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Life, Letters and Addresses of John Craig Havemeyer

By John Craig Havemeyer

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(p. 66) "All do not look upon Sunday with the same feelings as myself, making its observance depend very much upon personal convenience. After a fatiguing day's ride going through Sebaste, the ancient Samaria, we halted at Nablous and, ascending Mount Gherazim before daylight on the next morning, continued to a poor spring five hours from the Holy City, the first seen from a hill at 11 : 05, and here my description must end; there is much to say, but no time."

While in Samaria Mr. Havemeyer was shown the so-called ancient Samaritan Bible, claimed by the Samaritans to be 3,200 years old. At the time of Mr. Havemeyer's visit the parchment in question was kept in a case or cover of red silk embroidered with gold. The parchment had been torn, and was very much stitched with white thread. It unrolled from both ends. The aged Samaritan who had charge of the parchment said that it had been written by Abishua, the son of Phinehas, and great-grandson of Aaron, brother of Moses, and first high priest of Israel. Mr. Havemeyer did not believe that the parchment had the antiquity claimed, or anything approaching it. This is the same parchment mentioned by E. Robinson, in his "Biblical Researches in Palestine." Robinson visited Samaria about fourteen years before Mr. Havemeyer was there. The priest having charge of the Samaritan church, or synagogue, brought out the noted manuscript. Robinson says: "It was certainly very much worn, and somewhat tattered with use and much kissing, and here and there patched with shreds of parchment, but the handwriting appeared to be very similar to the former (a manuscript in modern hand, and on new parchment that had been shown previously), and the vellum seemed in like manner not ancient. Of course we were not permitted to handle or touch it."

(p. 67) Mr. Havemeyer gave sixteen piastres—about seventy-two cents—to the old man who had shown him the parchment. The Samaritans were few in number, in comfortable condition, more Gentile than Jew in appearance, but claiming to be stricter than the Jews in obeying the Laws of Moses. They are of mixed descent, the original Samaritans having been Assyrian colonists sent to occupy the land when the Israelites were carried off as captives to Babylon.

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

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

John Craig Havemeyer, (1833- 1922) son of William F. Havemeyer, thrice Mayor of New York City, died early, yesterday morning at his home, 58 Lamartine Avenue, Yonkers, Mr. Havemeyer was in his ninetieth year and had spent an active life as a merchant, sugar refiner and writer and speaker on political.

According to the dates in the book, his visit was a Monday Dec. 6, 1852