separately, and eat the Passover at home, or by themselves, as do the Jews at the present day, and as did the Samaritans some thirty years ago, when they were debarred sacrificing on the mount. It appeared, that at the previous Passover, some men, more greedy than the rest, had taken more than their share of the feast, and others thought themselves defrauded. Jacob, in view of my visit, from which he hoped to profit handsomely, took much trouble with the aggrieved parties, and persuaded them again to meet as a happy family on the summit of the sacred mount. They were encamped in a hollow in the mountain, the tents close together, except two, in which some women were located for ceremonial reasons.

(p.221) *April 18th.*—I had been down to the tent of some friends to dinner, at Nablus, and it was towards sunset on the 14th day of the month Abib, according to the Samaritan calendar, that I ascended Gerizim, to view the ceremonies about to take place on the anniversary of the Passover.

There, on the rocky space in front of the ruined temple, were the male Samaritans assembling, about forty-five in number, old and young. The women being away in their tents. On the rocky plateau they were gathering for the most part, clothed in the costume for prayer, flowing white robes; but some were in their best clothes, coloured, striped cotton garments, with cloth jackets. Soon they ranged themselves in a group, standing and facing east, towards their Kibleh, and began to recite some hymns after their priest, who stood a little apart, and facing towards them, that is, to the west.

As the sun began to get low, they changed their tone and quickened their pace, rattling the words out as quickly as they would come, and giving tongue like a pack of hounds in

full cry. They were describing the plagues of Egypt (I was informed), and became so excited, that as they stood up and worked their jaws about, they looked as though frenzied; this increased until, as the sun went down, their chant merged into furious, undulating, incoherent screams; the priest all this time reading out of a Pentateuch of great age, but bound up as a volume, similar to that possessed by Mrs. Ducat. "Thou shalt sacrifice the Passover at evening as the sun goes down." No sooner was the sun down, and the words completed, (p. 222) than they broke their ranks. Some got the oven ready, a hole built in the ground six feet deep, and three feet in diameter, in which they burnt green wood: while others brought up to the spot the seven sheep, and passed them on from one butcher to another, for there were several engaged in the slaughter.

"Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year, and the whole assembly of the congregation shall kill it in the evening"—as the sun goes down. At a given signal, as one of these verses (quoted) was being read, the men brandishing their knives, threw the sheep upon their sides, and in a few short seconds all was over, and they were seen with their heads nearly severed off, bleeding, their limbs still working convulsively.

Jacob now left the throng, to speak to me, and in his anxiety to explain all, I missed observing the sprinkling of blood: on the door-post it could not be, but on the foreheads of the children. "And the blood shall be given for a token." Prayer now recommenced, until the water, heated in a caldron, fairly boiled, when it was poured upon the lifeless bodies of the sheep to scald the skin, and the wool was plucked off with comparative ease. They then quickly removed the entrails, and cutting off one shoulder cast it aside to be burnt. Long poles were brought out to which the carcasses were lashed, and at a given signal, they thrust the seven into the oven and covered it with sticks, grass and mortar. "Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roasted with fire." This occupied until ten o'clock, when our party adjourned to my tent for (p. 223) coffee. All this was but the preliminary stage, the true ceremony was now to commence, at which only Samaritans could join. Soon after midnight there was a cry that the feast was ready, and the males of the people gathered together around the oven-mouth: and as soon as it was opened the scene was one which Rembrandt might have wished to view. The moon's light struggling through the mist, the torch-lights flitting here and there, the glow from the fires and the smoke streaming from the oven-mouth, looking murky-black beside the many lights.

I had expected a savoury smell from the oven when I saw the smoke arise, but it was far otherwise; and when the seven blackened and charred remains were brought out of the pit, the odour was most uninviting. "And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roasted with fire, and unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs shall they eat it. His head, with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof; and thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste, it is the Lord's Passover."

In strict accordance with these injunctions they now appeared, and crowded round the feast. Until this moment all had been decorous; but suddenly the demon of greed seemed to possess them, and a fierce quarrel commenced about the sharing of the food, so that all religious sentiment as to the ceremony was rapidly lost. After some delay, they were so far contented and shamed by Jacob and Amram into leaving the quarrel until the morrow, on its being represented to them that strangers were looking on: and each ate (p. 224) his food in haste. The women did not assist in any way in the ceremony, but pieces of the flesh were carried to them in their tents. The remains of the Passover were now picked up

by the light of a fire kindled for the purpose, and they were burnt. "And you shall let nothing remain of it till the morning, and that which remaineth of it until the morning, you shall burn with fire." Weary with the sight, and yet very weak, for the fever was still on me, I was glad to get into bed, the air being raw and chilly.

April 19th.—After the symptoms of ill-feeling one towards another evident during the midnight festivities, I was not surprised to hear in the morning a hideous noise caused by the yelling of infuriated Samaritans, who woke with empty stomachs and felt defrauded of their just share. Jacob was not present to appease them, and so they were able to quarrel to their heart's content, coming as nearly to blows as they usually ventured to do; that is to say, they shook their fists within an inch of each other's noses; the women were also not behind-hand, and aided their husbands in the wordy warfare, until the whole camp arose in an uproar.

As each seemed afraid to strike his neighbour, it bid fair to be an endless, if a blowless, quarrel, and I was becoming impatient at their not terminating it one way or another, when the wily Jacob hurried up to deliver us, and quickly throwing oil on the troubled waters, pacified them all in a few minutes. Jacob is truly a great man among his own, for he has so absorbed within his grasp all the reins of (p. 225) office, that whether for good or evil, he alone of mortals, can keep them in order.

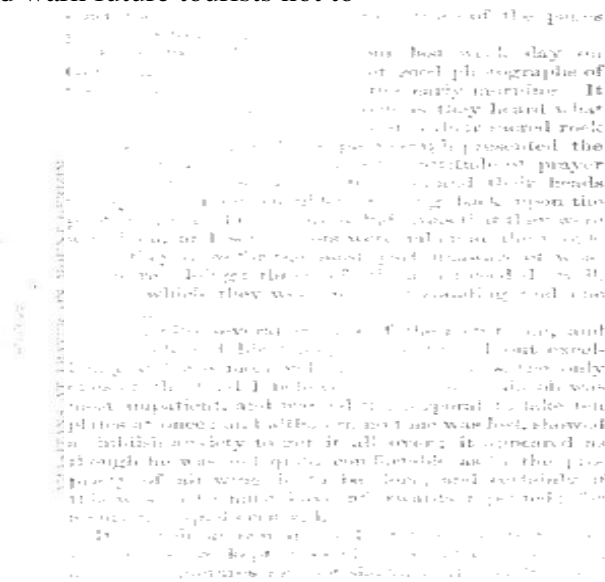
The vile passion of greed and avarice which these people introduced and exposed at a time when they ought to have been absorbed in the grand yearly ceremony, so upset all feelings of gravity, that the revulsion of feeling caused me to take perhaps too sickly a view of their actions, and it appeared as though the people were as puppets dancing to Jacob's wire-pulling, performing for the occasion, and only carrying through a ceremony for self-interest which their religion should have impelled them to go through whether visitors were present or not. Perhaps I was too much behind the scenes and saw more than I ought to have done; perhaps, Jacob, in his pride gave me the impression of possessing more power than he actually possessed, or perhaps I was too ill to take a just view of affairs.

Whatever may have been the cause, it certainly seemed as though the *tableaux vivants* were arranged very much to the liking of the European guests; that the actors were performing for the benefit of the spectators so long as the keen eye of the manager was upon them.

Amram, the priest, is a delightful old gentleman, the only one of the Samaritans I had any sympathy with. He made several ineffectual attempts to see me alone, but Jacob was always at hand, or carried him off with him: at length he seized his opportunity and told me his melancholy state. He felt he was gradually dying day by day, and talked of being fed on poisonous food; poor old man, whatever was the (p. 226) cause, it was evident he was sinking slowly, and that his energies were going; probably his house in Nablus was filled with impure air from the bad arrangements within, or perhaps it was constitutional.

As all Franks are "medicine-men," he was urgent that I should prescribe for him and eliminate the poison from his system. I felt very much sympathy for the old priest, who alone seemed to guard the treasures of the Samaritans: and prescribed charcoal for his disorder, which appeared to be a kind of dysentery, as I had often experienced its efficacy myself; he seemed, like Naaman, to think a simple remedy could do him no good, but he would try.

It was clear that he had gradually been pushed into the background by the superior knowledge of Jacob: knowledge of the world, I must say, for, as far as I could ascertain, Jacob had received no education, and could not even read or write the Samaritan characters. While I was on the mount I was subject to much questioning about the effect of certain acids, and putting matters together with Corporal Phillips it was clear that the questioning was with the object of ascertaining a means whereby new parchment could, when written on, be made to look ancient. Finding that there was probably another volume of the Pentateuch in preparation, to be sold piecemeal to visitors, now that the old ones were getting exhausted, I avoided giving any information which would lead to such an imposition; at the same time I gathered that their existing knowledge of such matters was considerable, and I would warn future tourists not to



(p. 227) trust too implicitly in the appearance of the pages presented to them.

April 20M—This being our last week day on Gerizim, we made efforts to get good photographs of the Samaritans at prayer in the early morning. It was not an easy task, for as soon as they heard what was going on, their prayer towards their sacred rock was interrupted, and the photograph presented the ridiculous spectacle of men in the attitude of prayer with their bodies in one direction and their heads turned over their shoulders looking back upon the photographer. These were so ludicrous that they were wiped off, and some shots were taken at the people when they were for the most part unaware of what we were doing: three of them succeeded well, two in which they were praying standing and one kneeling.

I had also several groups of the men taken, and also Jacob and his family; these turned out excellently and are most valuable photographs, the only ones of the kind I believe in existence. Jacob was most impatient, and wanted the corporal to take ten plates at once; and although no time was lost, showed a childish anxiety to get it all over; it appeared as though he was not quite comfortable as to the propriety of allowing it to be done, and certainly if this was so he must have afterwards repented; for a curious sequel occurred.

It is well known in the East that the women of the family are kept from view as much as possible, and their pictures are not shown to the public: but, of course, Jacob was quite content that his family (p. 228) should be exhibited in Europe, or, in fact, anywhere except in his own district. Fortune however played him a sly trick, for by some chance a

whole set of photographs were sent direct to the governor general of Syria without a selection being made. The governor picked out those of Nablus (including Jacob, his wife, and family) and forwarded them to the Pacha of Nablus, who thought it a good joke to send for Jacob and point out to him the picture of his wife, and commented upon her appearance. Jacob was excessively annoyed, and rightly so, and complained to me. It was too late, however: I could only express my sympathy with him, and advise him to secure the photograph, as a Moslem should not have such things in his keeping. This is just one instance of the numerous difficulties which beset the path of an Exploring Society, working over a great number of years: it was of course out of the question that any one could have foreseen the use the present to the governor-general would be put to.

On observing the figures in the photographs, one is struck with the youth of some of the married women, many of them appear mere children, one of them was only twelve years of age and yet a mother. One reason of these very early marriages is owing to the difference in numbers in the sexes, the males outnumbering the females as three to two; this probably assists in diminishing the numbers of this singular people, who, by their laws, cannot marry out of their community.

In the afternoon, I visited the Turkish Mosque in (p. 229) the city, and found the fanatical Moslem quite unconcerned with my entry there. I also examined the Samaritan Pentateuchs in the synagogue, in company with Amram and Jacob. There are five Pentateuchs, of which three are scrolls, and two are quarto volumes; at this time one scroll and one volume were kept up at Gerizim during the Passover week.

The old scroll has been so often described that I will not dwell on the subject. The law is written on the inside of a long roll of parchment, column after column, from right to left, each thirteen inches long and seven inches wide. At each end is a spindle on which the parchment is rolled, and when a portion is unfurled on the left in reading, it is rolled up on the right-hand side, leaving a narrow space of about two columns exposed to view. The characters are in the ancient style, similar to some extent to those of the Moabite Stone, the Jewish coins of the Maccabees, and the lion weights of Assyria.

Much has been said as to the age of this scroll, but little is really known on the subject, and while the most learned disagree, those who know still less may speculate.

Had the Samaritans any separate volume of the law of Moses in early times? There can be no question that they had. The early fathers of our church mention the Samaritan Pentateuch, and Josephus relates that, in the time of Alexander, the Jews and Samaritans had a dispute as to whether, according to the law of Moses, the Temple should have been erected at Jerusalem or on Mount Gerizim. And it is (p. 230) evident that for the consideration of the subject, the Samaritans, who were recognised as a rival sect, would have also produced their copy of the law. It would appear probable in still earlier times that they possessed a complete copy of the law, when an Israelitish priest was sent from Assyria to conduct their religious exercises. There would be much reason therefore, to suppose that they would have a copy of the law handed down from the times of their transference to Ephraim from Cuth.

It is, however, somewhat startling to find that their scroll claims, according to their assertion, to bear the name of Abisha, great grandson of Aaron the priest, and thus to belong to a much earlier period than the Samaritans themselves, even to the time of Joshua himself. Worn and battered as that venerable scroll is, there can be few Europeans

who would acquiesce in such an assertion. There is no reason, however, why this scroll may not be an exact copy of an original Pentateuch.

During the early stages of the Hebrew history in Palestine, the site of the tabernacle was in Ephraim, and the copies of the law of Moses would thus have been kept at no great distance from Gerizim, at Shiloh, until a king was given to the people. When the Philistines captured and took away the ark from Eben-ezer the copies of the sacred law were probably dispersed among the people of Ephraim, for Shiloh became an abandoned shrine; and as both Saul and David were of southern tribes, it is very possible that they may not all have been given up, especially when the Ephraimites found Hebron, and afterwards (p. 231) Jerusalem, made the chief seats of government instead of a city in their own land.

From the time of the loss of the ark at Shiloh, until the accession of Rehoboam, less than two hundred years elapsed: and from the time of the dedication of the Temple of Jerusalem to the separation of Judah from Israel, and the establishment of a separate worship in Israel, only *thirty years* elapsed: that is to say, the united kingdom had only a united worship at Jerusalem during thirty years. Then a separate worship was established in Israel, and although Jeroboam by his evil deeds caused the priests of Israel to flock to Jerusalem, yet it is probable that some of them remained and that copies of the law were in their hands. It is not therefore improbable that the Cutheans, when introduced into the land by the King of Assyria, and given priests of Israel, should also have come into possession of a copy or copies of the law of Moses, from the original text. And as these Cutheans (intermingled with a remnant of the tribe of Joseph) have carried on their worship continuously on Mount Gerizim, from at least the time of Alexander the Great down to the present time, we should expect to find among them copies of the law in the ancient character.

When therefore we find revered, almost worshipped, among the Samaritans of the present day a scroll containing the Pentateuch, written in the Hebrew language, and in the characters which were used before our era, it seems a natural conclusion that this is a copy or fac-simile of one of the ancient (p. 232) copies of the law, if not itself one of the ancient copies. It should be understood that the Samaritans who now talk Arabic, formerly used the Samaritan dialect, which appears to be a corruption of the dialect of Ephraim: but that their sacred language is Hebrew, the language of the Pentateuch.

Thus the people at the present day possess two dead languages, that of the Pentateuch, and that of their original dialect, in which is written a version of the Pentateuch. But both these languages are written in the old character called Samaritan, which as I have stated, resembles the character on the Moabite Stone, and the Assyrian lion weights, so far as written characters may resemble those incised, with the exception however that the Samaritan bears a certain evidence of being later than those of the Moabite Stone. If the characters in the Moabite Stone, the monumental Samaritan, the MS. Samaritan, and the modern Hebrew are placed side by side, it will be at once apparent that the monumental is derived from the Moabite, and that the MS. Samaritan and modern Hebrew are branches from the monumental; though the modern Hebrew appears to be of a far later or more removed construction. The fact that the words in the Samaritan Pentateuch are separated from each other by dots as in the Moabite Stone is another subject of interest.

I now went with Jacob to his house, where he showed me a piece of parchment which he stated he had cut off the old scroll itself; of this I could scarcely form an opinion, but it

appeared to me that the characters were not executed in the same kind of (p. 233) golden ink: the piece however without such an introduction looked most venerable and antique and I gladly took charge of it as a present to the Palestine Exploration Fund. He told me at the same time that if desirable he could obtain the whole Pentateuch, except that portion exposed to view. Moreover he gave to me a book of Samaritan prayers 1150 (A.D. 1740) for the Archbishop of York as Chairman of Committee and also for the Committee a book of Samaritan Hymns 1276 (A.D. 1859); and to this he added a leaf out of a 12mo. Samaritan Pentateuch for myself. He would at the time have no payments for these articles, and only wished them forwarded home in hopes that the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund would see their value and take him into favour and help the cause of his people.

He further, in order that there should be no doubt about his gift, desired to be photographed in the act of giving to me the book of Samaritan Prayers for the Archbishop of York; accordingly we adjourned again to the mountain and there were photographed outside my tent door. The generous Jacob holding the pipe of his argileh to his mouth with one hand and giving with the other, to me, the book of prayer. Having no knowledge on the subject of Samaritan MS., the doubt whether I had a real treasure or not in my possession rather tickled my fancy, and I took the greatest care of our luggage, with which it travelled henceforth, until it was safely deposited in Jerusalem.

I must anticipate events by saying that on my return to Jerusalem I paid a visit to Dr. Rosen, an (p. 234) eminent Oriental scholar, and asked his opinion. He was delighted with the scroll, and said I had an article of great value; not a piece of the very old one, but probably a portion of one of its fellows, which had been in use in one of the Samaritan towns now abandoned. He thought there was nothing in Europe like it.

As then I had an opportunity of getting more pieces if they were required, I sent the portion home by the next post asking for an immediate answer. Unfortunately Mr. Grove's extensive information did not include a knowledge of Samaritan Hebrew, and he was several months before being able to give me any answer on the subject; during which time Jacob became more and more importunate, and his great love for the Palestine Exploration Fund gradually curdled into hatred. I could do nothing, as he wanted a letter of thanks from London and not from me in Jerusalem.

I felt annoyed that I had accepted these things on behalf of the Fund, without having first inquired how they would be received, and wrote to urge they might be sent back again to Jacob; this, however, was not done, and eventually I was commissioned to pay him 5*l.* sterling for his gift. This I did at the expiration of three years, when I found him one day at Beyrout much in want of money, and received a receipt from him for it. Poor Jacob! he said he had hoped for a letter of thanks and 50*l.* besides, and made a wry face over the 5 *l.* Whether that was more or less than the actual value I cannot say; I only was interested in getting the letter of (p. 235) thanks which I had expected as a natural consequence on the receipt of a gift, but Mr. Grove thought otherwise. I can only say with the Moslems—But Allah knows best. My own impression is that Dr. Rosen's opinion was a just one, and that this portion of the roll should be deposited in some museum where it may be of use.

April 21st.—Our last day at Gerizim. This morning the face of the country was lovely, and the misty air so much spoken of by writers on Nablus made the view into the valley most pleasing. I was anxious to examine the scene of the reading of the law, if the natural

amphitheatre already mentioned may be considered as such; as to the powers of the voice across the valley, there could be no doubt, for on more than one occasion we had witnessed conversations carried on by the shepherds from one side to the other. The more the place is examined the more it appears like a natural theatre, the very rocks forming themselves into rough seats: and more than once I felt uncertain whether it had not been used during the Roman period for the celebration of games and sports.

But our visit to the Blessed Mount was drawing to a close, and I had soon to turn my thoughts upon our preparation for the morrow.

(p. 236) CHAPTER XI.
KURN SURTABEH.

"A most beautiful fortress which was built on the top of a mountain called Alexandrium."—*Josephus*.

April 22nd.—At six o'clock we were up and getting ready for our journey down into the Ghor, packing up hundreds of earwigs among our clothing, for the ground literally swarmed with them. Jacob came into my tent, and I gave him 500 piastres for the food with which he had supplied us, a most liberal backshish. He insisted on kissing my hand, and spoke much of his good intentions towards his flock, giving as angelic a cast to his countenance as he could summon up. When all was ready I went out and met the chief Samaritans, and, after some conversation, presented them with 500 piastres for their good offices in sitting to be photographed, &c.; they emitted a chorus of thanks. Amram and his young priest also received 100 piastres. Jacob accompanied us on our way, and inquired with the greatest solicitude after the safety of the scroll and hymn books, and our leave-taking was performed in the most impressive style.

Winding down the zigzag slope of Gerizim we (p. 237) followed the stream and entered the town to take leave of Mr. Felscher. Thence riding on across the splendid plain of Mukhna we arrived at Beit Dejan: here Sheikh Salah joined us again and took it into his head that we were to camp then and there, although not half a day's march from Gerizim. A great palaver ensued: Salah saying there was no water farther on and that the mules would die. Water or no water, I declared we should go on, and told Salah to go forward and turn the mules down into the road to Wady Ferah. This he refused to do, and Esau was going to do it for him, when I stepped in and insisted on the sheikh getting on his horse and going himself: it was a bitter pill for him to swallow, and he did it with a bad grace, as he was in front of the Arab villagers, and did not like that they should see him under control.

I foresaw, however, that if he did not obey on this occasion we should have difficulties with him when among the Mesa'aid Bedouin, and that it was necessary for him to give in. He had so constantly found it desirable to give way in the end before, that on this occasion he seemed to feel it was of no use holding out, and suddenly collapsing went off and turned the mules.....