

Reproduced from the Library of the Editor of
www.theSamaritanUpdate.com
Copyright 2011

Letters from Egypt, Syria, and Greece
By **Richard Allen**

Reprinted from the General Advertiser
Dublin:
Printed by Gunn & Cameron,
13 Fleet Street
1869

(p. iv)

EGYPT.—One of the first places we visited was the house of Benjamin F. Pinkerton, American Missionary at Alexandria. His schools are in excellent condition, but it is to his Gospel labours I more particularly refer. From many hours spent in his company, I may say I think I have never met with a more spiritually minded man. He is surrounded by some native converts, who appear scarcely behind himself in religious experience.....

(p. v).....

10th.—The Female Samaritan School at Nablous, which E. and S. Jones established while there (should a good report be received of its operations).

(p. 39) IX.

Departure from Jerusalem—Painful Results of the Common Inattention to Personal Cleanliness on the part of the Natives—Intelligence of the Children—Universal Custom of Hospitality to Strangers—Fruitfulness of Ephraim—Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal—Nablous, the Ancient Shechem— Visit to the Samaritan High Priest.

SAMARIA, 26th of 5th Month (May), 1869

(p. 42).....

Our next halt was at Howara, which we reached in the evening, where we found the population as usual friendly ; and striking our tents very early in the morning, proceeded *en route* to Nablous or Nabulus, the ancient Shechem, by way of Jacob's Well, memorable for the conversation which took place between our Lord and the woman of Samaria. Rough ways occasionally, with the accompaniments of a rich corn country, brought us nearer and nearer to Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, the latter on the north side of the Vale of Nabulus, and opposite it Gerizim, both appearing of nearly equal altitude. Arrived at " Jacob's "Well," we pitched one of our tents temporarily, and lingered long on this interesting spot. The well is now dry, and numbers of travellers have endeavoured to guess its depth by throwing stones into it. We found that though the mouth was sunk considerably below the level of the surrounding ground, on dropping a plumb line to the bottom it was still seventy feet deep.

Very strikingly were the words of our Lord brought home to us as we looked up at Mount Gerizim, just above us, and on which the Temple then stood—" Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this (p. 43) mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in

spirit and in truth." Continuing our course, and passing at some little distance the reputed burial place of Joseph, Nabalus gradually came into view, embosomed in rich wood, and we pitched our tents in the midst of a number of venerable olive trees, amongst the gnarled trunks of which numerous lizards, some of a very large size, sported and lived. The situation of Shechem may well be described as in beauty second to none in Palestine. A town in the midst of rich woods, surrounded by groves of olives, figs, and pomegranates, the latter in rich blossom, well watered by numerous streams, the sides of the mountains cultivated in terraces, the cactus growing abundantly, while in front is a deep and richly-wooded defile, Mount Gerizim on the one side and Mount Ebal on the other rising almost precipitously—the whole presented a *coup d'oeil* of ever-varied beauty, as early morning, noon, and the shades of evening successively followed each other. We first ascended Mount Ebal, a toilsome ride, part of it somewhat difficult, from the narrowness of the path along which we sometimes rode, while occasionally we had to dismount, leaving our horses to follow as best they could. Missing the most direct path, we wandered from summit to summit till nearly sunset; at length we reached the highest point, when three beautiful gazelles, startled at our approach, bounded across the hill top, and were lost to sight in a few moments. On another occasion some of our party saw two of these fleet limbed creatures, but they were off in a moment. Our dragoman has since bought a young one, which was caught napping by a wanderer on the hills. Though very shy at first, it seems to thrive, and apparently will soon become reconciled to captivity. The view from Mount Ebal was fine in the extreme, and before leaving Shechem we ascended Mount Gerizim also, and lingered for some time amongst the extensive ruins which crown its summit. The view, commanding Jacob's Well, with its surroundings, the Valley of Sharon, and the Lebanon and Carmel ranges, was very lovely; and when the time came for striking our tents, we felt that we had looked upon few richer scenes. Shechem boasts of its manufactures, amongst which are extensive soap and oil works, as well as those used in preparing cotton for the market. The neighbourhood of the town is incumbered with great mounds of the usual rubbish, to which the vast amount of refuse from the soap works forms a fearful addition. Again, the streets are narrow, and in wretched condition, rendering it a work of no small hazard (too great for me) to ride through it. That it is a place of considerable commerce is evidenced by the substantial appearance of its merchants, and by the numerous strings of camels arriving or departing laden, large numbers of them to be seen lying under the venerable olive trees, awaiting their turn; but still no one seemed aware how grievously the health of the city was interfered with by the utter want of attention to sanitary regulations. We were favoured by a call from three officials, highly respectable young men, who expressed to us the satisfaction they felt at our visit, and at the way we mingled with the people, which they expected would be useful in many ways. In reply we endeavoured to call their attention to some leading sanitary regulations which we believed would largely add to the health of the people. But I must not forget a visit we paid to the well-conducted missionary schools, as well as to two others, one in the Jewish quarter, which hardly deserved the name; the other to the Samaritan one, which we found in a healthy and vigorous condition. We had pleasant intercourse with their aged High Priest, a venerable looking (p. 44) old man, who much interested us by his conversation, displaying much liberality of view. He appears highly esteemed by his fellow-citizens, as well as by those at a distance who have made his acquaintance. He freely conversed with us as regards their

religious faith, and permitted us to enter their place of worship, where we saw their copy of the Pentateuch (all they accept as inspired), and said to be the oldest in the world. We were so much pleased with the school for boys that, finding from the High Priest that his daughter had been well educated, we endeavoured to arrange with him to commence a girls' school under her auspices.

They are now a very small body, numbering altogether, I think, under one hundred and fifty.

But it is time to close this lengthy and very hastily written epistle. Our next camping ground will be at Sebaste, the site of the ancient royal city of Samaria.

(p. 44) X.

The Plain of Shechem—Sebaste, the Ancient Samaria—Oppressive Exactions of the Turkish Government—Description of the Country—Distribution of the Scriptures, &c—Endor, its Weird and Savage Scenery—A Mountain Excursion—Arrival at Nazareth—Hasty Descent to Beyrout.

BEYEOUT, 9th of 6th Month (June), 1869.

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

Apparently Allen sent letters to the *General Advertiser* that published them in their issues.

Eli and Sybil Jones went with Richard Allen on the journey. They are the Jones that is mentioned of the Samaritan Girl's school.

Other interesting articles

~~~~~  
**Friends' Review.**

A Religious Literary and Miscellaneous Journal.

Vol. XXIII, Philadelphia, Second Month 5, 1870, No. 24.

Edited by William J. Allinson, Published weekly at No. 109 North Tenth Street, Philadelphia, by Alice Lewis.

(p. 380) CORRESPONDENCE.

EDINBURGH, First month 7th, 1870.

Dear friend William J. Allinson:-

(p. 381) .....

31st—We reached the ruins of Debon a little after noon, where we passed the night. No one can express the wildness of those Arab tribes that live there."

In returning to Jerusalem, Jacob visited the girls' schools at Nablous (Sychar) and Ramallah, (12 miles north of Jerusalem), where, by means of the funds subscribed by Friends for schools in Syria, girls' schools were established during our last journey, the former for the Samaritan girls. In these schools we take a rather special interest. The one

at Ramallah is very promising; that at Nablous not quite so much so; but I hope it may yet succeed. Jacob says: "On the 8th of 11th mo. reached Nablous; the next morning I visited the Samaritan girls' school, and talked with Amran, the high priest, for a time, about the management of the school, for it is not so promising as that at Ramallah.

I am thine sincerely, Ellen Claire Miller.

~~~~~

The British Friend:
A Monthly Journal,
Chiefly Devoted to the Interests of the Society of Friends
No. I, Glasgow, 1st Month, 1st, 1870, Vol. XXVIII

1st Month, 1st, 1870

(p. 10) On the 8th of the 11th Month left Salt, and went to Nabloos; the next morning I visited the Samaritan girls' school, and talked with Amran, the high-priest for a time about the management of the school, for it is not so much promising as that at Ramalah. Jacob Hishmeh

~~~~~

**The British Friend:**  
A Monthly Journal,  
Chiefly Devoted to the Interests of the Society of Friends  
No. VII, Glasgow, 1<sup>st</sup> Month, 1<sup>st</sup>, 1870, Vol. XXVIII

(p. 180) Of the girls' school at Ramallah, near Jerusalem, which Jacob Hishmeh superintends, and which is under the special care of Friends, there are continued good accounts, encouraging us to hope for its successful continuance a second year. The one established at the same time among the Samaritan girls at Nablous, has, on the contrary, failed, so that the means appropriated to its support must be applied to some other purpose, probably to opening a girls' school in another place, where, with a teacher interested in her work, as Miriam at Ramallah, we may hope for a good school.  
E.C.M.

E.C. M. is E.C. Miller

~~~~~

The British Friend:
A Monthly Journal,
Chiefly Devoted to the Interests of the Society of Friends
No. VII, Glasgow, 7th Month, 1st, 1869, Vol. XXVII

(p. 203) Eli and Sybil Jones
(Extracts from E. C. Miller's Letters.)

On the 21st (*fifth Month added by Editor, TSU*) we reached Nablous, where we remained three days, paying visits to the boys' school under Bishop Gobat, also to the

Jews' and Samaritan schools. The chief part of the population of this place consists of Mahomedans, a small proportion being Jews and Christians, and about 150 Samaritans, the last remnant of the race. The latter had no school for girls; but a suitable teacher being found funds were left for the establishment of one, and we have since heard of its successful opening. At both boys' and girls' schools the Old and New Testament are used in reading. First-day morning Eli Jones held a meeting at Raphidia, a neighbouring village, one of the few possessing a school. In the forenoon a meeting was held in the tent, and in the evening at the same place a large and very interesting meeting, where Jews, Mahomedans, Christians, and Samaritans heard Christ fully preached. They listened with respectful attention, though we had been warned by some of the Christians of Nablous that if such meeting were attempted we might probably be stoned. The people at this and some other places are represented as having a strong Moslem feeling, opposed to Christianity; but no attempt being made violently to combat their errors, but rather faithfully and in love to show them the more excellent way, E. and S. Jones were heard gladly and respectfully. Next day a deputation from the government came to thank the Friends for the interest shown by them there, and throughout the country, in the people. We went up Mount Gerizim one evening and saw the splendid view from the summit, a view extending from Mount Hermon to the mountains around Jerusalem, and from Moab to the sea, and on it are the ruins of the old temple. The pomegranate-trees in the gardens round Nablous were in full blossom, bearing the most brilliant scarlet flower, and having a graceful foliage like the myrtle. Nothing, I think, can exceed this among fruit-trees. Nablous stands in a valley well supplied with water from Ebal and Gerizim. Thence we proceeded to Noos-Jebal, a village with a boys' school. E. Jones had a meeting in the afternoon with the children, at which the priest of the village and many others came, and by the words spoken to the children, the elders also were taught. After sunset upwards of 100 men and women, old and young, assembled, to whom, after reading the fifteenth and sixteenth Luke, E. and S. Jones spoke of the love of our Father in heaven to fallen man, and of his message of love and forgiveness to all through Jesus Christ, concluding with prayer. It was a time long to be remembered, the people listening very quietly and attentively, as was the case again the following morning when assembled at reading.....

~~~~~

**The British Friend:**

A Monthly Journal,

Chiefly Devoted to the Interests of the Society of Friends

No. IX, Glasgow, 9<sup>th</sup> Month, 1<sup>st</sup>, 1869, Vol. XXVII

(p. 214) SCHOOLS IN THE EAST.

SOME account of the schools, &c, in Syria and Egypt, lately visited by E. and S. Jones and their companions, may be acceptable to the many Friends who take a warm interest in the work going on in these lauds, and whose funds we took with us for distribution. In the accounts of the journey already given, reference has been made to the schools visited; but it may give a clearer idea of what is being done for the education and improvement of the people of these countries, to bring together the various points of interest.

(p. 215) .....

The school at Nablous is for the Samaritans; the Old and New Testaments are to be used in it, and the Samaritan girls taught reading, writing, and sewing. These schools are superintended by one of the native missionaries at Jerusalem.

~~~~~

The British Friend:
A Monthly Journal,
Chiefly Devoted to the Interests of the Society of Friends
No. XI, Glasgow, 11th Month, 1st, 1869, Vol. XXVII

(p. 283) Letters from Jerusalem
To the Editor of the British Friend

The girls' school at Nablous is very promising now; there are nine girls who can read a little already. Amran, the Samaritan high-priest, takes an interest in that school.

(p. 284) ...E.C. Miller. Edinburgh, 10th Month 26th, 1869.

~~~~~

**Extracts from the Minutes and Proceedings  
of the Yearly Meeting of Friends,  
Held in London,**

(Printed by direction of the Yearly Meeting.)

1870.

London:

Edward Marsh, Book and Tract Depository of the Society of Friends, 12, Bishopgate  
Without.

London: R. Barrett and Sons, Printers,  
Mark Lane

(p. 58) APPENDIX B.

*Comprising documents presented to the Yearly Meeting, but not read in it for want of time.*

AT A MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS, HELD THE 6TH OF EIGHTH MONTH, 1869.

An account of the visit of our friends Eli and Sybil Jones in Egypt and Palestine has been brought in from the Committee and read in this meeting with much interest. It is to be taken to the Yearly Meeting, subject to such abridgment or modifications as the Committee may think fit.

SECOND VISIT OF E. AND S. JONES TO SYRIA, &c.....

(p. 65) .....

On the 21st we reached Nablous, where we remained three days, visits being paid to the boys' school belonging to Bishop Gobat, the Jews' school, and that of the Samaritans. The chief part of the population of Nablous are Mahometans, there being a small proportion of Jews, Christians of various denominations, and 150 Samaritans, the last remnant of this still distinct race. The Samaritans had no school for girls, but, a suitable teacher being found among themselves, funds were left for the establishment of one

under the same oversight as that at Ramallah, and we have since heard of its successful opening. At their boys' school they read both the Old and New Testaments, and these are also to be used in the girls' school.

~~~~~

Eastern Sketches:
Notes of Scenery, Schools,
and Tent Life in Syria and Palestine
by Ellen Claire Miller
Edinburgh:
William Oliphant and Company
1871

(p. 172)

We remained three days at Nablous, visits being paid to the boys' school belonging to Bishop Gobat, and under the care of a German missionary, the Jews' school, and that of the Samaritans.¹ Eli Jones held a meeting at the neighbouring village of Rafidia, which possesses a small school for boys. Most of the women of the place were absent in the harvest-fields, but a few came to the schoolhouse with the men and children, and these looked at us lovingly, striving to make us understand by words and signs how they rejoiced to see us. What a rich harvest-field is in this land for truly Christian women!

At Nablous our tents were pitched among some old olive-trees at the foot of Mount Gerizim, a few minutes distant from the gates of the city. Gardens with figs and pomegranates, the branches of the latter brilliant with the large scarlet bells of this most beautiful fruit-tree, were closely adjoining. We looked across the rich, deep valley, watered from the mountains on either hand, to the barer sides of Ebal beyond, its lower parts laid out in plantations of prickly pear, the tops craggy, or covered with short pasture, whence we saw the flocks creeping down in a long, dark, straggling line into the valley at night. This (p. 173) is the beautiful Vale of Shechem, the first place in Canaan where Abraham pitched his tent.

Many women came out from the town to gaze on the strangers, most of them seeking for *backsheesh*, and almost all dirty and down-trodden in their appearance. Here, too, we again saw several lepers, this being one of the places where they may congregate. They sat down or stood just within the encampment, stretching their arms out, begging importunately, and sometimes coming close to us in their eagerness. Inanimate nature was lovely—the hills, the sky, the beautiful flowering trees—but *human* nature was sorrowful to look upon.

A meeting was held at the tent in the forenoon of the Sabbath which we spent at Nablous, and a large and very interesting meeting at the same place in the evening, when Jews, Mohammedans, Christians, and Samaritans together heard Christ fully preached, listening with great attention and respect, though we had been warned by some of the Christian residents in Nablous that if such a meeting were attempted we should probably be stoned. The people here, at Sebastieh, and some other places visited, are represented as very rude, and with a strong Moslem feeling of opposition to Christians; but, no attempt

¹ A native teacher and his English wife have also a school for girls and a women's sewing-class, but these were not in operation at the time of our visit.

being made violently to combat their errors, but rather in love faithfully to show them the more excellent way, Eli and Sybil Jones were heard respectfully and gladly.

(p. 180)....

Accordingly, after sunset, we rode down from the tents at the top of the hill of Samaria, through the orchards, shaking many spent pomegranate blossoms to the ground as we passed under the branches. The interpreter, dragoman, and muleteers accompanied us, carrying a lamp, for the moon had not yet risen.

We found the people gathering in the courtyard, old and young men, with their staves, and in their striped mantles. Our party occupied the portico, and the lamp was placed on a table brought from the tents; the Samaritans sat or stood immediately below, in the shadow of the great wall of the mosque. A few women stole in at the door, hovering on the outskirts of the assembly, and we invited these to come and sit on the dais beside us. The clear stars looked down upon us; and, as the evening went on, the moon rose behind the ruined wall, and shone on the people, about 200 being gathered there to listen to such words as they had never before heard.

They were first invited to try to lift up their hearts in prayer to the great God of heaven; then from the Arabic Bible the 40th and 23d psalms were read; and Eli Jones spoke to them of the God of David, of Moses, and of the patriarchs,—of David's experience as given in these psalms,— of his condition when he felt himself as in an horrible pit,— of his means of deliverance from it,—and of his peace and joy when he could look up to God and follow Him as his Shepherd; referring to our case as the same as that of David, and to our only means of deliverance. He then told them of the state of society in Western countries, and of the good results of education and piety, speaking of the condition of woman, and of the part she takes there, both (p. 181) in the household and as a teacher, and even as a preacher of the gospel.

They listened to this with great attention, some of the older men standing up and frequently interposing words of assent or inquiry; while there were some dissentient voices, such a sphere for woman being so different from what is considered her right position in the East.

Sybil Jones then addressed the people, setting before' them the advantages of education, and of the elevation of woman; encouraging them to make some sacrifices that their children might be educated, and God would bless their efforts; reminding them how 'righteousness exalteth a nation;' and exhorting them to 'seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all needful things would be added unto them.'

They were heard with great respect, the people being here, as everywhere else, very much struck with the consideration of their coming so far to visit them with a desire to do their souls good. No one else, they said, had ever taken an interest in them; they never heard such beautiful words; had we really come from that far country on purpose to see them?

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

These references are not known to be 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