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**That Goodly Mountain & Lebanon:
Being the Narrative of a Ride Through the Countries
of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, into Syria, in the Month of August, 1872,
with Youhannah El Karey of Nablus.**

By **Thomas Jenner**

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(p. 146) Friday 16th. I am in Nablus, the Shechem of the Old Testament, and the Sycher of John iv. As we have seen.....

(p. 148) For these two or three days, we were inconvenienced by the difficulty of obtaining horses. My friend had restored the one he had been riding to its owner and depended upon making fresh arrangements, but met with many obstacles. Owing to the disturbed state of the country beyond Jordan, the government had found a pretext for requisitioning most of the horses in Nablus for the use of the (p. 149) troops. This caused owners of horses to be loth to let it appear that they had any, lest theirs also should be impressed, from which circumstance it arose that a considerable number were in concealment. Thus, part of our time was unsuccessfully occupied with efforts to obtain a mount for my companion.

One of the places whither our business took us, was the telegraph office, and I noticed, in a long and animated conversation which passed (in Arabic of course) between my companion and the manager of the instruments, that he was describing what I imagined to be a case of illness, as he placed his arched hand over his right cheek, and used the word *j+£ "Kabir"* which I knew to be "great." After the conversation, Mr. El Karey turned to me and explained that the speaker had an infant child at home, afflicted with a large and angry swelling on the side of its head, which, instead of being reduced by the treatment it had received, had rather grown worse; that the infant was in continual pain, causing great anxiety to parents and nurse.

Happily I felt that this was a case in which I could prescribe with some hope of success, and recommended warm fomentations, to be followed (p. 150) by the application of a cold-water compress, and these to be alternated three or four times in the course of the day. Upon this we repaired to the house, where a novel scene awaited me.

There were the Mahometan grandmother and mother, so closely veiled that only their eyes were visible, but the anxiety and interest expressed by these could not be mistaken. The nurse was a negress, whose whole appearance and behaviour justified the words of Cowper:

"Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in black and white the same."

The poor little sufferer was evidently in great pain from the abscess which, by squeezing and the application of cataplasms of lemon leaves and white of egg, had (no wonder!) grown worse. I again insisted on the importance of applying the water at-such a temperature at first as would allow of an elevation as the bathing was continued, the danger of urging the discharge by any pressure beyond the gentlest touch, and the necessity of covering the cold-water rag with oil-silk, a piece of which was happily forthcoming from Mrs. El Karey's

stores. The linen cloths, the hot and cold water were brought forth, the old plasters discarded, and, with English surgeon and Arabic dresser to (p. 151) regulate the temperature, and the African nurse to apply the fomentation, the father looking on, and mother and grandmother peeping over their veils with looks of the profoundest interest—baby (who was a fine little fellow of four months, but whom I should have judged to be at least ten months) was soon under the influence of the new treatment; in hopes of the success of which, we left him for the night.

Saturday 17th. Rose at 5 a.m., and accompanied my companion to the Turkish bath. After breakfast, although he had not obtained a fresh horse, to avoid being left altogether in the lurch by the muleteer who had accompanied us from Jerusalem and whom, under all circumstances, it seemed advisable to shut out from any opportunity of absconding, Mr. El Karey ordered him to bring my horse and the mule to the house, while we waited on the governor and explained the difficulty of our position. The governor, who had been recently appointed, received us with great urbanity and kindness, giving us coffee and promises, and instructing an officer to see our wants supplied.

We took leave of his Excellency, and were conducted by the officer to a gallery overlooking a (p. 152) yard, in which were pointed out three or four sore-backed animals, to place a saddle on either of which would have been simple cruelty. My companion expostulated, but was informed that these were the best that could be obtained at the time.

Upon this we set out for the Jewish quarter and made our wants known there, as it sometimes happens that such lack can be supplied by one or other of the Jewish families. "We were most kindly received and inquiries had been instituted in our behalf, when two soldiers from the government house presented themselves, having been commissioned to use all lawful arguments to dissuade us from availing ourselves of Jewish, when government resources failed. It is now literally true that where of old it was said " The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans," the rulers and the Samaritans have no dealings with the Jews. The peculiar oppression which the latter people are now under was yet more strikingly illustrated before we left Nabhis, as I shall have occasion to describe.

We next visited the quarter of the Samaritans, after the hour of their synagogue service (Saturday being their sabbath). We found the high priest at home, reading from a Hebrew manu- (p. 153) script, and were received very kindly. He is a man of a very handsome and venerable appearance and of an amiable expression. Having learned that I was from England, he inquired in broken English if I knew Mr. Mills?¹ My answer in the affirmative seemed to act as a talisman. Immediately he exceeded his former self in kindness, and presently his good wife, a worthy dame whose healthy appearance suggested that athletics are among the customs of Samaritan ladies, brought us a repast of bread, cheese, butter, water melons and water. (It will be remembered that on nearly all occasions, by bread is meant the Arab cake baked on the hearth.) This *gave* an opportunity for speaking about the water "which if a man drink, he shall live for ever." I proposed that he should visit England, and he expressed his willingness on condition that I should receive him, which, of course, I promised to do.

After a little while, my companion delicately introduced the matter of our desire to see the celebrated Pentateuch, the accredited oldest Biblical MS in the world. His nephew, and apparent successor to his office, conducted us to the syna- (p. 154) gogue, and having carefully locked the door, that it might not be seen by others of the Samaritans that we were being shewn the sacred relic, placed a stand before us, on which to rest the scroll. He went behind a screen and reappeared, bearing the MS in its silver case; having opened which, and

¹ Author of "Nablus and the Modern Samaritans" (lately deceased). *Et vide* p. 39.

placed it on the stand, he allowed us to approach and look on the relic. It is now well-known that many European and American travellers have been put off with the sight of one of the less ancient MSS, but my companion and other esoteric informants assured me that it was none other than *Manuscriptum Antiquissimum* which I saw.

On our way home we passed by " the potter's house " and turned in to look on him at his work. He sat at the wheel which he turned with his foot, and taking a lump of clay, placed it on the wheel, then while sustaining the rotation with his feet, having previously dipped his hands into a tub of water, applied them to the revolving lump in such a way as speedily to make it assume the form of a solid cylinder. He now directed his hands to the upper portion of the clay, so as to produce a hollowness therein and to complete it to the shape of a little water-pot, having finished (p. 155) which, he stopped the wheel and detached it; then renewing the rotation, he repeated the operation on the rest of the clay, and so proceeded from "*the same lump*" to make two or more vessels.

I especially noticed the facility with which, by a momentary alteration of the position of one of his fingers, he produced the most radical change in the form of the vessel, which brought out very strikingly another point in the scripture comparison, "Hath not the potter *power* over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" (Rom. ix. 21.)

We called to see the sick baby and were very pleased to learn that the remedies had, through the Lord's blessing, been successful, and the patient and nurses had passed a better night than for the previous week. To add to the assurance that everything was being properly done, the compress was removed, and the English pseudosurgeon and Arabic dresser, with the help of the nurse, applied the fomentation and renewed the compress, leaving everything in a hopeful condition.

In the afternoon, having obtained another horse, we started for Mount Gerizim, passing by the (p. 156) spot which bears the name of Jotham's Cliff (see Judges ix. 7). Near the top of the Mount, we came to the Samaritan encampment and temple, which consist of two or three places set apart, within dry walls of broken rock, in which the Samaritans assemble for the annual keeping of the passover. On these occasions, six or seven lambs are offered, according to the house of their fathers, "A lamb for a house." (Exod. xii. 3.) Over this celebration the high priest presides, and at his bidding, the lambs are simultaneously slaughtered and the feast is kept in more or less conformity to the details which marked its first appointment. Thus "on this mountain" (John iv. 20) do the Samaritans still worship (must we not say?) "they know not what." (Ver. 22.)

My companion pointed out the rock on which, it is said, once stood the Samaritan temple, and on which the Samaritans believe that Abraham offered up Isaac. Near to it were the ruins of a crusade church, which must have been, originally, a grand structure. On the mountain, I noticed some partridges, flying away at our approach, reminding me of the words of David to Saul in 1 Samuel xxvi. 20, "As when one doth hunt a partridge on the mountains," while the eagles soared (p. 157) above our heads with that vigour and dignity so often referred to in scripture, e.g., Isaiah xl. 31, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Having come down from the mountain, my companion pointed out to me the reputed site of the oak, under which Jacob buried the idols. (Gen. xxxv. 4.) "We next took our places on opposite sides of the valley, my companion on that part of the slopes of Gerizim upon which, it is believed, the six tribes, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin stood on the occasion mentioned in Deuteronomy xxvii. 12, 13, and Joshua viii. 33, while I rode to the

corresponding part of Ebal. Although there was a rather strong breeze blowing along the valley, we found that at the distance we were apart (about three quarters of a mile), we could, without raising our voices to a very high pitch, hear what was said by one to the other. Thus did we put to a practical test the conditions under which the law was here read, and the responses made by the tribes on either side of the valley. And be it remembered, that in the days of Joshua, the law was read in the (p. 158) valley between; a situation still more favourable for others, on either side, to hear. Therefore, even upon the low ground of experiment, the audibility of the words, under the conditions described in the word of God, instead of being simply impossible (as some sophists have endeavoured to say) is a simple fact. Just as we had finished our dialogue, an Arab in the neighbourhood discharged his gun, which produced reverberations along the mountain sides, strikingly illustrative of the peculiar fitness of their formation to produce these acoustic phenomena.

We next proceeded to Jacob's Well, in the immediate vicinity of which we noticed a long monolith shaft of a column of polished granite, and other indications of ruins of a church which doubtless was that mentioned by St. Jerome as standing here, and in the same neighbourhood were two or three frustums of columns of the same form and material, one of which had been built into a wall.

We now arrived at the one unique spot in all Palestine of which we felt we could say, "Jesus came here." The well is surrounded by a ruined wall, having entered within which, we found a domed cover surrounding the well. We let ourselves down by the irregularities of the masonry, (p. 159) and stood at the true mouth of the well. This was stopped by a wedge-like block of stone, through the fissures between which, and the stonework of the well's mouth, we dropped two small stones, and they returned a sound which told that they fell on a dry bottom. The time between dropping a stone and hearing it fall (two seconds and a half, I believe), gave some clear impression of the depth of the well. Maundrell says the well "is dug in a firm rock, and contains about three yards in diameter, and thirty-five in depth; five of which we found full of water." ² That the well is now constantly dry has been proved by the circumstance of a traveller's pocket bible falling down, and being recovered after lying four or five years at the bottom in a state uninjured, or little injured, by damp.

What memories attach to this spot, connected as it is with the histories of Abraham and Isaac and, more especially, of Jacob and Joseph! Many have expressed a surprise that Jacob should have dug this well at the entrance of a valley in which were so many natural springs; but it has been justly replied that, there being no cordiality in (p. 160) the terms upon which Jacob dwelled among the men of Shechem; like his father Isaac when he dwelled in Gerah, (Gen. xxvi. 6, et seq.) it was his interest to secure an independent means of watering his flocks. From the time of Jacob who sunk the well, and drank thereof himself and his children, and his cattle, how many strangers and pilgrims had not rested and been refreshed there; who, from various considerations, eschewed a divergence to the springs in the adjoining valley. Now one comes there, on His way from Judea to Galilee and sits on the well, His disciples only going into the city to buy meat, as though He had no purpose of turning from His northward journey. Who is this weary stranger? A little time will discover; for it is made known through the coming of a Samaritan woman, that He is the Saviour of the world, (Verse 42) and, when invited, He turns in and sojourns two days in the city. Such is His grace, and not only such:

"Behold a stranger at the door!
He gently knocks—has knocked before;

² " A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem," p. 84.

Has waited long—is waiting still,
You use no other friend so ill.
Open the door, He'll enter in
And sup with you, and you with Him."

From the well we rode a short distance to the (p. 161) Mahometan *wely*, known as Joseph's tomb. It is a walled enclosure, surmounted at one end with a dome, and containing, besides the reputed tomb of Joseph, that of a wealthy Mahometan, who obtained interment here. There are two tablets bearing inscriptions, one in the Samaritan, the other in the Hebrew character, the latter of which I commenced to copy, but soon abandoned the attempt and brought away as a memento, three or four leaves from a vine growing on the spot, which I regarded as suitably associated with the name of him who is compared to "a fruitful bough," even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall (Gen. xlix. 22); type of Him who is the true Joseph (that is, "increase ") "who shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied, and of the *increase* of whose government and peace there shall be no end." (Isa. ix. 7.)

What instruction too there is in the conduct of Joseph, who by faith gave commandment to the children of Israel concerning his bones, and was of the number of them who "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were (p. 162) strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Heb. xi. 13.)

We next wended our way westward, along the valley, and ascended the slopes of Ebal, where the mountain is terraced and planted with the prickly pear. It was the season of ripe fruit, and we ordered a basketful, which one of the owners proceeded to gather, while we contemplated the view of the city at our feet and of Mount Gerizim beyond. A part of this time I occupied in endeavouring to defend my poor horse from the attacks of innumerable flies, of which there were at least two kinds, one being protected by so hard a skin that all moderate blows fail to destroy them. They crowded to all those parts of his body where the poor animal had no power to reach them, and the gratitude with which he yielded himself to my efforts to defend him was a happy assurance that they were appreciated.

On the topic of insects I may take this opportunity to speak as exhaustively as appears desirable. Of course I did not escape my share of annoyance from those which attack *genus homo*. That they were various, was evident from the different marks which their bites produced, and among which experts pointed out those of the (p. 163) mosquito. I confess I was pleasantly disappointed in the small amount of suffering from these causes, which, though they evidently existed, did not give me much trouble.

On Mount Gerizim this day, while I was contemplating the herbal and entomological specimens at my feet, with the thought of collecting some, I found that I was attended by a hornet, which seemed disposed to put to the test the more exquisite pleasure of stinging an Englishman, as compared with that yielded by the same performance on an Arab; so remembering what I had learned at school some twenty-three years before, "*Crabrones ne irrita*" (do not irritate hornets), I comported myself with quietness, and suspending my researches, escaped from his attack; making with him a schoolboy's bargain of mutual forbearance, as I afterwards did with other members of his family.

I saw a few locusts, and, especially when crossing the plain of Esdraelon, was attracted by the great variety of insect life, of which however I did not collect any specimens.

But I must return to Mount Ebal where, the pears we had ordered having been gathered, we commenced the descent, attended by a boy carrying (p. 164) the fruit, with which we

returned to the house. Having taken off their prickly coverings and received payment, he left and we remained within doors for the evening.

Lord's day, 18th. In the morning a small congregation assembled in the house, when we had hymns, prayer, and the reading of the word, all of course in Arabic. The portion read, and from which Mr. El Karey addressed the assembly, was Luke vii., upon which (especially the raising of the widow's son) it was also my privilege to speak a few words, which were interpreted by my companion. I believe we all felt the occasion had been one of privilege and blessing. After the meeting the Samaritan high priest called to return our visit. I took the opportunity of presenting him with an Arabic copy of the Gospel by John, opened at chapter iv., upon which we conversed a little. Afterwards a native doctor called, to whom I gave a copy of Luke, opened at chapter v. 31, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

The muleteer not having shewn himself to-day, we went in search of him, and were informed at the Khan where he had kept the horses, that the previous midnight he had gone back to Jerusalem, (p. 165) taking with him the mule and my horse. In this • - state of things, the horse which my companion had engaged for himself was of no avail, but we spread the matter before our heavenly Father, and felt the proper course to take was to go direct to the governor. We did so, and the scene of the day before was re-enacted. The governor listened to the tale of our difficulties, and offered to supply the best remedy in his power. Should he send a soldier to Jerusalem to bring back the truant muleteer, horse and mule? But the certainty of losing two days, and the uncertainty as to how many more, was so far removed from our ideas of a remedy, that we urged our need of one, if not two horses and a mule, with the least possible delay. The same officer as before was summoned, and the following dialogue took place:

Governor. "These gentlemen wish to go to Kaifa, and through a breach of contract on the part of their muleteer, who ran away last night with a horse and mule, they have only one horse between them. They cannot proceed without another horse and one mule, but two horses and a mule would suit them better. Attend to this at once."

Officer. "I suppose I must mention it to the under-governor?"

(p. 166) *Governor.* "Do as you like about that; only get the horses."

Officer. "Very well, sir."

Leaving the matter in the hands of those who had thus undertaken it, we returned to the house, and in an hour a muleteer, accompanied by a Bashi-bazouk (a private of irregular cavalry) followed us, having been sent by the officer. Preliminary arrangements were soon made, the nature of which I will, however, postpone to the minutes of the next day, when they were confirmed and carried out.

This afternoon two poor Jews called, to entreat Mr. El Karey's interest in their behalf, the government having ejected them from their home, turning them and their property into the street, for the purpose of occupying their house with soldiers. They came a second time on the same business, and received the assurance of being spoken for when an opportunity should arise, as was the case in the office of the British Consul-General, Beyrout.

At 8.30 p.m. there was a prayer meeting on the house-top. Again the manifest reality of the faith and love of some of those who assembled was very refreshing to witness. This evening we (p. 167) could hear the sound of music and rejoicing on account of a wedding, preparations anticipatory of the cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh." On the preceding night I was long kept awake by hearing a company of Mahometans, in the upper chamber of an adjoining house, singing for hours at a stretch, the long story of the birth of Mahomet.

These sounds and the cries of the Muezzin at the hours of prayer were painful reminders of the number of the followers of the impostor of Mecca.

Monday, 19th. This morning the Bashi-bazouk and muleteer came again, the governor having put into requisition for us, a mule and two horses, belonging to a large proprietor who has a mule caravan trafficking between Nablus and Damascus. My companion's plan had been to proceed to Kaifa by road, and thence by steamer to Beyrout, whence we might visit Damascus. One ground upon which he recommended this course was, that it would save me some expense. This, however, was clearly my consideration, and it appeared to me, that the uncertainty about the steamer (although the time spent in waiting for it, might be most profitably occupied), the risk of greater delay, and the omission of some of the interesting sites we might (p. 168) hope to visit in going by road, would more than countervail the advantages of such a course; so that it was with much pleasure I learned that two horses and a mule were at our service, on condition that we proceeded across country to Damascus, to which city they belonged.

The government having made this provision, the Bashi-bazouk was sent with the muleteer, it being deemed right we should have an escort of, at least, one horseman, and when it became known that one was wanted to go to Damascus, this man begged for the appointment, urging the special plea, that his wife and children, whom he had not seen for a long time, lived there. While he was sitting waiting for Mr. El Karey and scanning me with an inquisitive glance, which I thought expressed the idea, "I wonder how much I shall get out of him," I used the opportunity in making the annexed sketch of our gallant escort. The terms having been arranged, we felt greatly relieved, and did not forget to acknowledge the love of our heavenly Father in thus providing for us in our need.

I now accompanied my companion about the city where he had some arrangements to make before leaving, one of which was to lay in a stock (p. 169) of wheat; for this purpose we proceeded to the bazaar, where a corn merchant was sitting in his store, receiving and selling the corn. There were one or two asses which had arrived laden with corn, and sacks pitched with open mouths, from which samples could be taken by the buyers. The particular quality having been chosen and the price agreed to, the sack was emptied into a heap on the floor, and a man proceeded to measure it. To do this, he sat on the ground and just scooped up as much wheat into the bushel as he could, in the way usually practised in England; then with his hands he quickly shovelled up sufficient from the heap to fill it to the brim, when, instead of striking off the grains which were above the top, he proceeded to shake it lustily by torsion in alternate directions, so as to cause the grain to settle down considerably. Again he piled it up with his hands, and again shook it down by jolting it on the ground, using one edge of the base as a fulcrum upon which to raise it. Once more he piled it up, squeezing down the grain with his wrists each time of putting in a double handful; then he heaped it up into as high a cone as it would form, and, while the wheat was yet flowing over the brim in all directions, emptied the bushel into a fresh sack, and proceeded to measure up another.

(p. 170) Who would fail, with these things passing before him, to recall the words, " Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again." (Luke vi. 38.) As to the expression "into your bosom," I may mention that the bosom of the loose upper garment of the Arabs is used for carrying many things. Thus we read in Psalm cxxix. 7, " Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom," as it is allowed to the binders of sheaves to put the broken ears into their bosom, and, when this becomes full, by pulling more of the loose robe above the girdle, they enlarge the receiving capabilities of the bosom.

We found that the horses would not be ready till the afternoon, so there was every opportunity to make all necessary preparation, and to respond to a request which reached us, that we should visit the sick baby once more before leaving Nablils. We did so, and found his progress everything that we could expect, and with the most hearty acknowledgments on the part of his parents and grandmother, we left him. I have (p. 171) since learned, by a letter from Mr. El Karey, that the improvement continued unto a complete recovery.

In the afternoon, as my companion's clean shirts, and other provisions for the journey, were being laid out ready for packing, looking up from a letter which I was writing, I saw the cat jumping from a chair, and carrying off bodily a piece of mutton which had been cooked, cooled, and placed in readiness for our commissariat-bag. I happily raised an alarm in time to save the mutton, which, with hard boiled eggs and *khubbs* (Arab bread), was duly stowed.

My companion's spare things occupied the holsters at his saddle-bows, and when at 3.30 p.m. it was announced, "The horses are come," I was not long in producing my portmanteau and saddle-bags. ,

By 5 p.m. everything was ready, and, taking leave of our kind friends, we mounted. Let not the reader imagine that we were beyond the range of all detention. One or two who had been concerned in our obtaining the mount, now came forward, and, at the outskirts of the town, in the presence of witnesses (Ruth iv. 7-9) made a parley, which occupied some time, before my companion (p. 172) felt justified in acknowledging their claims, which however he at length did, to some extent.

We now took leave of Sychar, or Shechem, whither Abraham journeyed and where the Lord appeared to him and gave him the promise, "Unto thy seed will I give this land ;" and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him (Gen. xii. 7); where Jacob bought a parcel of a field at the hands of the children of Hamor for a hundred lambs (chap- xxxiii. 18, 19, margin), on the inhabitants of which his two sons Simeon and Levi were avenged for their sister (chap- xxxiv.), which was made one of the cities of refuge (Josh. xx". 7), and inhabited by the Kohathites, of the tribe of Levi (chap. xxi. 21), and where other Old Testament scenes are laid. But, though each has its distinct importance, there remains the one greater and culminating fact, (as in the case of Israel, "to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and

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Thomas Jenner (1848-1934), Cornish historian and language expert; was the son of Henry Jenner (1798- 1856)

Appears to be a friend and traveled with Mr. Rolla Floyd.

They visited Lieutenant Condor and Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake, who were engaged on the Palestine Exploration Fund Survey. Jenner met Mr. Nimmo, Mr. Pichard, Mr. Nimmo, Mr. Jones, Mr. Audi Azam, Mr. Mackintosh, Mr. Catafago, Mr. Demitri-Cara, Mr. Buckingham, Mr. and Mrs. Muller, Mr. Elijah G. Saleeby (of Mount Lebanon Schools) and Mr. Lowthian.

Visited Nablus August 1972