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(p. 284)

SHECHEM AND THE SAMARITANS.

Shechem, like most eastern towns, is surrounded by a strong wall, which, however, according to modern military tactics, would be no serious obstacle to an invading foe; but where all are alike ignorant of warfare, such fortifications serve their purpose. This is one of the oldest and most renowned cities in Judea, and had gained, long before the Christian dispensation, a reputation that shall keep it alive in the memory when battles and conquests are forgotten. The houses are tolerably well built of stone, with domes upon the roofs, and are sometimes thrown, as arches, across the streets, which are narrow, ill-paved, and filthy. More than once I observed dead animals carelessly dragged into by-angles, where they lie until devoured by the dogs, or wasted by corruption. With such fatal hot-beds of mortality at almost every door, the wonder is not that fevers and the plague prevail among the people, but that they should ever be without these dreadful scourges. Some orange-trees, having found a favourable opportunity by a broken-down wall, threw several branches over the dirty foot-path, and had dropped fine fruit, for which no man cared. A stream of clear and delicious water, conveyed to the town partly by artificial means, from Gerizim, rushes down through the main street. We passed the remains of a church of good Byzantine architecture, and much dilapidated. On reaching our intended abode, the door, after repeated and loud knockings, was opened by a string from the flat above, like many of our common doors in large towns. The natives are seldom very prompt in their movements, and the principal part of the house being generally at some distance from the main entrance, it is no wonder that Peter stood knocking at the gate of Mary's house in Jerusalem. The door by which we now entered was very low. Having cautiously stooped to prevent the stone lintel from giving my head a warmer salutation than would have been agreeable, I passed through a half-underground apartment, and ascended, at the back of the house, by an outside rickety stair, to an upper room. This room, though not entirely destitute of comfort, was but an eastern one.

Shechem, one of the most ancient cities in Palestine, belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, was a city of refuge, and was possessed by the Levites. Josh. xx. 7. The names of Abimelech, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Hyrcanus, and Vespasian, are connected with it for rebuilding, enlarging, and beautifying it, or for rebellion and cruelty. It is long and narrow, consisting of one principal street, and contains a population variously estimated at from 4,000 to 10,000—the latter number is evidently an exaggeration. It is comparatively prosperous, though, like all towns under the rod of a Pacha, it suffers the accumulated ills of oppressive misrule.

The inhabitants are composed of Mohammedans, Samaritans, Christians, and Jews. The only Samaritans in the world are found in this place, to which they fled 331 years B. C, when driven by Alexander the Great from Samaria, as a punishment for burning Andromachus, their governor. In November, 1850, they amounted to only 63 males in all, 35 of whom were taxable men above 14 years of age. They are the feeble remains of those with whom Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, in 677 B. C. re-peopled Samaria, from the surrounding nations, to supply the room of the Israelites, whom, forty-four years before, Shalmanezar had carried captive to Babylon. There were, strictly speaking, the following captivities: the first by Tiglath-pileser, in 740; the second, by Shalmanezar, in 721; the third, by Esarhaddon, in 677; the fourth, by Nebuchadnezzar, in 606, when Daniel and his companions were dragged from the land of their fathers; the next in 597, when Ezekiel, and other men of distinction, were carried into exile; and in 586 B. c , when the final deportation took place. It was thus that the Assyrians carried away captive the people of Samaria, replacing the population of the conquered country by colonies of their own. But the Samaritans trace their own lineage to Ephraim, second son of Joseph; and it is possible that, from intermarriages, some of the blood of that tribe may flow in their veins. This difference, however, respecting their genealogy, is the chief ground of that relentless animosity which has for ages existed between them and the Jews, and which 2260 years have not mitigated. Few communities have committed more crimes, and have so little in their annals to commend; yet few have endured more reverses, or suffered so much in defence of their religion and ancestral customs.

Immediately after dismounting, I repaired to their small and very plain synagogue, which is partly built from their ancient temple on Gerizim. It was on Saturday, which is their Sabbath, and they were assembled for divine service. When the Chaldean shepherd and the Egyptian sago,—the earliest astronomers,—were bowing the knee to the host of heaven, a small people in Palestine, a country celebrated for the loveliness of its nights, the splendour of the sun, the beauty of the moon, and the brightness of the stars, which sparkled in their unclouded sky, were rearing humble altars, and raising devout souls to " the living and true God." It was, therefore, not a little touching to see these children of poverty at their devotions, pouring forth their hallelujahs, and raising their hearts to the mercy-seat of heaven. Their mode of worship resembles that of the Jewish synagogues.

To instruct the Samaritans in the Jewish faith, Esarhaddon, 676 B. c, sent a priest from Babylon. In 458 B.C., Ezra purified the temple, (Ezra viii.,) previously rebuilt by Joshua and Zerubbabel,¹ who, amidst many obstructions, were incited to perseverance by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, Ezra v. 1,2, and expelled from Jerusalem those who, contrary to the divine law, had married strange women, and who would not dissolve that unlawful union. Ezra x. Jehoiada was then high-priest in Jerusalem; and Manasseh, his eldest son and successor in office, had married a daughter of Sanballat, governor of Samaria. Manasseh would not break off that unhallowed alliance; he was driven from Jerusa- (p. 286) lem; he repaired to Sanballat at Shechem; and to revenge his expulsion from the holy city, his father-in-law built for him the large temple which stood so long on Mount Gerizim, in opposition to the temple in Jerusalem, and to which the Samaritan woman, at Jacob's Well, directed the attention of our Saviour. By these means the Samaritans obtained a knowledge of the Pentateuch, the Levitical ceremonies, and worship. They received only the five books of Moses as divinely inspired; and these books, though an incomplete and imperfect revelation

¹ In 445 B.C. Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Zion.

of the plan of salvation, contain, nevertheless, an imbodiment of the great truths of our creation, recovery, responsibility, and final retribution.

Males alone were congregated in the synagogue to pray, give thanks, and read the law. If females were present, they must have been concealed; and no place for that purpose was visible. I was requested to put off my shoes before entering, a request which was readily obeyed. This peculiarity forms a marked distinction between the Samaritan and Jewish synagogues. It was an interesting, and indeed an affecting sight, to look upon the small expiring remnant of a people who once counted their warriors by tens of thousands, met peacefully together to invoke a benediction from the God of Abraham. Unless these oppressed and benighted men be soon animated by higher aspirations than yet have swelled their bosoms, and unless the Spirit of the Lord call them as from the dead, and breathe into them spiritual life and activity, the Samaritan nation, not by external violence, but simply by inherent decay, will speedily survive only in the page of history.

Among their valuable manuscripts is found a copy, carefully preserved, of the five books of Moses, perhaps the oldest manuscript extant. They affirm it to have been written sixteen years after the death of Moses, upon parchment made from the skin of the first sheep offered in sacrifice by Joshua on Gerizim. The additional information is also given occasionally, that it was written by Abishua, son of Phinehas. Whatever credit may be attached to these statements, no man can count his paternal descent from Aaron with greater certainty than the priest who officiates in this synagogue. Manasseh, mentioned above, would have succeeded, after his father's decease, to the high-priest's office in Jerusalem, had he remained in that city; and from Manasseh, down to the present day, the Samaritans have registered their priests with the utmost care. It is worth travelling some distance to look on the face of a male descendant of Aaron, the first high-priest of God's people, and who can trace his genealogy with so much certainty.

I visited the school which is under the charge of Bishop Gobat. The room was clean, neat, and well furnished. There are commonly above 50 children on the roll of attendance, and the classes are conducted upon a plan which might be adopted with advantage in other quarters. There are the five books of Moses for the Samaritan, the Old Testament Scriptures for the Jewish, and the whole Bible for the Christian children. These classes are taught under the same roof, by the same masters, and no child is expected to read any book without the express permission of the parents. Might not such a system work well at home? It might, were sectarian prejudices, denominational peculiarities, and a grasping at authority by various parties, forgotten in a laudable and much-needed endeavour to educate our ignorant and degraded multitudes. The bishop wisely labours to gain the young. The good-will and consent of parents and guardians must be at least partially obtained, even before the youth shall be permitted to read; but the old give faint hope of improvement. It is the opening bud, and not the sear leaf of autumn, that gives pleasing promise of reward.

The bishop has prudently chosen the sacred volume as an important schoolbook. It may not accomplish all the good desired, nor may the children fully comprehend its contents, for even external nature is replete with mysteries to the wisest philosopher; but over the darkest soul, repeatedly coming into contact with divine truth, the Bible sheds its sweet and benign influence. The (p. 287) Scriptures have this peculiarity, that while they confer the greatest political, temporal, and spiritual benefit, and are the greatest, and indeed the only civilizer of the human race, they alone expand, purify, and elevate man's immortal part, by crowning his faith and labours with a blessed salvation and a glorious eternity. Christian parents should remember that every virtue springs from a Christian doctrine, as the branch from the trunk, and that the root of all Bible doctrines and precepts is *the love of God*; that parents, if they

would secure the respect of their children, must first teach them to reverence their Maker; that philanthropy, which alone teaches men to love and labour for each other, is a virtue of purely Christian origin; and that the doctrines of the cross so exalt man above the cares, and sorrows, and fears of time, that they raise him to the heights of sublime enjoyment and holy serenity. The command, therefore, rests unrepealed, and in all its force, upon every parent,— "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." Deut. iv. 6.

The Samaritan high-priest is a young man whose aged father has lately retired from office. Not content with kindly paying me all attention in the synagogue, and explaining several inscriptions on some principal stones brought from their ancient temple, he and two of his flock paid me a friendly visit in the evening, though he knew that my "face was towards Jerusalem." His visit was welcome, and I was happy at this opportunity of obtaining some desired information.....

The priest asked me one question, which puzzled and put me to shame. "Why," said he, "do you English do so much for the Jews, and do nothing for the Samaritans?" "Because the Samaritans are not so well known," was the only, but I fear unsatisfactory, answer I could give. To tell the leader of a perishing people that they are overlooked because of their insignificance was felt not to be complimentary, and the priest sighed. In the course of conversation I happened to remark that I was favoured with letters of introduction to the Lord Bishop of Jerusalem. He instantly said :—" He is a good man, he is a great friend to me; will you give him my salutations? will you carry a letter to him for me?" I expressed my willingness to serve him to the utmost of my power. The Samaritan high-priest went to his home, wrote a friendly letter to the bishop, and sent it by the hands of a Gentile minister of the gospel of Christ. So far are men and times changed from the days when the inhabitants of Samaria would not allow our Saviour to enter one of their gates! May these changes be a prelude to the time when animosities and parties shall cease, and all nations be one in Jesus!—*From 'Azuba; or, The Forsaken Land.*

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(p. 609)

#### A VISIT TO SHECHEM AND THE SAMARITANS.

(Extracted from a letter to the Editors of Christian Instructor and Evangelical Repository.)

Steamship, City of Manchester, Oct. 20, 1856.

Mr. B. next took us to visit the mission school. It was a feast-day, and the pupils were not present. The roll showed an attendance of twenty-six Christian boys, besides thirty Muslims, who only attended a short time each day to learn penmanship.

We next visited a large building, which was the only remnant of antiquity we saw in the place. It appears to have been a Christian church, but the Muslims now occupy it as a mosque; and although the Muslims of the place are notorious for their bigotry, we only had to wait an opportunity when not many of them were near, when, slipping a small present into the hand, of the door-keeper, and taking off our shoes as a show of respect for the place, we were admitted. I paced the large facade, and found it 240 feet long. On either side was a fine row of Corinthian columns and a fine gateway, of which we obtained a view from the street on the other side of the building. We next despatched our servants and baggage mules to Lybon, the ancient Libnah, where we proposed spending the night, and then we started for the top of Gerizim. The hill just above the city, is rugged and precipitous. The road leads up

first some distance, to the right, by way of a wady, which comes down just at the west end of the town, and then turns to the left. Just before commencing the ascent we passed a copious fountain, at which the women were engaged at their usual occupation of clubbing their own and their lords' last week's (or perhaps I might more correctly say, last month's) linen. To be thus plying their busy hands and busier tongues, (for they are continually chattering like a colony of sparrows in an orange grove,) has ever seemed to me to be the favourite pastime of the weaker sex— as sitting on the banks of the same stream, smoking, and drinking coffee, and whiling away the livelong day in a state of dreamy abstraction, is of the stronger. And now behold these heroines of the club. They tie their long, flowing, or rather trailing sleeves, over their shoulders, and grasping their weapons, they ply them with, brawny strength. There seems a touch of vindictiveness in their enthusiasm—directed not against the poor garments, which lay pinioned so helplessly on the smooth stones, nor yet against the extraneous material, (in other lands called filth,) which they contain, for these dames are not such sworn enemies to it—but against the living, creeping occupants of those folds and seams, who have enjoyed their long month of feasting and revelling, but whose day of retribution has now at length come. Yes, (alas for human frailty and fickleness that it must be spoken!) it is against those who have so long been their nearest, their *bosom friends*, that it is directed. It is the remembrance of nights of anguish, and days of crawling uneasiness and torment, which nerves their arms and gives vigour to their blows. Luckily we did not take breakfast this morning at our encampment, just below, on this same stream. Perchance the water in which Mr: Bowen's coffee was concocted was from another stream. Nay, ye squeamish daughters of cleanliness, do not thus distort your faces; for the accredited rule in such matters there is, that whatever filth (p. 610) may be thrown into a running stream, it has only to flow twenty cubits to purify itself. Ye are horrified at this. And what, then, would ye think of a Bludanian chancing along by a hot oven, and goaded (nay, stung) to desperation by the colony which he carried with him, deliberately divest himself of his own blackened linen, and casting it into the bread receptacle, leave it there for a thorough roasting?

Just before reaching the summit of the hill, we passed the place of sacrifice to which the Samaritans go up thrice annually, to keep their great festivals. The high-priest informed me that seven days before they had observed the feast of tabernacles, and we saw the traces of their recent festivities. In their passover, he said, they tented there three days, and sacrificed five or six sheep. Their passover they observe the fourteenth night of the month Nisan; and although in ordinary business with other sects they use Mohammedan time, they still among themselves date from the Exodus; and he said, that according to their reckoning, we are now in the 3,294th year, which gives a difference of fifty-two years between their chronology and ours. Crowning the hill are massive ruins of an ancient castle, which I need not describe, nor yet the smooth, sloping stone above, which they say was the most holy place of their temple, which also marks the locality of Bethel, and beneath which are, to this day, hid the tables of the testimony. These two latter items of information I felt quite as much disposed to question as did our Arab guide, whom we had employed to take us through the city, and who followed us to the mountain, and between whom and the priest quite a strong feeling of jealousy had sprung up, each striving to invalidate the testimony, and cause us to undervalue the information of the other.

From the ruined walls of the castle which stands on the northeastern brow of the hill, we obtained a distinct bird's-eye view of the configuration of the country below, and of the relative position of the various sites which are there clustered together. The narrow, well cultivated valley runs eastward from Nablous about three miles, between the opposite hills of Gerizim and Ebal, and then opens into the little plain of Moreh. Unto this plain Abraham first

came when he entered the land of Canaan, (Gen. xii. 6;) and this is the parcel of ground which Jacob bought of Hamor, Shechem's father, when he came from Padan-Aram. On the north-east border of the plain is Shalem, (now called Salim,) the city before which he pitched his tent; and at the base of Gerizim, just where the valley opens into the plain, is the famous well of Jacob, at which the Saviour held his memorable interview with the Samaritan woman; and just above the well, on the sloping curve (or, perhaps, I might rather say, shoulder, Heb., Sichem) of the mountain, are the ruins of what I suppose to have been the ancient city of Sichem. Concerning these ruins Dr. Robinson says:— " While turning the base of the mountain below us, on the right, and not far above the edge of the plain, are the ruins of a little hamlet called Belat," And again:—"Adjacent to the well are the ruins of an ancient church, forming mounds of rubbish, among which -we remarked three granite columns," I have not with me the books of reference necessary for a full consideration of the proofs on which he founds his conclusion of the identity of Shechem and Nablous. I will (p. 611) only say that the two phrases which he quotes—"εν Σεχεμοις τουτ' εστιν εν τη Νεαπολει," and " *Trans ibit Sichem—quae nunc Neapolis appellatur,*" and any others of a like general nature which may exist, (of which, however, I have seen none other so explicit in Ireland,) do not force us to the conclusion that the modern Neapolis must have been built on the exact site of the ancient Shechem. It is sufficient to suppose that Neapolis was built in the territory of Shechem; and the change of the name from Shechem to Neapolis, (the *new city,*) is presumptive proof that it is not the continuation of the old city; but that, on the contrary, it was commenced and built "*de novo;*" and if so, the superior water privileges would justify its removal farther up the valley to its present site. In the case of Surafend, (see Res., vol. iii., pp. 112—114,) we have an example of an ancient town thus changing its place without even changing its name. And besides, Dr. Robinson quotes two positive and particular testimonies against the exact identity of Shechem and Neapolis. He says:—" There is also a question whether Neapolis occupied, or now occupies precisely the same spot as Sichem, though the fact of their general identity does not appear to be doubtful. The difficulty has apparently arisen from what seems to have been a mere hypothesis current in the days of Eusebius, when the rage for pilgrimages and the finding out of Scriptural places was just beginning. At that time Sychar and Sichem were regarded as two distinct places, and both of them different from Neapolis. Eusebius says expressly that Sychar lay before (east of) Neapolis, by the field of Joseph, with Jacob's well, while Sichem was pointed out as a deserted place in the suburbs of Neapolis, where was also Joseph's tomb. The Bordeaux pilgrim, in the same age, (A. D. 333,) is more specific. According to him, by Neapolis, at the foot of Mt. Gerizim, lay the place called Sichem, where was the monument of Joseph; and at one Roman mile further was Sychar, whence the Samaritan woman came to draw water at Jacob's well." The testimony of these two witnesses is *generally* regarded as quite reliable.

I may add, that my supposition is confirmed (I had almost said, demanded) by the circumstances of the narration of John iv. The question of Dr. Robinson—" How can it be supposed that the woman should have come from the city, now half an hour distant, with her water-pot, to draw water from Jacob's well, when there are so many fountains just around the city, and she must also have passed directly by a large one at mid-distance ?"—of which very various solutions have been given, is thus satisfactorily answered. If the woman intended that day to have walked nearly six miles for a pot of water, she must truly have set a very " peculiar value on the water of this ancient well of Jacob;" and the probability that this "was not the ordinary public well of the city, from the circumstance that there was here no public accommodation for drawing water," may have had force in those days, but I am sure that at the present time the current notions of the "*meum* and *tuum*" are so loose among the Arabs,

that they would be very loath to leave their accommodations for drawing water at the public well. But there are other difficulties connected with the old theory. It is said, (John iv. 5, 6,) "Then cometh he to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar", near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there." Must (p. 612) we not suppose that this would have been differently worded had Sychar then been, as Nablous now is, nearly or quite three miles from the well? And do not the other circumstances of the narrative, such as the going of the disciples into the city to purchase bread, the return of the woman to the city, and her bringing back the people with her, and then the Saviour's departure for the city, seem to imply that the city was not then as far from the well as Nablous now is?

The descent from the castle to the well was so steep that we were forced to dismount and walk; and if our supposition concerning the true site of Sichem be correct, we must have passed very near the rocky rostrum from which Jotham addressed his memorable parable to the Shechemites. The relative positions of the city and the mountain were well adapted to this purpose, and also from the contiguity of the plain, much more so than the region of Nablous, to the three great gatherings of the Jewish nation, namely, at the time of the reading of the blessings and the curses, at the renewing of the national covenant at the death of Joshua, and at the assembling of the tribes in the days of Rehoboam. Just before reaching the well we noticed a large Wely, which our guide called "Beit El'Amut," (the house of the pillar.) Perhaps this has some connexion with the anointing of Abimelech, (Judg. ix. 6.)—"And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went and made Abimelech king by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem." Our marginal Bibles now read "oak," instead of plain. And in either case there is a remarkable fulfilment of the description; for there is there, just at the west of the site of Shechem, as above determined, a little plain more elevated than the neighbouring plain of Moreh; and if the correct translation be oak, then, unless my memory greatly fails me, we saw some oaks at the spot, and the oaks which in that country were planted in sacred places are by their power of reproduction among its most permanent monuments, and then also we have the identification of the place mentioned (Gen. xxxv. 4)—"And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hands and all their ear-rings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under *the oak which was BY Shechem.*" When we came up to the well we remarked that it was not in the plain, but on the slope of Gerizim, thus showing a peculiar fitness in the words of the Saviour—"Neither is *this* mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem." The well itself is so well known, that I need not describe it. About five minutes' walk to the northward brought us to Joseph's tomb. It is well built and enclosed, and has two small incense altars; one at the head, and the other at the foot of the tomb. In the corner of the enclosure, and growing up over the wall, is a luxuriant vine, which reminded us of the blessing of Jacob—"Joseph is a fruitful bough; even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall." The coincidence is remarkable, especially as there appeared no other ones in the vicinity, and as its life must be sustained by frequent watering by the Muslims, in whose hands the tomb now is, and who can be suspected of no intention of fulfilling a Scriptural prophecy. All sects unite in pointing this out as the tomb of Joseph. We are informed (Josh. xxiv. 32)— "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which (p. 613) Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor for a hundred pieces of silver." In Gen. 1. 26, we are told that " they embalmed Joseph, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." I need hardly say that our curiosity was very strong to know whether a mummy might be found by digging beneath the grave.

We next started in a south-easterly direction across the plain to the tomb of Eleazar. The high-priest having gone ahead of the rest of the company, I spurred up to him and engaged him in conversation, when the following dialogue, as near as I can now recollect it, took place between us. Knowing that the Pentateuch was our only common ground, I commenced. "What say you, O our father, about that prophet concerning whom Moses wrote: 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me?' " "He is yet to come," he answered. "And how will you know him when he comes?" "He will work miracles, as Moses did." "And if one should come claiming to be that prophet, and should perform miracles, would you admit his claim?" "Certainly." I dwelt on this point at some length, and was happy to find that he appreciated much more fully than the Jews usually do, the true office of miracles, namely, that by them God gives his testimony and sanction to the person through whom they are wrought, and as it were sets his seal to his claims. I then said—"Such a one has come; one who claims to be that prophet, and who established his claim by working miracles—Jesus of Nazareth." "But," he said, "Jesus was a Jew." I answered—"And does Moses say that that prophet must not be a Jew?" "No; but, » then, we do not like the Jews." "Well, did the Jews like Jesus?" I asked. "No." "Have we not, then, in this another point of resemblance between him and Moses? for the Israelites did not at first wish to receive Moses; and besides, does not the fact of their hostility to him afford additional proof of the truth of his miracles? They slandered him and abused him, and said that he wrought his miracles by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, but they could not deny that he wrought them." I expected, from the fairness which he had shown in the discussion, that he would admit the conclusion to which I had brought him; but, what was my disappointment, when, instead, he reined up his horse to my side, and giving me a knowing nudge with his elbow, he whispered—"You must tell the Khowajat to give me a good, big backsheesh." I think this request may throw some light on his "*puzzling*" and *abashing* question to the author of Azuba—"Why do you English do so much for the Jews, and do nothing for the Samaritans?" When I told him that the Khowajat would do for him what they thought roper, he did not "sigh;" but he insisted that they were green, that was the head of the party, and they would do whatever I instructed them to do. But his own actions are a yet better commentary on his question. Mr. Bowen is now doing what the high-priest wished the English to do. He is preaching the gospel, and also setting up a new French olive press, and he informed me that it was in the latter branch of his business only that the high-priest manifested an interest. That last paragraph of your extract from Azuba is one of a class, from which certain persons, with strong imaginations, are prone to draw large conclusions. Therefore I have noticed it.

We reached the tomb of Eleazar after about an hour's ride from (p. 614) Jacob's well. Its direction is about south-east from the well, and is situated on a hill to the left of the great road through Galilee. The tomb is enclosed by a solid wall. The enclosure is 27 paces long by 16 wide, is well flagged, and has three divisions; the lower one of which contains the building over the tomb, which is 15 feet by 18. The enclosure contains two large buten, and one kharub tree, the latter being about feet in diameter. This is the tree which produces the succulent pod, with which the prodigal son was fain to satisfy the cravings of his appetite. The high-priest gave us some facts relating to the tomb, and the building of the present enclosure, which I neglected to note. On the walls were some inscriptions in the Samaritan character, like those which I had before noticed on their houses in the city. In Joshua xxiv. 33, we are told—"And Eleazar, the son of Aaron died, and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in Mt. Ephraim." The tomb now pointed out is on a hill in the borders of Ephraim, and I am strongly inclined to place confidence in this Samaritan tradition. We met, though not without some difficulty and grumbling on our

part, the ideas of the high-priest as to what we Americans ought "to do" for the poor Samaritans; and after taking our lunch, we journeyed on to Lybon, which we reached late in the evening; and the next morning, leaving our luggage to take the beaten road, we went in search of Shiloh, which we found in the place pointed out in our inspired Guide-book—"A place which is on the north side of Bethel, on the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah." The place is an utter desolation, without inhabitants; and as we stood beside an ancient temple, with its venerable oak, the relics of idolatrous worship which had there succeeded the worship of the true God—and as we gazed on that ruin-covered hill, and on the lovely vales around, in which the thousands of Israel were wont to assemble at their solemn convocations, we read with an appreciation of its solemn meaning which we had never before experienced, the warning of God to Jerusalem, (Jer. vii. 12—14,)—"But go ye now unto my place, which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh." The same night we reached the Holy City, and we saw ample evidence of the fulfilment of the unheeded threatening. "Let us then be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, we should take heed lest he also spare not us." What an affecting narrative is that Ps. lxxviii. 56—64! Yet that history which describes also the Christian churches which have risen, flourished, and fallen in that same land, will hereafter be our history also, if we "fall after the same example of unbelief."

Yours in the bonds of the gospel, G. LANSING.  
 To the Rev. Drs. Cooper and Dales, Philadelphia.

### 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

The first article, (p. 284) SHECHEM AND THE SAMARITANS, is also in **The Friend of Israel**, Vol. III. January, 1855- February, 1857, Glasgow: Thomas Murray and Son. Einburgh: William Oliphant and Sons. London: Houlston and Stoneman (p.209-13) June 1856 ( By Scottish Society for the conversion of Israel)

The original book: *Azuba, or the Forsaken Land: a Description of a Recent Visit to Palestine*. By the Rev. William Ritchie. Published 1856 by Johnstone and Hunter in Edinburgh . Written in English. (p. 170-176 ?)

A New publication is now out: [Azûba; or, the Forsaken Land. A description of a recent visit to Palestine](#) (ISBN: [9781402191336](#)) William Ritchie  
**Book Description:** Adegi Graphics LLC, New York, 2011. paperback. Book Condition: New. Elibron Classics series. This Elibron Classics title is a reprint of the original edition published by Johnstone and Hunter in Edinburgh, 1856. This book is in English. This book contains 514 pages. **This item is printed on demand.**