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(p. 289) **WESLEYAN-METHODIST MAGAZINE,  
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(p. 338)

**THE LAST JEWISH SACRIFICE.**

WHEN the Prince of Wales made his oriental tour, the visit of the party to Mount Gerizim was of great interest. The ancient Shechem is replaced by the modern Nablous, in the valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. Jacob's well is at the foot of Gerizim. In the city of Nablous remains to this day a small company of Samaritans, the last of that religion, numbering at the present time one hundred and fifty-two souls. These are the sole representatives of a once powerful nation, the ruins of whose city, Samaria, at a little distance, crown the summit of an olive-shaded hill, and look off with mournful solemnity to the distant Mediterranean. The decay of the race is not the subject of interest so much as the preservation, to this time, of the worship of God on Gerizim.

The royal party reached Nablous just at the time of the Passover, and witnessed its celebration on the mountain by this little company of the descendants of the ancient people who celebrated it there in all the pomp of a great nation. The scene, as described, was most deeply interesting. The assembly was on the mountain to "sacrifice the Passover at evening, at the going down of the sun." The priest and the elders were robed in white, with bare feet. The women were all of them shut up in their tents. Before sunset the recitation of prayers commenced; and as the sun touched the horizon, six sheep were slain with knives, and the blood was tipped by the finger on the foreheads and noses of the children. The sheep were then spitted on wooden poles. There is an interesting point here, inasmuch as this method of roasting the Passover lamb closely resembles the ancient. Now they use a pole which has a cross-beam to keep the body from slipping off. Formerly this cross-beam was thrust through the breast of the lamb, and the forefeet were attached to it. Justin Martyr called attention long ago to this resemblance to the cross.

(p. 337) The sheep were roasted in pits, the utmost care being taken to observe the injunctions of Moses as to all the details. The pits being covered, silence took possession

of the mountain for five hours. After midnight the company were aroused to eat the passover. The strangers were not allowed to approach, in obedience to the injunction that no foreigner or uncircumcised person should be allowed to partake. And now, with ropes around their waists, with loins girded, shoes on their feet, and staff in hand, they ate in haste. They also ate bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Then every particle of the meat and bones was carefully gathered and burned, so that "nothing remained till morning," and the people then returned to their homes.

The minuteness with which they observed the ceremonial law, in various particulars which we have not mentioned, renders the account exceedingly striking. The Samaritans of Nablous have long been a subject of interest to travellers, and there is reason for it. The smoke of the sacrifice has seldom been interrupted in many centuries. Whether it will continue much longer, or whether this little company will disappear from earth, none can tell. They have retained about the same numbers for a long time; and it is noticed by all travellers who have seen and conversed with them, that they inquire very earnestly after other Samaritans, and ask whether there are not some of their religion elsewhere upon the earth. But there are none; and this is, according to Dr. Stanley, the "only one Jewish sacrifice lingering in the world."

(p. 577) **WESLEYAN-METHODIST MAGAZINE,**  
**July, 1864**

(p. 621) ....**Nabulus.**

(p. 625)...

We next proceeded to Jacob's Well, dug by the prudent patriarch (whose father Isaac had had so many disputes about wells) in the parcel of ground he bought of Ilamor, and, perhaps, at once given to Joseph, then the only son of Rachel. There is no building over it or near it, to mark it out, like the tomb, from a distance. The stonework, which, till within the last few years, shut in the mouth of the well, is now partly broken down; and the veil itself has either been entirely filled up, or its mouth has been roofed over and covered with rubbish, so that no trace of an opening into the well is at present discoverable. It is known that the well is a shaft cut down through the solid rock, and that it cannot, therefore, have been materially injured. Without much difficulty it could be cleared out and restored to its former state. One traveller who visited the well in June, 1856, relates, that until January of that year, "they told us, the well had been preserved," (p. 626) and that up to that time one might have sat on the edge of the well, and have looked into its depths. But in that year "the Arabs had broken and scattered the stones, and filled the well with rubbish. (Gen. xxvi. 15.) The Christians and Turks had been at war in Nablous; a Turk had been accidentally killed by a Christian; and they told, us the filling up of this well was an act of revenge on the part of the Moslems, knowing how sacred it was to Christians."

A curious incident is related of a Bible that was once accidentally dropped into the well, and afterwards recovered. Mr. Bonar, in the narrative of the Scottish Missionaries to the Jews, tells us how, as he was leaning over the hole in the top of the arch, his Hebrew Bible slipped from the breast-pocket of his coat, and disappeared, as he naturally thought, for ever in the depth below. Dr. Wilson, in his "Lands of the Bible," completes the story

by telling us how it was found and fetched up, after it had lain at the bottom of the well for about four years. Having lowered one of his attendants by a rope, the Bible was found embedded in the mire, the well being all but dry. At Nabulus I met with the individual referred to, who descended the well on that occasion, and whose name is Yakoob, or Jacob-b-esh-Shellabi, a member of the Samaritan synagogue. It was not without much persuasion, it seems, that Jacob was induced to venture on so perilous an undertaking. He was reminded, however, to put his trust in Jacob's God; and at length he consented to be lowered down, having meanwhile stipulated for a considerable *backshish*, and was afterwards safely drawn up again, so that no harm befell him. To follow the narrative. "Jacob tied the rope round his body below his shoulders. The Arabs held with us the rope, and we took care that he should descend as gently as possible. When our material was nearly exhausted, he called out, 'I have reached the bottom; and it is at present scarcely covered with water.' After searching for about five minutes for the Bible among the stones and mud at the bottom, he joyfully called out, 'It is found! it is found! it is found!' He was not slow to confess his fears for his safe arrival at the top again. 'Never mind,' cried Mordecai, one of the party, on observing his alarm, 'you will get up by the help of the God of Jacob.' The book, from having been so long steeped in the water and mud below, was, with the exception of the boards, reduced to a mass of pulp. In our effort to recover it, we had ascertained the depth of the well, which is exactly seventy-five feet. Its diameter is about nine feet. It is entirely hewn out of the solid rock, and is a work of great labour. It bears marks about it of the greatest antiquity. 'The well is deep,' was the description given of it by the woman of Samaria to our Lord." (John iv. II.)

Formerly, it is said, there was a square hole, opening into a carefully built vaulted - chamber, about ten feet square, in the floor of which was the true mouth of the well. Now a portion of the vault has fallen in, and completely covered up the mouth, so that nothing can be seen above but a shallow pit half filled with stones and rubbish. "The well is deep," seventy-five feet, it appears, when last measured; and there was probably a considerable accumulation of rubbish at the bottom. Sometimes it contains a (p. 627) few feet of water, but at others it is quite dry. It is entirely excavated in the solid rock, perfectly round, nine feet in diameter, with the sides hewn smooth and regular. It has every claim to be considered the original well, sunk deep into the rocky ground by "our father Jacob." This at least was the tradition of the place in the last days of the Jewish people. (John iv. 6,12.) Of all the special localities of our Lord's life, this is almost the only one absolutely undisputed. Jews and Samaritans, Christians and Mohammedans, all agree in believing that this is really "Jacob's Well;" and its position so completely harmonizes with the narratives of both the Old and New Testament that we can have no doubt on the matter. The tradition goes back, says Dr. Robinson, at least to the time of Eusebius, in the early part of the fourth century. That writer, indeed, speaks only of the sepulchre; but the Bordeaux Pilgrim, in A.D. 333, mentions also the well.' Jerome says that a church had been built over it, and the ruins round the well are supposed to be those of this church, which was destroyed during the Crusades. Jesus was journeying from Jerusalem to Galilee, and rested at the well, while "His disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat." The well, therefore, lay apparently before the city, and at some distance from it. In passing along the eastern plain, Jesus had halted at the well, and sent His disciples to the city situated in the narrow valley, intending on their return to proceed along the plain on His way to Galilee, without Himself visiting the city. All this

corresponds exactly to the present character of the ground. The well, too, was Jacob's Well, of high antiquity, a known and venerated spot; which, after having already lived for so many years in tradition, would not be likely to be forgotten in the two and a half centuries intervening between St. John and Eusebius.<sup>1</sup> There are a few hovels or huts, and also the remains of apparently much older buildings, at a little distance from the well, in the direction of the town.

Jacob's Well, as every reader of the New Testament knows, is inseparably connected with one of the most touching incidents in our Saviour's history. "He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. 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. Jesus, therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well; and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink." (John iv. 3—7.) The well is in the direct road to Sychar; and here in the sultry noontide it was natural that a tired wayfarer would rest and drink. In the brief and beautiful narrative already cited, there is that which may well excite our tenderest sensibilities. We sympathize with the wants and infirmities of the sinless humanity of our blessed Lord, "the man Christ Jesus," "who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became (p. 628) poor;" as we view Him tabernacling in our nature, and journeying from place to place, as "He went about doing good;" as we think of Him weary and thirsty, approaching this well for temporary rest and refreshment, just as any weary traveller might do under similar circumstances. We find that He who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," was sensible to pain and fatigue, to hunger and thirst, like other men; that He was of "the same flesh and blood;" "tried in all points like as we are." It was here, we learn, that, "wearied with His journey," He rested about mid-day; and, while He "sat thus on the well," taught the poor Samaritan woman those great truths which have broken down the separating wall between Jews and Gentiles: "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Hither to the Saviour came Samaria's daughter; and His words, "Give me to drink," which showed that in His breast there lurked no Jewish scorn or prejudice, disarmed hostility in her, and won her to converse, and, finally, to believe. On the well's brink sat Jesus, the way-worn, wearied, thirsting traveller, in His lowly humanity, soon to display His Divine omniscience, to convince the ignorant, unbelieving Samaritans that He was in very truth the Christ. Here, too, as the people flocked from the city to hear Him, He pointed His disciples to the waving fields which decked the noble plain around, exclaiming, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." They were commanded to "lift up their eyes and look," to be reproofed for the dulness of their spiritual perceptions, and to have their latent missionary zeal roused into life by a most affecting emblem of the pressing wants of the human race. And now it was that the first-fruits of those whom the Jews considered as strangers were gathered into the garner, soon to be followed by the great harvest of the Gentile world.

The Saviour was about to tarry two days in the neighbouring "city of Samaria, which is called Sychar," before He proceeded on His journey on the great road through which He

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<sup>1</sup> It is understood that the well, and the site around it, have been lately purchased by the Russian Church, though not, it is to be hoped, with the intention of erecting a church over it, and thus for ever destroying the reality and the sentiment of the place.

must needs go," when "He left Judea, and departed into Galilee." He was at this time travelling on the same road as ourselves, only in an opposite direction. He had left Judaea on His way "into Galilee," and we had left Galilee on our way into Judaea; and, as Samaria lay between the two, He and we "must needs go through Samaria." Our Lord, as we learn from the narrative, (John iv. 40,) "abode two days-" in Sychar; and we abode a part of two days in Nabulus, on or near the site of which town Sychar had stood. The circumstance, or rather coincidence, is too interesting not to be remarked. May suitable meditation be gathered from it! May it be made spiritually profitable to both the writer and his readers; so that each may daily endeavour, by His grace, "to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life I"

On leaving the well we rode back into the town. The landscape had changed but little since the Saviour was here, and walked up this same valley; and though the palaces of Sychar are gone, and have left no successors, yet, from a little distance, Nabulus, embosomed in groves, may not (p. 629) differ much, in general appearance, from the older city. On one side of the valley which lay before us was Mount Ebal, and on the other Mount Gerizim; at the foot of the latter lies the town of Nabulus. Gerizim is a mountain which forms part of the ridge called Mount Ephraim; and was the appointed "Mountain of Blessing," when the tribes were assembled, half on Ebal and half on Gerizim, to hear the words of blessing and of cursing from the mountain ridges on either hand. Groves, and gardens, and terraced cultivation cover its lower slope, and climb far up its sides. Numerous flocks pasture over its crest, and sparkling rills burst forth from its flanks, and dash through its ravines, to fertilize the vale below; so that as to its pleasantness Gerizim, it has been said, may well boast. Ebal and Gerizim are of about equal height, each being estimated to be from eight hundred to a thousand feet high. On the summit of Gerizim stood, in past ages, the Samaritan temple referred to by the woman at Jacob's Well, when she said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain;" and every year it is ascended in solemn procession by the small remnant of the Samaritan people who still dwell in the city of their fathers. It is thought that in our Saviour's time this temple was in being. (John iv. 20.) It was from the top of Gerizim that Jotham delivered his celebrated parable (probably the most ancient sustained allegory which is anywhere to be found,) against the ungrateful Abimelech and the Shechemites, before his flight to Beer. Near the foot of Ebal is a large Mohammedan cemetery; and on the side of the mountain, not far from its base, is a long range of grottos and tombs. In the deep valley between Ebal and Gerizim lie the graves of Joseph, of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, and Joshua, "the servant of the Lord."

Both Ebal and Gerizim are remarkable hills, not only for their form and bulk, but from the relative position in which they stand to each other, with a fine valley intervening. But their importance, historically considered, is still more remarkable. They were the scene of a most impressive ceremony which had been commanded by Moses, but which did not take place till after his death, under Joshua his successor. It was on Mount Ebal that God commanded to be reared up an altar, and a pillar inscribed with the law; and the tribes were to be assembled, half on Ebal, and half on Gerizim, to hear the fearful maledictions pronounced by the Levites upon all who should violate the obligations of the sacred code, and the blessings promised to those who should observe them. The tribes which responded with simultaneous "Amens" to the curses, were to be stationed on Mount Ebal, and those who answered to the blessings on Mount Gerizim. The words of the curse

were commanded to be spoken by the Levites to the people with a loud voice; to which all the people answered and said, Amen. "And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against Mount Gerizim, and half of them over against Mount Ebal; as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read (p. 630) all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law." (Joshua viii. 33, 34.)

This grand ceremony—perhaps the most grand in the history of nations —was duly performed by Joshua after he gained possession of the Promised Land; and a more fitting scene, it has been remarked, could not have been found, nor a better situation conceived for this purpose; the hills being at such a distance from each other that the hosts of Israel might stand between, and the voice from either side be heard distinctly, on a calm day, throughout the whole assembly. It must have been an imposing spectacle to have witnessed the various tribes occupying their different positions, with the venerable Joshua at their head, the immense multitude extending in firm phalanx as far as the eye could reach. As they pronounced with one voice the loud AMEN, the shout must have reverberated among the hills around, and ascended in one vast chorus towards heaven.

Nabulus, or Nablous, is a large and flourishing town, containing a population, it is supposed, of about eight thousand inhabitants. It is a place of considerable importance, not only from its relative magnitude, but likewise from the central position it occupies in a country so thinly peopled as Palestine. It is a great change of scene on coming into Nabulus, and contrasting it with the solitary places through which the traveller must previously have passed, from whatever quarter he may have approached the town; and this remark is especially applicable when approaching it from the north, namely, from Galilee. As I rode through the bazaars, the numerous shops or stalls on both sides of the long, narrow avenues or thoroughfares through which I passed, appeared to be well supplied with commodities. The bazaars here were the most extensive and busy-looking by far of any town I had yet seen in Palestine. Nabulus is an ancient town; and here and there might be seen evidences of its antiquity, in a broken column or other fragment of old date. The streets are arched over in some places, and the houses are built over them; thus they form vaulted or covered ways, which wear, however, a gloomy aspect, as the traveller passes through them. Nabulus is celebrated for the manufacture of a peculiar kind of sweetmeat, called *sesame*, which is held in high repute. It is so called, from the oil of sesame constituting one of its principal ingredients. A large amount of olive-oil is also made in Nabulus. I went to see the oil-mill belonging to the English Church Mission established here, and of which the Missionary has the oversight. The juice is here pressed out from the olives, and the process of extraction and preparation of the oil furnishes employment for a number of the Christian population. The oil of Nabulus is considered the best in Syria. Near the Mission-house is the school founded by the bishop of Jerusalem for the benefit of the youth of the town. Nabulus lies principally along the eastern base of Gerizim. Embosomed in the mountains, with its rich and well-watered fields and orchards, and gardens of flowering and fruit-trees, no wonder that the situation of the town has been described as one of surpassing beauty. "The land of Syria," said Mohammed, "is beloved by Allah beyond all lands; (p. 631) and the part of Syria which

he loveth most is the district of Jerusalem; and the place which He loveth most in the district of Jerusalem is the mountain of Nabulus." Its appearance has called forth the admiration of all travellers who have any sensibility to the charms of nature. It lies in a sheltered valley, protected by Gerizim on the south, and Ebal on the north. The feet of these mountains, where they rise from the town, are not more than five hundred yards apart. The bottom of the valley is about eighteen hundred feet above the level of the sea, and the top of Gerizim eight hundred feet higher still. The site of the present city, which we believe to have been also that of the Hebrew city, occurs exactly on the water-summit; and streams issuing from the neighbouring springs there, flow down the opposite slopes of the valley, spreading verdure and fertility in every direction. Travellers vie with each other in the language which they employ to describe the scene that bursts here so suddenly upon them on arriving in spring or early summer at this paradise of the Holy Land. The somewhat sterile aspect of the adjacent mountains becomes itself a foil, as it were, to set off the effect of the verdant fields and orchards which fill up the valley. "There is nothing finer in all Palestine," says Dr. Clarke, "than the view of Nabulus from the heights around it. As the traveller descends towards it from the hills, it appears luxuriantly embosomed in the most delightful and fragrant ho were, half concealed by rich gardens and by stately trees, collected into groves, all around the bold and beautiful valley in which it stands." "The whole valley," says Dr. Robinson, "was filled with gardens of vegetables, and orchards of all kinds of fruits, watered by fountains, which burst forth in various parts, and flow westwards in refreshing streams. It came upon us suddenly like a scene of fairy enchantment. We saw nothing to compare with it in all Palestine. Here, beneath the shadow of an immense mulberry-tree, by the side of a purling rill, we pitched our tent for the remainder of the day and the night We rose early, awakened by the songs of nightingales and other birds, of which the gardens around ns were full." Apart entirely from the historic interest of the place, such are the natural attractions of this favourite resort of the patriarchs of old, such the beauty of the scenery, and the indescribable air of tranquillity and repose which hangs over the scene, that the traveller, anxious as he may be to hasten forward in his journey, feels that he would gladly linger, and could pass here days and weeks without impatience.

The allusions to Shechem in the Bible are numerous, and show how important the place was in Jewish history. Abraham, on his first migration to the Land of Promise, pitched his tent and built an altar under the *u* Oak" (or Terebinth) of Moreh at Shechem. "The Canaanite was then in the land;" and it is evident that the region, if not the city, was already in possession of the aboriginal race. (See Gen. xiv. 6.) Jacob arrived here after his sojourn in Mesopotamia. (Gen. xxxiii. 18 ; xxxiv.) It was at this time that the patriarch purchased from the chieftain Hamor, the father of Shechem, "the parcel of ground," which he subsequently bequeathed, as a special patrimony, to his son Joseph. (Gen. xlviii. 22 ; Joshua xxiv. 32; (p. 632) John iv. 5.) During Jacob's sojourn at Hebron, his sons, in the course of their pastoral wanderings, drove their flocks to Shechem, and at Dothan, is that neighbourhood, Joseph, who had been sent to look after their welfare, was seized and sold to the Ishmaelites. (Gen. xxxvii. 12—28.) Here, OB the entrance of the Israelites into the Promised Land, God commanded six of the tribes to be stationed on Mount Gerizim, and six on Mount Ebal; the former to pronounce blessings on the obedient, the latter to denounce eurses against the disobedient. (Deut. xi. 29; xxvii. 12 ; Joshua viii. 33.) Shechem fell to the tribe of Ephraim, and was given to the Levites,an4 was a city of

refuge. It was here Joshua assembled the people, shortly before his death, and delivered to them his last counsels. (Joshua xxiv. 1, 26.) After the death of Gideon, Abimelech his son induced the Shechemites to revolt from the Hebrew commonwealth, and elect him as king. (Judges ix.) It was to denounce this act of usurpation and treason that Jotham delivered his parable of the trees to the men of Shechem from the top of Gerizim, as recorded at length in Judges ix. 7, *seq.* Picturesque traits of the allegory, as Dr. Stanley suggests, are strikingly appropriate to the diversified foliage of the region.  
( *To be continued.*' )

(p. 673) **WESLEYAN-METHODIST MAGAZINE**, August, 1864

(p. 698)

NABULUS.

(*Continued from our last Number.*)

IN the interval between the arrival of Abraham in Palestine and the return of Jacob from Padan-aram, Shechem seems to have arisen into a town; for when Abraham came there; on first entering the land of Canaan, it is mentioned only as a place described by reference to the oaks in the neighbourhood. But in the history of Jacob it repeatedly occurs as a town having walls and gates. It could not, however, have been very large or important, if we may judge from the consequence which the inhabitants attached to an alliance with Jacob, and from the facility with which the sons of the patriarch were able to surprise and destroy them. After the conquest of the country, Shechem was made a city of refuge, and one of the Levitical towns. During the lifetime of Joshua it was a centre of union to the tribes, probably because it was the nearest considerable town to the residence of that chief in Timnath-serah. In the time of the Judges, it became the capital of the kingdom set up by Abimelech, but was at length destroyed by him.<sup>2</sup> It must, however, have been ere long rebuilt, for it had again become of so much importance by the time of Rehoboam's accession, that he there gave the meeting to the delegates of the tribes, which ended in the separation of the kingdom. It was Shechem which the first monarch of the new kingdom made the capital of his dominions. Later in his reign the pleasantness of Tirzah induced him to build a palace there, and to make it the summer residence of his court; which gave it such (p. 699) importance, that it at length came to be regarded as the capital of the kingdom, till Samaria deprived it of that honour. But Shechem still thrived. It subsisted during the exile, and continued for many ages after, the chief seat of the Samaritans, and of their worship; their sole temple being upon the mountain of Gerizim, at whose foot the city stood.<sup>3</sup> As intimated already, Shechem re-appears in the New Testament. It is the Sychar of John iv. 5, near which the Saviour conversed with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well. The anonymous city in Acts viii. 5, where Philip preached with such effect, may have been Sychem, though many would refer that narrative to Samaria, the capital of the province. It is interesting to remember that Justin Martyr, who follows so soon after the age of the apostles, and who suffered at Rome

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<sup>2</sup> Shechem was twice destroyed; first, by the sons of Jacob, who, in revenge for the violation of their sister Dinah, slew all the male inhabitants, including Himor and Shechem, and spoiled their city; (Gen. xxxiv. ;) and again, five hundred years after, by Abimelech, the son of Gideon, who slew all the inhabitants of the city, "beat it down, and sowed it with salt;" that is, he entirely demolished and rased it to the ground. (Judges ix.)

<sup>3</sup> On the expulsion of the Samaritans from Samaria by Alexander, for their having killed Andromachus, the governor of Syria, they took refuge in Shechem, which has been their chief seat ever since.



about A.D. 163, was born at Shechem. About forty years after the death of Christ, Shechem was considerably enlarged and beautified by the emperor Vespasian, who gave it the name of Neapolis (*the new city*), which it still retains in the Arabic form Nabulus, being one of the very few names imposed by the Romans in Palestine which has survived to the present day. The name occurs first in Josephus, and then in Pliny. It has since been corrupted into Naplous, Nablous, or Napolose, as it is now variously designated. It is the heir, under a different name, of the site and honours of the ancient Shechem, the "city of Samaria, which is called Sychar," whose history extends over a period of nearly four thousand years. It was as old as Bethel or Hebron, but, unlike them, its interest does not terminate with the Old-Testament records, for one of the most remarkable and touching incidents related respecting our Saviour happened here. There were converts to the Christian faith at this place in the time of our Saviour; and it is probable that a church was gathered here by the apostles, and that it early became the seat of a bishopric. The names of several of its bishops are found among the subscriptions to the councils of Ancyra, Nicaea, and Jerusalem. In A.D. 487, the Samaritans rose against the Christians, killed many of them, and cruelly maimed the bishop. In consequence of this act they were driven from Mount Gerizim; and a church was built there in honour of the Virgin. This building was frequently attacked by the enraged Samaritans, and the emperor Justinian surrounded it by a strong fortress as a defence against them. On the invasion of Syria by the Moslems, Neapolis peaceably surrendered; and when the Crusaders captured Jerusalem, it as peaceably yielded to them. Like the other cities of Palestine, however, it suffered severely by the long wars between the Crescent and the Cross. It was repeatedly plundered; its churches and altars were polluted, and its people exposed to the most fearful atrocities. The bulk of the population of Nabulus is, of course, made up of Mohammedans: besides whom there are said to be about five hundred Greek Christians, one hundred and fifty Sama- (p. 700) ritans, and some forty or fifty Jews. The enmity between the Samaritans and Jews is as inveterate as it was in the days of Christ. The main street follows the line of the valley from east to west, and contains a well-stocked bazaar. Most of the other streets cross this: here are the smaller shops and the work stands of the artisans. Most of the streets are narrow and dark, as the houses hang over them on arches, very much as in the closest parts of Cairo. The houses are of stone, and of the most ordinary style, with the exception of those of the wealthy sheikhs of Samaria who live here. They have domes upon the roofs as at Jerusalem. There are no public buildings of any note. There is a welcome appearance of life and bustle in the streets, notwithstanding they are on the whole more gloomy and tunnel-like than any in Syria,—as if the ground was so precious that enough could not be spared even for an open thoroughfare. But probably security is aimed at; everyone is afraid to venture any considerable distance into the country. The Moslem inhabitants have a bad character, and deserve it. They have been long notorious for fanaticism and turbulence.<sup>4</sup> They are almost always in a state of

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<sup>4</sup> They have always been accustomed to abuse and maltreat all those from whose religious tenets they dissent. Christians and Jews are especially obnoxious to them. They are usually more tolerant to the Samaritans on ordinary occasions. But during the outbreaks that occur periodically, all are alike subject to insult and danger. Ibrahim Pacha, after a bloody struggle, subjected them for a time; but when the government of Syria was restored to the Turks, the people of Nabulus relapsed into their old system of infuriate resistance to all authority, and scenes of violence and bloodshed frequently occurred. Within the last few years there seems to have been an improvement in the manners of these turbulent citizens, and

semi-rebellion ; obeying when it suits their fancy, and resisting, literally to the knife, when their passions are roused. The Christians and the Samaritans only live by sufferance, always scorned, often insulted, and occasionally spoiled and oppressed. The inhabitants of this mountain district exhibit many physical and moral traits distinguishing them from the other Syrian tribes. They bear the impress of their ancestry; but Perrier remarks that to the turbulence and other bad qualities inherited from them, the Nablousians superadd the riots of the Arabs. The following anecdote illustrates their fierce party-spirit. In 1834, it is said, some children of the village of Beit-el-Ma amused themselves with gathering anemones, and plucking and scattering the bright leaves of the flowers. As the relations of these children were known to be of the Yeomeni faction, a mob of Nablousians of the Kess party immediately assembled in arms, vowing vengeance for this so-called insult to their adopted colour and emblem. Several villages were sacked, and a hundred and thirty individuals lost their lives in consequence of this frivolous quarrel.

The *Keniseh* or synagogue of the Samaritans is a small plain edifice, with a curtained recess on the left hand as you enter, in which they keep their sacred writings: one of these, a copy of the Pentateuch, they allege to be of (p. 701) great antiquity. The structure itself may be three or four centuries old. After the Assyrian conquest of Israel, and the removal of its people into captivity, colonies from the east were placed in their deserted cities. In the Book of Kings we read that when the king of Assyria had carried the children of Israel away captive, he "brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel." The country having been desolated by war, wild beasts multiplied, and became the terror and scourge of the new inhabitants. The barren heights of Hermon and Lebanon, and the deserted jungles of the Jordan valley, are to this day, said to be, infested with bears, panthers, wolves, and jackals. The strangers attributed the calamity to the anger of the *local Deity*, of whose peculiar mode of worship they were ignorant. They therefore petitioned for Jewish priests to instruct them in religious rites; and after they had heard their teachings, "they feared the Lord, and served their own gods." (2 Kings xvii. 24—41.) Such, according to some, was the origin of the *Samaritans*. If altogether foreigners, they were probably instructed in some of the leading points of the Jewish religion by Jewish priests; though still retaining the gods of their own nations. The possession of the Pentateuch may have dated from the time of Rehoboam; at all events it is sufficiently accounted for by the partial adoption of the Jewish creed by the colonists. In after times the Jews refused to acknowledge them in any way, and would not permit them to place a stone on the walls of the second Temple, though their refusal cost them many a trial. (Ezra iv.) Being thus cast off by the Jews, the Samaritans resolved to erect a temple of their own on Gerizim, which had doubtless been one of the high places where they had worshipped their false gods. (2 Kings xvii. 29, 32.) The immediate occasion seems to have been the circumstances related by Nehemiah. The date of the temple may be fixed at about B.C. 420. Shechem now became the metropolis of the Samaritans as a sect.

Many Jews who would not submit to the rigid interpretation of the ceremonial law, and the strict rule of Ezra and Nehemiah, threw in their lot with the Samaritans, who were

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strangers who have Tinted the town have met with no incivility. Whether this change is more than temporary remains to be seen.

regarded by the Jews with intense hatred. When Antiochus Epiphanes threatened with death all who took part in the rites of the Jewish religion, the Samaritans repudiated their Annexion with it and the Jews, and claimed to be descendants of the Sidonian worshippers of Baal. John Hyrcanus destroyed their temple on Gerizim, B.,C. 129. Samaritan worship still continued to be performed there, but there is no record of the temple having ever been rebuilt.

Four times a year they go up to Mount Gerizim in solemn procession to worship. These seasons are: The feast of the Passover, when they pitch their tents upon the mountain all night, and sacrifice seven lambs at sunset; the day of Pentecost; the feast of Tabernacles, when they sojourn here in booths built of branches of the arbutus; and, lastly, the great day of Atonement in autumn. They still maintain their ancient hatred against the Jews; accuse them of departing from the law in not sacrificing the Pass- (p. 702) over, and in various other points, as well as of corrupting the ancient text. Though they scrupulously avoid all friendship with them, and will neither eat with them, drink with them, nor pray with them, they have no objections, it seems, to transact a little *profitable* business with them. They appear to be the last remnant of a remarkable people, clinging for now more than two thousand years around this central spot of their religion and history, and lingering slowly to decay. Having survived the many revolutions and convulsions, which in that long interval have swept over this unhappy land, they are still a reed continually shaken with the wind, but bowing before the storm. The way up Mount Gerizim is by a steep, rough, rocky path from near the entrance of the valley. The summit of the range is described as forming a long flattish platform, broken by some undulations, from which the sides of the mountain fall abruptly. There are extensive remains of various kinds, among which are what seem to be the ruins of a large ancient village; but it is on the eastern brow, overhanging the plain, that the most striking objects are to be seen. Here is a smooth, bare surface of rock sloping down towards a natural cavern. This is the shrine of the Samaritans, profoundly venerated by them. They take off their shoes when they approach it, and turn towards it when they pray. It is their holy of holies. It seems almost certain that this was the site of the Samaritan temple, and that the holy of holies stood on this smooth rock. There are traces of old walls and massive stones around, which probably may have belonged to the building; and they most likely enclosed this peculiar spot, in rivalry of the sacred rock described as belonging to the Temple at Jerusalem. From the narrow cracks which cross the slippery face of the slope, dwarf shrubs spring up, which must have a difficult matter to find soil sufficient to keep them alive, small as they are. From the bottom of the slope the ground rises to a knoll, on which stands a vast ruinous structure of hewn stones, which seems to have been a strong fortress. In some places the walls are nine feet thick; and the building, which consisted of two adjacent parts, is about four hundred feet from north to south, and two hundred and fifty feet from east to west. At the four corners of the southern portion were square towers, and there was another in the middle of the eastern aide. There is every reason to believe that the great ruin just described is that of Justinian's fortress. Beyond it is a small space of level ground, where the Samaritans encamp at the feast of the Passover. Here, in a small area, surrounded by stones, is a trough, about four feet long, in which the bones and remains of the paschal lamb are burnt, according to the command of the Jewish law; as are the handkerchiefs on which those who eat wipe their fingers when the repast is over. Near this is a circular pit, three feet in diameter, and about nine feet deep, in which the lambs

are roasted, or rather baked. This pit is heated by burning wood in it, and then the lambs are suspended from a stick laid across the mouth, and are so arranged that «o part touches the sides or bottom. The whole Samaritan community, *raft*, women, and children, strictly observe the ceremonial enjoined by the law, and eat the flesh "in haste, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, (p. 703) and staves in their hands." Nothing will induce them to allow any stranger to their faith to taste the paschal lambs; and the Turkish governor at one time, the Arabs at another, have extorted money from the sect when assembled for the Passover, compelling them to purchase immunity from a profanation of the sacred food. At length these demands became so oppressive that for years they were compelled to celebrate the feast in their own houses. The small community of Samaritans which still exists in ancient Shechem at the foot of their holy mountain is the sole remnant of the sect. In the third and subsequent centuries they were scattered throughout the east in great numbers, and at the close of the fifth century they even had a synagogue at Rome. Within the last two centuries they were to be found in Egypt, in Damascus, Gaza, and elsewhere; but now they are extinct everywhere except at Nabulus, where they may number altogether about one hundred and fifty souls. They have a marked physiognomy, differing much from the Jewish cast of countenance; their noses are long and somewhat straight, complexions rather fair, lips thin, and they often have brown hair. They usually wear red turbans. They accept the Pentateuch as their sole guide in religious matters, and possess a very ancient manuscript copy, which they say was written by Abishua, the son of Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, and is consequently about three thousand three hundred years old! I went to see it in the Samaritan synagogue, and an old roll was taken from a small recess, in front of which hung an old embroidered curtain, and shown to me. I could not tell whether this really was the famous roll of the Pentateuch of which they boast, or whether it was a very old copy. Some say that the real roll is never shown except to members of the sect. The Samaritans keep the Sabbath, strictly praying in their own houses on the Friday evening, and attending public prayers three times on the Saturday; and they do not cook or light a fire during the day. Their worship is described as consisting of many prostrations, accompanied by recitations hurried over as if for a wager, and shouted at the top of the voice, whilst neither among priests nor people is there any appearance of solemnity or even of decent propriety. The community seems to be in tolerably good circumstances. The Samaritan boasts of one advantage over the Jew whom he hates; for he can sacrifice, as of old, on the holy mountain. The Jew cannot sacrifice on Moriah, and there alone would it be lawful for him to do so. It is related that some members of this little community were accused before the atrocious Djazzar, pasha of Acre, of having blasphemed the Mohammedan faith, by declaring that they alone, as possessing the true ancient religion of God, were entitled to paradise. Djazzar instantly summoned the chief men of the Samaritans, who entered his presence with dismay. Leaning on his hatchet, and surrounded with his cut-throats and executioners, he stared for a long while with the aspect of a tiger on the Samaritans, whose terrors he beheld with delight. "Filthy miscreants!" he cried at last in a voice of thunder, " what is the exact number of your people?" "A hundred and sixty," they replied, half dead with fear. "A hundred and sixty! and paradise is for you alone! Well, (p. 704) then, sons of dogs, leave the earth to those against whom paradise is barred, and go straight to heaven." Thereupon the pasha made the fatal gesture with his right hand, and the wretched men were hurried out for execution. But presently Djazzar

appeared to change his mind. "Send those dogs back to their dens," he said; "and if a single one of them ever ventures to show himself beyond them, let him be killed like an unclean beast." He then, by way of commuting their punishment, increased the taxes paid by the Samaritans sixfold; and saddled them with the cost of constructing and maintaining a fountain at *Kefr Nuohr*, two leagues from Saffad, that, as he said, they might do some good in this world to those who were to be deprived of paradise in the next. They quickly returned home, rejoiced at having got off so well from this interview with the ferocious pasha, who fortunately for them happened on that day to be in unusually good humour. "Ever since that day," say the oldest of them, "none of us have gone down into the plain, and we die without ever quitting the walls of our quarters." Djazzar Pasha has been many years dead; but the lesson still works, and the Samaritans, it is said, keep close to home, dreading to expose themselves to the outrages of the rude Nablousian mountaineers.<sup>5</sup>

On our return from Jacob's Well we entered the town by a different direction from that by which we had left it; and, a little way outside the gate, I was accosted by two or three lepers, most pitiable-looking objects, who were importunate in their appeals for sympathy and relief. Here these miserable outcasts wait, and clamorously beg alms from the people passing to and from the town, especially from strangers. It was painful to see them, and to hear the disagreeable, hoarse sound of their voices. The leprosy with which they were afflicted was not of that snow-like whiteness we read of in Scripture. There was an unnatural hue upon their faces, as though they had been scalded. It was enough to make

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<sup>5</sup> In the spring of 1799, when Bonaparte entered Syria at the head of twelve thousand five hundred men, in his attempts to storm Acre, the obstinate defence of the garrison commanded by Djazzar Pasha, aided by Sir Sidney Smith with English sailors, saved the city from the repeated assaults of the French general, who, after spending more than sixty days before it, and losing near three thousand men, retreated to Egypt.

The notorious Djazzar Pasha (an appellation explained by himself as signifying *the butcher*) was at that time governor of the city. During the siege, he sat on the floor of his palace, surrounded by a heap of gory heads, distributing money and military honours to all who brought him in the heads of Frenchmen. This Djazzar Pasha was one of the most black-hearted monsters that ever lived; cruel in disposition, arbitrary in his rule, and terrible in his revenge, he was, in fact, the Nero of his day. "We found him," says Dr. Clarke, "seated on a mat in a little chamber destitute of the meanest article of furniture, excepting a coarse, porous, earthenware vessel for cooling the water he occasionally drank. He was surrounded by persons maimed and disfigured; some without a nose, others without an arm, with one ear only, or one eye: *marked men*, as he termed them,—persons bearing signs of their having been instructed to serve their master with loyalty." On one occasion some of his wives happened to displease him. He suspected their fidelity; and, fearing lest their honour should stiller, he spoke to them on the subject, as an anxious and affectionate husband would do, and then chopped off the heads of seven of them with his own hands!

The number of his women was kept a profound secret, in order that his biographer might be unable to state how many of them he disposed of without causing them to suffer lingering illness. Djazzar died in May, 1804, after an illness of nine months, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, and thirtieth of his rule as pasha. His cruelty and atrocities bring vividly to mind the like characteristics of the first Herod; and it is remarkable that two such monsters in human form should die in their beds, and not be cut off by the vengeance of their outraged subjects. According to Dr. Clarke, Djazzar was his own minister, treasurer, and secretary; and not unfrequently both judge and executioner in the same instant. As late as 1815, it was not uncommon to meet in the streets of Acre men who had been deprived by Djazzar of an eye, an ear, or part of the nose. This remarkable and ferocious personage was a native of Bosnia. While still young, he sold himself to a slave-merchant in Constantinople; and being purchased by 'Aly Bey in Egypt, he rose from the humble lot of a Memluk slave, to the post of governor of Cairo. He afterwards became pasha of Acre and Sidon, and took up his residence in the former city.

one shudder to look at their repulsive features. In ancient times as now, it seems, these outcasts were found at the gates of cities. Thus we read: "There were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate " of Samaria. (2 Kings vii. 3.) At some place on the confines of Galilee and Samaria, it appears, when our Saviour was on His last circuit, "there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off." They were companions in distress, and therefore they associated together; though one, at least, of them was a Samaritan. Having heard of our Lord's miracles, they stood at a distance, with loud voices earnestly begging Him to compassionate their case. "The shades of evening," says one traveller, " were gathering fast as I approached the gates of Nablous, the Shechem of the Old Testament, and the Sychar of the New. More than a dozen lepers were sitting outside the gate, their faces shining, pimpled, and bloated, covered with sores and pustules, their nostrils opened and filled with ulcers, and their red eyes fixed and staring: with swollen feet they dragged their disgusting bodies towards me, and, with hoarse voices, extended their deformed and hideous hands for charity." At Jerusalem, hard by the city gate, (Sion gate,) are the lepers' huts, a set of miserable, low, clay hovels, the habitations of these unfortunates, who are now found only at Jerusalem and Nabulus. Dr. Schultz had occasion to visit them, and ascertained their number to be twenty-seven, men, women, and children— Mohammedans. They are allowed to intermarry, and thus propagate this loathsome malady, which is hereditary. They receive a miserable pittance for their maintenance from the government, which they are fain to eke out by begging. And a most pitiable and disgusting sight it is to see the poor wretches, laid at the entrance of the gates of the city, asking alms of the passengers, with outstretched hands, or stumps, in various stages of decay, under the influence of this devouring disease, for which it seems no effectual remedy is known. "I saw," he adds, " no case of that whiteness which is mentioned in Scripture as " a chief " symptom of this disorder; but I own that my eyes shrank with horror from the contemplation of such misery, and I avoided contact with them as I would with one plague-stricken."

Nabulus has five mosques, two of which, according to a tradition in which (p. 706) Mohammedans, Christians, and Samaritans agree, were originally churches. One of them, it is said, was dedicated to John the Baptist; its eastern portal, still well preserved, shows the European taste of its founders. The domes of the houses and the minarets, as they appear above the sea of luxuriant vegetation which surrounds them, present a striking view to the traveller approaching from the east or the west. Dr. Rosen says, that the inhabitants boast of the existence of not less than eighty springs of water within and around the city. He gives the names of twenty-seven of the principal of them. The olive, as in the days when Jotham delivered his famous parable, is still the principal tree. Figs, almonds, walnuts, mulberries, grapes, oranges, apricots, pomegranates, are abundant. The valley of the Nile itself hardly surpasses Nabulus in the production of vegetables of every sort. Being, as it is, the gateway of the trade between Jaffa and Beirut on the one side, and the trans-Jordanic districts on the other, and the centre also of a province so rich in wool, grain, and oil, the town becomes, necessarily, the seat of an active commerce, and of a comparative luxury, to be found in very few of the inland Oriental cities. It produces, in its own manufactories, many of the coarser woollen fabrics, delicate silk goods, cloth of camel's hair, and especially soap; of which last commodity large quantities, after supplying the surrounding country, are sent to Egypt and other parts of the East. The

ashes and other sediments thrown out of the city, as the result of the soap manufacture, have grown to the size of hills, and give to the environs a peculiar aspect.

Rosen, during his stay at Nabulus, examined anew the Samaritan inscriptions found there, supposed to be amongst the oldest written monuments in Palestine. He has furnished, it seems, the best copy of them that has been taken. The inscriptions on stone-tablets, distinguished in his account as No. 1, and No. 2, belonged originally to a Samaritan synagogue which stood just out of the city, near the Samaritan quarter, of which synagogue a few remains only are now left. They are thought to be as old, at least, as the age of Justinian, who (A.D. 529) destroyed so many of the Samaritan places of worship. Some, with less reason, think they may have been saved from the temple on Gerizim, having been transferred afterwards to a later synagogue. One of the tablets is now inserted in the walls of a minaret; the other was discovered not long ago in a heap of rubbish not far from it. The inscriptions consist of brief extracts from the Samaritan Pentateuch, probably valuable as palaeographic documents. Similar slabs are to be found built into the walls of several of the sanctuaries in the neighbourhood of Nabulus; as at the tombs of Eleazar, Phinehas, and Ithamar at *Awertah*.

Nabulus is about thirty-four miles north of Jerusalem, and seven miles south of Samaria. On the following day, we left this lovely "place of Sichem," and took our departure towards Jerusalem.

*Camberwell.*      **J. M.**

#### **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

Who is J.M. from Camberwell, a subdivision of London?