

PALESTINE
AS I SAW IT



ELLEN A. WINSLOW



The Jordan River Looking North from Allenby Bridge



The Jordan River South from Allenby Bridge

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The Dream of a Lifetime Comes True

 LI AND SYBIL JONES, two Friend ministers of South China, Maine, felt called to carry the gospel back to the land where Jesus lived and worked during His earthly life. They came home from Palestine when I was a girl and at our Quarterly Meeting told us about the starting of the Friends Mission there and showed us various curios like the phylacteries or frontlets, the virgin's lamp and other things mentioned in the Bible. I think I was in Grammar School at the time and it made a deep impression on me. It was the first mission field I knew enough about to be interested in and all the years since I have heard and read all I could about it, while it increased my interest in Bible study. As the years went by a number of the workers who went to the field were from our Yearly Meeting and some from my Quarterly Meeting and I knew them all. Finally one of my former pupils and a very dear friend, Alice Whittier Jones, went out and soon became Principal of the Friends Girls School at Ram Allah. That deepened my interest and several times when some associate teacher or friend asked if I wasn't going to take a trip to Europe, I would reply, "I never expect to cross the ocean unless sometime I can go to visit Alice W. Jones in Palestine." I did not feel at all sure I could do that but it was my daydream.

For many years I was needed at home to care for my parents and an aunt. Mother was spared to me till she was 93 and by that time I knew only younger people would be sought as missionaries. The year after I retired from public school teaching Alice Jones was home on furlough and in the spring asked me if I wouldn't give them a year of service as they needed another American teacher. Would I do the thing I would like best to do and spend a year in the part of the world I had longed most to see? There was only one answer possible and many times I have thanked God for the opportunity to do a little work

for Him out on the distant field, and for all the privileges of that year in the land of the Bible.

We sailed from New York September 9, 1925, on the Steamship Asia of the Fabre Line. It was a freight and passenger ship with no distinction of classes above the steerage and carried about twenty who were going across for some kind of missionary work, including A. Willard Jones, Principal of Friends Boys School, with his wife and baby, Richard, as well as Alice Jones. With such congenial companions I thoroughly enjoyed the month on the water. We made but few stops, yet did get to see Athens and Constantinople and the ship ran up to Constanza for nine hundred Jews for steerage trip to Palestine. We anchored just off the coast from Jaffa about 10.30 a. m. on Wednesday, October 7th. After long delays because of passports and the like we got into small rowboats to be taken by natives through the cordon of reefs, that leave only narrow passageways here and there, up to the landing at the wharf.

The Feasts of Welcome

IT WAS very evident in what high esteem the Principals of our two schools were held by their warm welcome back. Associate teachers and former pupils met them when they landed and did everything possible to help us get started promptly for Ram Allah. The number was increased to extend the welcome at the school on our arrival, while the next afternoon a regular reception was given for a like purpose. An addition had been built on the Girls School Building during the summer, forming about two-thirds of the third floor. Extra men helped to put on the tiled roof that Friday and the event was celebrated according to custom by a big "Feast of the Roof" for the workmen, members of the Mission and their friends. A prominent native Friend, Asa Shahla, who lives close by, had been fattening a sheep for an extra two months for our welcome combined with this event. Neither of the Joneses being a prodigal it didn't need to be a fatted *calves*, you see. With true Oriental courtesy they insisted it was just as much for the new teacher. The Mission provided the rest of the meat and most of the other food, though friends outside sent in some. Partly to initiate me, so they said, the rule was made that no one should use knife or fork or spoon. We sat down on the ground in groups under the pines

and for each group there was a big wooden bowl heaping full. We ate with our fingers out of the common dish, first the rice mixed with the whole dark grains of wheat, each picking out also a big chunk of the



Carrying the Food for a Feast of the Roof

mutton, then gradually digging down to the bread and gravy in the bottom. It was well cooked and seasoned and really very appetizing, for only Mission people were at our bowl. The native bread was delicious. Our own people went into the dining-room for our dessert of large, delicious white grapes.

Nameh Shahla was very anxious to feast us again with what they had saved from the sheep and native dishes, so her family prepared the dinner on Sunday and served the workers of the Mission in the teachers' dining-room. Among the things served were egg-plant stuffed with rice, also a kind of small summer squash stuffed and tender grape leaves with the same filling. The bread was of their cooking and of dark flour, consisting of not much more than two crusts, it was so thin. There was cold sliced meat as well as a dish similar to that served on Friday, but this time we had the usual silver utensils. For dessert it was more delicious grapes.

The first of that week we Americans were all invited to still another feast at the home of the Moslem caretaker of the grounds at the Boys School. With us were a Syrian and his wife. She could not speak English but he did very well, having been clerk to the Governor of the

60 villages around Ram Allah. The feast was given in a room on the second floor of one of the flat roofed houses of Beerî — the Beeroth of Joshua 9: 17. The room is reached by outside stone steps and is the pride of this Moslem who has it well furnished according to American ideas. They say he does not let his wife go into it for she might get it dirty or mussed up. She is a second wife, young and with no education and lives on the first floor. She was not at the feast but was allowed to shake hands with us as we went out. The native cook at the Boys School helped to serve us, also a son of the house who goes to our school. First we had a fine soup with native bread. Then a young lamb was brought in which had been roasted whole in the dish in which it was served, and we saw it carved. With it was a stuffing made of rice flavored with pine seeds from the Lebanon. The lamb was very tender and delicious and we were helped most generously, then our host, in oriental fashion, insisted on a second helping of meat. The potatoes had been pared and cooked with the roast, making the outsides such a fine brown. Our dessert was again great clusters of the best white grapes, followed by Turkish coffee in very small cups, fortunately for me. By this time I think we should have known we were sufficiently welcomed and the next day the pupils arrived for the opening of school.

Palestine as a Whole

THE PRESENT country of Palestine under the British Mandate is about as large as the small state of New Hampshire or Vermont. I prefer to liken it to the former as more nearly its shape and narrow towards the north. One can easily ride its whole length in a day — somewhere about 150 miles and its width varies from 25 to 50 miles. It stops on the east with the Jordan River and the two seas, beyond which lies the British Protectorate, Transjordan. In both the Old and New Testaments some of the events occurred there or in Syria to the north, which is now under French rule.

The larger part of the country is hilly or mountainous, but there is a large fertile valley, called Esdraelon, just south of Nazareth, the Valley of Sharon south of Mount Carmel, and other large valleys toward the Mediterranean shore with quite low land next to the water. There are only two rivers and three lakes that remain of any size during the long dry season. The River Aujeh is near Jaffa, but I hunted

long before I found it on any map though mentioned in several books. The Jordan receives water from the Lebanons and the snows of Mount Hermon and flows through Lake Merom and the Sea of Galilee, then through a deep gorge in places from ten to fifteen miles wide and rising abruptly on either side to hills sometimes 2,000 feet high. Where it enters the Dead Sea it is about 1,300 feet below sea level and in this vicinity is the lowest spot of dry land to be found on the earth's surface. This difference in altitude accounts for the intense heat of the Jordan Valley, especially in the summer months, and makes it a fine winter resort for some who live on the hills.

When I was in the country there was no harbor on the long coast line where large vessels could land, but passengers were taken in row boats from the ship to the wharves, chiefly at Jaffa or Haifa. We landed at Jaffa — ancient Joppa — and the sea was not smooth as the natives rowed us through the narrow openings in the reefs that protect the city, and we did not wonder that in very rough weather passengers are taken on to Haifa where there are not the rocks. I understand a good harbor is being made at the latter place. From Jaffa it is a ride of about thirty-five miles up to Jerusalem which is about 2650 feet above the Mediterranean. We rode on north ten miles farther to Ram Allah which is yet higher. Can you guess what looked best to me when we reached our journey's end that evening? It was the stars! for there were the same constellations I was accustomed to see at home and which would be over New England a few hours later. They had a homey look that was most welcome as I thought of being seven thousand miles away.

That part of the country, Judea, is largely composed of what in the summer look like bare rocky hills, except where relieved by groves of gray-green olive trees or the fig or nut trees. Nearly all the shade trees have been cut down for firewood and not replaced, the few remaining and many olive trees being thus destroyed during the World War. Yet there is a real beauty to the browns and grays of the soil and rocks that grows on one if remaining for any length of time. Many of the hills are terraced with a double purpose — to get rid of some of the rocks and to hold in place the loose earth which would be washed down into the narrow valleys by the winter rains. But there are so many rocks left that one is tempted to wonder how anything can be

raised until told that the limestone rock is soft and easily disintegrates and makes good rich soil — no more lime being needed. Indeed, very little is done to fertilize the land except to pasture sheep and goats there, or in rare cases a few cattle. The sheep and goats find food where we see little and thus are adapted to those conditions. Owners of the land are usually willing to have anyone bring his flocks to feed for a time during the dry season. One day we were driving close by the village of Bethel and right over the hill where Jacob is supposed to have slept. Certainly there were plenty of stones for a *bed* as well as for his pillow. I began to wonder if I had really seen many stones even over there as compared to those on that ride. It made me appre-



Wheat or Donkey, Which?

ciate the story told me of how when the earth was created God gave two angels immense bags of stones to distribute over the whole earth. While one of them was flying over Palestine his bag broke, so half of the whole were dropped on that country while the other angel distributed the rest in all other lands. I won't vouch for its truth, but go and see if it doesn't seem probable when you look at many of the side hills.

Genesis 8: 22 well describes the seasons — "seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter" — for there are only two. The early rains begin to come in November or early December and the rains last until April. After that no more need be expected till the next November. As soon as the showers come, the grass and flowers begin to grow and December is like our spring. Men were sowing

wheat or planting in January or February and reaping the wheat in May and June. On one ride up through the valleys toward Nazareth I had a chance to appreciate what Jesus said — "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest" — for that just described the scene.

Friends Mission at Ram Allah

ANY tourist passing by auto from Jerusalem to Nazareth may see the sign, Friends Mission, by the roadside more than once, and for some time will see the fine building of the Boys School on a slight eminence at the left and the Mission Home on a little higher one beyond. The Girls School is nearly a mile farther to the left and hidden by a hill. The Friends Meeting House is about half way between. All the buildings are substantially built of stone and well adapted to their several purposes. Those in charge have shown great wisdom in setting out a good number of shade trees, and fruit trees, especially on the girls' grounds which were developed earliest. Both schools have good facilities for athletic sports which are greatly enjoyed and do much for the health of pupils.

My readers may be familiar with the history of the Mission or can read it elsewhere. Suffice it to say here that both schools have a fine reputation throughout the country, and a number of pupils come to both from Transjordan also and go back there to teach or for other work. Former graduates hold responsible positions and fill places of strong influence in many communities. While there is every effort made to give a good foundation in the usual subjects and to inspire a love for education, there is still more emphasis in the minds of Principals and teachers on building strong characters patterned after the teachings and example of Christ. It is a pleasure to see the changes wrought in many lives after a few months under such influences. Pupils have always done as much as seemed practicable of the work about the schools and special courses have been added that will train them to make better homes and to improve on the methods of work now in vogue, as well as lead them to feel that no honest work faithfully done is beneath them. Each school had about a hundred pupils, the larger part being boarders with some day scholars from Ram Allah and Moslem boys from the Moslem village of el Birch in the edge of which stands the Boys School.

The Village Work

THE work of the Mission is not confined to the schools and home meeting but reaches out to many surrounding villages. One of our native teachers had started a Sunday School in Ram Allah for the children who would have no such privilege otherwise, and other teachers and pupils assisted. Since that time two others have been organized. In the summer of 1928 four Daily Vacation Bible Schools were carried on as an experiment with A. Willard Jones in general charge, three being in villages near by. In 1929 he was asked by the Religious Education Conference to have supervision of a number to be held in Palestine and Transjordan and with missionaries of other churches co-operating he hoped to start about twenty.

As often as possible I joined our native Bible woman, or village worker, in a visit to some far place. Nameh Shahla was distinctively a product of our school. She was born in our building when her father and mother were in charge of grounds and house, was educated in our school and became for three years one of its teachers. Then came the call to carry the gospel message to the women whose lives were so hard and narrow and without even a strong hope for the future. Being a native and speaking the same language, Arabic, she could find a welcome where a stranger might not, and her consecrated Christian life, together with a great deal of native common sense and ready wit, enable her to reach their hearts and influence their lives. Ram Allah is the center of sixty villages, of which only six are Christian, and the governor of that section has his home there and the government offices. Nameh visited about twenty of these, some of the rest being under missionaries of other denominations. Whenever I was with her it seemed that every man, woman and child whom we met greeted her with a smile and a welcome. She would gather a little group of women and their children in some dooryard and while they worked tell them Bible stories that fitted into their own lives and often bring home very personal lessons. I remember that the first time I went with her I asked her to tell me what she was going to talk about in Arabic so I might be thinking about the same subject, and she said, "I shall tell them the story of Naboth's vineyard for they need the lesson." At the close of her talk she would put drops in the eyes of most of the children and often of women and any men who were not too busy to sit and listen.

for there is a great deal of eye trouble and some blindness because of lack of proper care. She also gave them other simple remedies when needed. Then she would pass on to another part of the village and talk to a second group. If some followed her she varied the talk. A letter she wrote me after my return to America will illustrate how practical she was and I quote from it:

"I still remember the last nice trip with you to Jedereh. The other day I went there. I first met two old men who said to me, 'Come, let us find a group so you'll sit and read to us something nice.' I had four nice meetings there. Many questions were asked. I answered them freely. This last month [December] my subject in the villages was from Luke 1: 26-38 and 2: 1-20. I am more brave this year than before. The reason is that all love me now because I love them and won their friendship by being kind to them. Still I am not very easy with them when I see something wrong. I scold them freely without any fear for they know that I want to teach them the right because they believe me and trust me. I worked three years to win their confidence and it was not by my cleverness, all was God's blessing on me. . . . Today I went to Hisma, you know the place near Ain Farah, [where David fed his flocks]. There the brother of our friend, the sheik, died. Four villages besides Hisma were there, for today is the first Thursday after his death, so each woman brought with her a big bundle of sugar and coffee and a big dish of bread fried with oil. You know it. The women were wailing in two circles and another big group of old women weeping. In spite of everything I sat and gave my little message. My talk did touch very much some women from Shofat, the village on the way to Jerusalem. They felt so hungry and showed that they never heard such a talk or news before. After I finished one of the meetings a woman from Shofat came and asked me some questions about some of her mistakes. She wanted to know if God will forgive her or not. She was so sorry because somebody else interrupted us with the talk. If you only saw how eager she was to understand many things! She made me promise to go to her village. . . . While there a woman from Anathoth [the home of the prophet Jeremiah] came and saluted me and said, 'Do you know me?' I answered, 'Yes, I know your face but what is your name I forgot.' She then said, 'I am from Anathoth. I met you there three years ago and I still remember the

nice teaching I had from you.' She said, too, 'Do you remember my sister-in-law? Two weeks ago she died. She tried to live according to your teaching three years ago and before she died she sent after all her people and asked them to forgive her if she had done to them something wrong.' She said to me, 'Please come to our village.' "

I think we always went to the far villages on donkey back, occasionally with only one animal for two of us or two donkeys for three, so that we took turns at walking. There were no carriage roads to any of them, but only narrow stony paths through the valleys or up and down quite steep hills. The native houses are crowded rather close together on hilltops with no regular streets. They are mostly, in this section of the land, one-roomed stone houses with flat roofs reached only by outside stairs, and are often used for many succeeding generations. In one such village, Jederch mentioned in the letter above, I was told that no new houses had been built since the Roman occupation, centuries ago. Many Bible scholars think these houses are much like those in the time when Christ walked the same hills. As you enter the only door of a house there are stone steps in front of you leading to a raised platform of stone or concrete on which the whole family live. Going down a slight incline or some more steps at the side of those mentioned, you are on a dirt floor in what is used as a stable in the winter time, housing donkey, sheep or goats, or even cattle if the farmer is so fortunate as to own any. There are no partitions to separate this part from the other — but the animal heat helps to keep the family comfortable in the coldest weather. They all sleep on the stone floor with sometimes a mat woven of reeds under the beds — which are thin mattresses or like our thick comfortables. In the daytime these are piled up in a niche in the stone wall of the house. Babies may sleep in homemade hammocks swung across some corner. At one side is usually a large bin to hold the winter's supply of wheat or barley and dried figs and raisins, while a large earthen jar may contain the green or ripe olives or olive oil. Water jars, or tanakes made for the same purpose from square tins which have held five gallons of kerosene or gasoline, will also be in evidence and most likely a brazier over which are cooked the simple meals. It is quite probable that an Englishman translated to fit his own ideas the parable of the man who had such a good crop that he said, "I will pull down my *barns* and build greater,"

for it would seem more accurate to say, "I will pull down my bins, etc." I remember only two barns in that country and one of those was at Friends Girls School and one at the Boys School. One often finds only one window in a native house and that rather high up on the front, but if more they would all be on that side, lest when the winter storms come there should be a draught.

The peasant women work very hard, have very few pleasures, often not even kind words from their husbands, and little or no hope for a future life. If a baby boy is born, however, there is great rejoicing and the father will feast his friends, and the mother may fare a little better. If the baby is a girl no effort is made to tell the neighbors and the mother cannot rejoice for she loves the child yet knows what a hard life is before her. The wife must bring on her head all the water for the family, sometimes from a distant spring; must bake the bread in the common village oven and cook the other food over a small earthen "canoan," generally out of doors, for which she may have brought great loads of thorn bush from distant fields to dry through the hot summer days; must do much of the hard work connected with planting, weeding and gathering the harvests; must help to gather the olives and figs and raisins for winter food and then dry and prepare them; and sometimes must even grind the wheat into flour with one of the old stone hand mills such as was used in Jesus' time. There is much of superstition and very little knowledge of hygiene or care of the sick. If the blue beads do not keep away the evil spirits — and the infant mortality is forty or fifty per cent in some villages — the woman is taught to say "Min Allah," God wills it, and feels no responsibility, but accepts her hard fate without a murmur. There are many interesting customs, like those connected with marriage, of which I might speak, but space forbids.

Michmash

ONE of the villages that interested me much was Michmash — three hours away by a narrow stony donkey path. Try to imagine a village without a store of any kind or any school for boys and girls, and from which no child goes away to school. There was once a little store where one might buy matches or soap or needles and thread and the like, but the storekeeper died and there has been none since. If such

things are wanted some woman must walk about three hours to Bireh, Ram Allah or Jerusalem, taking along milk and butter and cheese, or perhaps honey, to sell in exchange for what her family needs. We met two groups of them the day of my visit, as it was a beautiful morning after some cold rainy days. Years when the village has extra good crops they sometimes have a Moslem khateeb, who corresponds to a priest, come and teach the boys for a few weeks to read the Koran in Arabic and learn whole pages by heart, and also a little very simple Arithmetic, but that had not been recently. Let me say here that the Government is trying to start more schools for boys as fast as it can, but it hasn't sufficient funds to have many for girls as yet, so their only chance is in a few mission day schools.



Michmash with Olive Trees and Wheat Fields in the Foreground

In some cases whole families were off in the wilderness, sleeping in tents or caves while they led their flocks from place to place for grazing. A boy whom Nameh knew took me to some quite large caves near the village while she taught the women some Bible story in Arabic. Then we ate our lunch on the rocks and the boy went as our guide for an hour's walk beyond Michmash through a big ravine. It was too rough for the donkeys, she said. Sometimes there were quite precipitous walls of rocks on either side. From a large cave, which showed evidences of having been used as a shelter for some shepherd and his flock, I took snapshots of the opposite hill. They show holes big enough for one to climb in and which I was told led to large rooms extending

long distances inside the hill. This is quite certainly about the place where Jonathan and his armor bearer climbed up the steep rock and so surprised the Philistines encamped in Michmash. You will want to reread the story in I. Samuel 14th chapter. In that connection it was especially interesting that I got a snap of an oriental beehive in what looked like the solid rock of the wall to a man's dooryard in the village. He stood with his hand close to the small hole where the worker bees were carrying in their loads, while his wife with her baby in her arms stood close by. It seemed a long hard walk and climb back through the ravine, but the man who cared for our donkeys brought them to the foot of the last hill and I rode up some steep places. We started home just as it began to rain a little and I did not get off my donkey till at our gate. I could scarcely stand then but was all right the next day. It rained hard for a full hour, I think, but there was no shelter we could seek. Nameh had had the forethought to take along two raincoats, so only my felt hat got wet, that having shielded my face. I brought home many kinds of flowers and had a plenty to keep me out of mischief to find the names of those that none of us knew. I saw plenty of bright scarlet anemones in the green grass near the village, so it seemed an appropriate place for Jesus to have spoken of the lilies of the field, which many scholars think were these same anemones.

Gibeon and Emmaus

FROM one window of my room I could look through valleys and between barren hills to a distant one and see the Mosque of Neby Samwil with its high tower. In that mosque the prophet Samuel is supposed to be buried and we were allowed to look into the room through glass windows. On a nearer hill, but looking as it on the side of that one, is the village of Gibeon in the valley of Aijalon. If I looked out in the early morning before the sun had risen for us, Gibeon would be the only village to be lighted up by its rays, and if I looked out just after our sunset it again would be the only spot on which the sun shone. After seeing that for some months the story of Joshua 10: 1-14 was very plain. The Valley of Aijalon runs exactly east and west and is an unusually large valley for that part of the country with no other hills to shut off the earliest and latest sunlight. No wonder it seemed to those from beyond the hills that the day was lengthened for their especial benefit, hence Joshua's poem!

One day in March I was invited to be one of a party to visit Amwas, thought by many Bible scholars to be the Emmaus of the Gospel story. Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Johnson of Urbana, Ohio, were guests of the Mission just then. He is a prominent member of our Five Years Meeting of Friends while his wife is a Methodist. There is no Friends Meeting in Urbana and he had been for years Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School. They had been visiting missions around the world and spent several weeks in Palestine. A small horse with side-saddle was secured for Mrs. Johnson while her husband rode the small mule belonging to the Boys School. Naneh was our guide and she and I rode our usual donkeys.



As I Went to Emmaus

It was a beautiful day and how much we did enjoy riding through the valleys and watching the many different kinds of flowers! Part of the way we followed the same trail as to Neby Samwil, but it was a little longer trip, about ten miles, and we passed villages new to me. When we got to Emmaus we came to the old road from Jerusalem so that very likely we were riding over the very places where Jesus walked by the two disciples and talked about the events in Jerusalem. It made it all seem very real. First we went into the beautiful Latin Church. There we found a fine painting of Jesus and the two disciples and the altar piece is the same with Jesus passing the bread to those on either side. One of the two is always represented as an old man, the other as a youth. Then each window had a scene in beautiful colors.

Next we went through the village and into the grounds of the German Hospice (monastery serving as hotel). There were tables and chairs under the trees in a beautiful garden, with the walk bordered by rosemary. We had taken our lunch and those who wished had hot drink served there for a very reasonable sum. It was so quiet and restful with just the few congenial people, and brought back the scene of long ago so vividly — when Jesus was recognized in the breaking of the bread! Later we climbed the hill and over a high stone wall, the gate being locked, to a grove of pine trees set out by the Italian monks, I was told. From there we had a wonderful view from the sea to Ram Allah, while in another direction Neby Samwil stood out against the sky. By the way, the last-named place is one of several from which almost the whole length and breadth of Palestine can be seen. From the tower of its mosque I looked one day from the sands of the Mediterranean shore to the Dead Sea and the hills of Moab, perhaps fifty miles, and from some of the most northern mountains to the southern hills. I counted over twenty villages in the vicinity, almost all on hill-tops.

A Trip to Samaria

MAY 22ND Edward Kelsey took the Senior Girls for a trip to Samaria and invited three of us older ones to go with them. In April I had been told that I needn't fear getting caught in the rain again for there would probably be no more till I left in July. Nevertheless, we had some heavy showers on this day and the curtains on our autos were not very tight. On our way north we turned off the road for about two miles to visit Shiloh. It is one of the surest of the old sites and we probably stood right where the Tabernacle was first placed when the people came from their long journey through the wilderness. We also stood where Eli sat in the door and watched for the runner who brought news of the defeat that day and the death of his sons. There was an extended view through the valley, making it very reasonable. The head of the Museum of Copenhagen, Denmark, was in charge of excavations in this vicinity and we saw much of interest.

We returned to the main road to Nazareth and soon came to Jacob's well where Jesus talked to the Samaritan woman. The place is covered with little buildings and a small chapel inside of which is the well, so one cannot get the original setting. All Christian, Jewish and

Moslem traditions say this is the real site and water is one of the surest proofs. The woman told Jesus the well was deep and on an earlier visit I turned the windlass to let down the bucket and bring it up full of the most excellent cold water, proving that she was right. It extends down about 80 feet and a Greek priest let down a metal plate with lighted candles to show us the solid masonry. The mouth of the well is cut out of one huge stone and is probably the original. Just beyond this spot is a village which may be the ancient Sychar from which the woman came.

A little farther on we rode between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal where the blessings and curses were pronounced as commanded by Moses in Deuteronomy 27 and 28. Mount Gerizim is still the place where the small remnant of the Samaritans annually keep the passover with the animal sacrifices offered according to the old law. They live in Nablus, the ancient Shechem, at the foot of the mountain but spend that week in tents on the top. That is their holy place of worship as in Christ's day.

It took us a little off the main road to go to the village of Sebastieh, near which are the ruins of Samaria. We ate our picnic lunch close by a mosque and in another building were shown the tombs of St. John, Elisha and Obadiah, the servant of Ahab. Such strange combinations are not unusual over there. Later we climbed to the top of quite a high hill to find the ruins of the old gate and two long rows of columns, probably built by Herod, of whose palace we also saw remains as well as of an out-of-door theatre. The gateway is probably mentioned in II. Kings 6: 24 to 7: 20. There were also ruins said to be of Ahab's ivory house of I. Kings 22: 39. Samaria was the capital city of the northern kingdom for many years, and its social conditions stirred the prophet Amos to utter his strong protests.

Syria and the Lebanon

DURING the Easter vacation I had a delightful trip with some native friends up into the French Protectorate of Syria. Over the week-end we were at Brummana on the Lebanon Mountains for the first conference together of the Friends of Syria and Palestine. This has been kept up each year until in 1929 they united to form a new Yearly

Meeting. The English Friends were most hospitable and the meetings and discussions both interesting and practical. Then the scenery was wonderful and I shall never forget a ride up and down steep mountain sides and around sharp hairpin curves on a trip to Ras-el-Metn, where Daniel Oliver has his large orphanage for Armenian boys, with some girls in a house in the village. That day we seemed so near to some snow-capped mountains, Suneen and Canisy, and it was the nearest that I got to snow for the year. On the way we saw many beautiful flowers and whole groves of mulberry trees for the cultivation of silkworms, and a factory where the silk is wound off from the cocoons. After this I spent nearly a week in Beirut as guest of a former pupil in Central High School, Springfield, Mass., now wife of a professor at The American University, and the first night she invited another old pupil, a staffite at the University, to dine with us.

A Visit to Galilee

ON MY way home from Syria I spent two nights at a hotel in Tiberias on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The first afternoon I was out on the lake in a rowboat and the next day I had excursions to the head of the lake and to its foot. The flowers on the hillsides that we passed



Sea of Galilee Looking Over Tiberias

were of most brilliant reds and yellows and blues and of a great variety of kinds. At the head of the lake lie the ruins of Capernaum and the supposed location of Bethsaida. Everywhere one is reminded of

the stories of Jesus and His disciples that cluster about its blue waters. Both mornings I went down to the wharf before breakfast, the first time finding the fishermen mending their nets with what looked like huge tatting shuttles, before hanging them up to dry. By going still earlier the next day I saw men peddling fish from their boat. We were served "St. Peter's fish" at the hotel and they were very good indeed. As I went to and from Tiberias we passed in sight of the little village of Cana where Jesus performed his first miracle, and through Nazareth, his early home. There one sees today "Mary's fountain" where undoubtedly Jesus as a boy went often with his mother with her water-jar on her head. From that hillside we had a fine view of the large valley of Esdraelon, associated with so many events in Bible history, and to the west Mount Carmel where Elijah had the famous contest with the prophets of Baal.

An Auto Trip to Transjordan

I THINK I will quote from a home letter this time. — On the Wednesday morning after my return from Syria I started with a party for a most wonderful trip over in Transjordan. Now they say I needn't mind that I don't get to Baal-bec for the ruins at Jerash are similar and some prefer them. Evidently it was once a very important Roman city, and there are many columns standing, Ionic and Corinthian mostly, with ruins of an out-of-doors theatre and a place where they could flood a considerable area to have naval feats in miniature, also a temple of the sun. It is one of the few cities over here with an abundant water supply from springs. But we travelled miles and miles over hills and through valleys to get there with scarcely a village in sight, except an occasional Bedouin encampment. At one place we forded quite a wide stream. There is no bridge.

The next morning we retraced much of our way, then turned off and went to Amman, the capital of the country. There we found a very large out-of-door theatre and other ruins, but the most interesting thing was a visit to the Emir Abdullah, the ruler of Transjordan under the English Protectorate. It is the nearest I ever expect to come to being received by a king. His father was a king in name and one of his brothers is now king of Bagdad, a small country farther east, but Emir only means prince. We didn't know as we could get into

the palace but Willard Jones's card as Principal brought us a very gracious interview. His private secretary interpreted. He shook hands with all of us and made quite a little conversation. They served us Arabic coffee first, and when none of us accepted the second treat, cigarettes, some delicious candy was brought in. It may interest someone that the following autumn the Emir and his Minister of Education visited both of our schools in which are a number of his subjects.

We went on to Madeba for that night and were entertained by an American worker of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Willard and two other men secured horses and rode to Mount Nebo — or to one of the supposed sites. They were just in time for a beautiful sunset and view of the Dead Sea and the Promised Land. They had Arabian horses and enjoyed a fast gallop over the fields, drinking coffee with a Bedouin sheik in his tent on the way back. In the morning we saw some very wonderful and very old mosaics in the floor of the Greek Church and in some houses. The one in the church is a map of Palestine of priceless value but nearly destroyed because its worth was not recognized in time. The country near there was very fertile and had immense wheat fields, apparently cultivated largely from the Arab tents. I don't wonder two and a half tribes begged to live that side of Jordan. The land seemed so much more fertile and not so stony nor hilly, but we rode for miles without seeing any village except Bedouin tents, and very likely the presence of these nomad tribes helped to make the hills of Palestine more attractive.

The Dead Sea and Jericho

IT WAS very beautiful where we crossed the Jordan at the Allenby Bridge, and I got two fine snapshots which you will see as frontispiece. From there it was a short drive to the Dead Sea. In July when my niece and a friend were with me we started very early one morning to avoid the heat and went down before breakfast for a swim in the Sea. Personally I have reason to remember that the water is very salt and contains many other minerals, as well as being more buoyant than the ocean. When I undertook to get up my feet refused to go down while my head did go partly under the water, with unpleasant effects for a time.

We visited the Jordan at the supposed place of Christ's baptism, then drove to Jericho. On the way we stopped at an oasis, redeemed

by some monks by the aid of artesian wells, and bought of them some great bunches of delicious grapes freshly cut. Jericho is also famous for its fine oranges which likewise ripen very early because of its warm climate. We visited Elisha's Fountain where the prophet made the bitter waters sweet and whose water is used to irrigate the orange groves near by. We also saw the ruins of ancient Jericho nearer the line of hills in which is the so-called Mount of Temptation.

Jerusalem and Vicinity

I HAVE purposely written almost entirely about the villages and country life for two reasons: those are quite certainly much more like what Jesus saw when he lived and worked in human form in this very country; and it is easy to find descriptions and pictures of the cities and the show places visited by the ordinary tourist. However, I did visit Jerusalem, which was only ten miles away and with good auto connection, at many different times. Its high stone walls with numerous gates, the so-called temple area with its beautiful mosques and close by the "wailing wall" where one might see many Jews especially every Friday afternoon, the Pool of Bethesda not far away but now reached by going down a long flight of stone steps, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher with its many traditions, the Tower of David, the very old and narrow streets — some known as *stair streets* because of the stone steps — all had their fascination. The narrow streets were lined with old dwellings and tiny shops for selling a great variety of articles, including vegetables and groceries. Outside the walls is a quite modern city with larger stores and houses and wider streets adapted to the use of carriages and autos.

Not far from the Damascus Gate is the garden in which Dr. Gordon thinks is the real sepulcher in which Jesus was laid and there the formation of a part of the hill gives the appearance of a skull, making the name "Golgotha, The place of a skull" very appropriate. I got a good snapshot of this which is printed here. On the top of this hill he thinks Jesus was crucified and that the body was then taken down the other side of the hill and around into the garden. The place fitted the gospel story far better than the Church of the Holy Sepulcher for which so much is claimed. Also outside the walls but across a valley and in plain view of the temple area lie Gethsemane and the Mount



“Golgotha, The Place of a Skull”

of Olives with all their sacred memories. The village of Bethany is but a short distance beyond.

Christmas Eve at Bethlehem

AGAIN I will quote from a letter to friends. — The afternoon before Christmas a small party of teachers went by special auto to Bethlehem, six miles south of Jerusalem. We ate our lunch down in “the shepherds’ field” and sat there for a long time in the dusk, then starlight. Venus was almost over Bethlehem and it was easy to imagine the events of nearly two thousand years ago. I read aloud the story of the shepherds by the aid of a flashlight and some of the company sang Christmas hymns. Sitting there in the quiet it was very impressive. We waited till nine o’clock in order to go into the sort of cave under the ruins of an old Crusader church but we found nothing of special interest, chiefly pictures of Jesus in his childhood and of no great merit. We climbed back to Bethlehem in time for the carols sung in the courtyard of the Church of the Nativity in English by the Anglican Church and others. It was fine!

The Latin celebration began at ten and lasted till after 3 a. m. A friend and I were fortunate enough to get good seats. Some of the music was very fine, and they say singers come from Italy for the occasion, while choir boys went out from Jerusalem. The chanting by the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the priests of high rank became rather monotonous after an hour or so, though it was broken occasionally by their marching around in front of the altar. I don’t know how many

times they changed the robe of the Patriarch but we saw them once put on a gorgeous robe that looked like cloth of gold, and his mitre was taken off and put on many times. Just at midnight the choir broke out with "Gloria in Excelsis" and a curtain was pulled back from a small box over the center, revealing the image of a baby in a cradle. Then there was more beautiful music before the chanting was renewed. Later a beautiful doll baby was brought in on a golden tray and placed in front of the altar. At 2 a. m. the procession of Patriarch and Priests with much pomp and ceremony took the doll down to the crypt and put it in its place behind a golden screen. We followed but had to wait a long time before we could go into the crypt because of the crowd and various ceremonies. The church is a beautiful one well lighted by electricity, partly through what looked like candles in elegant great crystal chandeliers. There were many lights in different parts of the big edifice, for some of which the money was sent or left by devout church people. The doll is each year sent back to Italy, I was told, and auctioned off, the proceeds to help keep the church in repair. It was crowded that night and I suppose all were expected to give something for the same purpose. Somehow the whole was such a contrast to the unpretentious coming of Jesus, that to me it was simply interesting, not impressive.

Other Sources of Information

MANY books have been written about Palestine, both scholarly and popular ones, and some of these may be obtained from almost any good library. This little booklet is the response to an urgent request from personal friends that I write down some of my own impressions. It has been written with the hope that it might be of some slight service to the boys and girls that I have had in Sunday School. If anyone wishes to know more of the work of the Mission where I spent a school year, there is an interesting account of it in a booklet, "Friends in Palestine," and another in "Pen Journeys to Palestine Villages" by Mildred E. White, and several leaflets written by her, while "Peasant Life in Palestine" by Christina H. Jones is another leaflet both interesting and reliable. Any of these may be obtained from American Friends Board of Missions, 101 South 8th Street, Richmond, Indiana. The first two are 15 cents each and the others from 1 to 5 cents. All were written by those who had been workers there for a number of years.

