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A Pictorial Tour in the Holy Land

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(p. 126)....

On entering Nablous we were assailed by an immense uproar. As we proceeded along the narrow and dark streets the noise increased, when suddenly we came upon a night festal procession of the Mohammedans. It was the occasion of the marriage of one of the chief of their number, and it was being commemorated by the people, who were beating drums, singing songs in honour of the bride and bridegroom, shouting at the top of their voices, and clapping their hands, for the purpose of beating time. A lurid glare was thrown over the scene by men lifting up in the air tins mounted on poles, and filled with burning charcoal. These were every now and then stirred to kindle a flame. Curses were freely muttered against us as we passed, and I knew that the state of Nablous was such that the mob would not be backward in attacking us should we give them the slightest cause. We were, therefore, well pleased to find ourselves at the house of Daoud Tanoos, a native Christian, to whom Dr. Sandresky, of Jerusalem, had given me a letter of introduction.

The hostile feeling of the Moslems of Nablous arose from a circumstance which had taken place a short time before our visit. A missionary from Asia Minor was taking a tour though the land, and on leaving the town, was urged by a Mohammedan youth to reward him for some service which he had never rendered. The missionary refused to do this, (P. 127) when the youth seized his gun, which happened to be loaded, touched the trigger, and in this way discharged the contents into his own body. He was killed on the spot. The fanatic Moslems assembled, and had the missionary not taken refuge in the house of the Governor he would have been murdered. As it was, the populace attacked the houses of the native Christians, killed two or three of them, and destroyed much property. They had never been punished according to their deserts, and hence they manifested up to that time a most bitter and hostile spirit.

As soon as we had breakfasted the next morning, we retraced our way to the entrance of the valley, to see Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, the scene of the blessings and the curses pronounced by the representatives of the tribes of Israel. Some travellers have asserted that while Ebal is rocky and forbidding in its aspect, Gerizim is all fertility and beauty. But the aspect of both mounts is substantially the same. They are both very rocky and bare. The valley below was looking green and beautiful with the young crops of wheat and barley. On the summit of Gerizim the few Samaritans who still exist celebrate their sacrifices at Easter. Of these the Prince of Wales was a spectator at the time of his visit. The Samaritans number about sixty souls, and as this number is much below what it

used to be within the memory of those now alive, in a short time we may expect that all traces of them will disappear.

(P. 128) Between the two mounts is "Jacob's Well." The mouth of it has been blocked up by a Mohammedan, to whom it and the surrounding land belongs. We were told that his object in doing this was to prevent persons from crossing his grounds to look at the well. It is needless to say that he diminished the interest of the structure without attaining his object.

After observing the building which is called the Tomb of Joseph, but which is only a Moslem *wely*, we returned to Nablous. The valley contains the finest olive trees I saw in the land, and the gardens by which the city is surrounded are most beautiful and luxuriant. It is certainly one of the most pleasant spots in the Holy Land.

Our start for Samaria was made at a much later hour than was prudent and desirable. As it will appear, it obliged us to stop at Kibotia that night, when we had laid out our plans for reaching Jeneen. It was past ten o'clock ere we were again *en route*, and [it was after mid-day when we reached Sebaste, or Samaria. The situation of this city was most judiciously chosen, and in its palmy days its aspect must have been very commanding and beautiful. Built as it was upon a large hill, which rose high above the surrounding valley, it was easy to fortify and defend it from attack. The views from the summit are very fine, especially in the direction of the Mediterranean, looking over the Plains of Jezreel.

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This reference is not located 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

The visit was January 1, 1857.

Author knew Mr. Finn, British Consul.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Augustus_Isaacs