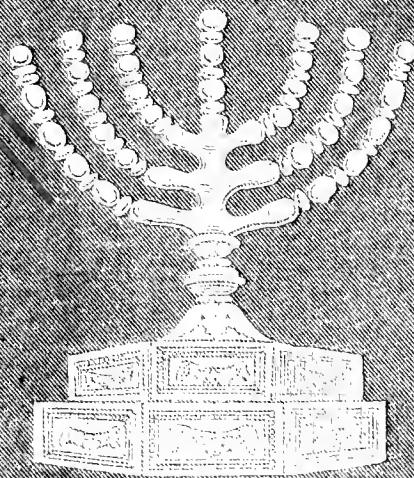


PALESTINE
ILLUSTRATED



ה'אש ד'ברך א'מת

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE

For Coding Florida
Medical Licensure
from her affectionate
father -

7086

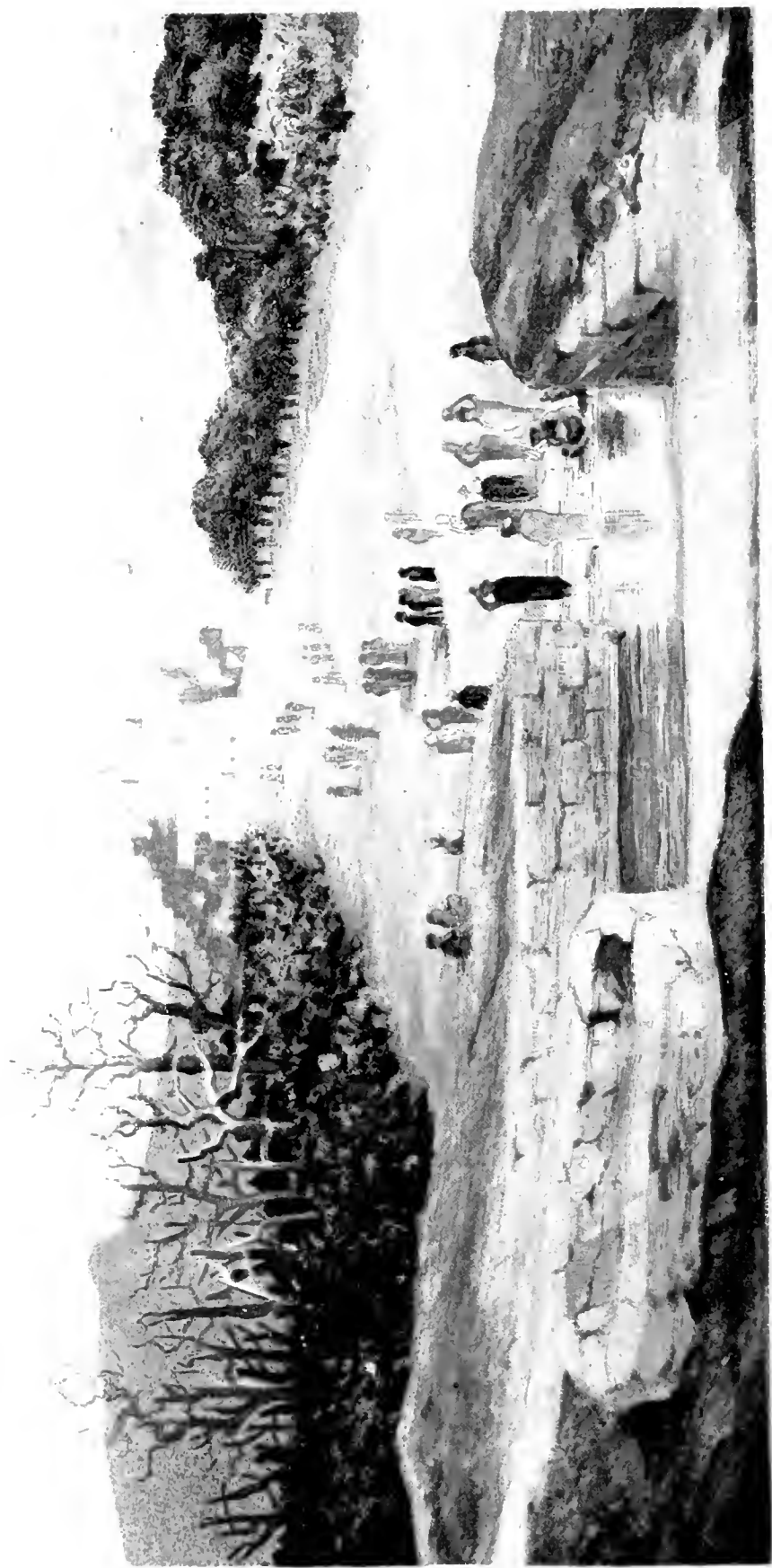
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Arthur R. W. Macdonald

with his father's love

12 Sep 1894





FRONTISPIECE.

CANA OF GALILEE.



PALESTINE



ILLUSTRATED.

BY

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE.

*“Thou hast been a refuge from the storm, and
a shadow from the heat.”*

LONDON:
W. H. ALLEN & CO., 13 WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL. S.W.

1888.

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While we praise the Lord for all the wonders of His power, wisdom and love, displayed in a system which is to war old and perish, we may therein contemplate, as in a glass, those new heavens and that new earth of whose duration there shall be no end.

*Read Nature; Nature is a friend to truth,
Nature is Christian, preaches to mankind,
And bids dead matter aid us in our creed.*

The sun, that fountain of life and heart of the world, the moon shining with a lustre borrowed from his beams, the stars glittering by night in the clear firmament, the air giving health to all things that live and move, the rain and the dew descending from above, the bow which compasseth the heavens about with a circle of glory, the voice of thunder and the piercing power of lightning—all these are ready to instruct us in the mysteries of faith.

*They speak their Maker as they can,
But want and ask the tongue of man.*

(BISHOP HORNE, 1771.)

P R E F A C E .



I DESIRE to state at the outset what is, and what is not, to be expected from this book. My main purpose is to present a reproduction of thirty-two studies made by me in oil-colours of very important scenes in the Holy Land. These illustrate the record of my journey to many of the most sacred places in the world.

The description is arranged according to the route taken in my journey. The geographical order of the places is in this wise :— Joppa — Ajalon — Jerusalem — Bethlehem — Jordan — Jericho — Bethel — Shiloh — Shechem — Samaria — Dothan — Esdraelon — Jezreel — Tabor — Nazareth — Cana — Gennesareth — Tiberias.

It will be seen, then, that the descriptive survey comprises a part only of the Holy Land, though the most

important part. It does not include the southern division of Hebron and Gaza, nor the northern division of Cæsarea Philippi and Merom, nor the coast of Tyre and Sidon. It does not extend to the region east of the Jordan.

The record includes a general account of my journey, and fully explains the coloured sketches which I took on the spot. The affording of such explanation is indeed the primary object. But, in order that the explanation may be complete for each illustration, a *résumé* is given of the Scriptural events relating to the scene which is depicted. The narrative, then, is so arranged as to set forth the subjects which are pictorially represented.

Thus the purpose of the work is strictly limited to the representation of many important scenes as they appear at this time, and to the exposition of the sacred topography or history relating to them. I do not undertake to do any more than this in a matter which has been, and is being, investigated by the most recent authorities. But even this will be found hard of accomplishment. No pains have been spared to verify the authorities, and to embody the results of the latest researches so far as they concern the particular points which I adduce.

I duly remember that *Picturesque Palestine* has of

late been most ably and fully delineated by wood-cuts and steel engravings. But these illustrations do not, of course, go beyond the exhibition of form with light and shade. Now my illustrations attempt something more, or something different, in that they display colouring. Such a task has not usually been undertaken by previous illustrators, and has something of novelty in it.

Some passages in Ruskin's writings are so specially applicable to colouring in sacred scenery that I will cite them here :—

“Of all God's gifts to the sight of man, colour is the holiest, the most divine, the most solemn. We speak rashly of gay colour and sad colour, for colour cannot at once be good and gay. All good colour is in some degree pensive, the loveliest is melancholy. . . . God has employed colour in His creation as the unvarying accompaniment of all that is purest, most innocent, most precious ; while, for things precious only in material uses, or dangerous, common colours are reserved. . . . I know no law more severely without exception than this of the connection of pure colour with profound and noble thought. . . . The ascertainment of the sanctity of colour is not left to human sagacity. . . . The sacred chord of colour, blue, purple, and scarlet, with

white and gold, as appointed in the Tabernacle, this chord is the fixed base of all colouring with the workmen of every great age. . . . A faithful study of colour will always give power over form, though the most intense study of form will give no power over colour.”

R. T.

THE NASH, KEMPSEY,

NEAR WORCESTER.

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PALESTINE ILLUSTRATED.

CHAPTER I.

TRAVEL IN PALESTINE.



Best season for travelling in Palestine.—The climate.—The spring.—The winter time.—Climate and atmosphere in February and early March.—Stormy weather.—Atmospheric effects.—Disadvantages and advantages also.—Life in tents.—Shelter in monasteries.—Rides on horseback.—Servants and equipage.—Journey from London to Jerusalem.—Comparative scales of expense of touring in Palestine.—The Palestine Exploration Fund.

THE following pages constitute the record of a journey in Palestine during the months of February and March 1883. It is necessary to state the time of year because the incidents and results of such a journey depend largely on the season.

In most countries the selection of the season for travelling demands forethought. In no country is such precaution more

needful than in Palestine. The climate in the mountainous regions of the Holy Land must originally have been cool and salubrious. The coast region, though much hotter, was swept by the health-giving breezes from the Mediterranean. The Jordan valley was the only region having a tropical heat. But the ruin that has set in for many centuries, the obstruction of natural drainage, the loss of vegetation, and accumulation of rubbish, have grievously affected the healthiness of the land which was promised as an inheritance to Israel. The traveller, then, must beware of the hot drought in the summer and autumn, that is from June to October. Some travellers who from experience know how to take every care for their own safety may venture here, even in the hottest time, as indeed they might venture anywhere. But the ordinary traveller would run a grave risk of fever or sun-stroke.

The best and usual time for travelling in Palestine is from the latter half of March to the beginning of May. The traveller will then expect sunshine and pleasant weather, dry ground and unimpeded transit, spring verdure and blooming wild-flowers. Most of these good things he will indeed find at that auspicious time, though in the weather he may be disappointed even then. But such advantages do not accrue in February and the first half of March. They may for a

brief while present themselves, but in that case they will be abnormal and unseasonable. And although they might be enjoyable to the traveller for the moment, he would, if a thoughtful man, regard them with foreboding, for they would portend drought, failure of crops, and ultimate scarcity. In other words, during the latter winter and the early spring there ought to be heavy weather, rain-storms, vapour-masses obscuring the sky, falls of snow in the mountains and the loftier plateaux ; bridle-paths turned into temporary torrents, lowlands becoming bogs, ploughed fields difficult to be crossed. Otherwise there will be no subsoil moisture for the spring crops, no supplies for the fountains and streams, no pasturage for the animals. The traveller, then, who chooses, or is obliged, to travel at that particular time must face the weather. He will have to endure some hardship, he will miss seeing many beauties that are seen by those who travel at more favourable times. But he will be rewarded by the sight of much grandeur that would not be visible under other circumstances.

In February and March of 1883, the season was of the ordinary character. It was stormy and wild, cloudy with outbreaks of splendour, rainy in the lowlands and snowy in the mountains. It had genial and delightful intervals between the storms. It was marked by rapid changes from cold to

heat. It abounded in occasions when the glory beheld would more than make up for toil and trouble. In the coming narrative, then, the reader will hardly look for the common characteristics of an Eastern journey—the glare, the heat, the dust, the baked earth, the cloudless sky. Heat, indeed, will be but rarely felt. The riding-dress will not be thin and light as in hot climates. On the contrary, water-proof protection from head to foot will often be needed. To the inhabitant of British latitudes, inured to a changeful climate, the comparative regularity of season in the East is welcome, when some forecast of fine and dry days can be made, and when the weather can be depended on. But that advantage is lacking on the journey now to be described. Tents are pitched, perhaps, only to be torn from their fastenings at the dead of night by the blast. Baggage mules and donkeys have sometimes to be extracted from the loam or clay of the ploughed field in which they are almost imbedded, or have to be actually dragged across a turbid and impetuous brook. I narrowly escaped detention at Jerusalem from a fall of snow two feet deep, and the hills round about Jerusalem are thus whitened in most winters, though not in every winter. All this may surprise those who regard Palestine as “Eothen.” They may naturally ask whether it is wise to travel in the interior of

Palestine during the winter season. The answer would depend on the strength, aptitude, and experience of the traveller. If he be at all an invalid, the imprudence is manifest, and in that region nature has sometimes exacted a severe penalty for such rashness. But if he be physically able to bear the discomfort without harm, if his spirits be cheerful and buoyant, if the hope within him of seeing wonders can enliven tedium and distress, then he would do well to try his fortune. He may indeed be altogether unlucky, and the weather in its course may fight against him. A continuous downpour may persecute him for several days consecutively. He may be condemned to ride tediously from morn to eve, seeing next to nothing. He must pack and unpack his scanty baggage in the rain, as the circumstances do not admit of delay. He must pitch and strike his tent on the wet ground, with the unpleasant reflection that the soaked canvas and sodden gear aggravate the burden of the animals already laden too heavily for the bad roads. But such obstinate ill-luck, though possible in his case, is not probable. He is more likely to meet with some bad weather and some good, more perhaps of the former than the latter, still some of each. The effect of each will be heightened for him by the contrast. Impending showers will warn him that the sunshine is treacherous.

Again, the darkness will be broken by a burst of brightness. The alternation of gloom and glory constitutes, indeed, a peculiar charm. There is not much of that dull weather casting leaden hues on both sky and earth, that haze which deadens the landscape, that indeterminate condition of the atmosphere, neither encouraging nor yet forbidding out-door pursuits, to which we are accustomed in the British Isles; fortunately for the traveller, the weather is otherwise in Palestine. There the normal appearance of the sky is cheerful, sometimes even brilliant. The clouds gather into lowering masses, discharge their heavy burden of moisture, and then disperse. Immediately after their dispersion the heaven resumes its brightness, and while they are breaking up, and when the light of the heaven beyond is seen through the vapour-masses, the finest effects pictorially are beheld. Then at length the traveller is rewarded for the discomfort he has endured and for the toil he has undertaken. He remembers that he is seeing things which could not be seen except in fitful and violent weather. He reflects that like as those who go down to the sea in ships see the wonders of the Lord, so those who pass through tempest in Palestine behold the majestic moods of nature amidst the most sacred scenery and the holiest associations.

Such considerations, too, govern the treatment and effect in all the pictures with which these pages will be illustrated. Those who from their Eastern experience expect to find representations of a parched earth and a sky like brass, may perhaps be surprised at the atmospheric effects depicted in the illustrations. But, in fact, the clouds are given just as they appeared at the moment when each sketch was taken, so far as I could imitate them, however imperfectly. The atmospheric effect, too, is rendered as it was day after day at that particular season, subject always to any fault in my power of representation.

Thus the traveller will find ample recompense for any discomfort, even distress, that he must unavoidably encounter. Moverover he will have every advantage that can be derived from the cheerfulness and fidelity of those who attend and serve him. Miserable as the weather may be, he will be pleased with, and thankful for, the conduct of his guide and his servants, his dragoman, his cook, his muleteer, his tent-manager, his donkey-driver. These people evince patient endurance and unfailing alacrity. They seem to take physical suffering as a matter of course. They follow the principle that their employer is not to be subjected to any avoidable distress from bad weather, and that the daily routine

of his convenience is not to be disturbed by this cause. The traveller, too, will be satisfied with the animals on whose strength he depends for locomotion. He will admire the Syrian mule stepping deftly on the slippery rocks, and even the humble donkey struggling through the morass. He will bear away with him grateful recollections of the light-paced swift-footed steeds of Moab or Damascus, that have carried him gallantly over many a march.

In the favourable season, say spring or autumn, the small tents obtainable in Palestine afford a charming shelter. But in the winter-time, which we are now considering, they are not really of much use. The traveller will take his tents with him, one for himself, and one for his establishment, but probably he will avail himself of them but seldom. For, if there should be bad weather to an average degree, he may be driven out of his tent by rushing water, or may find it blown down upon his head in the dark hours of the night. Fortunately in the central portion of Palestine proper he need not rely on his tent alone; for he will find monasteries, Latin or Greek, in the principal places, where a hospitable welcome is given. Securely lodged within the massive stone masonry of these quiet abodes, with his faithful beasts housed in stalls around, he listens complacently to the nocturnal blast howling

without, anticipating the sunrise effect of the wild morn that will follow. He will make the acquaintance of the monastic inmates, cultured men of various nationalities European and Asiatic. He will perceive that of these institutions some are ancient, some mediæval, and some modern, while one or two are superbly situated and surrounded with historic associations. Under any circumstances, whether he have his tents with him or not, he would do well to put up for the night at one or other of these monasteries by the way. If driven from the tents by stress of weather, he can, in the absence of a monastery or other European dwelling, find refuge in a small Syrian house or even in a cottage. On emergent occasions even lady travellers have been thus accommodated, though for them the lodging will be rough.

Indeed the winter travelling is as practicable for ladies, if they have equestrian aptitude, as for gentlemen. But in the interior of the country the marching can be done on horseback only. For an invalid, or for special cases, a litter would be procurable, but such a mode of conveyance must be tedious and costly. From any part of Europe up to Jerusalem the transit is easy. From Brindisi the Indian Mail steamer runs to Alexandria in three days; thence Mediterranean steamers run to Jaffa in two days; thence again a

carriage is driven in one day to Jerusalem. On Friday a traveller may start from London, and on the Saturday week, that is in eight days, he may reach Jerusalem with entire comfort. Therefore anyone, lady or gentleman, in weak health, may well reach as far as Jerusalem. Once within the city, he or she may be conveyed on a litter or a sedan-chair to the Holy Places, to the sights within the walls, to the sacred spots in the suburbs, and even to Olivet and Bethany. But any traveller who proceeds beyond these limits must be in the possession of health and strength. He may not be obliged to make sharp ascents on foot, though it is better to have the power of doing this also; but at the very least he must be able to sit on horseback during many hours for many days almost consecutively.

For one who travels by himself, with a small establishment of servants and necessary equipage, the travelling is comparatively expensive. Of course the expense is proportionately diminished for a party of two or three. But now-a-days arrangements are made, through private enterprise, whereby a party of twelve or twenty persons may journey together on a settled and well-selected route, under the guidance of a trained conductor who is versed in the best local information. There are, of course, some plain objections to this method; still

it is effective enough for acquiring information, and it is inexpensive.

I cannot close this introduction without adding my testimony to that of many others regarding the practical value of the work performed under the auspices of the Palestine Exploration Fund. We travellers of to-day are thereby enabled to understand the history of the places visited, and to identify the sites inspected, with a certainty and a facility unknown to our predecessors. The religious world at large is doubtless grateful for the benefit thus enjoyed, but the traveller owes a special debt of gratitude which he is bound to acknowledge. Of the various operations conducted by this important agency that known as "the Survey of Western Palestine" is the one to which the following pages will refer. Its results up to a recent date (June 1886) have been well summarised in the publication entitled *Twenty-one Years Work in Palestine*. I may cite briefly some few sentences from it:—

"As regards the natural features of the country the Survey has substituted exact detail for general statements. . . . The boundaries of tribes, the march of armies, the way of commerce, the fords, passes, and valleys . . . these things form the foundation of Bible history, and they are found legible to him that can read maps on our great Survey."

“There are 622 Biblical names west of the Jordan. Of these 262 were known before the Survey was begun, that is rather more than a third. During the Survey no fewer than 172 were discovered and are now generally accepted, so that of the whole number of places now identified, namely 434, almost exactly two-fifths are due to the Survey.”

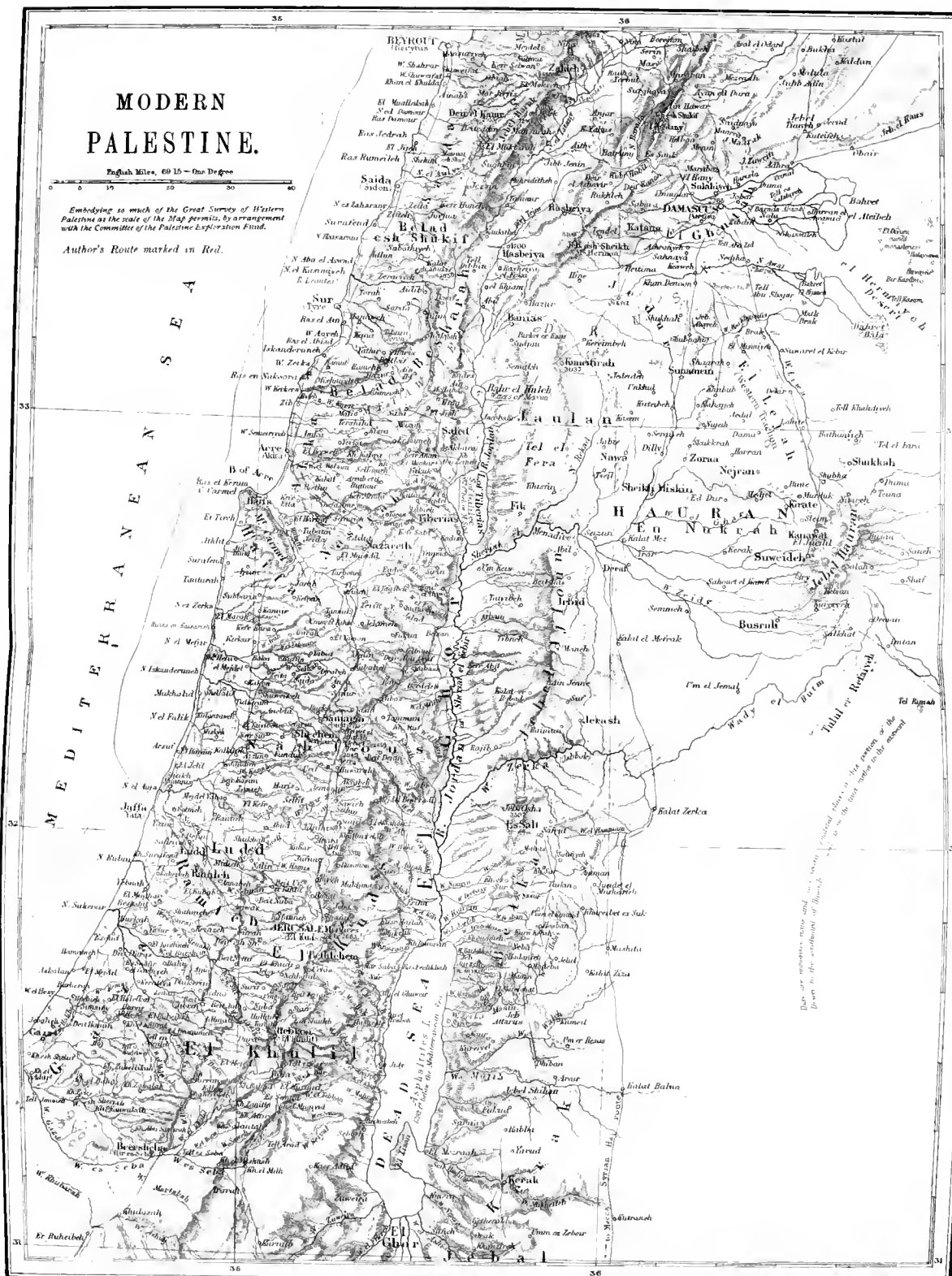
“For the first time the natural features of the country have been laid down by the Survey in exact detail, so that the reader of the Bible may now follow step by step the events of which he reads.”

MODERN PALESTINE.

English Miles, 0 10 20 30 40

Embodying so much of the Great Survey of Western Palestine as the state of the Map permits, by arrangement with the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

Author's Route marked in Red.



This map is intended to show the general features of the country, and is not to be taken as a guide to the details of the topography.

CHAPTER II.

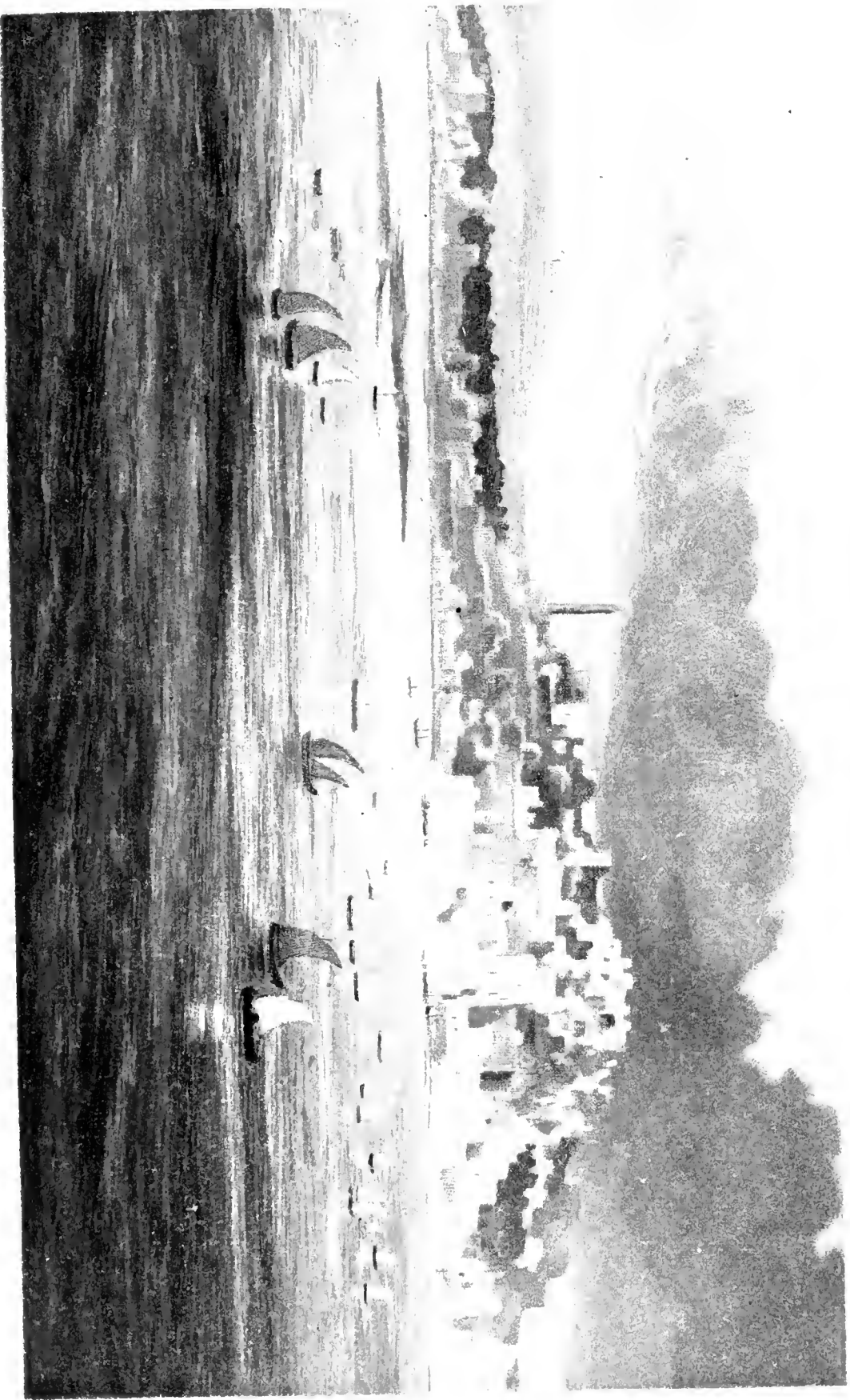
SHARON AND PHILISTIA.

Landing at Joppa. — Sacred history of the place. — Orange groves. — Plains of Sharon and Philistia. — Carriage road. — Halt at Ramleh. — Lydia, Modin and Bethoron. — Valley of Ajalon. — Moonlight view. — Mountains of Judæa. — Nicopolis-Emmaus. — Kirjath-Jearim. — Suburbs of Jerusalem. — Identification of Scriptural sites.

THE map here inserted will indicate the route taken in the journey about to be described. This route is marked in red, and the eye will readily run along it, from Joppa to Jerusalem, and by Bethlehem to Jericho; thence by Bethel to Samaria; thence across the plain of Esdraelon to Nazareth and the Lake of Gennesareth: thence by Sepphoris to the coast of Acre; and thence by Tyre and Sidon to Beyrout.

Early in February 1883 I started about sunset in a French Messagerie steamer from Port Said at the mouth of the Suez Canal on the way to Palestine. Our short voyage was accomplished during the night, in quiet weather. On a still and cloudy morning our steamer cast anchor in the open road-

stead of Jaffa or Yaffa ("the beautiful"), the ancient Joppa. Here, then, is my first view of the Palestine coast. This is, as it were, the gate of the Holy Land to a traveller approaching from the coast. This is the place as seen from the deck and as shown in the accompanying illustration (II). The town, being built on a low seaside bluff, seems to rise straight out of the Mediterranean. The lines of flat Oriental houses arranged in rows, one row above the other, are broken by Moslem minarets and domes of mosques. On the left are hillocks overlooking a narrow beach. In the distance are just visible the tops of mountains forming the central ridge of Palestine. The sky is grey and dull after a spell of bad weather. Our steamer is the only one in the roads, but many coasting craft with their light-brown sails, and lesser boats, are plying backwards and forwards with the gentle breeze. The sea is now smooth, but the water looks as if it were moving in a listless, wearied manner after the furious lashing it has recently undergone. Its colour, a greenish grey, sets off the ochre tints of the town. I learnt how the passengers of the steamer a few days before had been unable to land at this harbourless place, and had consequently been obliged to proceed as far northward as Beyrout. I was therefore thankful to row in a boat across a mile or so of



JOPPA OR JAFFA.

sea between our steamer and the town, to land quickly under the protection of a reef, and scale by a rude ladder the wave-washed quay. The town, though picturesque, had the draggled look which all Oriental cities have after heavy rain.

Joppa is not now regarded as a sea-port at all; it is merely an open roadstead where ships anchor for a few hours and pass on. Nevertheless it is among the ancient havens of the world. To it came the timber for Solomon's temple and for the second temple in the time of Ezra. It was the only position which the Jews possessed on the coast. The 14th chapter of I. Maccabees states that "Simon took Joppa for an harbour and an entrance to the isles of the sea." It was a solitary knoll of rock on a long shore generally straight and flat. Between its shelving rock and the reef already mentioned there is a narrow space of sheltered water comparatively smooth. This does not, indeed, suffice for modern ships, but must have sufficed for the small coasting craft by which ancient commerce was conducted. The situation was readily defensible under the then conditions of warfare. Though we no longer see many traces of its fortifications, yet we know that it was fortified by the Maccabees. Afterwards its walls were several times destroyed and rebuilt by Romans, Moslems, Christians. Its history begins

from about 1450 B.C., when, under the name of Japho, it was allotted to the tribe of Dan, down to 1799 A.D. in the year of the European revolution, a period of about 3,250 years. In these thirty centuries the supremely important event is that narrated in the 10th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. We may read this chapter close to the spot where the event occurred. Here on the ridge of rock and masonry revetments was the house of Simon the tanner, built in the same style as that of the houses now standing. On this flat housetop, overlooking the Mediterranean, Peter saw the vision which revealed to him the divine purpose that the Gospel was to be preached to the Western nations dwelling across the sea. Here was the beginning of that missionary enterprise which has lasted ever since and extended to the ends of the earth.

After a short walk through the town, I decided to drive in a carriage along the new road to Jerusalem, distant only thirty-five miles, starting at ten o'clock in the morning and arriving by eight o'clock in the evening.

The road passes through the orange groves for which Jaffa is famous. At this moment the branches of the trees are bowing under the golden weight of the fast-ripening fruit. These oranges are thought to have a delicious quality rarely equalled and hardly surpassed in any clime. Emerging from

the belt of grove and garden, the road enters upon the coast region of Palestine, which was in Hebrew *Arabah*, but is commonly called "the maritime plain." Our route follows the border line between Philistia and Sharon. The traveller then pauses to consider the view which is presented to him as he sets foot on the Holy Land.

The view faces eastwards, the Mediterranean is behind, and in front are the mountains of Judah and Ephraim. They appear to be, what indeed they really are, the backbone of the country. At this moment their outline is obscured by the clouds and darkness around them, and their base above the plain is dark with shadow. On the right there rise up the sandy hillocks of the lowlands held of yore by the stalwart Philistines. From them was derived the name Palestine which the Greeks gave to the Holy Land. The name of Dagon the fish-god survives in the village of Beit Dujan close to us. Behind these hillocks are Ekron and Ashdod or Azotus, famous in Jewish annals from the time of Samuel to that of the Maccabees.

On our left is the plain of Sharon. Beyond it, in the distance out of sight, are the ruins of Cæsarea jutting out into the sea. The name Sharon, signifying a level place, has a musical sound to our ears, from the opening verse of the 2nd chapter of Solomon's Song, "I am the rose of Sharon."

Doubt, however, has long been felt regarding the flower which was here meant. Conder, who is the newest authority, writes: "The rose of Sharon is best identified with the white narcissus which grows abundantly in the plains." I am not however, able to see this blossom, as the season is too early for the flowers to bloom. The champaign has a stiff loamy soil, which is well cultivated though for the most part unenclosed. The young cereal crops are springing up well. Thompson, in his *Land and the Book*, well observes: "Water to any amount can be procured in every garden and at a moderate depth. The entire plain seems to cover a river of vast breadth, percolating through the sand *en route* to the sea. A thousand Persian wheels, working day and night, produce no sensible diminution, and this inexhaustible source of wealth underlies the whole territory of the Philistines."

We must recollect that this plain formed the inheritance of Dan, a valiant tribe sorely beset by the Philistines. It must be kept quite separate in our thoughts from the distant territory which the Danites afterwards conquered for themselves (as related in the 18th chapter of the Book of Judges) at Laish near the source of the Jordan. This territory on the extreme north of the Jewish settlements is that meant in the Scriptural expression "from Dan to Beersheba," signifying

from north to south. Josephus writes (*Ant.*, bk. i. ch. iv., *Whiston*): "Abram fell upon the Assyrians near Dan, for that is the name of the other spring of the Jordan."

Such is the landscape as we drive for several miles till the tower of Ramleh comes in sight. The name Ramleh means "sandy," and the place is near the foot of the hills of Judah. Though close to many Scriptural places, it is not mentioned in Holy Writ. It had a very eventful history after the Christian era, during the wars of the Crusades. The tower is really a Moslem minaret, and from its top a view is had of the whole Maritime Plain. Robinson wrote thus in 1841: "From the top of the tower there is a wide view on every side, presenting a prospect rarely surpassed in richness and beauty. . . . We lingered on the tower till sunset, enjoying the surpassing beauty in which the mountains of Judah and the plains of Sharon revealed themselves before us." (*Biblical Researches.*)

From Ramleh the traveller has the choice of two routes to Jerusalem; first that by lower Ajalon and Bethoron, to Gibeon, and thence to Jerusalem, which is the old way and the best one, though longer; second that by upper Ajalon straight to the Holy City, which is the new way and the quicker, though inferior in interest. By the first way the

traveller must ride, by the second way he will drive in a carriage. It so happened that I was obliged to proceed by the latter way.

If the traveller proceeds by the first way he will pass through Lydda now called Ludd, where Peter was before he went to Joppa, and which became a famous bishopric after the Christian era. He may also see the site of Modin, now called El Medyeh, the home of the Maccabees. Here the patriots Mattathias and Judas were buried; here Simon built monuments "aloft to the sight," with seven pyramids, as related in Maccabees I. ch. xiii. Here in the mountains before us the insurgent Jews, with "neither armour nor sword to their minds," gave battle to the well-armed and disciplined troops of Greeks and Assyrians. They were undismayed at the hostile array, although "when the sun shone upon the shields of gold and brass, the mountains glistened thereunto and shone like lamps of fire." (Maccabees I. ch. vi. 39.)

Thence the traveller marches up the valley or pass of Bethoron to the central uplands of Palestine on his way to Jerusalem. The historic events of Bethoron, which are the most glorious in the annals of Jewry, need not here be noticed, as a future chapter will lead us in that direction.

I will revert now to Ramleh, where we have halted for

awhile. During the afternoon a fresh start is made thence for Jerusalem by the carriage road. Towards evening we enter the outwork of low hills, which were called Shephelah, in Hebrew, and which are between the plain (Arabah) and the watershed range of mountains (Har). From the first ridge we look back, over the plain which has been crossed during the day, towards the horizon of the Mediterranean. At this sunset hour the clouds of the forenoon and afternoon have cleared away, and we have the same sort of view as that which Robinson had in the description already quoted. The plain beneath our eyes seems to smile with richness and to glow in the warm light.

Proceeding onward from the ridge, we skirt the heights over the partly cultivated valley of Ajalon which is within the Shephelah. Thus we approach the site which is still called Yalo and is identified with the Ajalon of Joshua. The hill-sides and slopes are striped with horizontal and parallel marks, which at first look like rock-strata. But they prove to be the marks of ruined terraces. Here was that terraced cultivation which once supplied the agricultural wealth of Palestine. Here were once the vineyards, the fig-orchards, the olive-groves. But during the distresses of many centuries, the stone walls of the terraces fell out of

repair, the masonry dropped away piecemeal, the fertile soil, which had been thus sustained, was loosened, the descending rains washed away the earth with the dilapidated stones, and so the garden culture disappeared. Now the fragments still preserving some of their original lines, the choked-up cisterns, the stumps of aged trees, are all that remain as traces of the skill and industry that once abounded here.

While I was making haste to sketch all these particulars and to take notes of the colouring, before the twilight should fail me, a soft light began to steal over the scene. It was the young moon, touching with light the mountain spurs, and the edges of the terrace-ruins, while the shadows became darker and more opaque. The moon was seemingly motionless, looking down upon the valley. Instantly there rose to memory the text, "and thou moon stand still in the valley of Ajalon."

This, then, is the subject of the illustration (III.). In the foreground are the carriage roadway, a ruined dwelling and the scanty remnant of olive-groves. In the middle distance is the hill-slope of Ajalon, marked in parallel lines by ruined terraces. Beyond it are the tops of the outer range just crossed, which hides the plain of Sharon from sight. In the distance is the Mediterranean almost mingling with the evening



sky. Over all is the moon-lit heaven and the fading red of departed day on the sea horizon.

On the heights overlooking Ajalon, we take our last look over the Maritime Plain and feel ourselves to be within the mountains of Judæa. This plain, though allotted to the Tribes on the partition of the land under Joshua, never was occupied as a permanent inheritance. With the exception of Joppa and its neighbourhood, the Israelites seem to have left the Mediterranean coast to the Philistines and the Phœnicians. Throughout their history they remained an un-maritime nation. Their national home was in the bosom of these mountains. There had their patriarchs originally sojourned; there was won that battle of Bethoron which placed almost the whole land at their feet; there was the kingdom established. To these mountains they clung as their earliest and their latest refuge. They were mountaineers; and they ever cherished that imaginative faculty and that tenacity of tradition which distinguish mountaineer races. Josephus said: "We neither inhabit a maritime country, nor do we delight in merchandise; . . . the cities we dwell in are remote from the sea." (*Apion.*)

Within these mountains was the scene of the conclusive events of sacred history both before and after the advent of Our Lord. Remembering this, the traveller is awe-struck by

the sight of the rounded summits, the limestone crags, the desolate hill-sides, the pervading aspect of ruin and decay.

As we start for Jerusalem, we may notice some of the historic places around us. Close by is Beit Nuba, a village of celebrity in Christian times.

In our neighbourhood is Nicopolis-Emmaus which must not be confounded with the Emmaus of St. Luke's Gospel. Near Nicopolis Judas Maccabeus defeated the superior forces of Gorgias as related in Maccabees I. ch. iii., iv. He retained only those who had the stomach for the fight. "But as for such as were building houses, or had betrothed wives, or were planting vineyards, or were fearful, those he commanded that they should return every man to his own home." But those whom he retained were marched to the camp on the south side of Emmaus. To them he said "Arm yourselves and see that ye be in readiness against the morning. . . . For it is better for us to die in battle than to behold the calamities of our people and our sanctuary."

The mount Mizpeh, where Judas organized his fighting strength, rears its head to the north of us, and I shall revert to it in a future chapter.

Soon we shall be near Kirjath-Jearim where the ark of the Lord rested after being recovered from the Philistines,

The word *jearim* means "woods," and the place must then have been in the midst of forests. But, alas! the hills have long been denuded of trees and shrubs. Tristram, however, (*Bible Places*,) writes that he found a piece of primæval forest near here.

From Yalo and the Ajalon valley the carriage-road, which is well engineered, ascends considerably. But the horses, having had a brief rest, breasted the ascent well. Ere long we had reached the table-lands of the Jebusites and of Judæa, two thousand feet, or more, above sea-level, before we were fully aware that we had mounted so high. It was now nightfall, and the temperature, which had been pleasant all day, was cool without being at all chilly. Our faces were set straight for Jerusalem, and as we approached the city the pace of the carriage-horses grew quicker while the road became smoother and the ascent more gentle.

Then we entered the western, or the Frank suburb of Jerusalem, which is quite modern. Most of the houses have been built within the last few years, and fresh buildings are springing up year by year. They are constructed with light-coloured stone masonry, and the roofs are arched with stone-work as from want of timber supply, there are no ordinary means for roofing. The consuls of the several European Powers now reside in this quarter, instead of the

interior of the city as formerly. The churches, the convents, the mission-houses, the hospices of the several Christian communities are here. Among these, the structures belonging to the Russian Church are conspicuous, and can be seen from afar. But there are not any commercial buildings, nor any miscellaneous houses, for trade and industry have not been established hereabouts. Fortunately this suburb occupies the western, or only side of Jerusalem where no sacred associations, no historic remains, exist. Consequently its construction has spoilt nothing, while ministering to the health and convenience of those whose duty compels them to reside close to Jerusalem.

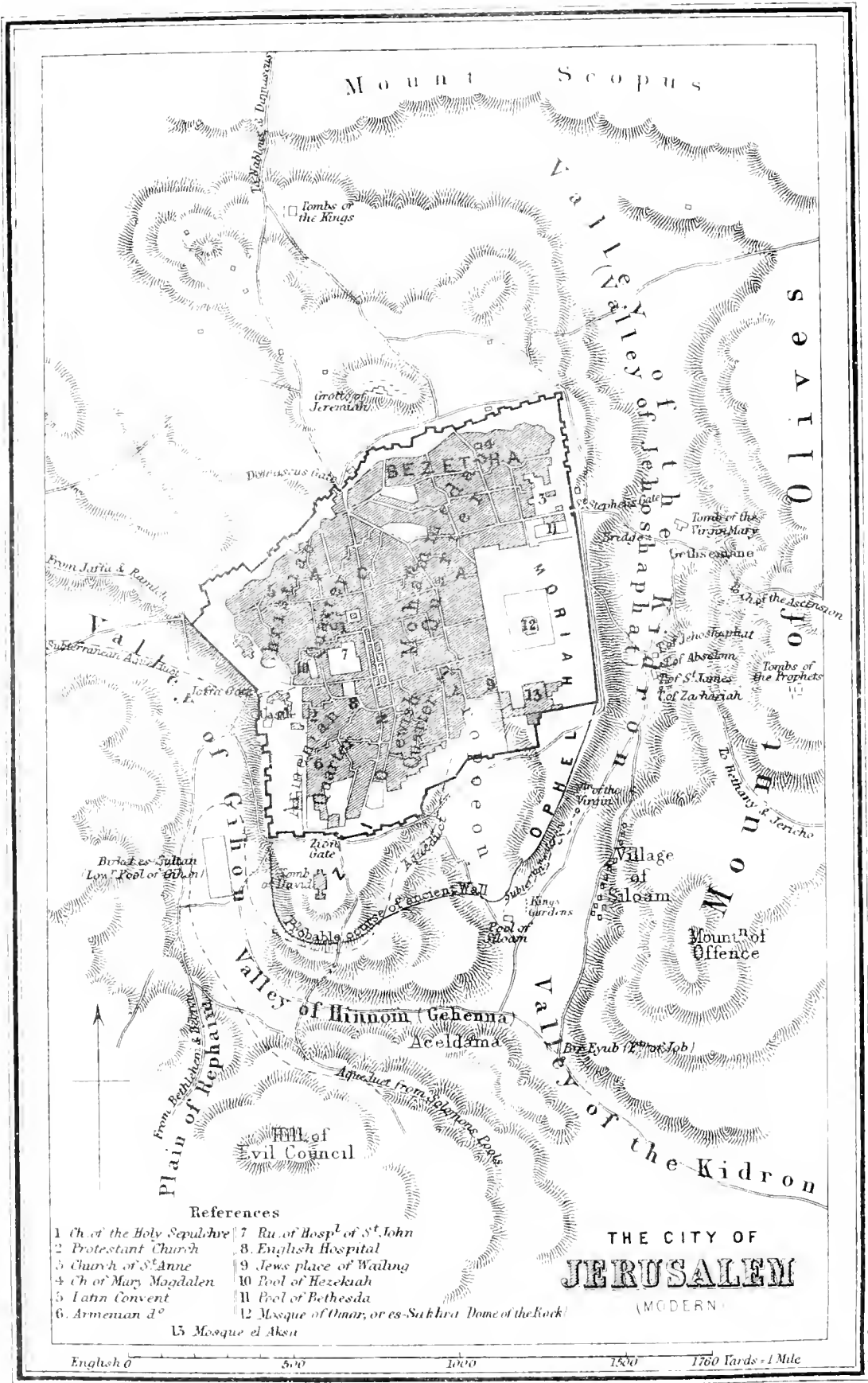
Driving in the dark through a suburb which by daylight looks smart and garish, we came suddenly on the walls of Jerusalem. We did not regret to find that the first glimpse of Jerusalem was obtained by the dim light of the moon on a cloudy night. For the western side is the only one of the four sides whence no proper view of the city can be obtained. We drive straight up to the very wall, observing nothing remarkable. Passing through the shadow of a great terebinth tree, we enter by the Jaffa gate, of massive masonry, near the tower of Hippicus, called after David's name. Here we alight from the carriage and walk for a short distance to a Syrian house which has been turned into an hotel.

I arrive there about 8 o'clock, and rest in a chamber consisting of light stone masonry.

Something has been already, and much more will yet be, said regarding Scriptural sites. But this occasion may be taken to mention, in a general way, what is meant by their identification. It must be admitted that of the sites usually indicated to the traveller some are fanciful, some unproved, and some plainly wrong being contrary to the language of Scripture. At certain times of early Christendom, and especially of Latin Christianity, places seem to have been chosen as the scenes of prominent events in the sacred record, without due regard to the words of the Bible itself, and without study of the ground in the actual locality. The errors hence arising are but too well known to travellers in Palestine. Nevertheless the inquirer is not to be discouraged in his search for the sites of sacred occurrences and for the scenes of momentous events in the history of our Religion. It may be that the list of Scriptural places which cannot be at all identified is unhappily long. The number of places, too, which have been wrongly selected, is considerable. Still there is the satisfaction of remembering that the sites and scenes of many among the most memorable events are known with reasonable certainty. Learned research, scientific inquiry, antiquarian ex-

ploration, have thrown, and are constantly throwing, much light upon these themes. But we may read, mark, and learn the words of Scripture; and thus furnished we may visit the sacred spots. There, with the ground and its surroundings under our eyes, we may read over again the passages of Scripture. We shall then have a clear vision on many points of biblical geography where our ideas before were quite shadowy. And we shall be thankful to find that, humanly speaking, we have a positive assurance regarding the places where many among the most essential circumstances in the Bible History came about. The exact coincidence, in numerous instances, of the actual topography with the sacred narrative, adds another bulwark to the stability of our faith.

In the following pages many allusions will be made to Scriptural sites real or supposed. But there will always be a passing explanation as to whether the particular site is certain or not. Chiefly I shall mention those situations which are undoubted, as it is not always profitable to discuss those regarding which there may have been much dispute without any definite result.



References

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 Ch. of the Holy Sepulchre | 7 Ru. of Hosp ^l of St. John |
| 2 Protestant Church | 8. English Hospital |
| 3 Church of St. Anne | 9 Jews place of Wailing |
| 4 Ch. of Mary Magdalen | 10 Pool of Hezekiah |
| 5 Lahn Convent | 11 Pool of Bethesda |
| 6. Armenian d ^o | 12 Mosque of Omar, or es-Sakhra Dome of the Rock |
| 15 Mosque el Aksa | |

CHAPTER III.

JERUSALEM.

The Four Quarters of Jerusalem—Zion, Akra, Moriah, Bezetha.—View from height near Jaffa Gate.—City Bazaars.—Débris of the ancient city.—The Mosque of Omar.—Subterranean reservoirs of Moriah.—Wailing-place of the Jews.—The Temple enclosure.—Zion.—The Church Missionary Society.—Via Dolorosa.—Church of the Holy Sepulchre.—Structures of the Knights of St. John.—English Mission to the Jews.—Ophthalmic Hospice.—Sunset view of Jerusalem.

THE sketch-map here inserted will indicate the topography in this chapter and the succeeding chapter. The two chapters refer to the scenery of Jerusalem and its neighbourhood. The subject has been investigated by explorers; especially by those who work under the auspices of the Palestine Exploration enterprise. I shall not enter on the details of discovery, or the points of controversies, but shall content myself by recapitulating the salient features which present themselves to the spectator.

For a due understanding of the scenes about to be depicted it is necessary to survey briefly the localities of the Holy City.

Though Jerusalem was originally built on a cluster of hills with ravines more or less deep between them, it now seems to stand on a mountainous plateau, because the intervening depressions have been filled up with the débris of ages. Thus though the modern city stands on the same site as the ancient, its general surface has been much altered. This surface has indeed eminences and indentations, but to the traveller it looks like an undulating plateau, with a slight incline from west to east, overlooking the valley of the Kedron and facing towards the Olivet range.

The four quarters of the city, as now recognized by travellers, are Zion and Akra on the western side, Moriah and Bezetha on the eastern side. Akra is not mentioned in Scripture, and was probably included with Zion in the upper city. Bezetha, too, is not mentioned in Scripture, and our knowledge of it is derived from Josephus. It was not inhabited under the kings of Judah, but was occupied as a new quarter in after times. There was another quarter, Ophel, mentioned in the Book of Chronicles and by Nehemiah, but that is now uninhabited and outside the present city. Akra contains the tower of Hippicus

already mentioned, and is regarded as the citadel, whereas the ancient citadel was on Moriah. It is inhabited chiefly by Europeans, and Christians of other nationalities. Zion is occupied by Armenians and Jews, Moriah and Bezetha by Moslems. The spectator, standing on Akra and looking towards the surrounding heights, is subject to some optical deception. He will probably imagine Zion and Olivet to be considerably higher than his position, and Moriah lower. In fact, however, there is not much difference in altitude between these several hills. In Warren's *Temple or Tomb* (1880) the following elevations are given above sea-level: Church of the Holy Sepulchre, 2,490 feet; Zion, 2,470; Moriah, 2,440. Other elevations are thus given by the Ordnance Survey: Russian Hospice in the western suburb, 2,660 feet; Jaffa gate, 2,528; Armenian convent on Zion, 2,550; Bezetha, 2,520; platform of mosque of Omar on temple site, 2,435; Gethsemane near Kedron, 2,279; Mount of Olives, 2,643.

The Jaffa or western gate, stands on the uppermost part of Akra. In the wall close by is the tower of Hippicus built by Herod the Great. Some of the Herodean masonry was preserved by Titus and is still to be seen. The tower is generally but erroneously called by the name of David. At a short distance inside the city is the reservoir commonly

called "Hezekiah's Pool." Some modern authorities identify it with the second or lower pool of Gihon. It was on this water that Hezekiah depended, when, as related in the 32nd chapter of the Second Book of Chronicles, he stopped the supply of the first or uppermost pool of Gihon outside the walls, awaiting the Assyrian siege.

As already seen, the Hotel is near the Jaffa gate, and consequently has a situation very favourable for views. Arriving there at night, I was told that the window of my room commanded a view of the whole city. But the fitful moonlight in a cloudy sky did not enable me to make out anything. At daybreak I looked out from the casement, and was indeed rewarded; for there lay the whole of Jerusalem right beneath the eye, with the Olivet range beyond. Though clouds were gathering behind from the west, yet in front, on the east, the sky was clear and serene. The Olivet range was in dark shadow against the faint brightness of the dawn. The sun rose from behind the range, and its slanting rays began to light up point after point in the city. Thus were observable in succession, the Moslem mosque built on the very site of the Jewish temple, the minarets near the sites of Herod's palace and the Antonia tower, the modern Jewish Synagogue on Zion, the ruined structures of the Hospitallers and the

Knights of St. John, the cupola and façade of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. A fit foreground to this view was afforded by Hezekiah's Pool. Thus all the four quarters of the city are seen simultaneously. Of these, Akra, from which I was looking, and Moriah, which came right in front but slightly below the eye, were conspicuous. On the right was the height of Zion. Then Bezetha was less perceptible, being partly hid from sight by the structures on Akra. It has fewer objects of importance than any of the other three quarters. The Olivet range is often indicated by guides as the place where the Lord's Prayer was first delivered; but this must be wrong, as that event occurred in Galilee. The highest or southerly point of this range is the Mount of Olives.

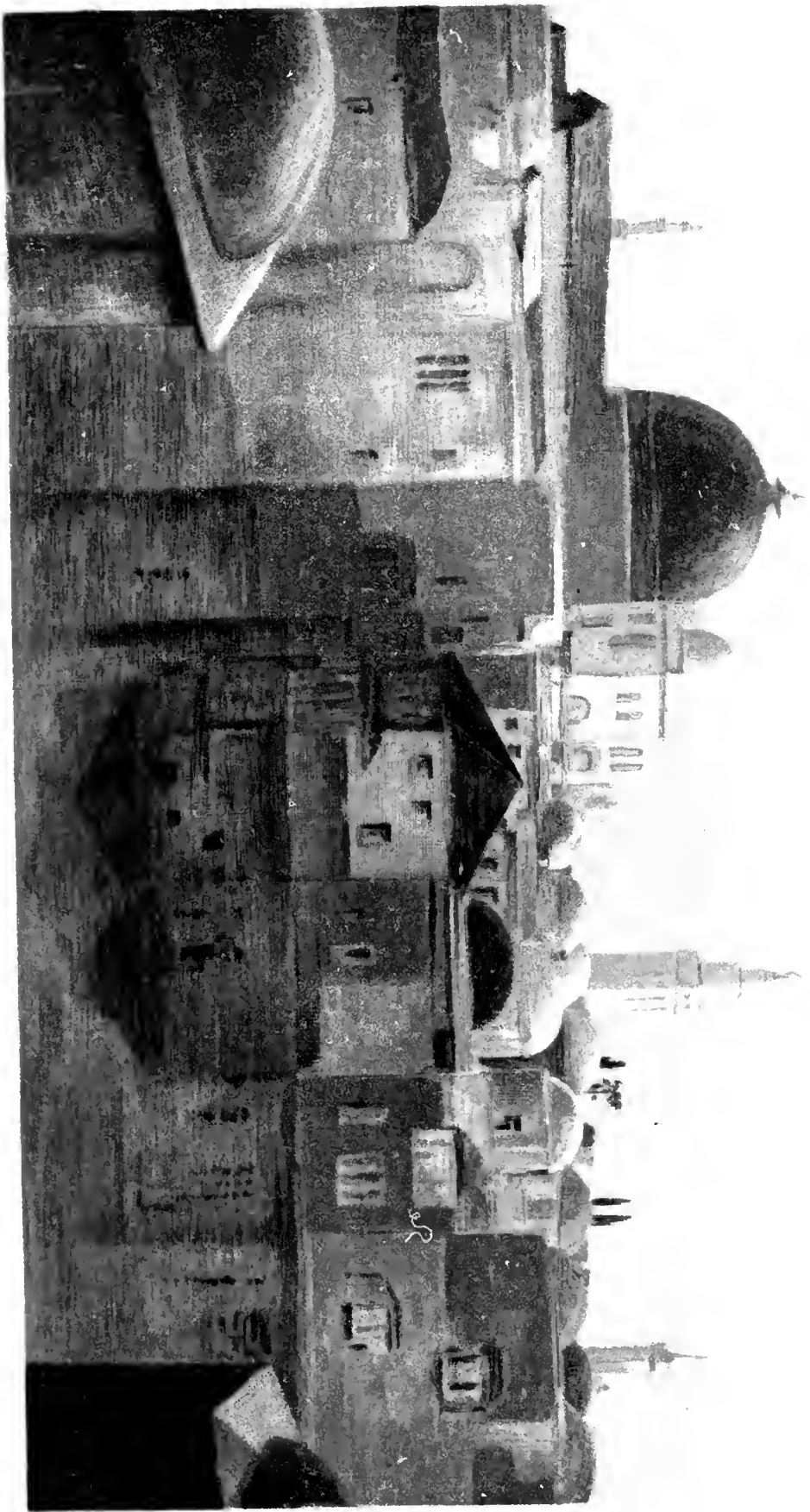
The most prominent object in this prospect is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It may or may not be on the true site. At all events it is surrounded with the associations of many Christian centuries, and is on that account to be venerated. The eye, after resting awhile upon it, roams naturally over the other objects in succession.

I am fortunate in having a historic sheet of water as a foreground to a view of the city. Hezekiah's Pool, though turbid, yet reflects darkly the surrounding houses with their Oriental balconies.

The aspect of the city in the early hours of the day at this winter season is quiet, with a cool grey colouring. This differs from the garish look of the place during the latter hours of the day at other seasons. The Olivet range gains greatly from being in shadow, against a light sky. Indeed, its appearance when seen under the midday glare is very poor. A few olive trees are thinly scattered on its bare side.

This view, then, which I had ample opportunity of sketching, is the subject of the illustration (IV.).

In the background is the violet-grey of the Olivet range, against the amber tints of the sunrise sky. The Mount of Olives, being to the right, is just out of the picture. In the middle distance is the dome of Omar's mosque on the temple site. Near it the minarets mark the position of the Antonia tower and the judgment-hall. In the nearer part of the picture the Church of the Holy Sepulchre rears its cupola dark with a sheeting of lead. Some parts of the early Christian architecture are shown. This cupola is the structure about the repairs of which disputes arose in 1853 and ended in the Crimean war. On the right of it are just seen the ruined structures that once belonged to the Knights of St. John. The houses of the



CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

city are flat-topped, with small domes like bee-hives. From their midst arise the tapering forms of Moslem minarets. No Christian spires are to be seen. In the foreground is Hezekiah's Pool, at some depth below the eye. Its water has darkish hues and the reflections are somewhat dim.

From Akra the traveller proceeds on foot along the roughly paved streets of the city, which now contains from 20,000 to 25,000 inhabitants.

Here is a mercantile quarter, if we may thus designate the quarter where the bankers chiefly live. Inasmuch as trade or local industry scarcely exists here, the banking business mainly relates to the funds of the religious corporations and institutions, which are very numerous. There are, of course, bazaars, often over-arched and well-shaded. Their shade is, indeed, so pervading as to impart a sombre aspect. To the eye of a poetic observer they might even seem to have a sort of melancholy appropriate to the place. Though highly picturesque and stored with curious things, they have not that bustling variety, that kaleidoscopic brilliancy, for which Oriental bazaars are generally noted. Farther on, in the heart of the city, the perspective and vista of the descending streets are closed and ended by glimpses of the Olivet range beyond.

With such a supremely interesting background as that, several of these streets present very noteworthy views.

As the traveller walks on, he perceives that his foot-steps are not upon the original ground of Jerusalem, but upon a mass of super-imposed matter which has been strewn over the whole site. History enumerates seventeen captures of the Holy City, eleven of which were attended by sieges more or less destructive. After many of these events the houses then standing were razed to the earth. These were in time succeeded by new houses which in their turn were overthrown at the next siege, and so on, each capture adding to the accumulation of rubbish. Thus the traveller learns that a compact layer or solid coating, from 30 to 50 feet in thickness, has been by degrees spread over the entire space. Even the valleys and ravines between the several hills on which the city was built have been so far filled up as to have partly lost their special character, as already mentioned. The Tyropæon brook is perhaps the most particular instance. The traveller will have heard of this brook, or read of it in Josephus, as a landmark in the interior of this city; but he will not find it. Nevertheless it was so deep that at its exit from the city at Moriah the bridge-span was more than 100 feet above its bed. Its course has been traced

by the discovery of the arch, and by deep excavations here and there which have exposed the bed now overlaid with ruins.

Thus we arrive at Moriah, and, passing by the site of the Antonia fortress of Herod the Great, obtain a pass at the residence of the Turkish prefect. With this pass we enter the enclosure of Solomon's temple, now belonging to the Moslems and by them designated with some of the holiest names that their sacred literature can supply. In their eyes it is, of all places, the second, or at least the third, in sanctity. The traveller cannot now realise the swelling form, almost like a very broad dome, which Moriah is believed to have had in the days of David and Araunah. It has been made flat by the levelling of ages. Over the Jewish holiest of holies the mosque of Omar rears its head. Its dome, with its ribbed surface, great dimensions and beautiful proportions, is one of the finest domes in the world.

As Warren well observes in his *Temple or Tomb*, it was not built as a mosque at all, but as a shrine or "wali." Its interior was designed to be splendid. But the ornamentation, though elaborate and gorgeous, is somewhat gaudy and tawdry, without due arrangement of colour or regard to general effect. Whether, apart from its historic interest, this mosque deserves admiration, is a question which depends on the previous

experience of the spectator. Except for its dome, it will, perhaps, not be really admired by those whose standard of judgment has been formed from observation of Moslem architecture in Eastern or Central Asia. In the interior there is a sacred rock covered by a silken canopy of great size and elegance. Beneath is a subterranean chapel, but unfortunately we were not allowed to see it.

Close by is the mosque El Aksa, which was originally a Christian church. Its interior has been but little altered by the Moslems, and presents a very curious sight.

Underneath the temple enclosure are cisterns, chambers, passages, flights of steps, rows of massive pillars—most of which are hewn out of the solid rock. These were begun by Solomon and finished by his successors. Enough light is admitted through scanty apertures to set off the bold shapes of the rock-hewn architecture, and to deepen the gloom of the shadows. Several subjects for the painter are to be found here.

Tristram well observes that the rock-formation of Moriah is “pierced with wells and honey-combed with reservoirs.” Thus the traveller realises the original fact that the site of Jerusalem had no water-supply save, perhaps, one spring in Moriah. The water had to be brought from a distance for a population which was ordinarily not much less than a hundred thousand,

and on annual occasions might amount to nearly a million. The principal reservoirs were in the hills south of Bethlehem, about nine miles off, and endure to this day, under the name of Solomon's Pools, as a memorial of his genius. The water was conducted by aqueducts and channels. Neither reservoirs nor channels could be defended against any enemy who was victorious in the field. But the vital supply had to be rendered secure in a city liable to persistent attack and designed to withstand long sieges. Consequently reservoirs had to be excavated in Moriah, whereby vast quantities of water could be stored within the strongest lines of the fortifications. The arrangements for this extensive storage have been investigated recently. The science of hydraulic engineering could not have been known to Solomon's officers, therefore the practical ingenuity of the ancient Jews excites wonder.

From the temple enclosure two departures may be taken by those who wish to understand Jerusalem; one leading towards Zion, the other taking us by another way back to Akra, whence we started.

In the first place, then, the traveller, leaving the temple enclosure with his face towards Zion, notices the outer face of the ancient wall which bounds the sacred area. Just here are some masonry layers, undoubtedly of Solomon's time, many tiers

of massive stones, straight hewn in oblong shapes. These stones are of a size unknown in the buildings of modern times, and a reverent observer will consider that they belong to an age when there were giants on the earth. Here is "the wailing-place of the Jews," so called because every Friday the Jews who may be in Jerusalem assemble to read psalms of penitence, to lament over the scattering of their nation, and to pray for its restoration to the patriarchal home. I had not an opportunity of seeing this ceremony, but was able fortunately to see something even better. For through the aid of a friendly Rabbi I was present, unobserved, on another day when the Jews came singly and quietly, without any form or ceremony, to weep over the beloved stones. Man after man would come, quite by himself, in black robes, with a grief-stricken countenance, would recite verses from his psalm-book in low tones, and would press his brows against the mighty masonry. It is literally true, as Porter has said of these Jews, that they moisten the stones of Solomon with their tears.

Close by was the site of the Asmonean house or palace of the Maccabees, as mentioned by Josephus. In this house Herod Antipas was sojourning (having come from Galilee) when Our Lord was sent to him by Pilate.

Near against the west side of the temple enclosure is a

part of the arch of the Tyropœon bridge discovered by Robinson; also the remains, discovered by Wilson and Warren, of the viaduct and causeway which once crossed the valley between Zion and Moriah. This depression has been largely filled up by ruins, and is overgrown by rank vegetation. The traveller will follow a pathway winding round it on his way to Zion. Thus he will pass by the site of the palace of Herod the Great. To that house Pilate had come for the Jewish festival, having left his head-quarters at Cæsarea and travelled to Jerusalem by Lydda and Bethoron. Here he was sojourning on that day when our Lord was brought before him by the Jews; and here was the judgment-hall in which the death-sentence was given. Josephus thus describes the structure in his *Antiquities of the Jews*:—"He (Herod) built himself a palace in the upper city, raising the rooms to a very great height, and adorning them with the most costly furniture of gold and marble seats and beds." The space hereabouts used to be called the Xystus, or place of public assembly.

The hill and ancient citadel of Zion is partly without and partly within the present walls of the city. The highest point outside the walls is surmounted by the so-called tomb of David, which is jealously guarded by the Moslems, and cannot be seen by Christians. From Conder's authority it

would appear that the real tomb of David must have been in Akra, not far from Hezekiah's Pool. Around the buildings on the top of Zion are some traditional sites connected with the Last Supper and the events which ensued that night. These sites, however, have no confirmation either from the language of Scripture or from topographical enquiry.

Close by are some very useful schools belonging to the Church Missionary Society, where religious and secular instruction is given not only to Moslem and heathen children, but also to waifs and strays of Christian races. Practical Christianity is thus illustrated in its earliest home, and some result worthy of the sacred associations is achieved.

I shall now revert to the temple enclosure, in order to take the second departure, namely, that towards Akra, by a way different from that by which we came.

This way is the "Via Dolorosa" of Christian tradition, along which our Lord is believed by many to have passed towards Calvary. The death-procession started from Pilate's judgment-hall, but we know not what route it actually took. I walked up the "Via Dolorosa." The original pathway must be lying many feet below the present ground on which we tread. The length and toilsomeness of the ascent makes us doubt whether the sad procession could have followed this

route. Thus, at length, I reach the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

We may enter the church, and stand in wonder at its matchless interior. Other churches in other lands may be more splendid and imposing, but this is the most interesting church in all Christendom. Sombreness, solemnity, variety, richness, are its characteristics. The obscurity in the dim, scanty light, the cool yet heavy air, deepen the effect on the mind and sadden the spirit, without depressing the imagination. As the eye wanders through the interior space of the dome, or is confined by the narrow bounds of the subterranean chambers, or rests on the gorgeously-wrought screens in the chapels, a marked variety of style, design and decoration is to be seen. For within this area are collected the relics and the devotional offerings of both the Latin and the Greek communities. The ceremonies on high festivals must be very impressive. But all who are zealous for the honour of Christianity in the East must be sorry to hear of the disputes which sometimes occur between these communities on sacred occasions, and of the mutual recriminations that thus arise.

There is a marble sarcophagus over the very spot where the rock-hewn chamber of our Lord's burial is believed to

have been. The original rock cannot be seen, being overlaid with structures. Pilgrims come hither from all countries to kiss the marble. Among them I recognized the costumes of Russian worshippers, in the middle rank and in the humbler classes, which I had seen in my travels in Kief and Moscow. Many picturesque garbs from Siberia and from Mid-Asia, as well as from Eastern Europe, were noticeable. However different they might be in language and habit, they seemed to be one in their intense devotion. Here, again, was a subject for poetic treatment pictorially. Even those who reasonably doubt whether this is the real place of our Lord's death and burial, and whether that most holy spot has been, or can be, discovered, will yet sympathize reverently with the hallowed traditions and the historic memories that gather round the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Near at hand is the area known as the Mûristan, containing the structures raised in the crusading age by the Knights of the Order of St. John. The mighty work of this organization amidst the islands and shores of the Mediterranean, lends a touching interest to the crumbling masonry which once sheltered the charitable yet militant establishment. The place is being cleared and explored

under German auspices, so that, with due caution as to where he treads, the traveller may move about the ruined stonework, glancing through the galleries, and peering into the vaults or wells.

In this quarter are the school and church belonging to the English Mission to the Jews. It is here that the English traveller hears the service of his own Church performed on the Sabbath. The religious instruction is given not only to children of Jewish descent but also to children of other races.

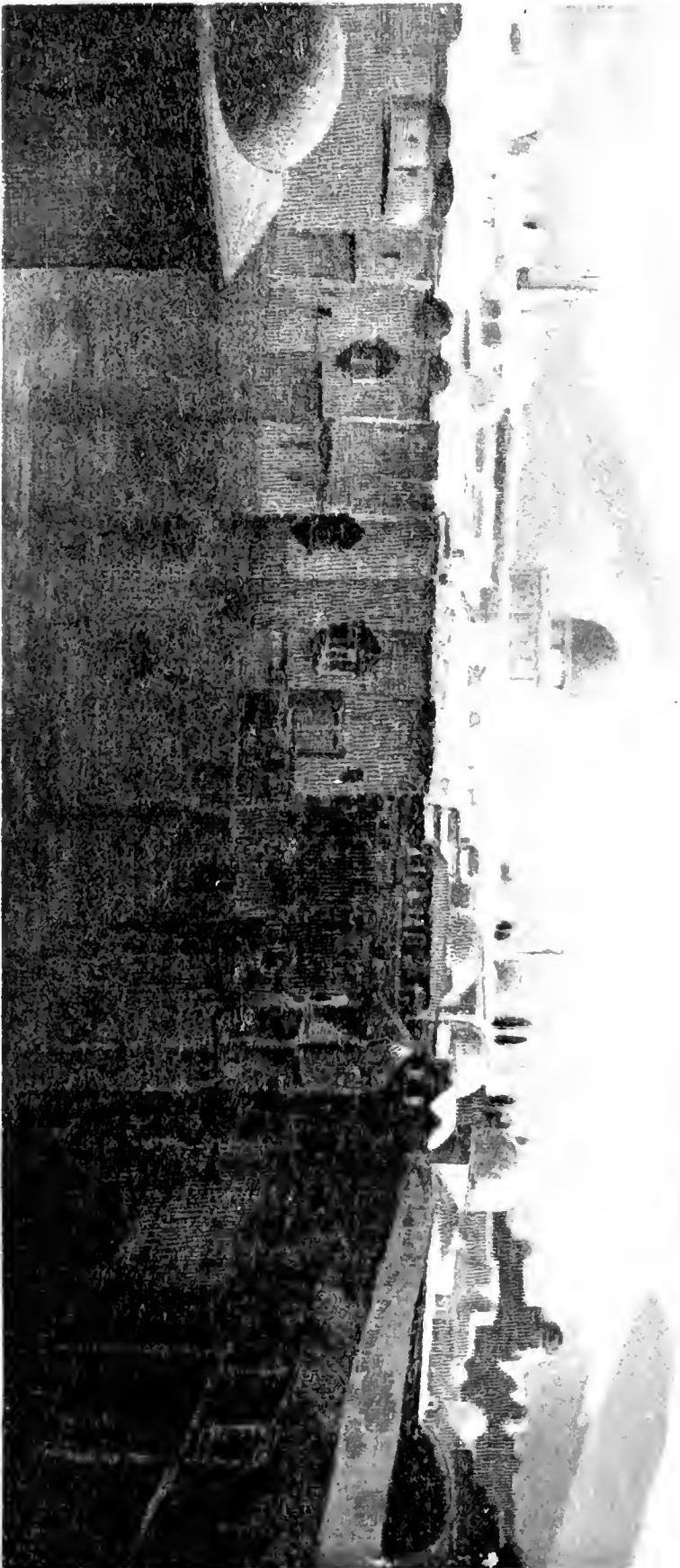
This is not the only English establishment here, for within the last few years an Ophthalmic Hospice has been founded through the good offices of Englishmen who are acquainted with the East, and are thus able to appeal to the generosity of their countrymen. This institution has already proved most useful in mitigating the various eye diseases to which the natives of Palestine have always been peculiarly exposed. If developed, it will prove a blessing to the people around.

Before quitting Jerusalem I shall present a sunset scene as I beheld it from Akra. This was the last view that I had of the Holy City.

After a stormy day the clouds at eventide gathered in

dense masses near the Mount of Olives, not resting on the mountain but hanging over it. This is the view which I have attempted to portray in the accompanying illustration (V.). The light of the setting sun struck the clouds, and imparted to them the highest colouring imaginable. Thus they formed, as it were, a gorgeous canopy and emblazoned standard over the sacred summit. The mountain itself has lost the forbidding aspect which it often has under the hot glare of a cloudless noon. Under the atmospheric conditions of this moment, it is aglow with a fiery light and is suffused with crimson hues. Under this pervading blush are hidden the dull details of the bare hill-side. Thus Olivet seemed for a while to be ethereal. On the southern shoulder we just discern the road coming from Bethany and leading to Gethsemane, along which our Lord rode on the first Palm Sunday. Beyond Olivet, the mountain range of Moab appears deep blue in the distance on the other side of the Dead Sea. Such is the scenery which displays Jerusalem as a jewel set in a casket. Though the mountains are close round about the city, they yet seem to stand quite apart, majestically veiled in their airy garb.

In front of the Mount of Olives we see the dome of Omar's mosque, the Turkish palace, the minarets near the



JERUSALEM AT SUNSET.

site of Antonia, the lesser domes and minarets in the nearer quarters of the city. On the right are Zion and its modern synagogue. Every point in the buildings, high or low, throughout the city is tipped with the vivifying light of an Asiatic sunset. In the foreground is the water of Hezekiah's Pool. Instead of the grey, almost hoary look which the scene presents under ordinary conditions, the general effect is warm, brilliant, and exciting.

The blood-red sunset was quickly succeeded by the pale moonlight. The golden sky became sicklied over with a greenish cast. The fiery clouds faded into cold masses of grey. There was an opportunity of seeing, what many poets and painters have desired to see, Jerusalem by moonlight. That night there was for a while the magic beauty, the ineffable solemnity, which may be imagined but not described. In this winter-tide the chilly wind drove fleet clouds coursing along the sky, obscuring the moonbeams and for a time dropping heavy showers. Thus a sort of physical depression intensified that melancholy which, even under the most favouring circumstances, affects the scene.

For, whether contemplated by stilly night, or by busy day, Jerusalem is of all places the most melancholy. The place is indescribably attractive, certainly, but its sadness is

undeniable. Those whose reflections are intermitted through the hurry of sight-seeing, may escape from this sentiment. But those who are able to pause and reflect, cannot but be saddened. There is a depressing and ever-present consciousness that here is the centre of woes unnumbered, and here the scene of the Divine Tragedy.

CHAPTER IV.

NEIGHBOURHOOD OF JERUSALEM.

The Jaffa and Damascus Gates.—Possible site of Calvary.—Ancient tombs.—Mount Scopus and camp of Titus.—The brook Kedron.—The Garden of Gethsemane.—The tomb of the Virgin Mary.—View from Mount of Olives.—The village of Bethany.—Place where Our Lord wept over Jerusalem.—Corner of the Temple enclosure.—Ophel and Siloam.—The glen of Hinnom.—Hill of Evil Counsel.—View of Mount Zion.—Its characteristics.—Circuit of Jerusalem

LET us now pass through the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, starting from the Jaffa gate, which is the first of the two western gates. This circuit must be made on horseback, with a mounted guide.

The bridle-road passes underneath the battlemented walls and bastions, with their ochre-grey masonry, mostly Turkish, interspersed with stones or slabs of ancient times. We first pass the second of the two western gates, namely, the Damascus gate. Then we gaze with wonder into the caverns which were the quarries whence Solomon caused the

stones to be hewn for the temple building. Next is seen the grotto called after the name of Jeremiah.

Near here, just outside the walls, is an eminence, of a rounded form for the most part, to which I must allude with reverent reserve, for it is believed by many competent persons to be the real Calvary. It is readily accessible from the site of the judgment-hall (already mentioned), through the Bezetha quarter and the Damascus gate. This consideration somewhat assists the argument in its favour. For the toilsomeness of the Via Dolorosa adds to the difficulties, which otherwise exist, respecting the acceptance of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as the true site.

Moving onwards we see several chambers hewn out of the solid rock, which may be, according to their traditional repute, the tombs of several among the Jewish kings. One at least of these chambers presents at its entrance a striking subject for the painter.

Thus we reach the end of the Bezetha quarter, which forms the northern limit of the city. Leaving this limit behind us and proceeding further northward, we ascend the hill of Scopus, where Titus had his main encampment when he besieged Jerusalem. Our bridle-road passes over slopes, hollows, ravines, undulations, all of which are now almost

wholly desolate. Yet here must once have been some of the finest garden culture in all the suburbs of Jerusalem. Titus found the scene smiling with richness, and adorned by skill as well as by nature ; but he made havoc of its beauty, and left nought but the traces of utter desolation. The work of destruction is thus described by Josephus (*Whiston*):—

“Titus gave orders to level the distances as far as the walls of the city. So they threw down all the hedges and walls which the inhabitants had made about their gardens and groves of trees, and cut down all the fruit trees that lay between them and the walls of the city, and filled up all the hollow places and the chasms, and demolished the rocky precipices with iron instruments, and thereby made all the places level from Scopus to Herod’s monument, which adjoined to the pool called the Serpent’s Pool.”

This, then, is the scene through which we are passing, on our way to the height of Scopus. The view of Jerusalem from this height, that is from the northern point, was the most important of all views before the Christian era. From that era it yielded in importance to the eastern view from Olivet. In ancient times the northern road from Samaria and the western road from the sea-coast (which then ran by Bethoron) converged just north of Scopus.

Thus the greater number of worshippers, pilgrims, and travellers had their first and their last look at the Holy City from this point during many ages.

To-day also the traveller northward-bound bids farewell to Jerusalem from here ; or approaching it from the north, he will catch his first glimpse of the place from here, beholding it much as it must have been beheld by the besiegers of all times. Then after a few moments the whole city bursts upon the view ; and seen thus, after a long march, it strikes the imagination powerfully.

When I reached this point a violent hail-storm was descending upon Mount Scopus itself ; but as the storm was local, the city remained still in sunshine. The atmospheric effect then added a fresh charm ; for through the fast-falling hail, which formed a haze like a gauze, I could descry the bright city in the middle distance.

Descending from Scopus on the road to Jerusalem, we soon perceived a streamlet, consisting of a small rift in the rocky hill-side, and generally dry, except after a fall of rain. This is the brook Kedron, and we follow its course till a small Turkish bridge is reached. From this point is beheld the upper vale of Kedron, which divides Mount Moriah of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, and which is called the valley of Jehoshaphat.

The streamlet in its upper course is so very small that the traveller wonders whether this can really be that Scriptural Kedron which is associated with many passages in the Gospel history, and which has always been an important feature in the topography of Jerusalem. In fact, however, the original Kedron has been filled up, narrowed, and even turned aside from its proper course. It is thus but a shrunken remnant of its former self, though clearly recognized even in its modified condition. The case is specifically stated by Tristram thus (*Bible Places*):—

“So enormous has been the mass of rubbish thrown down from the platform (of the temple on Moriah) into the Kedron valley, at the successive destructions of Jerusalem, that the *débris* is heaped against the wall to a depth varying from 30 feet, at the Golden Gate, to 80 feet at the south-east angle, and 142 feet in the deep valley filled up near the north-east angle of St. Stephen’s gate. The result is that the bed of the Kedron has been pushed 30 yards to the eastward, and raised 42 feet above its original level.”

In all Palestine there are few views more important than that of the valley of Jehoshaphat, looking southwards from the upper ravine of Kedron. On the right are the steep banks leading up first to Bezetha and then to Moriah.

Their steepness has been much diminished by the accumulation of rubbish, as shown above. Along their ridge runs the whole length of the eastern city wall. In this wall are the Eastern Gate, called after the name of St. Stephen, from the traditional site of his martyrdom, and the Golden Gate, now blocked up. Above it is just visible the dome of Omar's mosque. The wall ends with the temple enclosure on Mount Moriah, which rises from at least the foundations of Solomon's wall. On the left are the slopes of Olivet, in the midst of which is a small but dense olive grove.

This is the Garden of Gethsemane, as shown in the sub-joined illustration (VI.). Beyond it can be traced the roadway leading to the flank of Olivet, and winding round the corner towards Bethany. In front can be seen the village of Siloam, and beyond that the valley narrows till the view is closed in by the gloomy Tophet.

Thence the walled enclosure is soon reached, which contains that which the Latin monks venerate as the Garden of Gethsemane, and which is certainly on, or very near to, the site of the ancient garden. The word survives in the present name Jesmanea. The monks have planted flower-beds between some of the trees, greatly injuring the effect of the grove when seen in the noon-day light ; but in the



GETHSEMANE.

early morning this hardly affects the general impression, because the shadows cast by the dense foliage of the olive obscure all lesser details. The trees of Gethsemane were cut down by the soldiery during the siege under Titus, but their descendants will be the trees now standing on or near the spot. Thus the sylvan scene must be essentially the same as it was on the night when our Lord suffered the agony. There can, therefore, be no grove on earth at all comparable with this in interest.

In the picture the trunks of the trees are faithfully rendered, the gnarls having been verified by more than one observation. The foliage has a darker hue than the pale grey generally seen in the olive groves of southern Europe. Through the breaks in the canopy of leaves, as through windows, is seen the wall of the temple enclosure, upon which the eastern light falls directly from the newly-risen sun. Above the wall there rises the dome of Omar's mosque. The monotony of the masonry is broken by the ancient gateway, which is now blocked up, and is believed to be on the site of the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. The two figures represent the Latin monks in their present costume.

Issuing from the postern gate of Gethsemane, we visit

the subterranean cavern chapel, which is revered by the Latin Church as the tomb of the Virgin Mary. Whether the tradition be believed or not by us, we must acknowledge that the scene inside this chapel is one of the most romantically beautiful in the land. The daylight flows in scantily from the opening above the rock-cut staircase, just enough to touch the surface of each step in the long flight. The monks in their flowing robes and the pilgrims are passing up and down. Then brazen lamps of curious shapes hang from the roof of the cave, lighted sufficiently to make the inner gloom perceptible. The lamplight, too, is reflected on the gold and silver vessels or ornaments on the altar of the chapel, and on the embroidered vestments of the priests. Then the solemn chant resounds through the rocky hollows of the sacred cavern, while the dim lamplight contends with the scanty daylight entering from the mouth of the cave.

Past the tomb, a zigzag bridle-path runs up the steep side of Olivet. The bare ground has a few scattered olive trees. A horseman very soon reaches the top — 2,634 feet above the Mediterranean. From this summit is seen the best view of Jerusalem, and the finest prospect in all Palestine. This prospect has two parts—one westward

fronting Jerusalem, the other eastward facing the Dead Sea and the mountains beyond.

The eye first turns towards Jerusalem, across the Kedron valley just described. All the features of the Holy City, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, are clearly visible. On the morning of my visit, the view was seen to extraordinary advantage. The clouds rolling up from the west had congregated into a dark mass like a vast pall, but the light of early day from the east still rested on the city itself. The contrast between the bright expanse of the city and the background of clouds behind it, was such as can never be forgotten. The darkling clouds seemed like the mournful history of this most sacred place; yet the Holy City was irradiated by sunshine as if by light from heaven.

As I turned round and faced eastwards, my sight was dazzled by light flashing from a distant object as from a mirror. This is the Dead Sea, upon which the rays of the newly-risen sun are playing. It is 1,290 feet below the Mediterranean, and, therefore, 3,924 feet below us who are standing on Olivet, 2,634 feet above the sea. Behind it is a line of violet-grey, stretching like a mountain wall and bounding the horizon. This is the range of Moabite mountains beyond the Dead Sea. Above the range there rises

two summits, not exactly peaks, but square eminences—these are Nebo and Pisgah. Between us and the Dead Sea there extend bare slopes, and the eye ranges over brown-coloured undulations.

Amidst these, hidden in a hollow, lies the village of Bethany, to which we now proceed. The path from the summit of Olivet to Bethany crosses several knolls, from one of which the Ascension of our Lord must have taken place. The ground is desolate, of a whitish-ochre hue, broken occasionally by the shadows of ravines. This colouring contrasts intensely with the azure of those parts of the sky which have not yet been reached by the driving clouds.

Bethany is no longer known by that name to the natives, but its identity is well ascertained. It is now-a-days called Alazareya, from the name of a person, Alazar. The name is common to this day, and probably belonged to the Lazarus of Scripture. It is easy to understand how the Alazar of Syria became rendered into the Greek of the New Testament by Lazarus. Though the place is not encircled as of yore by a belt of garden cultivation, and though the hills in which it is embosomed are no longer terraced with vineyards and fig orchards, still the village is charming even amidst naked hill-sides. In biblical times it was doubtless one of

the loveliest villages in the land. Despite the comparative desolation of the surroundings, its situation is still delightful, for it is at the head of the natural opening amidst the hills which lead from the Jordan to the uplands of Judæa. The humble homes of its little streets are of the ordinary description, with but few traces of antiquity. There are, however, several tombs hewn out of the solid rock, one or other of which may have been the tomb of Lazarus. The village being placed on a slight elevation above the main road, a side street at right angles to the main street leads down to the roadside, and is finished off by a short flight of steps which are carved out of the primæval rock, and which have doubtless existed without change from the earliest times. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is the same now as it was in biblical times, and the ancient rock-cut steps are also the same. It is inferred, then, that these may be the very steps by which Our Lord passed up and down when He visited Martha and Mary, and when He went to the tomb of Lazarus.

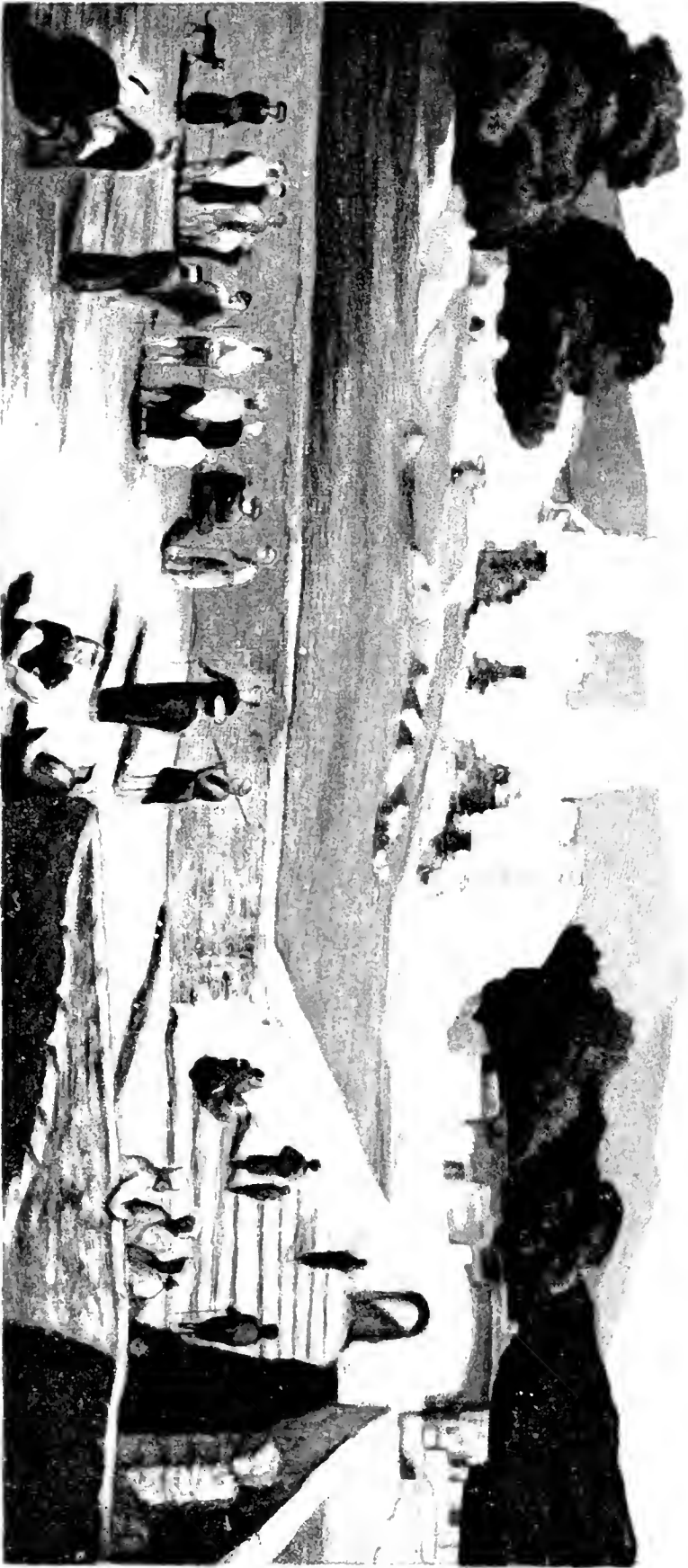
This, then, is the subject of the illustration (VII). On the right is the flight of steps with the peasants, the people of the middle class, and the wayfarers in the costume of the day. On the left is a field with the rising crop of barley, a few umbrageous trees being scattered about. Behind the field are

some ruined houses of the better sort; fanciful names and traditions are attached to these ruins, but are hardly worth noticing. Behind the village are the low hills, doubtless terraced with fruit-gardens in the olden time, but now almost naked and brown.

The very plainness and simplicity of the place serves as a foil to its deathless renown. The desolation of ages has failed to deprive the situation of its cheerfulness. The sense of repose may be as perfect as ever; still the distant prospect to the east and south-east is inspiriting, and thus the quietude never causes any depression to the mind.

The main road from Jerusalem to Jericho, passing by Bethany, was in Our Lord's time one of the most important in the country. Approaching the plain of the Jordan it winds through a defile which is thought to be the finest of the many fine defiles of Palestine. This beautiful glen had always an evil repute for highway robbery, which was never suppressed until recent years. The events which commonly occurred there are thought, with some reason, to have supplied the vivid particulars for the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

But instead of pursuing this road in its descent eastwards, we must move along it westwards to the southern



BETHANY.

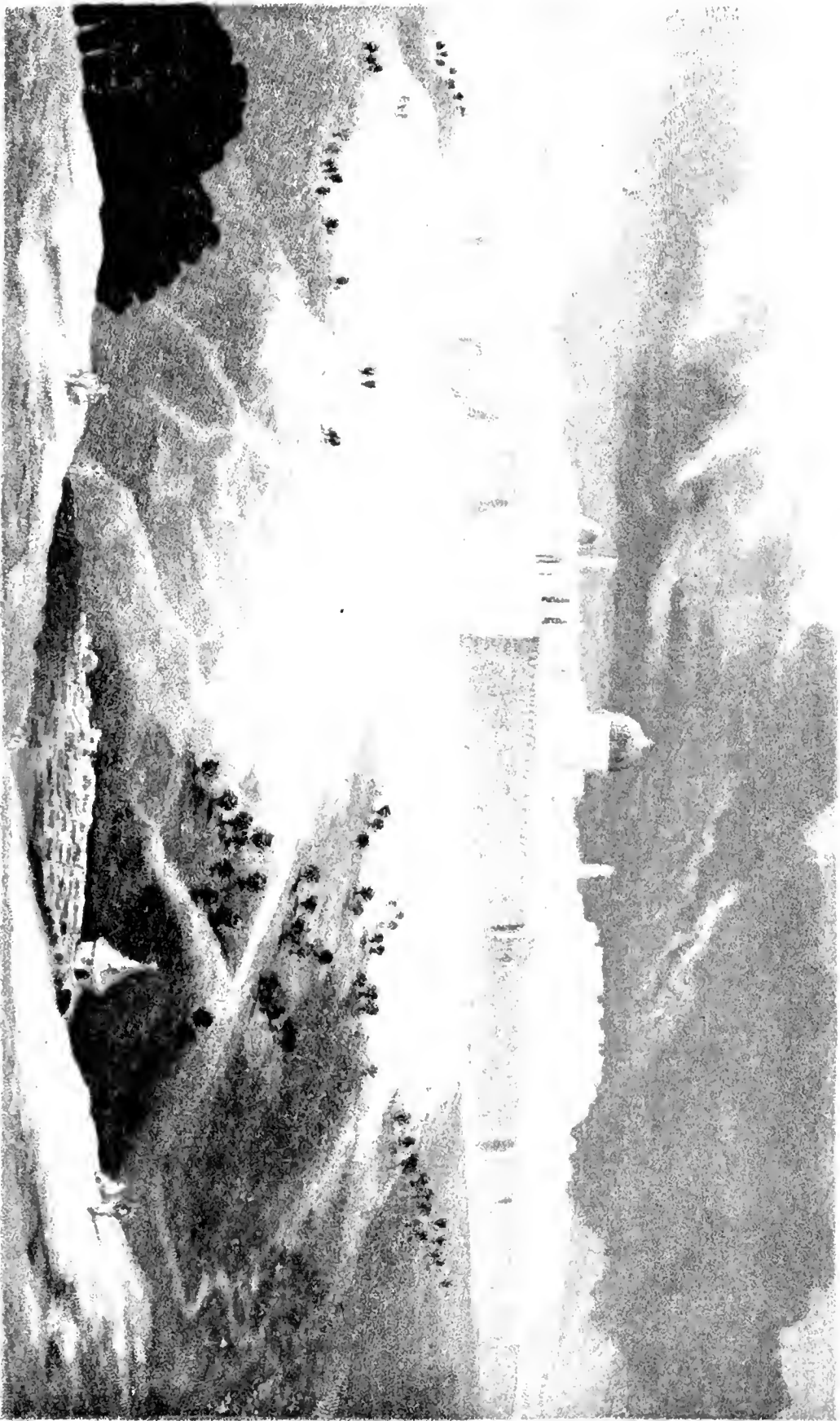
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flank of Olivet, a short distance of about two miles. Of all the roads near Jerusalem, none was trodden more often by Our Lord than this. It was from here that He commanded the ass to be brought on which He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. A bend in the mountain-road reveals a part of the city, the southern quarter. Then another bend over the side of Olivet, and a turn round a corner, bring the spectator to the very brink of the Kedron valley, which alone separates him from Jerusalem. He thus looks across the narrow valley right on to the city opposite, which is in full and perfect view from end to end, from height to height. Just here a ledge of rock adjoins the road at the corner. This is the ledge upon which Our Lord must have stood with His disciples and attendants when He wept over the city, recounted its sins and foretold its doom. From the sacred narrative, and from the nature of the ground, we may be convinced that here is the site of that most affecting and memorable event. Dean Stanley writes: "it is hardly possible to doubt that this rocky ledge was the exact point."

This is the subject of the accompanying illustration (VIII.). The view of the city is the same as that already mentioned from the summit of Olivet. It is indeed somewhat

nearer to our sight, and more on a level with the eye, as we are not now on the top of the mountain, but on its side, a short way down. The valley is here so narrowed as to be hardly more than a ravine. The spectator is raised only just enough to see over the whole city, without being so elevated as to have a bird's-eye view. Thus by nature the arrangement of the landscape is wondrously good. Had Jerusalem been a city of lesser renown, this view would have been remarkable among the urban scenes of the world. As it is, we may reverently say that the spot, where some of our most touching and solemn associations are gathered, presents the best among all the views of the Holy City. It seems beautiful from here in its ruined and half-desolated state. It must have shone forth gloriously on the first Palm Sunday when the superstructure of Herod stood on the foundations of Solomon.

The four quarters of the city are seen, as already mentioned in the last chapter. On the right front of the view is Bezetha, and behind it Akra rises up. On the left front is Moriah, behind which Zion towers aloft. Farther on in the vacant space outside the walls is the site of Ophel, which was a division of the city in ancient times. From right to left runs the wall which the Moslems have built



JERUSALEM FROM OLIVET.

on the old Jewish foundations. Though the city walls have been much altered on the other sides, yet on this, the eastern side, facing Olivet, their line remains unchanged. Underneath this eastern wall rows of little monuments are seen on a narrow ledge of ground on the brow of the Kedron ravine. Here is the cemetery of the Moslems, who venerate this ground as being near the mosque of Omar. The mosque itself is in full view, and its dome is conspicuous.

The course of the Kedron is hidden at the base of the ravine. On the spectator's side of the ravine, and beneath his eye, is seen the top of an ancient structure called by the name of Absalom's tomb. In the foreground is the sacred ledge of rock and the beginning of the road running to the right towards Gethsemane, along which Our Lord rode when the people cut down the palm branches and strewed their garments on the ground, crying "Hosanna!"

The atmospheric effect is rendered just as I saw it, and is the same as that described from the summit of Olivet on another day. The city is in a full sunlight bringing out every detail that could possibly be seen at a very moderate distance. The expanse of buildings thus illuminated is set off by the masses of clouds which have a leaden colour.

We must now descend from this angle of the Bethany road down into the ravine of Kedron. At this time, February, the soil shows nought but withered vegetation. Some shoots of tender grasses are springing up, and ere long the rugged banks will have a green carpet of herbage spread over them for a few weeks in spring, before they are parched by the summer's drought. Here and there some groups of olives are seen, or perhaps a solitary tree of that species clings to the steep hill-sides. Yet in biblical times each side of this ravine must have been one sheet of garden culture. Gone, however, are the palms, the figs, the vines which appear in many passages of Scripture, and from which some of the biblical imagery is drawn. Soon we come upon a part of the Olivet slope just above Kedron, where the ground is whitened over with countless stone slabs placed flat upon the earth. These indicate the tombs of Jews who have been buried here for scores and scores of generations from time immemorial. There is strict economy of the precious space, and the tombs are crowded together in the closest order. Fresh burials are constantly taking place, and Jews come from distant lands, near the end of life, to lay their bones in the sacred and beloved earth. Here the very dust is dear to them, and when it is said of them that they whiten

the side of Olivet with their tombstones, the statement is literally true.

On the same side of Kedron are tombs hewn out of the rock, almost in rows, which are called the tombs of the prophets. At all events they must be the sepulchres of persons eminent in the religious and political history of the Jews.

A short but sharp descent takes us to the narrow and rocky bed of Kedron, and then we ascend the steep bank towards the southern corner of the long wall which, as already mentioned, is the eastern limit of the city. The whole wall has been erected by the Turks upon the ancient Jewish foundations. But at this particular corner the original character is best preserved ; for, on both sides of the angle not only are the ancient foundations perfect, but above the ground there are to be seen several layers of the vast stones, precisely laid one over the other and well fitted together by the masons of Solomon. Here is one of the finest specimens of that noble masonry which stirs the pride and commands the affection of the Jews to this day. Standing at the foot of this, the most noteworthy point in the walls of Jerusalem, the spectator sees a view of the highest interest. Looking eastwards he gazes right upon the Jewish cemetery. Just above the slope covered with the light-coloured tomb-

stones is the line marking the route by which Our Lord rode from the turning-point of the Bethany road, past Gethsemane, to cross the Kedron by the bridge which then existed, and to ascend towards the eastern gate of the city. The line of road clearly cut on the hill-side conducts the eye to the dark mass of the Gethsemane olive-grove. Here, then, is seen the best view of that most memorable route. Above Gethsemane the rounded top of Olivet rises up, the regularity of its shape being broken by the monasteries and chapels with which the sacred height is crowned.

This, then, is the subject of the accompanying illustration (IX.). On the right stands the corner of the wall, at the base of which are the layers of Solomon's stonework. Above these grand layers is the Turkish masonry, surmounted with battlements of the modern style. The ochre-tinted stonework stands out vividly against a sky of intense azure. The figures represent priests of the Greek Church. Steep banks on either side shut out the Kedron from our view. Across the ravine, and opposite to the eye, is the Jewish cemetery. Above that we see the route from the angle of the Bethany road and the Garden of Gethsemane. The summit of Olivet looks down upon the scene.

From this point the city wall, built in Turkish times, runs



TEMPLE CORNER.

up-hill in a westerly direction towards Zion, and we need not follow it.

Quitting, then, this very noteworthy corner, we enter upon the barren slopes of Moriah where once was Ophel, a quarter of the city in Jewish times. But Ophel is now desolate, being buried beneath its own ruins. Recently some portions of its walls have been discovered by excavations seventy feet in depth. Crossing these slopes, we come upon the southern limit of the city. Hereabouts were those ruined walls of the royal city of David and his successors, which Nehemiah visited with solemnity at night after his return from the Captivity, and vowed that the restoration of these national defences should be undertaken.

Farther down are the fountain of the Virgin and the pool of Siloam, whose waters (Isaiah said) go softly. Below this again are the remnants of the King's Gardens, by which the last of the Jewish kings escaped after the city had been taken by the Chaldees. Thence he fled down the Kedron valley to Jericho, only to be captured as a fugitive and carried to the presence of the victor at Ribla in the Lebanon region. These historic objects are on the right and west bank of the Kedron. On the opposite or left bank is the weird and quaint village of Siloam itself. The homes of the better

sort nestle at the base of the scarped side of the rocky hill. The poorer habitations consist of chambers rudely excavated in the solid rock. The inhabitants have a wild and shy look. Though living close to Jerusalem, they are quite distinct in manner and habit from the people of the city. Above this is the Hill of Offence, indicated by continuous tradition as the height whereon Solomon set up idolatrous worship.

Below Siloam, the valley of Kedron is more and more narrowed till it becomes a precipitous glen, into the depths of which the sunlight hardly penetrates. This gloomy defile is believed to be Tophet, the scene of the Moloch sacrifices of children by their parents. Its extremity is overlooked by the Hill of the Scape-goat.

We must now turn back from this part of the Kedron valley, and set our faces towards Zion. As we ascend the steep path, we enter the defile of Hinnom, passing near the traditional site of Aceldama, the field purchased by the price of Our Lord's betrayal. The name of Hinnom has a mournful significance, but the glen as seen now-a-days is one of the most picturesque spots in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. This, then, is the subject of the accompanying illustration (X.). On the south side the rocks are flat-topped and crowned with trees, while their scarped sides are pierced by many

HINNONI.





rock-cut tombs. Leading to the entrance of some among them are flights of steps also rock-hewn. These appear on the right side of the picture. In the centre are rich olive groves, seeming to fill up the hollow of the glen. On the left are the steep slopes leading up to Zion. In the background, bounding the view, are the hills of evil name on the opposite or eastern side of Kedron. As we see the place, the mild radiance of a sunny afternoon is shed over the scene.

From the glen of Hinnom, which may be described as passing round the base of the Zion slope down to the Kedron, we ascend the adjoining height, which is called the Hill of Evil Counsel, and which rears its head right opposite to Zion. The name of Evil Counsel comes from the tradition which alleges that here was situate that palace of the High Priest Caiaphas, in which the Jewish leaders—alarmed at the popular acclamations with which Our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem was saluted—took counsel together to kill Him. There are no proofs in support of this tradition, which has, however, been persistently maintained. It is not in itself improbable, as the situation does seem to have once been occupied by a structure which may have been the palace. The utter barrenness of the height is varied only by a

solitary tree, which is well known locally, and to which some fanciful legends are attached.

But the main interest of this commanding height arises from the view which is hence obtained of the southern side of Jerusalem. This is not only the best, but is the only good sight that can be had of Mount Zion in all its dignity. It is from this stand-point alone that we can realise the position of the sacred mount, and can feel the full force of the text "out of Zion the Lord hath appeared in perfect beauty." The mount is seen to rise up to a height of its own, and seems to be separate from the rest of Jerusalem. It looks down in serene majesty upon the Holy City. Its head is crowned by the reputed sepulchre of David, though the real tomb is believed by recent authorities to have been in Akra. The sepulchre is built over with the domes and minarets of the Moslem. The graceful forms of these buildings add to the picturesque effect. In front of these buildings, and somewhat below them on the hill-side, is the southern and Turkish wall of the city. This portion of the wall has no claim to antiquity, except that it follows nearly the old limit between the division of Ophel on the one hand, and Zion with Moriah on the other hand. Doubtless, as Ophel ceased to be inhabited, the authorities contracted the

area of the city. They must have taken the temple enclosure as their starting point, and carried their work westwards up to Zion, thus leaving the Ophel area outside. The masonry in the greater part of this wall is Turkish. From the Zion area, then, which is at the south-west angle of the city, the eye ranges to the south-east angle at the corner of the temple enclosure, which has been already represented by an illustration. From that corner the slope of the ground towards the Kedron is rapid. Above the line of the wall, the dome of Omar's mosque appears, marking the centre of Moriah. Behind that, in the background bounding the horizon, is the Olivet range.

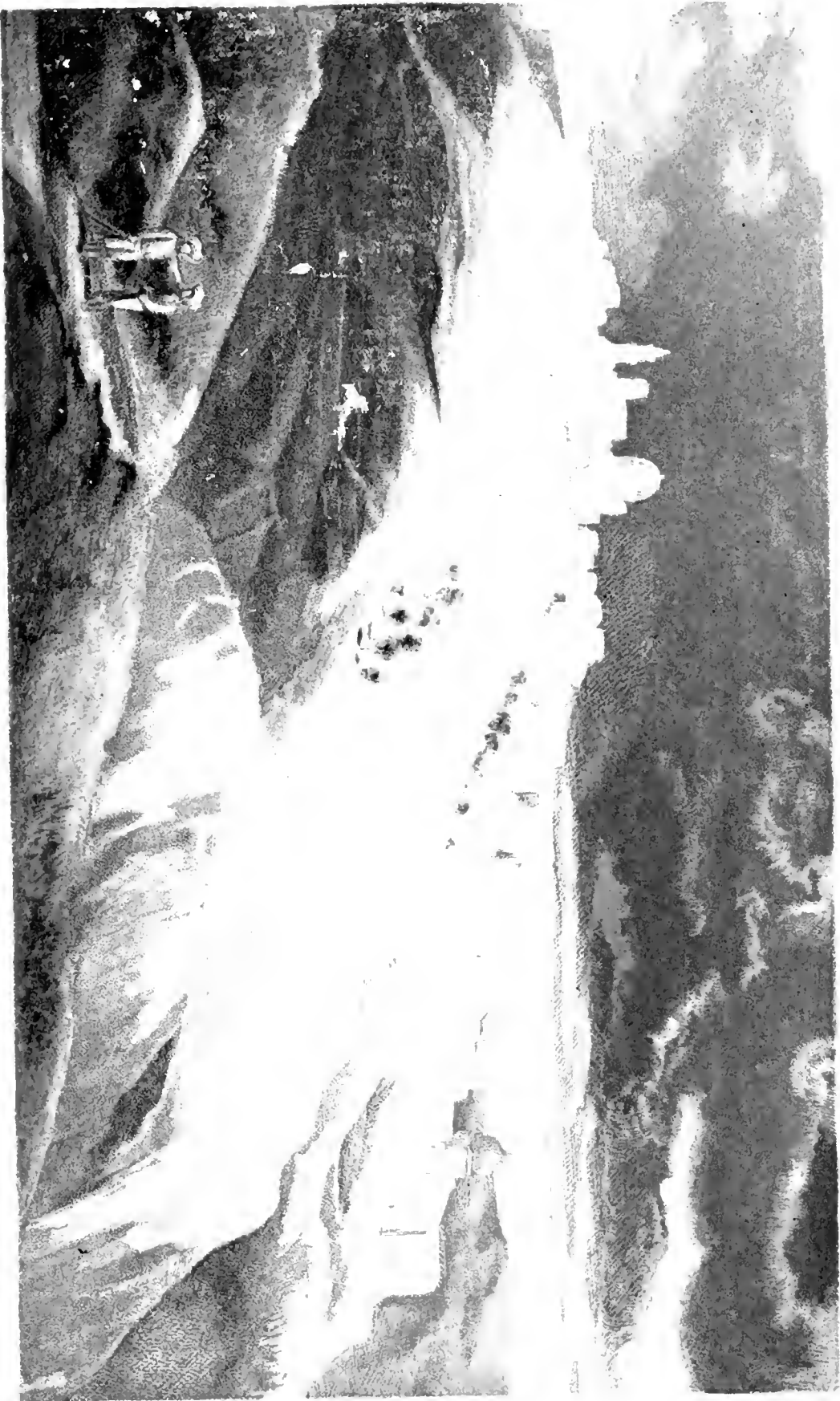
From the Zion height, the ground descends sharply towards the ravine of Hinnom, already described. It is threaded here and there with foot-paths, or interspersed scantily with stray olive-trees and patches of cultivation. The spring herbage is at this time beginning to appear on the dry and barren surface.

As I see the view, with brilliant sunshine breaking through masses of vapour, and with expanses of azure sky between the dark-coloured clouds, Zion—whose name means “sunny”—has a cheerful aspect. This is noteworthy because the sombre sadness, which has already been remarked as characteristic of

Jerusalem, extends generally to the neighbourhood of the Holy City. The view from Scopus, perhaps, is less dispiriting; but the whole valley of Kedron is the abode of melancholy. Even from the summit of Olivet, the survey of Jerusalem, though superb, does yet summon up the thought of sorrows unutterable. But it is not so with this view of Zion, which suggests nought save the palmy days, the golden age of David and Solomon, the assurance that the glory of the Most High has rested here, and the hope by faith that here will this glory be restored.

This view, then, of Zion from the south is represented in the accompanying illustration (XI.). The sunlight rests on the mountain-top, and on the structures near the reputed tomb of David. Behind these bright objects is a mass of dark cloud, just as I saw it, affording a fine contrast. On the left are the buildings of the Church Missionary Society. In front is the southern or Turkish wall reaching down to the corner of the temple enclosure. Above that we perceive the dome of Omar's mosque standing up against the Olivet range in the background. Then in the foreground are the steep slopes on the shoulder of Zion.

From Zion the city wall turns a corner and runs northwards along the western boundary of Jerusalem. It proceeds



MOUNT ZION.

to the head of the Hinnom ravine, not far from the upper or outer pool of Gihon. It then passes by the tower of Hippicus and touches the end of the Frank suburb already described in Chapter II. Thus it rejoins the Jaffa gate, the place whence we set out. The length of our excursion round Jerusalem, about fourteen miles, appears much greater than it really is, because of the objects which, almost at every step, appeal to the imagination.

Thus our circuit of the places round about Jerusalem is complete, inasmuch as we have started from the Jaffa gate and have returned thither. We have in imagination passed by the Damascus gate, the grotto of Jeremiah, and the tombs of the Kings. We have ascended Scopus, the site of the Roman encampment, and descended to the Kedron. Thence, skirting the eastern side of the city by Gethsemane, we have crossed the summit of Olivet and passed on to Bethany. We have proceeded from Bethany to Siloam and Hinnom. Then we have wound our way around Zion back to the western gate named after Jaffa.

CHAPTER V.

BETHLEHEM.

Road to Bethlehem.—Rachel's tomb.—Town of Bethlehem.—Basilica of Constantine.—Cave of the Nativity.—Chamber of St. Jerome.—Missionary establishments.—Solomon's Pools.—Fields of Ruth and Boaz.—The Frank mountain.—View of Bethlehem on the height.

FROM Jerusalem a journey to Bethlehem is easily and conveniently made, as the distance is only six miles, and the road is good. In a single day the traveller can ride to Bethlehem, see the chapels, the convents and monasteries, the missionary schools and establishments, the historic ground close by, and return to Jerusalem before nightfall. A short but most instructive tour is often arranged in this manner. Those travellers who propose to visit Jerusalem only, and are not able to undertake a march into the interior of Palestine, should still endeavour to see Bethlehem, which may indeed be almost reckoned among the surroundings of the Holy City. Besides its supreme importance as the place of the Nativity,

Bethlehem is among the most certain sites of historical events in the Old Testament. It is mentioned in Genesis, and must have been well known to Solomon, who built his waterworks in its neighbourhood.

I proceeded, then, from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, lightly equipped. My two small tents, the baggage, the spare mules and horses, and a few camp-servants, are sent on from Jerusalem to Bethel, about twelve miles to the north, with orders to await my arrival there. I myself, with my mounted dragoman as guide and interpreter, am to proceed by a circuit round Bethlehem and Jericho to Bethel, and join our little camp there. We are to stop for the night at monasteries, and ride without baggage, carrying a few necessaries in our saddle-bags. I have changed my dragoman in reference to local knowledge and experience; but both men are equally good in their respective ways. The dragoman at Jerusalem was a Syrian member of the Greek Church; my new dragoman is a native of Lebanon, and belongs to the Latin or Roman Church.

The start is made from Jerusalem on a fine morning, after windy and rainy weather on the day before. The bridle-road to Bethlehem is the best in southern Palestine. Open fields with early crops springing up, and occasional

olive-groves, are met with on the way. On looking back we take our last look at Zion.

Pursuing our way through a landscape that is smiling after recent storms, we soon pass by a domed structure known as Rachel's tomb. This comparatively modern structure, though standing on a point of great antiquity, cannot be identified as her sepulchre. But, according to the words of Scripture, she must have been buried by the Patriarch just about here on this line of march. The simple and affecting narrative in Genesis is called to mind by wayfarers of all generations.

Soon the heights of Bethlehem, covered with buildings, come in sight. The town of to-day is quite modern, and presents a clean and pleasant appearance. It is beyond doubt the Bethlehem where our Lord was born. The place of the Nativity also has been fixed by a tradition which is locally probable. On and about the traditional site of the Nativity several spacious and stately structures, monasteries, and chapels, have been built by the Greek and Latin churches. Their frontage displays itself finely to those who stand in the square outside. Here is the Basilica of Constantine, venerable as the oldest church in the world. The architecture is not remarkable in style, but carries us back to the days of

primitive Christianity. A short flight of steps conveys the visitor to low chambers beneath the floor of the main building. Here is an altar over the cave or rock-hewn stable indicated as the birthplace of Our Lord. At such a place I was surprised to see an armed sentry, a Moslem in the Turkish uniform, mounting guard. Violent disputes had arisen between the monks of the Greek and Latin churches, and the Turkish authorities were obliged to station a sentry here. Such a guardian of the peace, under Turkish rule, must necessarily be a Moslem, and it is derogatory to Christianity that its followers of different branches should by their conduct oblige the alien magistracy to take these precautions.

Underneath the chapel is the rock-cut chamber where for many years St. Jerome used to study and prepare the Vulgate translation of the Scriptures.

A visit may well be made to the establishment of the Church Missionary Society, and to the school belonging to the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East. The Missionaries, both ladies and gentlemen, impart valuable information to the traveller regarding the social condition of the inhabitants of southern Palestine.

From any housetop in Bethlehem charming views may be had in nearly all directions, especially towards the east.

In that direction the distant mountain - ranges beyond the Dead Sea rise up above the hills of Judæa.

A few miles to the south are the reservoirs and aqueducts by which Solomon stored and conducted the water-supply for Jerusalem.

But we must now descend from the town of Bethlehem by a steep bridle-path to the olive-groves which cluster round the base of the hill. Just beyond the groves eastward is a small plain, for the most part cultivated, and surrounded on three sides by low stony hillocks, or gentle inclines, on which pasturage is obtainable. The fourth or western side is formed by the olive-groves of Bethlehem. There is no other plain of a like kind at or near Bethlehem. This narrow area, then, is one of the most historic places in all Palestine ; for, upon the clear inference to be drawn from Scripture, here must have been the fields of Boaz, here the betrothal of Ruth, here the tending of the flocks and herds by David, here the first announcement of the Gospel to the shepherds at night. Our road winds round the plain. The cultivation is apparently the same as it was in ancient times. As I saw it, the young crops were springing up, and they consisted of barley. The harvest was chiefly of barley in the days of Boaz when Ruth was

gleaning. A village headman met us just here ; he had the heavy turban, the grave features, the long beard, the flowing robes, the natural dignity of a Shekh. His presence recalled the ideas we have of the appearance which such a man as Boaz must have presented. The external habit of these people has been much the same through all ages. An artistic study of this man, his face, figure and costume, on the very ground of Ruth and Boaz, would have furnished material for an imaginative picture.

On the whole, Bethlehem is enlivened by an ever-abiding cheerfulness, and must be described as one of the pleasant places in Palestine; though our journey will take us to places yet more pleasant. Being salubriously situated within a few miles from Jerusalem, it is a desirable spot for the residence of Europeans, and always has a small European society. It is a suitable centre for religious and educational effort. Its inhabitants are of a mild and teachable disposition. Those persons, ladies or gentlemen, whose duties may take them here, will find the scenery exhilarating and the associations spirit-stirring. The frequent influx of pilgrims in greater or lesser numbers from all parts of Europe and some parts of Asia, must afford subjects of unfailing interest to the cultivated observer.

The position, too, is favourable for excursions, full of instruction as well as of interest. As we shall presently see, the wilderness of Judæa is near at hand, often commanding lovely views of the Dead Sea. A day's march will take the student to Hebron, the patriarchal capital of southern Palestine. The view from the square-topped hill, known as the Frank mountain, the palace-tomb of Herod the Great, will fully reward those who undertake the ascent.

Looking back, from what may be described as the fields of Ruth and Boaz, towards Bethlehem, we see the best view that can be had of the town and the hill. This, then, is the subject of the accompanying illustration (XII.). In the foreground are the olive-groves already mentioned, which in this neighbourhood are extensive and productive, though they do not appear to contain trees of any considerable age. From the groves the bridle-path is seen ascending to the town on the height above. Near the brow on the ridge, are the ecclesiastical buildings, and the sacred structures over the site of the Nativity. These are tipped by the rays of the declining sun. The sky behind is gilded by the rich light which is shed towards evening in these regions when the air has been cleared by recent rain.



BETHLEHEM.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEAD SEA.

Wilderness of Judæa.—Monastery of Mar Saba.—Lovely view of the Dead Sea.—Abraham and the Cities of the Plain.—Bedouin escort.—Descent to the Salt Lake.—En-gedi.—Water of the Lake.—Peculiar foreground.—View towards the desert.—Traces of earthquakes and igneous agencies.—Antique associations.—Chedorlaomer and Abraham.

THOSE who purpose to travel from Jerusalem and its neighbourhood into the interior of Palestine, should visit the Dead Sea, the Jordan, and Jericho, before proceeding northwards. They must, indeed, take this opportunity of seeing the basin of the Jordan, if they are to see it at all without retracing their steps, and without loss of time in moving backwards and forwards.

I do not advert to the route towards the Dead Sea from the south, that is from Sinai, Beersheba and Hebron. That route is indeed most interesting, but it belongs to a

scheme of travel different from that which I am endeavouring to pursue.

Those travellers whose leisure is scanty can proceed northwards direct from the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, without a descent into the valley of the Jordan, contenting themselves with the distant prospect of the Dead Sea from the summit of Olivet. But the victorious beauty of that prospect, under certain effects of light from the sky, inspires the spectator with a wish to penetrate to the strange region which is laid out deep beneath his eye. There is a shadowy gloominess in our ideas regarding the Dead Sea, but the sheen and shimmer of the water prove that even this salt lake is no exception to the laws of natural beauty. Here, too, is the mouth of the Jordan; and near the inland sea, on almost the same level, is the plain of Jericho.

A straight road, already mentioned in Chapter IV., runs from Jerusalem past Bethany to Jericho. The defile near the Jordan valley is one of the most historic, as well as the most beautiful, passes in Palestine. It was trodden by Our Lord during several momentous events in the record of His life on earth. This route is very commonly followed by travellers, who can thus reach Jericho in one day's march. From Jericho they can proceed to Hebron, if southward

bound, or to Bethel directly, if northward bound, without returning to Jerusalem.

My approach to the Dead Sea is from Bethlehem.

A short ride from Bethlehem, along the edge of the historic plain already described, takes the traveller to the region named Jeshimon or "solitude" in the first Book of Samuel, and the wilderness of Judæa in the Gospel of St. Matthew. Leaving the fields green with rising crops, he enters low hills which become more and more desolate, until an area is reached which has always been utterly sterile. Rock, gravel, sand, of light-brown or reddish hues, are all that the eye perceives. At this time the air is cool, and the breeze pleasant. But in the glare of summer, with the heated blast blowing over these horrid hills, the distress to the way-farer must be severe. This, then, is the wilderness separating the uplands of Judæa from the Dead Sea, and forming the flank of the plateau that fronts towards the salt lake. Hither David fled from before Saul. Here was the refuge of Judas Maccabæus under persecution, and of the Maccabees after his death.

Our route leads us to the monastery of Mar Saba. The Kedron, leaving the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, enters the wilderness, and cleaves a way through the very wildest part

of that region. Its banks then become most precipitous, and its course is at the bottom of a very deep rift. Now the convent of Mar Saba is placed on the brow of the very steepest part of the Kedron ravine. The sight becomes dizzy to him who looks from the terraces of the convent into the depths of the Kedron bed. But when the gaze is steadied, the bold shapes of the rock-formations, and the varied stratifications, are much to be admired. The situation of the convent, indeed, is the most weirdly picturesque in all Palestine. The structures too, with their numerous balconies projecting forth and almost overhanging the precipice, are so placed as to increase the effect. Solitude, or seclusion from the bounties of nature and the works of man, would seem to be the object aimed at by the founders of this institution; so that in contemplating heavenly things, the inmates should commune with nothing earthly save the rocks, and lift their eyes to nothing save the sky above. There are hermit caves all around, and the very air teems with saintly legends.

There are several court-yards and many guest-chambers. Indeed, to shelter travellers in this inhospitable region seems to have been regarded as one of the functions of the convent. The rooms are furnished plainly but comfortably. The traveller usually brings with him his own supplies of food. The monks

belong to the Greek Church, and many of them are Syrians by birth. Though sad-looking, as those who are dead-alive, they are courteous, and make the stranger feel that their convent is for him a temporary home in the desert.

In the early days of Christianity the monks appear to have suffered oppression and persecution. On one historic occasion the convent suffered from a Persian invasion which swept over southern Palestine.

Thus travellers to and fro between Judæa and the Jordan are lodged for a night, or longer, in this pile of buildings, which seem as if clinging to the giddy heights over Kedron, like an cyrie on a lofty crag. From any of the heights around the monastery, views of the Dead Sea may be obtained. The water would be full 3,000 feet below the spectator. His eye would wander over a rolling mass of low hills varied in form, structure, and colouring, but uniform in barrenness. Beyond the sheet of inland sea, the mountains of Moab range themselves along the eastern horizon. Behind the front line of the range two square-shaped mountains rear their heads; these are Nebo and Pisgah. Now, however, a new feature, not yet seen, is to be observed, namely, the mouth of the Jordan on its junction with the Dead Sea. Near the river's mouth a long spit of sand is projected into the water. This view of the

Dead Sea is remarkable under any circumstances. In stormy weather it must indeed have a savage grandeur. The water will look murky, almost inky, under the lowering clouds. The ranges of sterile hills which intervene between it and the spectator, and which lie beneath his eye, will in the dull light have a fearful wildness. Often, however, the weather is auspicious, and one evening I saw the Sea as shown in the accompanying illustration (XIII.). The sun was setting behind me as I looked eastwards. The sunset blaze, however, in the then state of the atmosphere, cast a golden haze even as far as the eastern horizon. The whole range of Moab was standing up against the bright sky. The mountains facing to the west had the light poured full upon them. The same cause which rendered the sky golden, imparted a roseate colour to the distant mountains. Under this beautiful veil, all details of the valley or spur, all variations of light and shade, were obscured. Nothing could be perceived except the outline against the sky, and the expanse of aerial colour right down to the water's edge. In contrast to this colour, the water displayed other hues equally vivid. The yellow of the sky reflected on the bluish gray of the water produced a delicate green hue, something between that of the turquoise and the emerald. Against this water, the nearer ranges of



THE DEAD SEA.

hills stood out. Though barren, they were no longer ill-favoured in appearance, for their tops, edges and crags were lighted up by the setting sun. As this view shows the Dead Sea at its best, in an aspect unlike that which it usually assumes, an attempt is made to represent the scene with something of its pictorial effect.

Though Mamre and Hebron are situated a few miles south of our present stand-point, still this is much the same view as that which Abraham had when, encamped at Mamre on the morn of doom to Sodom and Gomorrah, he contemplated the destruction of the cities in the plain. It is still an undetermined question whether Sodom and Gomorrah were situated at the northern or the southern end of the Dead Sea, and different inferences have been drawn from the language of Scripture describing the view which Abraham had on that eventful day from the hills where we are now in imagination standing. Porter, in his *Handbook of Palestine* (Murray, 1875) writes thus:—

“Abraham then dwelling at Mamre, by Hebron, received the visit of the angels, and accompanied them towards Sodom. After his appeal on behalf of the cities, he returned to his tents; but early the next morning he went to the same spot, ‘and looked towards Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward

all the land of the plain; and beheld, and lo! the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.' (Genesis xix. 28.) Lot, driven forth from Sodom at the first dawning of the morning, reached the 'little city of Zoar' as the sun was risen upon the earth, and Zoar was situated on the eastern shore of the sea near the promontory of Lisan. These facts indicate that the doomed cities and their well-watered plain were towards the southern end of the lake; for otherwise Abraham could not have seen them from any point at an easy distance from Hebron, and Lot could not have gained Zoar in the short interval between dawn and sunrise."

Tristran, on the other hand, (*Bible Places*, 1884,) considers that there is some reason for supposing the cities to have been at the north end. After advancing several arguments, he writes thus:—

"After the destruction of the cities, we are told that Abraham, then encamped at Mamre, 'looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the plain, and lo! the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.' The accuracy of the expression is to be noted. Not he saw, but he looked toward the cities of the plain. From the hill above Mamre the plain itself cannot be seen, but

the depression between the nearer hill and the distant tops of Gilead is plainly to be perceived, which is not the case with the depression of the southern end of the Dead Sea. Thus Abraham could at once have identified the locality whence the smoke arose."

It would seem that if Abraham actually saw the cities burning and smoking, then they must have been situated at the south-eastern end of the Dead Sea. But if he only looked towards them and perceived their smoke ascending, though they themselves were hidden from sight by the mountain-wall of the Dead Sea, then they must have been situated at the northern end, and in that case the Zoar of Lot must have been some place other than the Zoar on the Lisan promontory. But as the number of the cities destroyed was at least five (including Sodom and Gomorrah), we may infer that of those which were on the east shore he saw the actual conflagration; and of those which were at the northern end, he saw only the smoke.

From Mar Saba the traveller takes with him two Bedouins on foot as an escort, according to the Turkish regulations. The name is really Budawin, which is applied to the people dwelling beyond the Jordan. In the inhabited parts of Judæa the travelling is safe from overt theft or violence. But in

the wilderness nomad tribes are often encamped, or families joined into a brotherhood or cousinhood are sojourning for the pasturage of their flocks and herds, or stray individuals are moving about. Such a homeless society as this will be likely to prey upon neighbours or passers-by if opportunities should offer. Therefore an escort, chosen from among the nomads themselves, is thought necessary; so that responsibility may be enforced if anything untoward should occur. With this precaution, however, the route by the Dead Sea may be followed in security. As we left Mar Saba on our descent towards the Dead Sea we saw several of these Badawi encampments. Black tents, of coarse material and small dimensions, are dotted about on the sandy or gravelly soil, and sometimes are arranged in picturesque groups, contrasting well with the light-brown surface of the ground and of the hills around. Indeed, one of these encampments, with the arid wilderness around, the Dead Sea in the background far beneath the eye, and the Moabite mountains on the horizon, would be a characteristic subject for the artist.

The ride is somewhat tedious down the steep and naked hill-sides. But the monotony of barrenness is not quite unbroken; for a short distance on our right is Engedi, or Ain-Jadi the fountain of the kid. This place was made

famous by the Song of Solomon and, though reft of its primitive beauty, is still verdant.

Then during our descent we realise the fact that this salt sea is what geographers term the deepest depression yet discovered in the surface of the earth. It terminates the trough and the basin of the Jordan. The river, rising near the base of Hermon, descends rapidly to the sea of Gennesareth, which is 682 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. Between that Sea and the Dead Sea the river descends 610 feet more, making a total descent of 1,292 feet. Thus the broad water before us, a little beneath the eye, is nearly 1,300 feet below sea-level.

When the base of the mountain is reached, a mile or more of sandy undulation has to be crossed before we arrive at the water's edge within a short distance from the mouth of the Jordan. From the brackish state of the water, it might be expected that no vegetation whatever would be found on the margin of the lake. Here and there, however, reeds, rushes, and even some hardy wild-flowers, are perceived, and are beginning to put forth yellow blossoms. The salt water, percolating through the sand, may be so sweetened as to sustain at least some scanty vegetation. The lake, at this, the north end, is constantly receiving supplies of fresh

water, not only from the Jordan, but also from the Calirrhoe and the Arnon on the eastern shore. Consequently the water is not so saline here as at the southern end. As Dean Stanley well says, the Jordan flows in with "sufficient force to carry its brown waters far into the bright green sea." The fresh water from the earthy particles held in suspension will be turbid in colour, whereas the water of the salt lake will, from its composition, be clear and sparkling. The saline quality of the lake is chiefly derived from a salt mountain, *Jebel Usdom*, near the southern extremity, which is out of sight. Despite the constant influx of fresh water, the level of the lake's surface is preserved by the evaporation in the hot season. The heat in this profound hollow must then be intense, and all accounts state that the evaporation causes clouds of steam to arise and then hang over the lake for several months consecutively. This phenomenon is thought to have suggested some of the Scriptural imagery of smoke ascending. It must, if seen to advantage, cast a poetic halo over this sterile death-like scenery, and suggest a fine pictorial effect. I do not, however, see it at all, in this the winter season. The clouds are rolling high overhead and the atmosphere is clear. Some atmospheric conditions, either by storm or by mist, are needed to render our view of the Dead Sea attrac-

tive. Under any circumstances, however, there will be a fitting, though not a beautiful foreground. The Jordan is constantly rolling down the stems, trunks, branches, boughs of trees. These being immersed in the saline water become stripped of their bark, and encrusted with salt. When cast back by the waves on the sandy beach, they look like the skeletons of trees, and appear as the dry bones recalling associations of death.

Our view, then, at the northern end near the Jordan's mouth, looks towards the lake touching the Arabian desert, not far from the arm of the Red Sea which is known as the gulf of Akaba. Recently much attention has been directed to the seventy miles of sand and rock which separate the Dead Sea from the head of the Akaba gulf, in reference to the project of a canal, which was not found practicable. Meanwhile our view, which is the most interesting one geographically, is not favourable pictorially, because the mountains on either side become lower and lower till they dwindle away towards the end of the horizon.

The most characteristic view is that which faces the wilderness of Judæa. There the hills are more abrupt, and their barrenness is in harmony with the ideas which we have regarding this salt and bitter lake. The mountains on the

eastern or Moabite side are evidently not so barren, and are, indeed, in some parts productive. I had, however, no opportunity of visiting them.

The idea that the salt lake was formed when the Cities of the Plain were destroyed four thousand years ago, and that the site of Sodom lies beneath the shallow water at the southern end, is not only unsupported by Scripture but is contrary to its tenour. Geological research furnishes proof that the lake has not materially altered within historic times. Round about it are traces of earthquakes with volcanic eruptions. In his *Land of Israel* (1865) Tristram describes the sulphur springs, the sulphurous sand, the bituminous blocks, the masses of combustible material. Yet these fire-smitten shores were once smiling with agriculture. The garden cultivation of that time is known to have comprised products superior to anything now known in Palestine. The people who made these gardens, built cities too. What these cities were externally we know not. But tribes thus skilled in agriculture must have excelled also in many other arts of peace. In warlike arts they failed through cowardice of disposition. They were enervated by their hot climate, their luxuries, and their vices. They yielded to Chedorlaomer, who marched from the farthest end of Mesopotamia to invade

them. Their salt-lake territory must have been regarded as a rich prize in order to induce the invader to undertake this remote expedition. After twelve years of submission they rebelled, and were again discomfited by Chedorlaomer in the vale of Siddim, at the southern end of the lake. But the victor was followed along the very ground before us, by a few hundred men of a braver race, under the command of Abraham, and at last being attacked in the dead of night was routed near the head of the Jordan valley. This event, described in the 14th chapter of Genesis, is not only the first of Hebrew victories in the field, but is the earliest operation recorded in the annals of war.

CHAPTER VII.

THE JORDAN AND JERICHO.

First view of the Jordan stream and banks.—Halting-place at the broad pool.—Bathing-place of the pilgrims.—Crossing of the Israelites under Joshua.—Formation of their national character.—Approach to Jericho.—Site of the later city.—Crimes of Herod the Great—His last days.—Site of the elder Jericho.—Channels of irrigation.—Derived from the famous Fountains.—Past and present cultivation. Mount Quarantania.—Traditional scene of the Temptation.—Ascent of the mountain.—General view of the Jericho landscape.

From the Dead Sea northwards we strike across a barren plain, and meet the Jordan a few miles above its mouth. The river has a fringe of low trees on either side. We are on the right or western bank; from the opposite bank a narrow plain extends to the mountains of Moab. The vegetation, down to the water's margin, consists of small trees, coarse grasses, reeds, shrubs with tapering branches and feathery leaves. The stream is quite narrow; it may be fifty yards broad, but the breadth cannot be exactly measured by the eye. The water is high

and almost reaches the brim. It is indeed turbid and thick with particles of earth held in suspension, but it is not actually muddy. Its colour is a reddish brown, and its surface is agitated by the swift current. During many months in the year the river is probably a streamlet wandering over a sandy and shingly bed. But its volume is swollen in the latter part of winter by the rainfall of Galilee or Anti-Lebanon, and in the early spring by the melting of the snows on Hermon. I was fortunate in seeing it thus in full flood, because it was under this condition that the Jews under Joshua made their ever-memorable passage.

Then we march for a short way up stream on the right bank till an open space is reached. Up to this moment, our interest and curiosity only have been excited, but nothing of beauty has been seen. Now, however, the river becomes beautiful as it opens out into a large pool. The expanse of water, though brown with earthy particles, yet reflects on its surface the blue sky and the fleecy clouds. It is encircled by trees of the same sort as those just mentioned. But hereabouts the trunks are taller, the branches stretch out farther, the foliage is thicker, the underground vegetation is richer. Behind the eastern or left bank a precipitous cliff stands up lowering and black, evidently consisting of bituminous sub-

stances. In the distance the Moabite ranges are visible. We dismount to study the scene at a point where the ground shelves gradually down to the water's edge, under the shady trees. At this low level of the Dead Sea the climate is becoming somewhat tropical, and at midday the sun's rays are distressing even in the winter season.

I had not an opportunity of seeing the pilgrims assemble at Easter; but the scenery of the pool, as I saw it, is represented in the accompanying illustration (XIV.).

In the distance is seen the northern part of the Moabite range, adjoining the region of Ramoth Gilead. Behind the water is the dark wall of bituminous formation. Around the pool are the trees and the vegetation; on its surface are slight eddies from the current of the river. Near the sandy margin in the foreground are the bare, bleached, weird trunks and branches of trees floated down by the stream. They may not, perhaps, be thought beautiful; but they are characteristic of the place. As the spring advances, the banks will, doubtless, be adorned with wild flowers; but none of them are yet to be seen.

This pool is distant, by direct measurement, about five miles from the Dead Sea, and about the same distance from the site of Joshua's Jericho. It is the most important point in the



THE JORDAN.

whole course of the Jordan. Here is found the only place where a large multitude could bathe. Certainly for many centuries the people have on religious feast-days bathed in this pool. Tradition has declared that somewhere near this point was the place where John baptised the multitude, and where Our Lord received baptism ; and probability favours this view. Topographical research, however, indicates that perhaps the place may have been higher up the stream.

By all accounts the sight to be seen here at Easter-tide is wondrously picturesque. Pilgrims and devotees, of many races and languages, press on eagerly, crowding to the water's edge. They come from eastern Europe, from the shores of the Mediterranean, from several parts of Asia, and even from some parts of Africa. Their types of feature, countenance and expression delight the student of humanity. Their costumes—clerical, ascetic, secular—afford an ever-varying play of form and colour. This restless crowd, under a hot sun, is contrasted with the smooth water and the cool shade of the over-arching trees. This, then, would be a characteristic subject for a picture illustrating the Palestine of to-day.

After a somewhat depressing ride along the border of the Dead Sea, the traveller is glad to abide for a while at this pool, meditating on the Biblical events that have happened

near here, and on the scenes which are still presented occasionally. This is, doubtless, the midday halting-ground ordinarily for those who are journeying from the Dead Sea towards Jericho. In other marches the halt is uncertain: sometimes it may be at one point, sometimes at another. But on this march the halt will usually be at this spot, and nowhere else. Thus a fresh interest arises to anyone who thinks of the students, the antiquarians, the explorers, the authors, who in recent times must have halted under these trees by this water.

Near here the Israelites under Joshua must have crossed over the river-bed. The passage may have occurred at some point situated a very few miles up-stream. Nearly opposite to it must have been Gilgal, where Joshua fixed his first camp after crossing the river. As we turn our heads towards Jericho, the scenery of prominent events in the Old and the New Testament is before our eyes.

It was here that the Jewish nation first planted its foot in the Land of Promise. As we look around, we cannot but think of the wondrous manner in which that nation had been formed, up to the time of crossing the Jordan. If the influences of Egypt, the climate of the Nile delta, and the plenteousness of Goshen, had for several generations enervated

the Israelites, still the experience of one generation in the wilderness must have braced them up to the highest degree of nervous force. We cannot fully estimate the effect of the divine inspiration which guided them, nor can we measure the strength of the protection from on High which sustained them. But we can imagine the discipline to which they must, as a race of men, have been subjected during that weary span of forty years in the desert country between Sinai and Moab. The frowning precipices of Sinai and Horeb, the trackless sands, the untrodden wilderness, must have filled them with vague terror. Yet a way through this undiscovered country had been found for them. They must have been haunted by anxiety for food and water, though urged to move on laboriously, march by march, from day to day, over ground parched by perpetual drought, with their strength withered by the blasts of hot wind. Yet sustenance had been provided: the manna falling like dew, the seasonable flight of quails, the gushing spring from the rock, had come in time to save them. Their society had been framed and knit together by a perfect organization. Their laws touched every relation of life, and reached the minutest details of the social system. Thus they were bound all together in one brotherhood, tribe with tribe, class with class. They were trained to

obey their leaders as having divine authority. This obedience was rendered by them under circumstances that to human eyes would seem hopeless. Even if they escaped from the perils and miseries of the desert, and entered districts which, though wild, were partly inhabited, they met armed opposition, against which they had to fight for their lives. They had been warned of the consequences should they shrink from exertion, or quail before danger, or bow under fatigue, or evade discipline, or pause in their allegiance. They had witnessed tremendous phenomena, and had seen nature convulsed, the solid ground riven asunder by earthquake, the waters of the sea banked up in a vast heap. Yet through all this tribulation they had advanced victoriously : their ranks being unbroken, their numbers undiminished, their discipline unimpaired ; their social system being perfectly ordered, their laws, regulations, and customs being exactly preserved. Their nation, then, by divine blessing, had stood the test of the fiercest trial and the hardest adversity. Then the national character must have been developed together with the growth of the nation. Then were produced that unconquerable fortitude, that desperate courage, that adherence to system, that inward enthusiasm, that imaginative disposition, for which the Jewish race has been distinguished during many ages and in many countries. Never

in the history of mankind has any host been moved by such sentiments as those which animated the people under Joshua as they approached the Jordan. Their souls were stirred by the memory of perils surmounted through divine mercy, and by triumphant hope in the divine promise.

There is nothing to mark the convulsion which, under God's providence, caused the waters of Jordan to fall back, leaving their bed dry for the passage of Joshua's army and people. Still, the surroundings and scenery amidst which the event occurred must be the same now as then.

Turning westwards, with the Jordan behind us, we ride over a sterile plateau towards Jericho, "the city of palm trees," in Deuteronomy, as descried by Moses from afar. Before us are dark masses of evergreen foliage and the long-extending groves of Jericho. Though the character of the vegetation has greatly changed, yet, from the distance Jericho must have appeared to Joshua much as it appears to us. Behind this thick belt of trees a mountain rises up nearly a thousand feet above the plain. It forms, indeed, part of the mountainous range which flanks the uplands of Judæa and bounds the valley of the Jordan. Still it stands apart from the neighbouring mountains. Its outline is sharp, its sides are scarped; its colour, though subdued by distance, is reddish.

This is Mount Quarantania, to which allusion will be made presently.

Approaching the groves of Jericho, we ford a clear transparent stream, rushing over bright-coloured stones and pebbles. This is the Kelt, so called in modern times. Tradition has declared it to be the brook Cherith of Elijah, and thus it is generally named by the guides. This tradition is not, however, supported by enquiry. If the language of Scripture be studied with reference to the country before us, we shall perceive that the Cherith of Elijah must have been far away from here.

Before entering the woods around the oldest of the sites, the traveller will probably ride along the bank of the charming Kelt to see the site of the later Jericho. This was built some three miles away from the elder Jericho, the rebuilding of which was forbidden after its destruction in the time of Joshua. The first Jericho was, as will be remembered, a beautiful city. The second Jericho must have been still larger and richer. It became in time the temporary abode of royalty, and the resort of the noble and the wealthy in Judæa. Doubtless, to people accustomed to the hill-tops of Palestine, often bleak and waterless, the change to the rich plain, the shady groves, the water-springs, tanks and fountains of

Jericho, must have been delightful. In the later days of the Jews, Herod the Great began adorning this place, as he had adorned many other places, with splendid architecture. His son and successor, Archelaus, continued the work. The ground was covered with palaces, villas and gardens. The wealthy residents could hardly have stayed here all the year round, for the heat at this low level, right underneath the hills scorched by the sunshine, must have been intense ; though some relief may have been afforded by currents of air moving up and down the Jordan valley to or from the Dead Sea. This, then, is the Jericho repeatedly mentioned in the New Testament, where Our Lord sojourned, laboured and taught. The renowned site is now strewn with remains so shattered, splintered and battered, that they can hardly be called ruins in any distinguishable shape. But the minute fragments are numerous enough to reward antiquarian research.

The ordinary route from Jerusalem to Jericho and the Jordan meets us here. It descends by the picturesque ravine mentioned in the last Chapter (VI.). Instead of following the straight line we have been marching by the circuit just described.

No traveller can quit the site of the later Jericho without calling to mind the terrible story of Herod the

Great. Here was committed the greatest of his many crimes, and here was his last earthly punishment endured. He was jealous of the popularity enjoyed by Aristobulus, the brother of his wife Mariamne, a youth of seventeen, endowed with the noble and engaging qualities of the Maccabean race. So he invites the youth to the palace of Jericho, and there causes him to be drowned. The murder is thus described by Josephus (*Antiq. Jews*, book xv. ch. iii.).

“As they stood by the fish-ponds, of which there were large ones about the house, they went to cool themselves by bathing, because it was in the midst of a hot day. At first they were only spectators of Herod’s servants and acquaintances as they were swimming; but after a while the young man, at the instigation of Herod, went into the water among them, while such of Herod’s acquaintances as he had appointed to do it, dipped him as he was swimming, and plunged him under water in the dark of the evening, as if it had been done in sport only, nor did they desist till he was entirely suffocated.”

It will be seen, when we reach Samaria, that this crime led to other crimes, and that henceforth Herod’s life is a continuous tragedy ending in death at this very Jericho. The particulars are given by Josephus (*Antiq.*, book xvii.

ch. vi. and vii.). Herod "makes the Jews assemble in the theatre, and because he could not himself stand he lay upon a couch" to make his last speech to them. As "a fire glowed within him slowly" he "bathed himself in the warm baths at Calirrhoe which runs into the lake called Asphaltitis" (the Dead Sea). Then "he came again to Jericho, where he grew so choleric that it brought him to do all things like a madman." Anon he sends for his sister Salome, and says, "I shall die in a little time, so great are my pains, . . . but what principally troubles me is this, that I shall die without being lamented." When faint from pain "he called for an apple and a knife . . . when he had got the knife he looked about and had a mind to stab himself with it, and he had done it had not his cousin held his hand." Receiving an unfavourable report of his son Antipater, "he cried out, beat his head, raised himself on his elbow, and commanded them to kill Antipater, and to do it presently." Then he makes his will, disposing of his kingdom to Archelaus and Herod Antipas. Within five days after the execution of Antipater he dies.

A very short ride now takes us from Jericho the new to Jericho the old. The original word survives in Riha, by which name a village is still called. The Riha of to-day

consists of several detached hamlets, and comprises all the remains that can be traced of the ancient Jericho. It is situated in the midst of cultivation; its lands are densely wooded and permeated by channels of irrigation. Inside the encircling groves, the landscape seems quite fresh to the eye which has been accustomed to the wilderness and the Dead Sea. The vegetation may be rank and coarse, but it is abundant. The trees are neither tall nor out-spreading, but they are evergreen. The garden cultivation is not well ordered, but it is very productive. Water-courses are branching out in all directions to conduct the water to the fields. Then, amidst the trees and the cottages there stand shapeless mounds in a sort of order which shows that they are not there by chance. Indeed they spring from design, for they are the remains of that Jericho which fell down in the presence of Joshua's army. The stones of the ancient masonry must doubtless have been taken away as materials for the building of other cities. No traces of architecture are now to be seen. Near the mounds is a small Latin monastery, newly finished, where I receive hospitality. The cluster of cottages around it is one of the several hamlets. The huts are numerous indeed, but they are scattered amongst the fields.

The channels for irrigation are now seen to be longer and larger. Canals brimful are supplying water to these channels as arteries distribute blood amongst the veins. It is, then, important to note the source whence the fertilizing waters are drawn. The quest for this brings us nearer and nearer to the base of the mountain already mentioned. Not far from this base, a reservoir of some size is filled with water from a copious spring, which during all the past ages has bubbled up inexhaustibly from the bowels of the mountain, and has for several thousand years endowed the plain of Jericho with fertility. This is the water which the prophet Elisha blessed. This is the veritable source of that prosperity which made Jericho one of the gardens of the East, and the envy of surrounding nations. It is now called by the natives the Sultan's Fountain. There is another spring called the fountain of Dûk, an old Jewish name probably. These, then, are the very fountains which gave life and wealth to a district where important events occurred in the history both of the Old and the New Testament. They are, after the lapse of ages, still copious, and are discharging the same functions for agriculture to-day as they did four thousand five hundred years ago. In respect of their antiquity, of their historic

renown, of their present preservation, they are perhaps the most wonderful fountains now existing in the world.

The cultivation dependent on these springs is still rich and varied. But it is distinctly of an inferior character, as compared with that of Scriptural times. It then included most, if not all, of the best products of tropical climes, the choicest fruits, the most valuable garden produce, the finest shrubs, the most useful trees. These products were not only consumed by a wealthy and luxurious community on the spot, but exported largely to Jerusalem and other hill cities. But the palm, the balsam, the citron, the fig, the olive of former times have given place to commoner plants.

It has been already mentioned that Mount Quarantania stands up right behind Jericho. This mass of tawny or whitish rock forms a background to the mounds that mark the site of the ancient city. Its scarped sides and reddish-ochre colour contrast with the foliage and verdant gardens near its base. This is the subject of the accompanying illustration (XV.).

The view is taken in the morning, when the eastern light strikes full upon the mountain. Thus the stratification of the rock, the rifts, the crevices, the ledges,

MOUNT QUARANTANIA FROM JERICHO.



can be fully observed. When I saw the scene the morning was fine, but dark clouds were gathering behind the summit, and setting off the sun-lit colour of the rocky heights. In the foreground is the vegetation covering the site of Jericho. Seldom in any country is so suitable a contrast of form, of colour, and of natural objects to be seen as that between the vegetation of old Jericho and the rock formations of Mount Quarantania.

When our gaze is turned towards the details of the mountains, dark spots are perceived, extending in long rows, one row being above another in parallel lines. These are the cave-cells of hermits; some of the chambers may be natural but many of them have been enlarged by excavation. Advantage has been taken of ledges in the mountain-side to place the cells in rows, so that communication might be had between them. The date of some among the cells must be very ancient, and doubtless many of the Jewish prophets have dwelt in them. Probably some of the greatest prophets mentioned in Scripture have sojourned there for a time at least. Certainly many saints renowned in Christendom during the middle ages have occupied these caves. The occupation continues in modern times even to this day. The monks and ascetics, who dwell here, are improving the cells by masonry or additional excavation.

The peculiar name Quarantania immediately attracts attention. It is derived, of course, from the French and Italian words signifying "forty days." Tradition affirms this to have been the place of Our Lord's temptation. This particular belief, probably based on earlier faith, became definite in the time of the Crusades, and has been maintained during the eight succeeding centuries. This is doubtless the reason why the monks and hermits have been, and are still, anxious to spend their days in the caves of the mountain. The acceptance of the tradition by exact enquirers must depend on the determination of the place where the Baptism occurred. If that place be at some point of the Jordan opposite Jericho, then it is apparent from the language of Scripture that Our Lord went for His temptation to the wilderness in a mountain close by. A survey of the mountains within reach shows that Quarantania is the one most fitted for the holy purpose. Indeed, as the hill ranges actually are, this is the only mountain that would have been perfectly fitting. The prevailing belief seems to be in accordance with this view. But the scene of the Temptation must be sought for elsewhere, if, as some recent authorities are inclined to believe, the Baptism took place at some point higher up the Jordan.

The name, nature and tradition of Quarantania were familiar

to Milton, who has described them in some stately and sonorous lines.

Thus from its commanding position, its sacred traditions and its intrinsic beauty, Mount Quarantania is to be regarded as one of the mountains best worth seeing in Palestine.

The ascent of the mountain, along its eastern face, as far as its northern shoulder, is now to be undertaken. The bridle-road winding up the spurs and hill sides is not difficult. It has been trodden by man and beast from the earliest ages. It was the line of traffic between the inhabitants of the Jericho valley and the wandering shepherds of the Canaanite uplands. It was used by the soldiers of Joshua for the invasion and conquest of Palestine. Its importance decreased after the building of Jerusalem, for then the principal line began to run from Jericho by the ravine of the Kelt already mentioned. It is still much traversed, both by the natives and by travellers, and assuredly it is one of the most interesting cross roads in the whole country.

The ancient and famous fountains of the Sultan, already mentioned as supplying the waters to be spread over the thirsty lands, and turning barrenness into fertility, is the point of departure. Soon the other fountain named Dûk is passed, and then the path mounts up the shoulder of Mount Quarantania.

tania. Every moment, as we rise higher, the steep scarps, the marking of the strata, the varied hues of the rocks, become more and more perceptible till we seem to look the mountain straight in the face and to note every feature. Then at a convenient spot we turn round, and thus looking back contemplate the landscape that lies far beneath us. This is indeed one of the finest views in all Palestine and some attempt is made to represent it in the accompanying illustration (XVI.).

It is morning time and the sun has mounted not very far above the eastern horizon. The prevailing tints of the sky are blue blended with amber. The mountain range of Moab is in shadow and stands up in violet-grey against the sky. At its feet is the northern end of the Dead Sea catching the sunlight and glistening as a silver sheet. On this side of the salt-water is a long strip of desert land with reddish hues. Then comes the broad belt of sylvan verdure, which girdles Jericho as with a zone of emeralds. In front of this and near to the foreground, though still much below the eye, are the fountain-reservoirs, the chief of which is a small sheet of water in which the sky is mirrored. From these the principal water channels are seen wandering in bright streaks among the over-shadowing woods. The lofty pedestal,



VALLEY OF JERICHO.

on which we stand, is formed by the red rocks of Quarantania.

From this standpoint, Robinson thus wrote in 1841 (*Biblical Researches*, vol. ii.):—

“We here have our last and most splendid view of the plain of Jericho. It is one of the richest in the world.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CENTRAL RIDGE OF PALESTINE.

Extent of the Central Ridge.—Its physical character.—Its ravines and passes.—Its rock formations.—Its vegetation.—Loss of its forests.—Its animals, wild and tame.—Its landscape.—Its inhabitants.—Their primæval descent.—The preservation of their manners and customs without change.—Their social condition.—Their religion.—Their aspect and demeanour.—State of the country.

ASCENDING from Jericho, over the shoulder of Mount Quarantania, as already described, we regain the uplands of Palestine and touch the heart of Judæa in the mountains of Benjamin. Our line of march is to pass along the very backbone of the Holy Land, or what geographers would call the dorsal ridge.

This most important ridge begins in the south from Beersheba, and gradually rises, broadening as it proceeds due northwards. Each step in its northerly course is marked by some place of supreme interest. We may follow it from Beersheba northwards to Hebron, to Bethlehem, and to

Jerusalem. We pursue its line from the Holy City to Bethel, to Shiloh, to Samaria, and, lastly, to Engannim (Janin), on the southern edge of the Esdraelon plain. Its general character is varied by several summits of the utmost importance, as Olivet, Mizpeh, Ephraim, Gerizim, Ebal. Its average height is about 2,500 feet above the level of the Mediterranean, but its summits rise to 3,500 feet. Its region comprises the heritage of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh. It may be likened to a trunk line from Beersheba to Engannim; but from the heights above Engannim it breaks off into two branches. The branch on the left, by far the longest and largest of the two, has a north-westerly direction, and ends in the sea-girt promontory of Carmel. The other, or lesser, branch takes an easterly direction and ends in Gilboa.

The subjoined sketch-map will indicate what may be termed the orography of this Central Ridge from Beersheba to Engannim, and thence to Carmel. On it is traced the route which we have been following, inclusive of detours, for several marches past, and which we are about to follow for several marches more.

The altitudes are always given in reference to the Mediterranean, owing to the peculiarity of this level. It has

been said in Chapter IV. that Olivet is 2,700 feet above the Mediterranean, but is nearly 4,000 feet above the Dead Sea. Again, Tell-Asur (Baal-Hazor of 2 Samuel) is 3,376 feet above the Mediterranean, Ebal 3,076, and Gerizim 2,848 feet. But to these altitudes about 800 feet, perhaps even more, must be added to indicate their height above the Jordan valley. Consequently the Central Ridge has a more imposing aspect when viewed from the east than from the west. Again, the intervening hollow lends a fine atmospheric effect to the trans-Jordanic mountains as beheld from the ridge.

Upon this ridge were the early resting-places of Abraham during his nomad life, the grazing grounds and pastoral settlements of Isaac, and the first purchase of land by Jacob from the aboriginal inhabitants. These heights arrested the vapours rising from the Mediterranean, and condensed them into the snows of winter, or into the early and late rains in due season. Here, by nature's process, were gathered and stored those supplies of moisture, which furnish resources for men and animals, in a climate generally hot and a region too often dry. Here, then, were the delicious pasturage, the cool retreats, the flocks and herds, the cattle on a thousand hills. Here was formed the character of the Jews as a conquering and governing race, that persistent and persevering temper

which has stood the test of ages. Here were employed that skill and capital which formed the higher departments of Jewish husbandry, and which covered the hill-sides with garden culture.

We must recollect that this ridge, bordering on the deep hollow of the Jordan eastwards and on the Mediterranean coast westwards, does not give a source to any river, and hardly to any brook of consequence. Kedron is its only streamlet of renown. But on both its sides it has several passes of the utmost importance, some leading down to the Jordan, others to the sea-coast. From Hebron there is one pass by which Abraham used to proceed to Sodom and Gomorrah; another in an opposite direction towards the settlements of the Philistines. From Bethlehem there is the frequented pathway through the wilderness of Judæa to the Dead Sea. From Jerusalem there is the route through Ajalon to Joppa, the only establishment which the Jews had on the sea-shore, and the defile descending to Jericho. From Bethel is the pass on the one side down to Gilgal, by which Joshua more than once marched up to victory, and on the other side the pass to the plain, by Bethoron, famous in Jewish history from the era of the Judges to the days of the Maccabees. From Shechem, at the foot of Gerizim, there is

on one hand the pass down to the Jordan on the way to the Jordan ford, opposite Ramoth Gilead; and on the other hand to the lovely vale wending from Neapolis (Nabulſis) towards the coast at Cæsarea.

The rock formations of the ridge are chiefly limestone. In some places the limestone is crystalline, and in others nummulitic. On Gerizim the limestone is full of nummulites (Conder). Near Gilboa and in parts of Carmel, around Jerusalem, and in the wilderness of Judæa, are chalk formations.

Regarding the vegetation, Conder (*Handbook to the Bible*) well observes: "The trees mentioned in the Old Testament are, without exception, still found in Palestine."

The oaks that sheltered the patriarchs and their tents are of three kinds. The famous terebinth (pistachio) can still show individual trees of remarkable beauty. The acacia, or Shittim, which supplied wood for the Tabernacle, is common to this day. The juniper, under which the prophet rested, is the Retem broom (genista), and is reported as lighting up the desert with white blossoms. The locust tree, the pods of which are believed to have been the husks eaten by the prodigal, is often found. The balm of Gilead and Engedi is identified with the Zakkum, from the berries of which a

healing oil is extracted; and the camphire of the Canticle with the Henna, whence pink dye is obtained for personal adornment (Conder). Other trees, as the sycamore, the ash, the plane, the elder, the hawthorn, the arbutus, the tamarisk, may be mentioned. But now-a-days these trees are not found in their pristine abundance. They are only seen singly here and there, or in scattered and scanty groups. Though the people are sparing of wood in building their houses, they have used it for fuel without stint during thousands of years. There never has been, and is not yet, any attempt at forest conservancy; consequently, the consumption has long out-stripped the supply. Thus the mountains, valleys and plains have in time become denuded of the sylvan vegetation with which Nature had originally clothed them. Adverting to the woods, Conder (*Handbook to the Bible*) truly says:—"The annual destruction of trees for fire-wood threatens in time to reduce these to the same condition with the ancient forests near Jaffa, which now consists only of low bushes springing from the roots of former timber-trees."

Even this is within the truth, for I heard that even the roots of trees are being often dug out for fuel, so that in many places the last remnants will be extirpated. Forest

conservancy, however late, might still effect much ; but the Turkish authorities are not likely to undertake it. In the continued absence of precaution, the condition of the country and of the climate must deteriorate.

Originally the climate of the Central Ridge must have been delightful and salubrious. It is not so esteemed by travellers in these times. But that is owing to decay, neglect, and partial desolation. It is, in part, also attributable to the injury caused by the improvident use of forest and undergrowth without any arrangement for preservation or reproduction.

The wild flowers of Palestine are mentioned with admiration by travellers in the spring season. The "lily of the valleys" is thought to be the blue iris. I am not, however, so fortunate as to see much of this natural beauty, like which "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed." The season was too early for the flowers, with one exception, namely, the red anemone, which was beginning to bloom amidst the herbage, and was an ornament in every foreground.

Of the animals mentioned in the Bible, the wild bull, the unicorn, identified with a species of wild ox, the lion and the bear, are extinct. The ibex, or wild goat, the hart, the roebuck, the wild boar, the leopard (cheetah),

the hyæna, the wolf, the jackal (called the fox), are all existing.

The nightingale is heard in the Jordan thickets, otherwise song-birds are rare; but the birds of prey — eagles, vultures, hawks — are numerous. Several species of doves are now existing. The note of the owl is heard in the olive-groves. Many game-birds — the partridge, quail, woodcock, plover, and others — are found in abundance.

The grasshoppers are so abundant as to be roasted for food. The locusts sometimes appear in devastating swarms. The wild honey is hardly to be identified; but the honey-bee is reared in mud hives.

Though the scriptural phrase, “the cattle upon a thousand hills,” is scarcely applicable to the Central Ridge of to-day, yet flocks and herds are in sufficient abundance. The pasturage and herbage, however, which greeted the eyes of Joshua and his host, has been grievously affected by the loss of the forests.

Respecting pictorial effect, the scenery is suggestive and characteristic, rather than beautiful. That loveliness of Nature, which in other climes has excited terrestrial worship, and inspired the human mind with fanciful and fabulous notions, is hardly to be seen here. Some travellers, keeping, perhaps,

a special standard of comparison in their thoughts, have been much disappointed. Allowance must be made for the monotony shed over even the boldest scenery by the glare of a midday sun in the East. The quality of this scenery can be estimated only in the mornings and evenings, when the shadows are long and the lights are effective from being limited. Some artistic authorities, too, have deemed the scenery to be lovely in itself irrespective of its associations. Certainly, in or about this Central Ridge, our journey introduced us to at least six views which, besides all other considerations, are very fine pictorially. Of these views, three—namely, that from the summit of Olivet, that of the Dead Sea from the wilderness of Judaea, and that from the height over Jericho—have been already described. The remaining three will be described in the succeeding chapters.

The Land itself holds a place so peculiar, that we may be apt to overlook the people who now dwell there. By observing them, however, the student is better able to understand the expressions, metaphors and allusions in the Bible. They have, indeed, few national traits, and little of political life or tribal organization. But they have something like self-government in their villages under the local patriarch or Shekh. They cling to customs and manners

existing immutably from Biblical times. They are the veritable descendants of the Canaanites described in the Bible, of the Jebusites and of the Amorites. Originally they must have had a decided character of their own and a settled form of society. Their system may have been broken up by the Jewish conquest; but, as the students of Bible history will well remember, they never yielded to Jewish influence. On the contrary, they often made their influence disastrously felt by the Jewish nationality. Though much vexed by the Greek conqueror, perhaps by the Roman also, they held their own at least. They were probably not converted in any large numbers during the early days of Christianity. In short they preserved their ancient idolatry up to the days of Mahomet. Then they were converted by the Arab soldiery to the faith of Islam, about twelve hundred years ago. In that faith they have remained to this day. Perhaps when the Crusading host swept over the Land, they may have partially accepted Christianity. If they did, however, they went back to Islam when the Crusaders' rule was finally broken by the Saracens in the thirteenth century. They perhaps join some of their ancient rites and observances to their practice of the Muhammadan faith. But ordinarily they appear to be Muhammadans, simply following

the religious rules and regulations of their masters the Turks. They look to the Sultan at Constantinople as the head of their religion and of their political constitution. They have a Muhammadan priesthood indeed, and a wandering ascetic class. They venerate many of the places most sacred to Christians. They cherish the memory of Biblical Prophets, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. They display fanaticism occasionally, but as a rule they are quiet and forbearing.

Their deportment is sedate, reserved, stubborn; such as is natural with a hardy race that has suffered, endured, resisted, for many ages. They told the Exploration Surveyors that there is no room in their hearts for mirth. Their complexion is dark as that of Asiatics dwelling in tropical heat, but not so dusky as that of the Arabians, or of the Bedouins beyond the Jordan. Their cloaks, mantles and blankets, their head-dress, waist-bands and sandals, are the same as those which have been worn in the East from the remotest times. But within this generic description, several variations of physique and costume will be found.

They cultivate the soil, chiefly as peasant proprietors, directly under the Turkish official who collects the land-tax. They have extensive rights of grazing and pasturage, on all

which they pay their dues to the Turk. They are called *Fellâhîn* (the plural of *Fellâh*), and thus they bear the same name as their fellow-subjects in Egypt. They till their fields and pay taxes to the Turk patiently, just as they did to the Saracen, to the Arab, to the Roman, to the Greek, to the Persian, to the Assyrian—probably also as they did to the Jew. After the Jewish conquest they must often have become tenants of their lands under the Jew as landlord. They probably performed the labour in the fields, even if the Jew worked in the vineyard and the orchard.

Modern research is much indebted to the retentive memories and unfailling traditions of the shepherds and herdsmen, who have kept alive from mouth to mouth for thousands of years the names of Scriptural Sites, thus affording the means of identification. Where native Christians dwell, as in Bethlehem and Nazareth, progress and vivacity are perceptible. Otherwise the state of the country is such as must be expected under a Rule which, though much improved of late, has been very depressing and restrictive. But this is not the place for discussing the character of the Turkish administration.

CHAPTER IX.

BETHEL.

Territory of Benjamin. — The Rock Rimmon. — Michmash. — Ai of Joshua. — First sight of Bethel. — Patriarchal encampment. — Present village on Bethel site. — My camp there and arrangements for march. — Views near Bethel. — Ophrah. — Last glimpse of Jerusalem.—Gibeon.—Joshua's victory over the Allied Tribes.—Mount Mizpah.—The Prophet Samuel.—Gibeah and Geba. —Isaiah's description.—Valley of Bethoron.—Victories of Judas Maccabæus.—His death.—The Kingdom under Saul.

As already explained, we enter the hills of Judæa after passing round the shoulder of Mount Quarantania. The path runs through the heritage of Benjamin. The territory is small and poor compared with the territories allotted to the other tribes of Israel. But it is wild and rocky, abounding in strategic positions and forming what soldiers call a strong country. It doubtless tended to confirm those heroic and enterprising qualities for which the tribe is noted, and which were indicated by the Patriarch's prophecy that

Benjamin should "ravin like a wolf." Occasionally caverns are seen, where armed men used to lie in wait, or where fugitives would take refuge during the political storms that swept over the Jewish nation. Our course is to the west, towards the Central Ridge or backbone of Palestine described in the last chapter. The scenery then becomes bolder and bolder every mile, until the eye finds little to rest upon save the light grey rocks. On the right is seen an abrupt hill-top known as "the rock Rimmon" where the men of Benjamin, flying from the wrath of Israel at large, held their own with much hardihood. Then, near the present village of Makhmas, are seen some massive remains of the Scriptural Michmash, the scene of the romantic and successful enterprise of Jonathan and his armour-bearer against the Philistines. Michmash was one of the military positions commanding the principal pass eastwards from the central ridge of Palestine to the Jordan valley. The defeat of the Philistines there, through the prowess of Jonathan, led to the consolidation of Saul's Kingdom.

Then a still more interesting position comes in sight, namely, the Ai of Joshua (also written Aiath). Dismounting, we leave our horses with the peasants in a hamlet, and climb a steep conical hill, the sides of which are strewn with cut stones,

while the top is covered with the remains of an ancient citadel. The hand of the destroyer and the storms of ages have effaced all traces of the walls and towers. Evidently there must have been a fortress, small in extent, but strongly built with stone masonry. Standing on the highest stone in the shapeless mass, the spectator sees that the position was protected on several sides by deep ravines, especially on the north and the west. Joshua, with his little army, must have ascended from the Jordan valley by the same route as that which we have been following. On his first attempt, by a direct attack against a position so well defended as this, he was beaten back with heavy loss. On the second attempt, which was made with some stratagem, he succeeded. His movements, as set forth in Scripture, can be understood exactly by a student on the spot. In front is the northern height across the deep ravine from which he made his feigned attack. On the west is the ravine where he planted the ambush by which the place was taken. Though he reduced the fortifications to a mere heap—long known as Et-Tel, or The Heap—the town and citadel were rebuilt, and are mentioned more than once in the later history of the Jews.

From this height the northern hills of Benjamin come

into view, consisting mainly of grey limestone, and forming the most defensible part of Palestine. This, the natural home of the brave, was fitted to brace the energies of its inhabitants and sure to become the scene of valorous enterprise. The rocky crests, uplifted against the sky, have an abruptness hardly equalled in any of the districts to which our journey extends. Here the Jews often took refuge in times of trouble.

Descending from Ai, we rejoin the path to Bethel. In a short time the head of the pass is reached. The sloping sides are strewn profusely with heavy boulders of a rounded shape and of a whitish colour. Among these are scattered great slabs of similar hue. As the evening draws near, these pale rocks are in a very sombre shade; for, in our front, as we look westwards, the Central Ridge stretches across the view, and flings its long shadows in our direction and over all objects between itself and us. Behind it is the evening sky, bright as usual, while dark clouds are gathering overhead. The long line of the ridge, standing out dark against the sky, is broken in the middle by an old tower. This is the remnant of a chapel built by the Crusaders over the probable site of Abraham's encampment and Jacob's dream. Such is our first sight of Bethel. Besides its intrinsic importance, the view is strikingly picturesque, and

the wayfarer may well pause while the recollections, which the name of Bethel summons up, are crowding on his mind.

This, then, is the subject of the accompanying illustration (XVII.) which shows the ridge of Bethel running across the picture from right to left. The dark line is strongly traced against the golden sky. The little tower in the middle marks the Patriarch's encampment. The foreground of cold grey rocks is in shadow.

It is on the eastern side that the stony character of Bethel is best understood. On the other sides cultivation and habitation are mixed up with the rock. But here is nothing save the countless boulders of huge size, flung over the hill-slopes in magnificent confusion. Here, then, is felt the force of the beautiful lines—

“ Out of my stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise.”

Threading our way through the boulders, we reach the ridge—the true backbone of Palestine—at a point where the geographical formation is well comprehended and the water-parting is fully perceived. As the rain descends near the



BETHHEL.

base of the tower on the site of the Patriarch's encampment, those drops which fall on the east side of the line flow towards the Jordan, and those on the west side towards the Mediterranean.

Along the Central Ridge, too, there is no point to equal this in respect of historical memories drawn from the Old Testament.

From the tower on the ridge the distance to the village is short. The name of this village—Beitin—is in some way a corruption of the sacred name Bethel. A collection of houses and cottages stands on the site of Luz, which was the name of the city, while Bethel was the name of the sanctuary close by. The village is on the west of the Central Ridge. The aspect of its streets and alleys is not attractive, and the bearing of its inhabitants is not quite so respectful as usual in Palestine. Adjacent to it is the water-spring close to the area of an ancient cistern of stone masonry. Like other historic springs in the Holy Land, it changes not, and survives to mark the place where monarchies rose or sank, and where nations were made or un-made.

Wilson (*Lands of the Bible*, 1847) writes :—"The ruins of Bethel . . . consist of numerous foundations and broken

walls of no great height. . . . Among the enclosures may be the remains of churches or public buildings."

The town was a frontier fortress after the separation of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. It was taken and re-taken by the rival kings. It was visited by Elijah and Elisha. In it some true believers remained even under the Assyrian rule. Subsequently Josephus (*Antiq.*, book xiii. chapter 1) writes of Bethel that Bacchides "built towers in it and encompassed it with strong walls" to subdue the Maccabees.

The camping-ground here is on a damp, sometimes even wet, plot of green ground, close to the ancient water-springs. The guides regard it as one of the worst halting-places in Palestine. However, after the long and rough ascent from Jericho, I was glad to see my little camp of two small tents pitched here, and to find that my servants and baggage, together with fresh horses, had arrived by the direct route from Jerusalem. I here parted regretfully with my little grey horse of Moabite breed, that had carried me charmingly round the wilderness of Judæa and the Dead Sea. For him was substituted a little bay of Damascus breed. When first mounting the latter, I little recked of the stiff marching in store for us both. Looking back on the good service

rendered by these two animals, I think that the Moabite grey was the fleeter and the lighter in action, but that the Damascus bay was the sturdier and the better suited for dangerously heavy ground. As already mentioned in Chapter V., the dragoman, a Roman Catholic of the Lebanon, was an experienced and competent man. But for rapid marching in bad weather, a young and cheerful guide would have been preferable; perhaps, also, one more acquainted with the recent results of discovery and research. Still, on the whole, he did his work very well, and took every care of me when I was laid up for three days later on. We arranged to have the travelling cook well mounted; for his presence at the end of a weary march was indispensable. He was a Syrian of the Greek Church, and his conduct was always excellent. His zealous activity was equalled by his professional skill. While we made détours on the line of march, he used to push straight on to the next halting-place, and had everything ready in time. I used to wonder how, under circumstances often hard and trying, he managed to provide for me as well as he did. The head muleteer was also a Syrian of the Greek Church. He would murmur in a troublesome way when I was obliged to insist on our starting on a wet or a stormy morning; but, when once started, he would bring

up his little convoy in a most praiseworthy manner. Sometimes, when I had despaired of his coming, by reason of the distressful weather, he would agreeably astonish us by arriving quite well. I have seen him pick his way through field, flood, and torrent, with remarkable cleverness. His mules, too, would follow bravely where led, as if they had confidence in him. Such, in brief, was my equipment at Bethel.

In the village there are several houses to the roofs of which the traveller may mount in order to survey the prospect. From most of these house-tops, or from the tower on the ridge, he commands one of the most important views in Palestine. Of this historic view, the particulars are now to be presented in outline at least.

First of all, the situation commands a double view. Looking southwards, on our left we have a good sight of the Jordan valley, and on our right a glimpse of the Mediterranean — only a glimpse, indeed, but still enough to perceive the sea. It must have been hereabouts that Abraham offered his nephew Lot the choice of turning either to the left or to the right, and so determining their respective rights of pasturage and settlement. Lot naturally chose the left side which, from this point of view, appeared to be the

most promising. The narrative of Genesis read here, on the very spot, after the lapse of four thousand years, is marvellously impressive. Here, on the very ground before our eyes, was the patriarch's camp, consisting, doubtless, of small black tents like those of the Bedouin in the wilderness of Judæa, as described in our Chapter V. Here Jacob dreamt his dream of the ladder ascending to heaven, and in his vision heard the divine promise of a great future for his descendants. Here the Judges of Israel were assembled in council. Here was established the altar of Beth-El — that is, the place dedicated to God. Here Jeroboam's idolatry caused the name to be changed to Beth-Haven, or place of idols. Here was displayed the iconoclastic zeal of Josiah.

These are the important points close at hand; but the distant points are of equal importance. Some of these are on the northern side, but most of them are on the southern and south-western sides.

The northern points may be mentioned first. They are the stony and rocky heights which bound the heritage of Benjamin on the north, separating it from that of Ephraim. Of these, Rimmon and Ai have been already mentioned. But Ophrah remains to be mentioned, rising up as monarch of the region, its head being covered with ruins grey. The

name Ophrah is believed to be identical with Ephraim, and the place is identified with the Scriptural city of Ephraim, whither our Lord retired after the raising of Lazarus. Still this city appears to have been within the territory of Benjamin, and not within that of the tribe Ephraim.

In the extreme south a well-directed gaze enables us to perceive the heights of Jerusalem, just the summit of Olivet, the tower of the Russian church, perhaps also the tops of the domes of Moriah and Zion. This is our last glimpse of the Holy City.

Then immediately to the south and south-west three points are seen, Gibeon, Gibeah, and Geba. They are, as their names imply, situate on hillocks. The three must be recollected in clear distinction one from another, and each of them will be separately mentioned.

Gibeon, now written and pronounced El Jib, is on a hillock rising up from one of the few plains that exist on this mountainous ridge. The remains on the hillock and the richness of the plain agree with the Scriptural account of the place, as the most important position on this part of the ridge before the Jewish conquest. Behind it, that is, on the south, is the mountain of Mizpeh, to which I shall refer presently. On its right, that is, towards

the west, is Bethoron, now written and pronounced Beth-Ur. It will be remembered that the Gibeonites, having made an agreement with Joshua, became hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation of Israel. Very soon afterwards, when sore beset by the allied forces under the Amorites, they urged Joshua to come to their aid from the Jordan valley. His way was by the ravines leading up to Ai, with all which he and his soldiers were by this time well acquainted. So he made a night march (by that very route which we have just traversed in imagination), and in the morning appeared with his forces in the plain round Gibeon. The allied host was driven westwards to the rocky heights of Bethoron, and thence to the village and into the valley that stretches westwards towards the plain of Sharon and the sea coast. On one of these rocks it was that Joshua stood and looked down the defile of Bethoron, and right on to the vale of Ajalon already mentioned in our Chapter II. Thence he beheld his foes flying down the steep descent and smitten by a terrific hailstorm. Then he made his memorable appeal to the power of Heaven to help him in his pursuit of the enemy.

The league of native and local chiefs thus overthrown by Joshua consisted of various and distant members. The

Hivites occupied the country round the battle-field, and the Jebusites the country just south of it. The Hittites came from the country farther south, round Hebron; they were a branch of the Hittite nationality that had spread in distant regions. The Amorites were scattered over the central ridge of Palestine. The Perrizites were from the region round Samaria. The Canaanites must have advanced all the way from their territories near Acre and in Galilee. The lesser tribes on the spot, as the Hivites and Jebusites, doubtless placed their whole fighting strength in the field. The more distant tribes probably sent contingents. The combined force was doubtless lax in its organization, and without a supreme commander. It must have numbered, at the least, many thousand men. But it was routed by Joshua's force, which, at the most, could not have exceeded a few thousand men, thoroughly disciplined, intensely zealous, and well commanded.

It was at Gibeon that Solomon in a vision received the divine promise of wisdom and understanding.

From the plain of Gibeon the Mount Mizpeh rises to a height of 600 feet. It is now named, after the prophet Samuel, *Nabi Samvil*. The Mount Scopus (lying to the south) to which we ascended in our Chapter IV., was formerly

supposed to be the Mizpeh of the Old Testament, and both names signify the same thing, namely, a watch-tower. But modern inquiry has shown that the true Mizpeh is the prominent hill beyond Gibeon. The prospect from its summit, 2,800 feet above the sea, is the most comprehensive in southern Palestine. It commands an excellent view of Jerusalem.

The Mount was a place of assemblage for Israel on many memorable occasions. In the Book of Judges, when a grave outrage had been committed, the offending tribe of Benjamin was cited to appear here before all Israel, represented by four hundred thousand men. From the First Book of Samuel it appears that here the prophet assembled the representatives of the people to abjure idolatry. Thence he despatched them to win by victory a lasting peace from the Philistines. Near there he set up the memorial stone of Ebenezer. Hither he came annually on circuit to judge Israel. Here he assembled the people once more for the choosing of Saul as their king.

Afterwards it became a frontier fortress between the separate kingdoms of Israel and Judah. When Judah had been carried away to the Captivity, the Chaldæan Governor resided here. Hither the prophet Jeremiah repaired after

being released from his chains. Here was the scattered remnant of Judah collected; and here was the Governor killed by the insurgent Jews. To the men of Mizpeh was assigned a share in the re-building of the Temple under Nehemiah. The importance of the place is attested by the prophet Hosea, when he says to the priests, princes, and people of Israel, "Judgment is toward you because ye have been a snare on Mizpeh and a net spread upon Tabor."

Gibeah, now Talicl-el-Fûl, the hill of Benjamin, was the birthplace of Saul, and the seat of his kingly government. On this hill David permitted seven of Saul's descendants to be sacrificed by the Amorites, in order to terminate a long-protracted famine. On one of the many rocks about here, Rizpah, the bereaved mother of some among those thus sacrificed, spread sackcloth, and watched over the wasting corpses through the summer heat.

Geba, now written and pronounced Jeba, is a conical hillock. It is the Geba of Benjamin where Saul first smote the Philistines, and whence Jonathan started for his gallant adventure at Michmash, already mentioned. Isaiah alludes to it in his stirring narrative of Sennacherib's advance towards Jerusalem, on the expedition which ended in the sudden destruction of the Assyrian host.

As the sun's rays light up point after point in the landscape—Rimmon, Ai, Geba, Gibeon, Mizpeh, Bethoron—the spectator almost fancies himself living in a remote age among chieftains, prophets, warriors. He reflects on the incidents of heroism, devotion, superstition, pathos, which the scene recalls. He reads again the 12th, 13th, and 28th chapters of Genesis regarding Bethel; the 10th chapter of Joshua and the 3rd chapter of 1 Kings regarding Gibeon; the 11th and 13th chapters of 1 Samuel regarding Gibeah; the 10th chapter of 1 Samuel regarding Mizpeh; the 13th and 14th chapters of 1 Samuel regarding Geba. The ground, the knolls, the hills, seem to be instinct with Jewish life, and to resound with the shouts and cries of the people around Joshua, Saul, Jonathan, Samuel.

The central and dominant object in the landscape is the Mizpeh peak. Around it are the lesser hills around Gibeon. The shoulder of the mountain sloping to the right, that is westwards, indicates the valley of Bethoron.

This valley, the most historic of all the valleys in Palestine, has been already mentioned. Its name has been preserved for 3,500 years; at the head and foot of the pass there are still the villages of upper and lower Beth-Ur. It was remembered with pride by the Jews for many centuries as the pass down

which Joshua chased the beaten enemy. Though it saw the defeat and death of Eli's sons, yet, twenty years later, that disaster was retrieved by the victory under Samuel. Later on, it was regarded with affection as the scene of the first and last among the many victories won by the national hero, Judas Maccabæus, the "Hammer of the heathen."

If a picture were made embracing all these historic objects, it would be topographical rather than artistic. But wandering amidst the broken ground near Bethel, I found one of the few tarns to be seen on the Central Ridge. This tarn was full of water after the winter rain, and formed a fitting foreground to the view of Mount Mizpeh, standing up in gloomy grandeur against a sunset sky, where a field of gold was traversed by lines of dark clouds. Such, then, is the subject of the illustration (XVIII.). Bethoron lies to the right of the picture.

Judas' first battle at Bethoron is set forth in the First Book of Maccabees. He was declared by his dying father to have been "mighty and strong even from his youth up." He "put on a breastplate as a giant, and girt his warlike harness about him." In his first fight with the Greeks for Jewish independence, he "took their spoils, and Apollonius' sword also, and therewith he fought all his life long." Then another leader, Geron, advances "to be avenged of the children

MIZPEH.



of Israel. And when he came near to the going up of Bethoron, Judas went forth to meet him with a small company; who, when they saw the host coming to meet them, said unto Judas, ‘How shall we be able, being so few, to fight against so great a multitude and so strong, seeing we are ready to faint with fasting all this day?’” Judas, however, after a spirited exhortation to his men, “leapt suddenly” upon the enemy, “and pursued them from the going down of Bethoron unto the plain.” A similar narrative is given by Josephus, who clearly mentions Bethoron as the scene of action.

During his wondrous career, which placed him among the heroes of mankind, Judas was attacked by Nicanor, who “pitched his tents in Bethoron, where an host out of Syria met him.” But “Nicanor’s host was discomfited, and he himself was first slain in the battle.” This we learn from the First Book of Maccabees. Josephus also states Bethoron to have been the place.

On that day, the Bethoron pass resounded for the last time with the notes of those Maccabee trumpets which had often struck terror into the enemies of Judah. Another general, Bacchides, is sent against the Maccabees. Judas is overpowered by superior numbers, and slain at Beth-Zetho. The place is now identified with Bir-ez-Zeit, near the pass

north of Bethel. The body of the hero is (according to Josephus) received by a treaty from the enemy, "and carried by his brethren to the village of Modin, where their father had been buried." In the First Book of Maccabees it is written, "All Israel made great lamentation for him, and mourned many days, saying, 'How is the valiant man fallen that delivered Israel!'" Modin, as shown in our preceding Chapter II., is near the foot of Bethoron Pass.

Before leaving Bethel, we may by studying its geography observe the precarious tenure which the Jews held in Palestine at the outset of Saul's reign. They were the people of the hills in the Central Ridge. Their foes were the Philistines, the people of the plain adjoining the Mediterranean. But the Philistines never left the new-comers at peace in the mountains. They feared lest the Jewish conquest should extend from the mountains to the plain, and preferred to take the initiative by assailing the Jewish strongholds on the Central Ridge and so driving the new settlers down upon the Jordan valley. Up to the third year of Saul's reign the Philistines had a garrison at Geba. This fact is significant as showing that they were established in force on the ridge. Thus a hostile wedge must have been driven into the Jewish kingdom, rending it in twain and cutting off southern from

northern Palestine. Saul indeed drove the Philistine garrison out of Geba, but the Philistines occupied Michmash in great force. Then Saul was obliged to retire to the Jordan valley, while his people were hiding in caverns, and the mountains of Palestine were in the hands of the Philistines. But he and Jonathan rallied with a small force of their best men, for an effort to recover the ridge at Geba and Michmash. This effort succeeded through the personal prowess of Jonathan. The first success was followed by the rout of the whole Philistine army. The Scriptural narrative does not exactly inform us how the rout was effected. At all events the beaten Philistines were pursued, flying down the pass of Bethoron (the very way by which they had ascended) right on to Ajalon. They retained their own country on the Mediterranean coast. But Saul at once consolidated his kingdom from the valley of Ajalon to the western bank of the Jordan. He was then able to carry his victorious arms beyond the Jordan valley. His kingly capital remained however at Gibeah of Benjamin. We must now quit the romantic territory of Benjamin, and part for awhile from the history of Saul, until in the course of our journey we approach the place where his career ended.

CHAPTER X.

SHILOH.

Heritage of Ephraim.—Its richness.—Road to Shiloh.—Set forth in Scripture.—Plateau of Shiloh.—Its desolation.—Site of the Tabernacle.—Samuel.—Loss of the Ark in battle.—Death of Eli.—Subsequent history of the place.—The village of Labouah.—March towards Samaria.

FROM Bethel our line of march is right northwards, passing the limit of Benjamin. We enter the territory of Ephraim, which in fertility and pasturage was the richest of all the heritages allotted to the tribes of Israel, after the conquest under Joshua. Up to the time of David it was the dominant portion of the country. Under Solomon it gave place to Judah, but rose to the first rank when the kingdom of Israel was separately constituted.

Our road runs through a pleasant glen, the sides of which are terraced with cultivation. Fruit-trees are growing

amidst stones and rocks. At this season the fig-trees are leafless. Soon we see, for the first time, an olive grove of sylvan dimensions. The trees are old enough to be stately, yet not so old as to lose their richness. The trunks are massive, the boughs out-stretching, the foliage dark. Then some villages of prosperous appearance show themselves and many fig orchards. For about eight miles we pursue the road for Nabalûs, the ancient Neapolis at the foot of Mount Gerizim, till a road is seen branching off to the right eastwards. The servants with their camp proceed by the straight route to Nabalûs. But we take the road which branches off, as it is the way to Shiloh.

For many centuries the site of Shiloh was obscure, and erroneous conjectures were made regarding it. Indeed the place might have remained undiscovered, had not Scripture, in the 21st chapter of Judges, given precise directions for finding it.

“On the north side of Bethel, on the east of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah.”

When enquirers studied these words on the spot, the position of Shiloh was soon found.

After riding a few miles we ascend a slight ridge

and behold an irregular plain surrounded by low hills. This is the Shiloh of Scripture, now called Seilûn.

Most travellers will probably be disappointed at their first sight of a place, the name of which has been familiar to them from their earliest childhood. The surrounding hills are featureless, and monotony pervades the scene. Some of the hill-sides must once have been dotted with well-built houses, perhaps the dwellings of the priests and their office-bearers. The peasants have now made use of the ruins in constructing the terraces for their cultivation ; otherwise, the long-stretching slopes are bare of trees, shrubs, or herbage. The plain has some patches of cultivation, where the young wheat is just beginning to spring up.

Riding over this little plain from its southern end, we reach at the north end a rocky platform slightly elevated. On this plateau are seen some ruins of Christian times. Thence a full view of Shiloh is to be had. Here on the plateau stood the Tabernacle containing the Ark of the Covenant. There, on the plain below, were assembled the twelve tribes under Joshua while the land was being apportioned among them. There also, in succeeding years, the annual festival was held around the Ark.

In the days of the Judges of Israel the religious and

political centre of the Jewish tribes was at Shiloh. It was the most venerated place in all Palestine during the triumphant youth of the nation. To it were turned the eyes of the whole people after they had entered upon their inheritance. Its situation, in the bosom of the mountains, protected it from the hostile races on the east and on the west.

Hither was brought the infant Samuel from Rama, and here "the Lord revealed Himself" to him in the Tabernacle. Hence was sent the Ark to the Israelite camp in order to retrieve the fortunes of the battle with the Philistines near Bethoron. Here Eli received the fatal tidings that the Israelites had been finally defeated, and that the Ark itself had fallen into the hands of the enemy. Here, too, was pronounced the name of Ichabod, which has always borne the saddest significance in all succeeding ages. The Lord "forsook the Tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men" (Psalm lxxviii.). The Ark, when afterwards recovered from the Philistines, was placed elsewhere. It would appear from the Psalmist that the place was given over to fire and sword, though the circumstances are not narrated. It was still, however, occupied in the reign of Jeroboam by the prophet Ahijah. He dwelt there probably for the sake of the solitude. Hither the king's wife came

to consult the prophet, and was warned of the retribution impending over the kingly house for the many evils that had been wrought. In the time of Jeremiah the desolation was so complete as to be indicated by the prophet for a sign of what would be the punishment of disobedience.

The site is held to be among the Scriptural sites which are the most certainly identified. When the mists of uninformed tradition passed away, and the words of Scripture were examined *in situ*, the exactness of the language showed the students where to search. When attention had been directed to this neighbourhood the true position could hardly be mistaken. The plateau and the plain agree with the requirements of the sacred narrative. Hereabouts, too, no other area could be found that would have suited the erection of a large tabernacle and the assembling of the whole people in their tribes. The necessity of space was perhaps the reason why the place was chosen somewhat off the main line of communication.

The place, despite its solitude and dreariness, is yet fraught with high interest to those who read on the spot the 18th chapter of the Book of Joshua, the 1st and 4th chapters of the First Book of Samuel, and the 14th chapter of the First Book of Kings.

The ancient ruins on the plateau of the Tabernacle are shapeless and scattered about in utter confusion. But a carefully levelled area is still to be seen, and is evidently of great antiquity. This is probably the space on which the Tabernacle was pitched. The ruins of later times, some of the Roman age, others subsequent to the Christian era, are curious and will repay examination. The foundations of a citadel are to be observed, as also some parts of a church. In later centuries a small mosque had been added by the Moslem.

Some Moslems, well armed and very picturesque in their garb, were lingering about the place without any business or occupation. We regarded them at first with some suspicion, but they proved to be harmless.

A large terebinth tree, aged and leafless, was standing close to the ruins when I was there. Its bare branches were stretched over the sacred site, and seemed to hang despondingly over the scene of desolation :

“Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves.”

This, then, is the subject of the illustration overleaf (XIX.). In the centre of the picture are the ruined structures, partly Christian, partly Moslem, with the figures

standing near them. Beneath the eye on the right is the plain where, as we believe, the Twelve Tribes of Israel used to assemble. In the background are the barren hills of a reddish colour, on the eastern horizon. On the left is the old terebinth tree that stands like "a sentinel setting his watch" over the remnant of Shiloh. The sunlight from a cloudless sky diffuses a glare over the landscape. Though the ground is bare and sterile for the most part, still it is lighted up by the sunshine, and its warm colouring contrasts well with the serene azure.

Leaving Shiloh, we pass through a narrow valley, and then enter upon a small but fertile plain surrounded by lowering hills. A village and an old caravanserai come into view, and in the hill-side at the rear are the entrances to caves. This is the Lebonah of Scripture, now called Lubbân. The situation is a hollow, and lies embosomed in the midst of the heights on the central ridge of Palestine. Just here we rejoin the trunk line of communication from Bethel to Shechem, from which we diverged in order to visit Shiloh. Once more our line of march runs due north, and our faces are set towards Samaria.

SHILOH.



CHAPTER XI.

SHECHEM.

Distant prospect of Shechem, Gerizim, and Ebal.—First sight of snow-clad Hermon.—Antique history of Shechem.—The Patriarch Jacob.—Joshua's assembly.—Jotham's parable.—Meeting of Rehoboam and the Israelites.—Subsequent events.—Tirzah and Shalem.—Descent to the valley.—Ænon and John's baptism.—Narrow valley between Ebal and Gerizim.—Joshua's last exhortation.—Jacob's Well.—Revelation of the Messiah to the woman of Samaria.—Evidence for identifying the spot.—Sychar village and Joseph's tomb.—The men of Ephraim.—Town of Neapolis, now Nablûs.—Its cascades.—Summit of Gerizim.

LEAVING Lebonah, and taking the road to Samaria, we mount up the hill-side by a stony ascent. Nothing remarkable is seen till the top of the ascent is reached. Then suddenly a prospect bursts upon us which may be reckoned as the third among the six great views to be met with during our journey. This is the road by which Our Lord and his disciples must have walked between Jerusalem and Nazareth.

The particulars of this view, which embraces Mount Gerizim and the Shechem valley, may be presented thus.

Deep beneath the eye is a plain, green with the rising crops, and surrounded by hills. It looks like a lake in the bosom of the mountains. In these latitudes the crops are early, and at a distance seem to cover the ground with a carpet of tender verdure, although the winter season is not yet ended. This is the vale of Shechem, now called El Makhma. Conspicuous among the hills on the left, or western side, is Gerizim, a majestic mass of limestone, with stately head and precipitous sides. Ebal is the sister mount of Gerizim, but can hardly be seen at all from this point. Its top, however, can, by careful observation, be descried over the ridge of Gerizim. In our front, and a little beyond Gerizim, is the hill of Tirzah, and at its foot Shalem, both of which places will be mentioned presently. Beyond that again, rises up a pyramid of snow, in the distance bounding the northern horizon. This is Hermon, which to the Jews of all generations has been the most conspicuous object in their national landscape. The traveller, surmounting the ridge, and hearing the name of Hermon as it bursts from the lips of his guides, pauses to gaze on the noblest of mountains mentioned in Scripture. Towards the end of winter the mountain is seen at its best. For then the snow (which melts as the summer advances) clothes the gable-shaped summit and the swelling

sides with a white sheet that glitters in the sunlight. Over the whole scene is shed the glow of a bright afternoon. The clouds are arrayed in gorgeous hues; a purple light streams over the distant mountains. The nearer hill-sides are lit up, and the long shadows are flung across the plain.

Shechem is ever mentioned with honour in the Old Testament. It is among the historically antique sites in the world, and its record can be traced back for four thousand years. It was the choicest part in that heritage of Ephraim, which was the most richly blessed among all the portions of Jacob's sons. The name Shechem originally belonged to a pastoral Chief, but was afterwards applied to the lands which he owned. Here Abraham had his first resting-place in the land, and received in a vision the divine promise. Within this area was Shalem, where Jacob pitched his tent on his first march through Palestine, from Haran in the land of Laban the Syrian. Near this, and close to the foot of Gerizim, was the plot of land which he bought of Hamor; and here he caused his well to be excavated. Hither were the bones of Joseph reverently brought by his descendants from Egypt, through all the desert marches, and entombed under the directions of Joshua, after his conquest of the Land. Here, in the hollow between the bases of the sister mountains,

Ebal and Gerizim, was the spot prophetically fore-shadowed by Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy. On that spot the two divine alternatives were to be presented to the Israelites: the blessing for obedience, the curse for disobedience. Hither, accordingly, did Joshua come during the interval between his capture of Ai and his victory over the allied tribes at Gibeon. Here, in conformity with the Mosaic instructions, he marshalled, for the first time, the Israelites, half on one side the defile and half on the other, and with his own mouth read out to them the commandments of the Lord. Here, when in after years he felt the approach of death, he summoned the Israelites for the second time. Then he delivered the message from the Lord.

In the days of the Judges, Shechem retained its importance. The people here proved themselves disloyal to the memory of Gideon, their deliverer, and accepted the usurper Abimelech. The family of Gideon were slain by Abimelech, all but Jotham. Then, standing on an eminence on the side of Gerizim, Jotham delivers the earliest parable recorded in Scripture. The trees are represented as choosing their king, and as offering the kingship first to the olive, then to the fig, then to the vine, and lastly to the bramble. This passage of Scripture is very important, as showing the

state of agriculture in this valley just 3,000 years ago, and as illustrating the poetic imagery of that remote time.

On the establishment of the Kingdom, Shechem was the place of coronation. After Solomon's death, Rehoboam went to Shechem, "for all Israel were come to make him king." There he heard the people tell him that his father had made their yoke grievous, and that if he would make that yoke lighter they would serve him. There he gave the fatal answer that as his father had made their yoke heavy he would add to their yoke, and that as his father had chastised them with whips he would chastise them with scorpions. Then the people uttered the memorable cry: "To your tents, O Israel!"—rebelled against the house of David, and made Jeroboam king over Israel.

Thus the kingdom of Israel was established with Shechem as its capital. A second residence for the kings was set up at Tirzah inside the hills to the north of the Shechem valley. Half a century later the capital was removed by Omri to Samaria.

Twice is Shechem signally mentioned in the Psalms, once in a moment of depression, when the aid of God is invoked against the enemies of His people; once in a moment of triumph, when the lute and harp are awaked to praise the

Lord. On both occasions the words are the same, "God hath spoken in His holiness, I will rejoice and divide Sichem."

From the earliest establishment of the Jewish system, Shechem, that is the chief town in the valley, had been a city of refuge.

Once in the New Testament it is the scene of an event that is reverently cherished in the memory of all Christians, namely, the conversation which Our Lord held with the woman of Samaria.

Such in brief is the Scriptural history which at once recurs to the mind of the traveller, as he stands on the brow of the ascent and surveys the valley that is spread far down beneath his feet. Though the names of plain, of mountains, of ruined cities, of deserted sites, have been familiar from childhood, are associated with the best and brightest thoughts, are indelibly written on the tablets of the mind, still it is well then and there to open the Bible and to read the 12th, 33rd, and 37th chapters of Genesis, the 8th and 24th chapters of Joshua, the 9th chapter of Judges, the 12th chapter of the 1st Book of Kings, and the 10th chapter of the 2nd Book of Chronicles. Thus, with the sacred and historic landscape spread before him like a map, the reader is struck with the biblical narrative even more forcefully and impressively than

ever. As he sees the places mentioned in Scripture grouping themselves naturally in order, he perceives the leading features of the history more clearly than before, and he seems afterwards to remember the leading events almost as easily as if he had witnessed them.

Then to all this mental satisfaction is added the pleasure of a glorious prospect, if the air be as clear, the sunshine as bright, the clouds as luminous as they were when I stood on the rocky brow of the ascent. The sight of Hermon in the distance makes the scene expand, and carries the thoughts onwards.

This then is the subject of the illustration overleaf (XX.). In the middle of the picture far beneath the eye is the vale of Shechem (El Makhna). Its pale green colour represents the young crops. The pathway starting from the stony slopes, winding through the rocks of the foreground, and then passing through the cultivated plain, is the main line from Jerusalem to Samaria in the days of the Jewish kings, and at the Christian era. It is therefore the very road which Our Lord used to tread. On the left of the picture in the middle distance, and right in front of the eye, Mount Gerizim stands up boldly. The sun is declining behind it; therefore its dark grey masses of limestone are rendered

doubly sombre by shadow. Its crest is surrounded by thin vapours and light clouds, all of which, when touched by the slanting sunlight, seem like a golden gauze. Near the point where its eastern declivity merges into the plain, is Jacob's Well. As already explained, Mount Ebal is almost entirely hidden from sight. Beyond Gerizim and towards the right of the picture are the hills which bound the Shechem valley on the north, separating it from Samaria. Among these hills is Tirzah, and at the foot of them is Shalem. Still farther north is Hermon, towering indeed as a pyramid of snow, but not cloud-capped. For the sky behind it is clear, and the snow, even at this distance of fifty miles, is glistening.

The descent from our ridge to the vale of Shechem, or as it is now called the plain of Makhna, is easy. The road through the plain is charming with fresh young crops on either side, with the bright sky above, and with the cool shadow of Gerizim. Surely this must have been one of the places to which Our Lord alluded, when discoursing upon the fields, the harvests, the flowers, and the birds. Here are the hedgeless unenclosed sheets of cultivation, the pathways winding among the growing crops. Here is the husbandry extending beyond the fertile soil to the verge of the stones and gravel, and onwards into ground hardly fit to reward



GERIZIM AND SHECHEM.

tillage. Inasmuch as this was one of the chief lines of Our Lord's journeyings, all the objects are suggestive of the imagery used in the Parables. Thus the road approaches the eastern declivity of Gerizim and is so far level. Thence the ground slopes downwards, and a new arm or branch of the valley comes into view. In order to observe it properly, the traveller who is moving northwards, must turn to his right eastward. This eastern branch is now called Salim, after the Shalem of Scripture, already mentioned, and is an integral part of the Shechem valley. Here too, the site of Ænon has been found. "And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salem" (John iii. 23). Among the hills to the north the position of Teluzah is seen, which has been identified with the Scriptural Tirzah. The situation of Teluzah with its copious fountains, its beautiful olive groves, its salubrity, and its bearings in regard to other Scriptural sites certainly identified in the neighbourhood, affords a reasonable assurance that this is Tirzah. Here, for nearly half a century, was the summer residence of the Kings of Israel. Before this, however, the beauty of the place was so famed that Solomon sang "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah."

From the eastern end of the valley near Shalem the traveller turns again with his face westwards towards the

Central Ridge of Palestine. The sight that meets his gaze is one of the most imposing in the Holy Land. The twin giants, Ebal and Gerizim, rise up majestically, the joint monarchs of the Central Ridge. They are joined together near their bases by a lower ridge of that form which geographers designate a saddle. On that saddle is situated the Turkish town of Nablûs, occupying the site of the historic Neapolis. After the Jewish conquest Ebal was held in equal veneration with Gerizim. Indeed, it was on Ebal that Joshua set up the altar before his first summons to the people to hear the Divine Law. As the traveller advances closer and closer, both mountains loom forth grander and grander, their rocky outlines being strongly marked against the sunset sky. As the gorge becomes contracted near the bases of the two mountains, there are natural recesses exactly suited to the arrangement made by Joshua for the first assembly already mentioned, when half the people were marshalled on the Gerizim side, and the other half on the Ebal side; so that loud sounds or chaunts could be heard from one side to the other, and perhaps even the words pronounced by the voice. The shape of the ground also renders it certain that just here must have been the second assembly in the closing days of Joshua's life. The place is

perfectly adapted for such a gathering. The multitude would be collected in orderly array beneath the connecting ridge already described. The steep flanks of the twin mountains on either side would afford shade, an important matter in a climate generally hot. They would also enclose the multitude, thus heightening the effect of the spectacle, and would assist the sound, thus adding to the value of the ceremony. Though the people could hardly have caught the words of Joshua, yet they could see his form and gesture as he recited the Law, and they could hear the solemn responses given by the priests and Levites in chorus. With what rapt awe must they have gazed on the aged warrior-prophet, the leader in many arduous marches, the hero of many warlike enterprises, who, after victory, had known how to place each tribe in its proper inheritance, and to organize a national system, both for religious and secular purposes. Their regard must have been rendered the more intense when they reflected that ere long his face would be seen no more. As we draw near, and as the two mountains close round us, seeming to embrace us in their mighty arms, we picture to ourselves the scenes of the first and second assemblies of the Israelites under Joshua. We hear in imagination the invocations, the adjurations, the solemn

chants, the loud responses from thousands speaking as with one voice, the resounding notes echoed and re-echoed from one side to the other, the rocks of Ebal crying to those of Gerizim, the rocks on Gerizim answering those of Ebal. When, too, we remember the wicked follies of the Jews in after times and the dreadful consequences which ensued thereon, it is pleasant to dwell for a moment on those concluding years of the warrior-prophet's life, regarding which it is written — "And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel."

Regarding the acoustic properties of the Pass, Tristram, in 1865, recorded this evidence (*Land of Israel*, pp. 148-149):—
"In the early morning we could from Gerizim not only see a man driving his ass down a path on Mount Ebal but could hear every word he uttered as he urged it on. In order to test the matter on a subsequent occasion, two of our party stationed themselves on opposite sides of the valley and with perfect ease recited the Commandments antiphonally."

Without ascending the ridge, which connects Ebal with Gerizim, we turn to the left towards the base of Gerizim,

and approach a ruined mound. Amidst these ruins is the deep rocky pit which once was Jacob's Well. Dean Stanley writes (*Sinai and Palestine*, chapter v.):—"Of all the special localities in Our Lord's life in Palestine this is almost the only one absolutely undisputed."

The Well was excavated by Jacob close to the parcel of ground which he had bought. Anderson (*Palestine Exploration*, 1866) observes that thus "the Patriarch secured on his own property, by dint of great toil, a perennial supply of water at a time when the adjacent water-springs were in the hands of unfriendly, if not actually hostile neighbours."

In Scriptural times the Well was, as it still is, close to the main road from Judæa to Samaria. It must have originally been dug deep into the rock till it reached cold and delicious water. It has long been dried up and choked with stones. In 1838 Robinson found a depth of 105 feet; in 1875 Conder finds only 75 feet. Anderson, in 1866, reports—"The true mouth has a narrow opening into the well itself, which is cylindrically shaped." Around are the ruins of a church. Close by is Joseph's tomb, over which a shrine has been raised by the Moslems, who venerate the place. A short way farther on, in the direction of Ebal,

is the village of Askar, in which we see surviving the name of Sychar, mentioned in the 4th chapter of St. John's Gospel.

“He left Judæa 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 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. Then cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water.”

It is not to be inferred that she had just arrived from Samaria; indeed, she must have come from the neighbouring village of Sychar or Askar. Being a Samaritan, she would naturally turn her eyes to Gerizim, which towered aloft in the sky and almost overhung the scene. She doubtless pointed to the rocky height on which the Samaritan temple would be just visible, and said that God would be worshipped there. But she was told not there, nor on any sacred mountain, for “God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

The most recent narrator, Barclay (*Palestine Exploration*, 1866) writes:—“We gazed down the open well, and sat on that ledge where doubtless Our Saviour rested, and felt with

our fingers the grooves in the stone caused by the ropes by which the water-pots were drawn up."

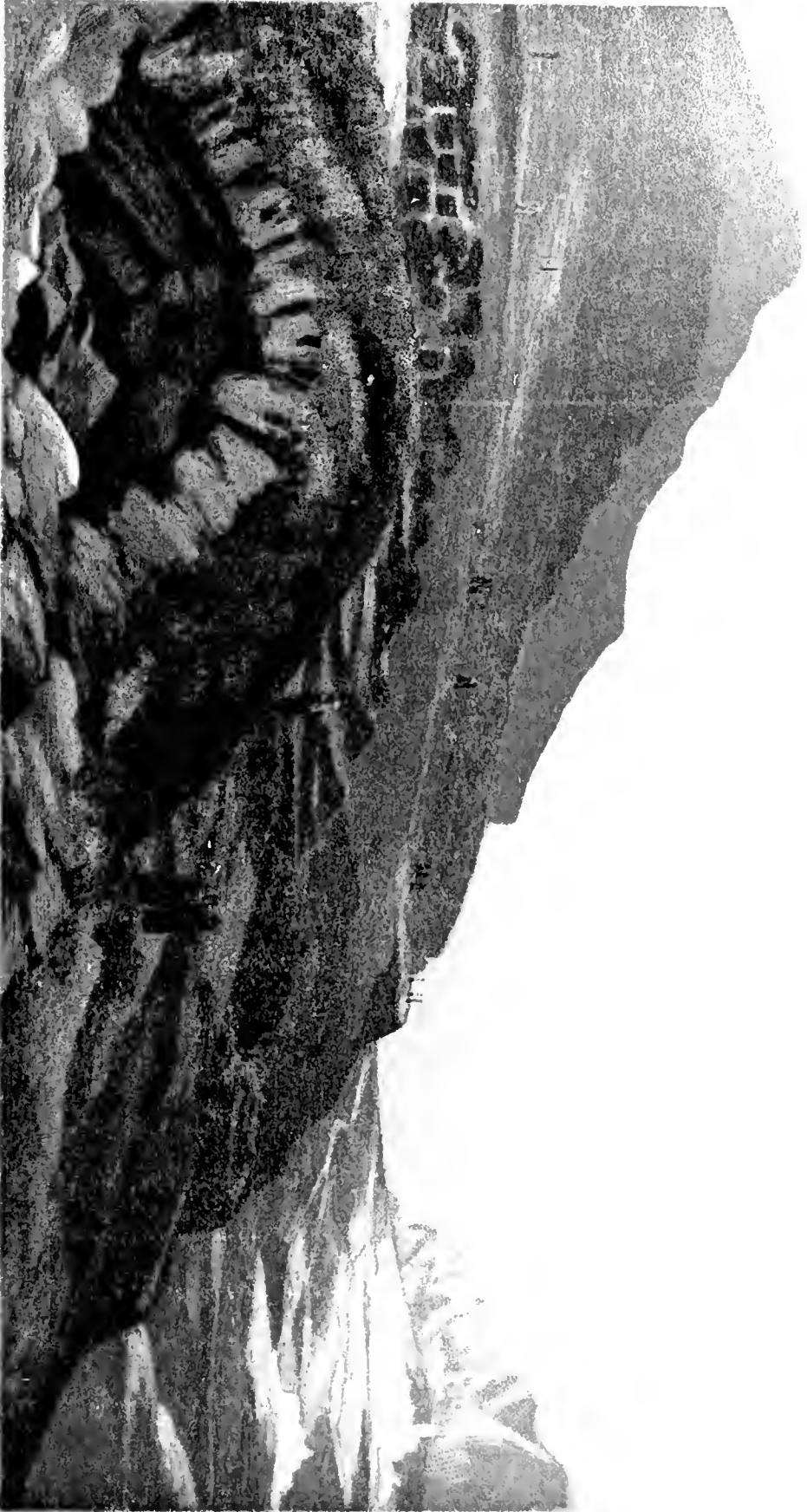
The renowned traveller, Clarke, thus wrote in 1801:—

"The spot is so distinctly marked by the Evangelist, and so little liable to uncertainty, that if no tradition existed for its identity, the site of it could hardly be mistaken. . . . The journey of Our Lord from Judæa into Galilee; the cause of it; His passage through the territory of Samaria; His approach to the metropolis of that country; its name; His arrival at the Amorite field which terminates the narrow valley of Sichem; the ancient custom of halting at a well; the female employment of drawing water; the disciples sent into the city for food, by which the situation of the town is obviously implied; the woman referring to existing prejudices which separated the Jews from the Samaritans; the depth of the well; the Oriental allusion contained in the expression 'living water'; the history of the well and the customs thereby illustrated; the worship on Mount Gerizim; all these occur within the space of twenty verses."

Tristram (*Bible Places*, 1884,) writes, "the oak of Moreh, the first camp and altar of Abraham in the Land of Promise, was before Shechem, at the entrance of the

valley, and, therefore, close to Jacob's Well. There is no spot in sacred story more accurately marked out than this." It has been held that the name of this tree, which is mentioned in Joshua and Judges, as well as in Genesis, should be rendered as "Abraham's terebinth in the plain."

The scene, as beheld by us in these days, has been depicted in the accompanying illustration (XXI.) The masonry at the mouth of the well has been carefully drawn. The shapeless heaps round about belong to the ruins. The line along the bank above is the main road from Judæa to Samaria. The rocks higher up, and the outline of Gerizim against the sunset sky, have been exactly rendered. The mind is impressed by the thought that these mountain shapes, of a sharply defined character, and of marked structure geologically, are the very same as those on which Our Lord looked while speaking to the woman of Samaria. Close by, on the right, are the enclosure and the structure about the tomb, whither the embalmed body of Joseph was brought from Egypt. A short way off, at the foot of Ebal, is the village whence, as we believe, the woman of Samaria came to the well to draw water. The horizon in the centre of the picture



JACOB'S WELL.

is bounded by the ridge of Nabalûs (Neapolis), which connects Ebal with Gerizim. Between our foreground and that ridge is the probable site of the Shechem city as often mentioned in Scripture. The season of the year some months before harvest, is the same as that when the Scriptural event occurred, and the hour of the day is nearly the same.

By a short ride uphill from Jacob's Well towards the connecting ridge between Ebal and Gerizim, the traveller crosses the slope on which Shechem must have stood as the capital of the kingdom of Israel. We pause for a moment on the now desolate site, to recall the character of that gallant but wayward race of men who made Shechem what it was. More than two centuries ago, in 1650, Fuller, in the quaint but expressive language of that time, in his *Pisgah Sight of Palestine*; thus described Ephraim: "A princely and puissant tribe . . . The people thereof were active, valiant, ambitious of honour, but withal hasty, humorous, hard to be pleased, forward enough to fight with their enemies, and too forward to fight with their friends, counting other men's honour to be their injury."

Soon the ridge is reached, on which stands the Turkish city of Nabalûs, a name derived from the Neapolis founded

by the Roman emperor after the fall of the ancient Shechem. In 1801, Clarke described "Napolose, luxuriously embedded in fragrant bowers, half-concealed gardens, and stately trees collected into groves." The saddle on which it stands is the true ridge, and the water-parting between the Mediterranean and the Jordan. Ebal and Gerizim are eminences on either side, shutting out the view on the north and the south. But the prospect on the east and west is open, and renders the situation of Nabalûs one of the best in Palestine. Eastwards is seen the plain of Shechem and Moreh to Shalem, bounded by hills with the purple hues of middle distance. Beyond them is the Ramoth Gilead range in the blue haze afar off. Evidently between them and it, must be a wide and deep depression. Indeed, the depression there is the valley of the Jordan. From our standpoint the kings of Israel could see their Gileadite possessions across the Jordan, frequently the scene of warlike expeditions. On the opposite direction, that is on the west side, a long-descending valley displays itself, leading towards the site of Cæsarea (now ruined) on the Mediterranean coast. The horizon is bounded by the blue sea. Thus, in Scriptural times, our present situation formed a point on the ridge just between the two principal mountains.

On this point two main passes converged, one from the crossing of the Jordan near the junction with the Jabbok, the other from the coast region occupied by the Philistines. The pass from the Jordan had always been one of the highways to and from Syria, with which the kingdom of Israel was often at war. In later times, under Roman rule, the pass from the west was the means of communication between Neapolis in the heart of Palestine, and Caesarea, the Herodian capital, on the sea-coast.

The Turkish city of Nabulûs has charming resources in respect of running water. Through fissures in the vast masses of Ebal and Gerizim the purest water gushes forth abundantly. This is formed into reservoirs, and thence conducted over artificial cascades in a westerly direction. As the western descent is sharp, the cascades are arranged so as to be in steps one over the other. The chain of little cascades produces a charming effect. The suburbs of the town are adorned with the olives, the figs, and the vines, for which the place has been famed since Jotham's parable was delivered three thousand years ago. The inhabitants, chiefly Muhammadan, are reputed to be fanatical, and sometimes uncivil to strangers. But of late their demeanour appears to have improved in this respect. Their head-dress,

costume, arms, and accoutrements are picturesque. Indeed, they would furnish to an artist some of the best figure-groups to be found in the country. As usual on a classic site, many stones, slabs, pillars, are embedded in the modern masonry. The missionary schools and establishments (Protestant) are well worthy of attention. The Roman Catholics have not any convent or monastery here on a scale like those at other places in Palestine. The camping ground, where our tents are pitched, is excellent. Those who desire to study the modern Samaritans, may ascend Gerizim to see not only the ruins of the ancient temple, but also some ceremonies still observed. For comprehensive surveys of central Palestine the summits of Ebal and Gerizim are suitable, just as Mizpeh is for a survey of southern Palestine.

CHAPTER XII.

SAMARIA.

Road to Samaria.—Its establishment as capital of Kingdom of Israel.—Ahab's blood-stained chariot.—Siege by the Syrians.—Victorious expedition to Damascus.—Siege by the Assyrians.—Gallant defence of Samaria.—Its capture.—Herod builds Sebaste.—Christian structures.—Present aspect of the place.—Approach to the modern town or village.—Scriptural scene at the gate.—Interior of the village.—St. Peter and St. Philip.—Herod's colonnade.—Death of Mariamme.—Execution of her sons.—Origin of the Samaritans.—Boundary of Manasseh.—The vale of Dothan.—Joseph's brethren.—First sight of Carmel.

FROM Neapolis towards Samaria the main road for a short distance follows the charming valley that leads down to the Mediterranean coast. Then the road, leaving the valley, turns to the right northwards, going straight for Samaria. We are now leaving the inheritance of Ephraim and entering that of Manasseh.

As the hill of Samaria will soon be in sight, it may be well to recollect that the name is a Greek translation of

Shemrin and Shomron, denoting a hill which Omri, King of Israel, bought of Shemer 920 years before the Christian era, in order to found a new capital. From that time till 721 years before the Christian era—that is, for a space of 200 years—Samaria had a chequered history, disfigured, indeed, by crime and superstition, but still distinguished by desperate courage and heroic endurance, sometimes also signalized by glory. Thither was transferred the seat of sovereignty from Shechem and Tirzah. On reflection the student may wonder why this change was made, when the kings had so central a seat as Shechem, and so delightful a residence as Tirzah. The reason probably amounted to this, that according to the warfare of that age the hill of Samaria was more defensible, and had more resources for obstinate resistance than any other place in the kingdom. It was a solitary hill, as we shall see presently, rising up among the mountains, with valleys on all four sides. It had a level top, and could contain a court and camp, with soldiery, retainers and traders for supplying the needs of a town population. Its water supply was abundant; its steep-sloping sides were clothed with harvests and olive groves. It was thus calculated to stand, as it actually stood, severe and protracted sieges. Though it had to withstand the rivalry of Jezreel in the plain, as will

be presently observed, still it kept its position as the capital till the destruction of the Israelite dynasty.

In Samaria were committed most of Ahab's impieties and abominations. Here, too, was perpetrated the most flagrant of his crimes, namely, the judicial murder of Naboth. Near the gate of this city sat the kings of Israel and Judah, and asked of the false prophets whether war should be undertaken against Ramoth-Gilead, while the true prophet, Micaiah, said that a lying spirit had been put into the mouth of those prophets, and that the Israelites would in the war be scattered like sheep without a shepherd. In the pool within this city was washed the blood-stained chariot of Ahab, according to the words of Elijah, in the very place where the dogs had licked the blood of Naboth.

In the reign of Ahab's son, Jehoram, the Syrians from Damascus laid siege to Samaria. We are not told how long that siege lasted, but it must have been cruelly protracted. The famine, that ensued within the city, is described with fearfully graphic force in the 6th chapter of the Second Book of Kings, together with several incidents in the life of Elisha. That siege was, however, raised, and for a time "the bands of Syria came no more into the lands of Israel." About ninety years later, King Jeroboam II. was able to organize

from Samaria an expedition sufficiently strong to carry his arms to Hamath, on the lake of Gennesareth, and thence on to Damascus itself, which he actually captured. It must have been a triumphant day in Samaria when the tidings came that Damascus had fallen to the Israelite. Those who know what Damascus still is, and what it must have been at that time, who also see the narrow limits of Samaria's hill, can estimate the magnitude of the efforts necessary to take such a city as Damascus, and can imagine the glory which was shed thereby on the prowess of Israel.

Eighty years later, Samaria had to face a worse foe than the Syrian of Damascus. The Assyrian from Mesopotamia, having first seized Damascus, overran the kingdom of Israel, and at length besieged the capital. Doubtless all the best men of Israel with their families, and all things most revered or valued, were collected within the fortifications of Samaria's hill. It is stated in Scripture that this siege lasted three years, but the horrors of the famine and pestilence which ensued are not set forth. We must, however, infer from the Scriptural narrative of the first siege, about 170 years previously in Jchoram's time, that the misery during the second siege must have been extreme. If we compute the hosts which the Assyrian Emperor commanded, the resources which

he must have accumulated, the appliances which he must have employed, the moral effect he must have exerted by the conquest of all the kingdom outside Samaria,—then we can understand the desperate fortitude of the Israelites inside Samaria. Indeed, their romantic resistance to the last extremity may be reckoned among the heroic defences recorded in the annals of war. To them the end was the bitterest of all ends to men of their race and faith. For this remnant of the garrison, of the survivors and of the non-combatants, with their families, were sent away in captivity to Mesopotamia. The term *Ichabod* might be then applied to Samaria, for in truth its glory never returned. Heathen colonists were placed in it by the Assyrian monarch. They conformed in some external particulars to the Jewish faith, and were styled Samaritans; but they hardly accepted the faith in its true sense. They built their temple after the Jewish model, not on the hill of Samaria, but on Gerizim.

Some seven centuries later, Herod the Great reconstructed the city of Samaria, crowned the hill with edifices—of which we shall presently see some ruins—and called it *Sebaste*, a name which survives to this day as *Sebastieh*. These structures became ruined in their turn. Then the early Christians probably erected churches on the hill. Whether the Moslems

built any mosques there is uncertain; but the Crusaders and the Knights of St. John raised some fine churches, of which the remains are still to be seen.

Before considering the existing aspect of Samaria, we may recollect the former aspects which it must have presented, owing to the work of human hands. The hill has, doubtless, always been much the same as it now is, but its architectural crown has changed from age to age. First of all, there arose the temple of Baal, built by King Ahab, a standing insult to the faith of Israel. Doubtless, with brass and gilding it gleamed from afar, "As some tall bully lifts its head and lies." Next arose the temple built by Herod for the worship of some heathen god, in honour of his patron the Roman emperor. Lastly, the domes of the Christian churches, and the towers raised by the Knights of St. John, pointed heavenwards.

This, then, is the subject of the illustration (XXII.). The oblong hill of Samaria is in the centre of the picture. Some clouds overhead are casting shadows, which cause it to stand darkling against the sky. It is so placed by Nature that no other object competes with its position, and nothing diverts our gaze from its commanding form. It therefore affords a characteristic subject for the painter. Below the walls, structures,



SAMARIA.

and low towers above, we see lines of terraced cultivation extending down the hill-side. Adjacent to them are the olive-groves. In the foreground is the roadway leading up to the north-eastern gate of the place.

On our line of march the hill of Samaria rises up, 400 feet above the valley. Though limited in prospect, the hill is the monarch of the locality. Its long flat top is still crowned with buildings, some of which are inhabited. The Syrian village of Sebastieh has replaced the royal city of the Israelites and the provincial capital of the Romans. Around the summit are some traces of the fortifications that girdled the city in its brave old days. Below the shattered belt of masonry, are terraces of cultivation extending right down the hill-side, in almost parallel lines, one above the other. These lines are, however, broken by olive-groves, which are here and there abundant. In the regal times the gardening and tree-planting on this steep slope must have been glorious. Close to our roadway the groves become denser and richer, and the appearance of the ground shows that Samaria must have possessed close at hand the resources of corn and oil which enabled it to withstand protracted sieges.

From our standpoint we proceed along the roadway to the gate. We descend slightly at first, and so reach the neck of

land which spans the valley, and joins the hill of Samaria to the adjacent country. This neck is fully commanded, in a military sense, from the north-eastern gate of the city. We approach the gate, reflecting on all the Scriptural events which have happened here. Among many wondrous episodes, Micaiah's prophecy was uttered outside the city gate. There were two principal gates, of which this was one. Probably on some vantage ground hereabouts, sat the two Kings of Judah and Israel in their robes to hear Micaiah declare before the vain and foolish prophets his vision of the heavenly host and of the lying spirit. The power and grandeur of the narrative strike with redoubled force the mind of him who here reads the 22nd chapter of the First Book of Kings.

Passing through the gateway, we enter the existing village of Samaria. The cottages are of the ordinary style. The masonry, however, in itself is of a style better than that of cottages, for it is partly taken from ancient buildings, and consists of pieces which once belonged to superior structures. A low door opens into a sunken court, and thence is seen a roofless church with an altar-niche almost entire. The remains indicate that here was a church of the early Christians, dating, perhaps, from the apostolic time of St. Philip, who founded a Christian community in this place.

The original church was, however, replaced by the larger Church of the Crusaders, and this latter was adorned with crosses and other sacred devices by the Knights of St. John. It is well to read the 8th chapter of Acts amidst these ruins. For here St. Peter spoke to Simon the sorcerer the memorable words: "Thy money perish with thee."

Leaving the village, and passing along the hill-top, we meet with the Herodian remains. Tristram (*Bible Places*, 1884), succinctly describes them thus: "Higher up, long streets of columns in different directions, some fallen, some broken, others half-buried, but very many standing perfect, show the extent and splendour of Herod's city. There are also gateways and a triumphal arch standing."

Josephus also writes: "He (Herod) contrived to make Samaria a fortress for himself also against all the people, and called it Sebaste. . . . This he did out of an ambitious desire of building a temple and to make the city more eminent than before, but principally that it might be at once for his own security and a monument of his magnificence." (*Antiq.* book xv. ch. viii.)

It has been said by a great essayist that one of the poets makes all the varied features of the landscape form a background to one dark and solitary figure. So it is here;

these ruins on this noble site are but the background to the strange figure of Herod the Great. Here was his most poignant remorse endured; here, too, was one of his most ruthless crimes committed. This part of his eventful story can be readily gathered from Josephus (*Antiq.*, book xv. chap. vii.). He was married to the Maccabean princess Mariamne, and the early part of his married life with her was spent at Samaria. On one occasion she discovered that, when going to Rome, he had ordered her to be killed in event of his not returning—doubtless out of jealousy, to prevent her falling into the hands of anyone else after his death. This discovery of hers alarmed him. On another occasion she reproached him with the murder of her brother, who, as we have seen, was drowned at Jericho. He then took proceedings which ended in her execution.

“But when she was once dead, his affections for her were kindled in a more outrageous manner than before. . . . For his love to her was not of a calm nature.” He shut himself up in Samaria, a prey to his anguish and despair. “He would frequently call for her and lament for her. . . . He would order his servants to call for her, as if she were still alive and could hear them.” All this was unavailing, so “he bethought himself of things to divert his mind from

thinking of her, and contrived feasts and assemblies for that purpose." Then "he forced himself to go into desert places, and there, under pretence of hunting, bitterly afflicted himself." Yet "he had not borne his grief there many days before he fell into a distemper. . . . He had a pain in the hinder part of his head joined with madness. . . . Thus his distemper went on while he was at Samaria."

He sent her two sons to Rome for education. They inherited her beauty and her pride. On their return to Palestine they proved intractable; they invoked her name and resented her murder. At last "they were brought to Sebaste by their father's command and there strangled, but their dead bodies were in the night time carried to Alexandrium." (*Antiq.*, book xvi. chap. xi.)

Thus perished the last of the Maccabees.

We leave Samaria by the south-western gate, the opposite to that by which we entered. The descent leads us into a series of olive groves, so extensive as almost to form a forest. Looking back, we see a view of Samaria and of the summit of Mount Gerizim behind it in the distance. A gradual ascent leads to the uplands of Manasseh. A halt amidst these olive woods is refreshing to men and horses. Soon, however, the gathering clouds begin to drop their showers, and threaten

a heavier rainfall. It is necessary to press onwards, for ahead of us lies a large hollow, which receives the drainage of the surrounding heights and has no outlet. It is therefore a swamp not easily crossed after rain, and bears the ominous name of "Merj ul gharak" or "the drowning meadow." If there should be a downpour before we reach the place, our crossing over it would be unsafe, and our alternative would be to make a troublesome detour over the neighbouring heights. We succeed in arriving, however, before the rain has fallen in sufficient quantity to fill the broad hollow, and we cross it without mishap. Thence an ascent conducts us into the mountains of Manasseh.

The wildness of the early ages still characterizes the country hereabouts. After the fall of Samaria, the land became so desolate as to be the home of wild beasts and hardly fit for human habitation. This circumstance gave rise to the sect of the Samaritans. The Scriptural record is specially instructive. In the 24th verse of the 17th chapter of the 2nd Book of Kings, the narrative states that the Assyrian monarch colonized the country of Samaria with men from a great distance. The colonists became sorely troubled by the ravages of wild beasts. Then the sacred narrative proceeds thus :—

“Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying,

the nations, which thou hast removed and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land, therefore he hath sent lions among them and behold they slay them. . . . Then the king of Assyria commanded saying, carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence, and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land."

Thus the sect of the Samaritans was instituted; and evidently the Assyrians imagined that as every region had its own local deity, so the God of Abraham, was the God of Palestine particularly. The desolation of the land, after the fall of Samaria, became the means of introducing among heathen colonists a knowledge of the true faith, amidst these mountains of Manasseh.

From the heights a fine prospect is seen, which includes the first view of Nazareth to a traveller from the south, and which is bounded by Hermon. But the fast-falling rain prevents the sight being seen. As we advance however, the shower ceases, the sky clears, and soon a yet finer view is visible.

The storm passing from our uplands, rolls on to the west, and discloses to our gaze, a deep valley and a large

mountain beyond. The valley is Dothan and the mountain is Carmel. The name Dothan means "two wells." The hills around have stony sides of which the bases are clothed with olive groves. Here again these groves are so extensive as to assume the character of a forest. In the hollow itself, too, the olive trees are growing thickly. Their dark grey foliage looks doubly sombre in the shadow of the overhanging clouds. In the midst of them is a streamlet, running full with water after the rainfall, and catching whatever light there is. In the centre of the hollow or valley is a large mound called by the natives a Tel. This mound or Tel has a decidedly marked character, and is identified with Dothan. In the background stands Carmel, appearing, from this point of view, as an oblong mass with a flat top. Some parts of the mountain are in gloomy shade, while other parts are partially obscured by the rain. The atmospheric effect is befitting for the mountain. But the situation of Carmel and its historic events can be better understood from other points of view. Its leading characteristic as a great headland jutting out into the Mediterranean is not perceived at all from this side.

Dothan is a name familiar to us from childhood; still it is well, on these heights of Manasseh, to read the 37th

chapter of Genesis and the 6th chapter of the Second Book of Kings. Here, about 4,800 years ago, the Ishmaelite caravan, journeying from the Syrian desert near Damascus to Egypt, halted in the valley, found Joseph with his brethren tending their flocks and herds, purchased him from them, and carried him away southwards. Hither came Jacob's messenger from Hebron, and learnt the feigned tidings of Joseph having been killed by a wild beast. In the succeeding ages of occupation by man, the beasts have indeed been driven away. The olive and other domesticated trees have replaced the primeval forests and thickets. But we have just learnt how readily wild beasts increased in these regions, and we perceive how credible the story of Joseph's destruction would appear to the Patriarch.

Under the kingdom of Israel a considerable village existed here, the resort of the prophet Elisha during the Syrian invasion in the reign of Jehoram, and doubtless it stood on the hillock or Tel just mentioned. Thither must have come the messages from the perplexed king. Thence the prophet must have gone to warn, to encourage, to console, the beleaguered Israelites in Samaria. Once the hillock was surrounded during the night by armed Syrians, intent on seizing the prophet, and in the morning the place was

full of men and horses. Then it was that the prophet, confronting the many enemies around him, but confident of Divine assistance, uttered the words : "Fear not, for there are more with us than against us."

This, then, is the subject of the accompanying illustration (XXIII.). The view is looking in a north-westerly direction, and towards the Mediterranean. In the middle of the picture far above the eye is the valley of Dothan, abounding in dark-hued olive groves. Above the belt of trees, are the rocks and the gravelly ground scantily covered with withered vegetation. The streamlet sparkles slightly amidst the groves in the valley. Midway in the hollow there rises the hillock of Elisha's village, being a conspicuous object in the landscape. Around the valley are low hills, and behind them rises up Carmel, as an oblong mass. The descending rain, the rolling mist, the overhanging clouds, the leaden colour thrown over the landscape by the storm, are all rendered in imitation of the atmospheric effect which was observed at the moment. On the other side of Carmel, the base is washed by the waves of the Mediterranean which are hidden from sight.

We are now about to quit the mountainous inheritance of Manassch and enter that of Issachar. In these mountains



was born and bred Gideon, the hero who was the instrument for delivering Israel from the Midianites. Our march will soon be passing close to the scene of his greatest triumphs. And the next view will indicate the strategic importance of the passes in this mountain chain.

We are about to descend finally from the Central Ridge of Palestine, leaving Samaria and Judæa behind us, with our faces set towards Galilee, and to cross the intermediate plain that separates us from the Lebanon region. Before doing so, however, we must analyse the wondrous prospect that is now stretched out before our sight.

CHAPTER XIII.

PLAIN OF ESDRAELON.

General view of Esdraelon plain.—The hills of Nazareth.—Tabor and Little Hermon.—Hill of Gilboa.—Physical geography of the plain.—The Book of Judith.—Levels of sea, plain, and Jordan valley.—Canal project.—Historical summary.—Heritage of Issachar.—Camp at Janin or Engannim.—Village of Jezreel.—Gideon's Victory over the Midianites—Joram and Jehu.—Naboth's vineyard.—Jezebel's fate.—Site of Megiddo.—Death of King Josiah.—View of Mount Tabor.—Deborah, Barak, and Sisera.—Battle of the Kishon.—Elijah and Elisha.—The prophetic office.—Memories of Esdraelon.

TURNING to the right from the heights above Dothan we see the Plain of Esdraelon. With respect to the number and variety of objects on mountain, plateau, and plain, to the events affecting several nations, that have happened within this area, to the long chain of associations lasting for nearly 4,000 years, this is one of the most interesting views in the world. It will now be sketched as we look northwards.

Far beneath the eye, and stretching from left to right

across our range of vision, is the Plain of Esdraelon. At this season, towards the end of winter, the area being largely, though not wholly, cultivated, is green with young crops or fresh herbage. It is traversed by the river Kishon, which is not visible at this height. On the extreme left — that is, on the west — is Carmel, which retains the same outline as that which has just been depicted. As the north side of the mountain slopes down steeply towards the Mediterranean, a low range of hills appears. This range separates the Plain of Esdraelon from the coast of Acre, and hides the sea from our sight. The Kishon has to break its way through this low range, in order to find an outlet from the plain, and so reach its mouth in the sea near the foot of Carmel,

On the opposite side of the plain a range of hills appears, one of which belongs to Nazareth. The town and the structures of Nazareth are visible in the sunlight. The remaining hills of the group pertain to the uplands of Galilee. Behind the Galilæan uplands are seen the mountains of Anti-Lebanon. In the extreme distance, and on the right, is the snowy pyramid of Hermon.

Within the Plain are two detached mountains ; of these one is Tabor, and the other is called Little Hermon. The former

is, however, almost hidden by the latter. On the right hand—that is, on the east—a ridge appears, and this is Gilboa. Between Gilboa and Little Hermon the Plain becomes narrow, and begins to assume the character of a valley. At this point Jezreel is situated, and can be discerned with the aid of a field-glass.

In the foreground are the heights of Manasseh, from which the wide landscape is overlooked.

This noteworthy view may be now considered in reference to its geographical importance.

The area of the Plain is about twenty miles in length and ten in breadth, thus covering 200 square miles. It has been in all ages the battlefield of the warlike races in the surrounding countries, and the vantage ground which each race was anxious to win.

It is nearly on a level with the Mediterranean at its lower or western end, but rises gradually towards its upper or eastern end near Jezreel. On this eastern undulation Jezreel is situated, and there is the water-parting. From this undulation westwards the water drains into Kishon, and so into the Mediterranean. From the same undulation eastwards a valley begins, which carries the drainage down to the Jordan basin. Thus the Plain, and the outlets or valleys

adjoining it, form a sort of connection between the Mediterranean and the Jordan. But this partial connection is affected by the fact that the Jordan valley is hereabouts 700 to 800 feet below the sea-level.

The heights of Manasseh, from which we are surveying the prospect, were always valuable in the estimation of the Jews after the conquest under Joshua. The passes leading from them into the Plain were guarded as the gates of Central Palestine. The entrance could be blocked by the Israelites against invaders from the north. Behind the shelter of these ridges, again, the Israelite forces could be securely prepared for a descent on the Plain.

Accordingly, when Holofernes approached with his army "over against Esdraelon and the great strait of Judæa (or pass)," as told in Chapter III. of the Book of Judith—Joachim, the high priest, "wrote to them that dwelt in the open country near to Dothaim, charging them to keep the passages of the hill country, for by them was an entrance into Judæa, and it was easy to stop them, because the passage was straight." (Chapter IV.).

Conder (*Handbook to the Bible*, 1882,) remarks that "the author of the Book of Judith was intimately acquainted with the country lying between Shechem and Esdraelon."

The village of Mithilia near Dothan, on one of the approaches to the Plain, is identified with the Bethulia, where the tragedy of Judith and Holofernes occurred. The place is not far from the spot where we are standing.

The hill of Gilboa is geographically a part of these heights, and forms, as it were, an outpost to them. Strategically it was so treated by the Israelites under Saul.

From this view Tabor, and Jebel Duhy called by the Franks Little Hermon, seem to be detached mountains within the Plain. They are indeed separate from each other; nevertheless they are connected with the low hill-range which flanks the eastern end of the Plain, and divides it from the Jordan valley. The two mountains are jointly conspicuous as a pair from nearly all points of view.

As respects the Mediterranean then, this flat area may be regarded as a plain, on nearly the same level with the sea, and divided from the coast at Acre only by the low range of hills through which the Kishon breaks its way. But as respects the Jordan, the area is to be regarded as an elevated plateau several hundred feet higher than the river. This is perhaps an unique circumstance geographically.

As an addition to the many wondrous circumstances of

the Plain, I must mention that this is the area through which it was proposed to construct a canal from the mouth of the Kishon near Acre, thence past Jezreel, and by the valley, down to the depression of the Jordan, as already mentioned in our Chapter VII. The project has apparently been abandoned. Had the canal been constructed, it would have caused the Mediterranean water to flow in, and gradually raise to its own level the waters of the Gennesareth or Tiberias Lake, of the Jordan, and of the Dead Sea. Thus, the waters of these two inland lakes, and of their connecting valley, would be raised several hundred feet and become one inland sea in junction with the Mediterranean, by means of a canal running through the Plain of Esdraelon and the valley of Jezreel.

On the opposite or northern side of the Plain a natural wall is formed by the hills of Nazareth. Among these a hill appears, which is usually named the Mount of Precipitation from a tradition which will be noticed hereafter. Beyond them is the plateau of Galilee, which cannot be perceived in this view. But behind it, on the north again, rise the mountains of the Lebanon, in two main regions, one of the Lebanon culminating in the Mount Lebanon of King Hiram and the cedars, the other of Anti-Lebanon

culminating in Hermon. These regions extend up to the plain of Hamath, declared by Moses in the Book of Numbers to be the northern limit of the Promised Land.

This Plain, then, the heritage of Issachar, divides the Holy Land into two parts, both mountainous. The upper or northern consists of the Lebanon mountains and the Galilean plateau — the heritage of Naphtali and Zebulun. The lower or southern is formed by the mountains of Samaria and Judæa, comprising the inheritances of Manasseh, Ephraim, Benjamin, and Judah.

The Plain is the scene of four great battles in Scripture history, namely:—

The battle of the Kishon between the Israelites under Barak and the host under Jabin, King of Hazor, with Sisera as captain. B.C. 1245. Judges, chap. 4.

The battle near Jezreel between the Israelites under Gideon and the Midianites. B.C. 1205. Judges, chap. 7.

The battle near Gilboa between the Israelites under Saul and the Philistines. B.C. 1055. I. Samuel, chap. 31.

The battle between the Jews under Josiah in alliance with the Assyrians on the one hand and the Egyptians on the other. B.C. 610. II. Chronicles, chap. 35.

The area is known in Scripture history as the Plain of

Megiddo, and the supposed site of the future Armageddon. The name Esdraelon was afterwards derived by the Greeks from Jezreel.

When surveying this view in 1841, Dr. Robinson, a very competent observer, declared it to be "wide and glorious," and adds, "the impression at first sight almost overpowered me." (*Biblical Researches*, vol. iii., pp. 153-4).

In 1801, Clarke, when surveying one of the prospects in this part of Palestine, wrote thus :—

"It was indeed a scene to abstract and elevate the mind, and under emotions so called forth by every circumstance of powerful coincidence, a single moment seemed to concentrate whole ages of existence. In the calmer moments dedicated to this memorial, the objects are no longer beheld, but the impression remains."

Some attempt is made to depict the view in the illustration overleaf (XXIV.).

Midway in the picture runs the green plain of Esdraelon from left to right, with little Hermon prominent, and Tabor but slightly perceptible. On the right is the slope of Gilboa. In front, beyond the Plain, is the range of Nazareth hills, marked by the traditional Mount of Precipitation. Above this range are the tops of the Lebanon Mountains and the snowy

summit of Hermon. In the foreground is the northern face of the Manasseh hills, in the bosom of which lies the village of Kabâtiyeh, surrounded by rich olive groves.

This is the fourth of the six great views which we meet with during our journey.

In the tender green hues of the Plain we cannot, from this height, distinguish between the cultivated crops and the natural herbage. Under the Kingdom of Israel the whole area was probably under the plough. Subsequent revolutions must have caused it to relapse into primitive vegetation. At the beginning of this century it was uncultivated. In 1801, Clarke wrote thus: "Here, in this Plain, the most fertile part of the land of Canaan (which we found a solitude like one vast meadow covered with the richest pasture), the tribe of Issachar rejoiced in their tents." Cultivation, however, has since sprung up, and is increasing.

Passing by the village of Kabâtiyeh, the inhabitants of which are reputed to be inhospitable to travellers, we descend the northern pass of the Manasseh hills, leaving the district of Samaria behind us. At the foot of this descent, and at the mouth of the pass as it opens out into the Plain of Esdraelon, is Engannim, the Ginea of Josephus, now called Janîn. This is one of the oldest villages in Palestine, being repeatedly men-

PLAIN OF ESDRAELON.



tioned in the Pentateuch and in the Book of Joshua. It is probably the village which repelled Our Lord and His disciples, as set forth in the 9th Chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. The name meant "fountain of gardens," and that character is preserved to this day. The gardens are doubtless poor as compared to what they were three thousand years ago. Still there are fruit trees, and especially some palms. Indeed, this is one of the few places in Palestine where the palm is now found. A clear spring wells up, and its water is collected in a charming reservoir. A neatly built village is inhabited by civil and friendly people. The camping-ground is a green plateau slightly elevated above the great plain. Thus Janin is one of the pleasantest halting-places in the Holy Land.

During our night's halt there the weather was fitful. Shortly after midnight I was awaked by the canvas falling upon me, and found that my little tent had been blown down by a gust of wind.

After the storm the morning broke clear, and the sun rose gloriously, lighting up the whole landscape of Esdraelon as already described. The verdure was deliciously fresh, and sparkled with dew-drops. The march from our halting-place into the Plain was quite exhilarating. Our road went straight across the level area in the direction of Jezreel. Little Hermon

was in front of us, Tabor being behind it and quite hidden from view. In the distance was Nazareth, on its range of hills. Near to us on our right was a long, steep, sterile hill recognized as Gilboa. It had a forbidding aspect, as if the curse of David still rested there. Some peasants of the neighbourhood were asked the name of the hill, and they called it *Jalbôn*. Several streamlets are crossed, they are among the feeders of the Kishon, but the river itself is to our left.

Thus, after a short ride, we reach a village with a solitary tower. This is *Zerîn*, on the undoubted site of the Scriptural *Jezreel*. It is on the ridge of the gentle slope tending towards the Mediterranean, and on the verge of the valley leading towards the Jordan. It is the scene of at least three decisive events in the Old Testament history. Near it is the fountain of *Jezreel*, at the base of Mount Gilboa, the water-spring which determined the place of two great battles. Near it is the site of *Naboth's vineyard*, and the road along which *Jehn* drove.

In this valley was the encampment of the Midianites, when it was attacked in the dead of night by *Gideon*. These Bedouin Arabs had marched all the way from their home near *Sinai*, through the wilderness, crossed the Jordan, ascended the valley to the Plain of *Jezreel*, cut the crops, harried the villages, driven the Israelites to the caverns

and the mountain-recesses. Then they lay encamped along the valley in fancied security, with their tents scattered over an extended line, their marching equipage cumbering the ground, their camels in countless array. Gideon having rallied the Israelites in his native hills of Manassah, determined at the fountain to keep three hundred picked men and to send away the rest to be held in reserve for further action. The three hundred lapped at the fountain—the lapping being a test of endurance. At a trumpet signal they rushed upon their sleeping foe, with the war-cry “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” Those who know the loosely-arranged camps of the East, and understand the method of night-attacks, can imagine the confusion that must have ensued in the darkness—the tent-ropes cut, the Arabs rushing in disorder and overthrowing one another, the camels plunging about and trampling both men and things underfoot. If the details could be known, this feat of Gideon and his three hundred might appear to be among the best-planned night-attacks in the annals of war. Having dispersed the Arab encampment, and liberated Jezreel, he re-assembled all his soldiers from the neighbouring hills and pursued the enemy across the Jordan. This was one of the most signal victories ever gained by Jewish arms.

Around these same water-springs was the camp of Saul

on the fatal eve of the Gilboa battle, when he went at night to Endor, on the other side of Little Hermon, a very few miles off, saw the spirit of Samuel, and learnt that on the next day he too would be in the world of spirits. Doubtless it was for the sake of the water-supply that he kept his army below at the base of Gilboa, instead of taking up an almost unassailable vantage ground on the heights. He was attacked down below by the Philistines, and being beaten, retired upwards to the heights. Then he was pursued uphill by the enemy, and finally destroyed on the plateau at the summit.

At a very short distance from this situation, the vineyard of Naboth must have been planted, as appears clearly from the 9th chapter of the 2nd Book of Kings. King Joram is lying wounded in Jezreel; with him is Ahaziah, king of Judah. The watchman on the tower sees a company of armed men approaching from afar. First one horseman and then another is despatched to speak to them. As the company draws near, the watchman recognizes the driving of Jehu in the chariot. Then the two kings, Joram and Ahaziah, go forth each in his chariot and meet Jehu in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. After a few words with Jehu, King Joram utters the words, "There is treachery, O Ahaziah," and turning his chariot to fly, is shot in the back

by an arrow from Jehu's bow. His body is immediately cast into the plot of ground which had been Naboth's portion, according to the judgment pronounced to Ahab his father. Then King Ahaziah flies by the way of the garden house, which is doubtless the same as the palace of Ahab, near which Naboth's vineyard had been situated. These facts, studied on the spot, show that the vineyard must have been at a very short distance east of Jezreel. For the two kings issuing from the city could have advanced but a little way when they met Jehu.

Next, Jehu moves on to the eastern gate of Jezreel, and there sees Jezebel, as she looks out of the lattice window, and hears her reproach of treachery: "Had Zimri peace who slew his master." It must have been outside this gate that her dead body was thrown to be devoured by the dogs that are always prowling about the precincts of an Eastern city.

It is to be borne in mind that the judicial murder of Naboth must have occurred at Samaria. The Divine judgment for it was executed upon Ahab there, but upon Jezebel here, close to the vineyard itself and to the king's palace.

On this occasion, Jehu came from Ramoth-Gilead across the Jordan, where he was commanding the Israelite forces on behalf of King Joram. That had been for some time a

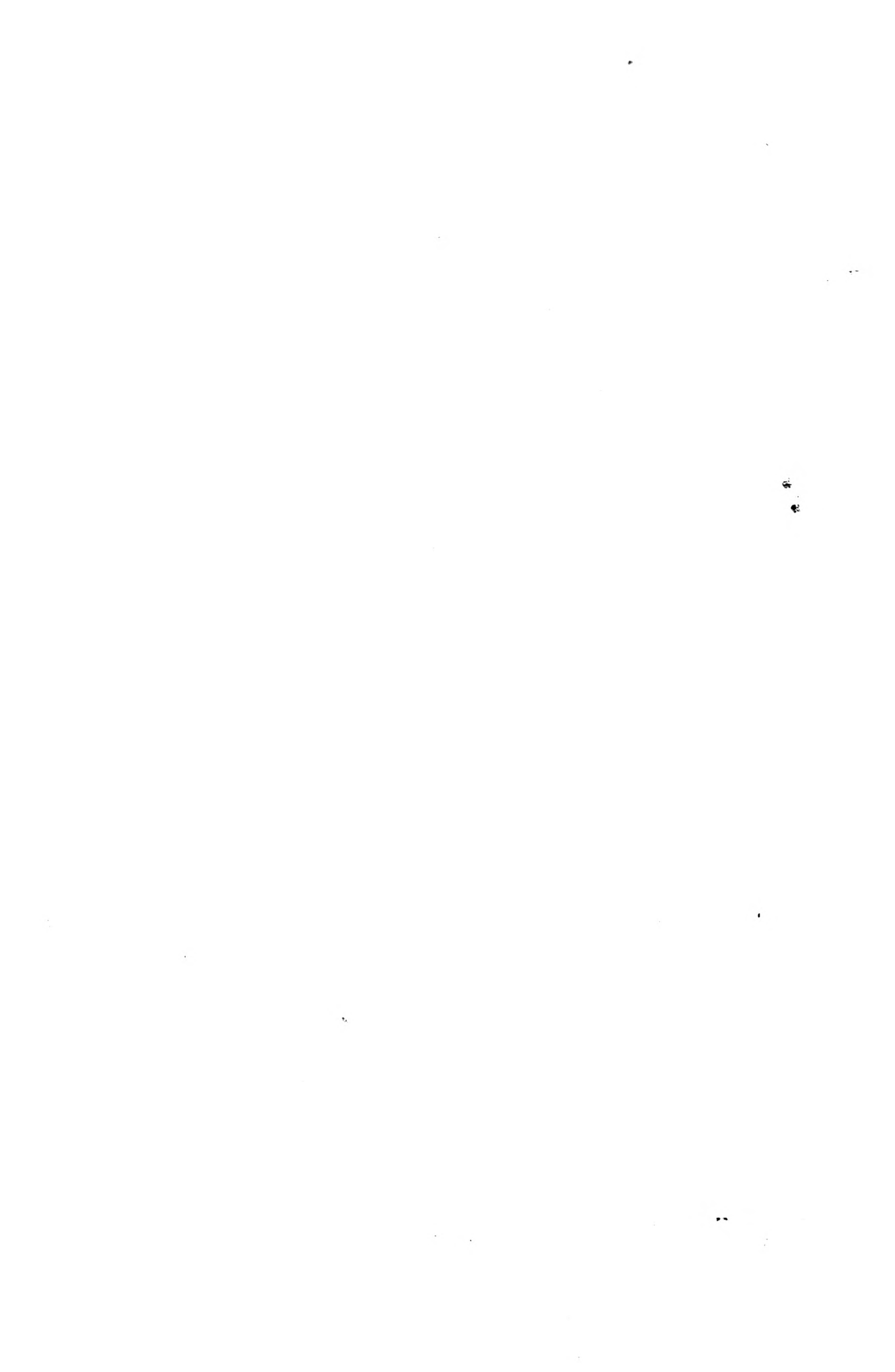
troubled part of the Israelite dominions, partly because it adjoined the hostile kingdom of the Syrian Damascus. Its blue hills are seen from Jezreel, which was, indeed, in a position commanding the principal route to and from the trans-Jordanic province.

The Jezreel, or Zerûm of to-day, is shown in the accompanying illustration (XXV.). The village is now quite humble; outside the cottages are stacks of produce and fuel, with some manure-heaps too. In the midst is a tower, reminding the traveller of the far finer tower which must have stood thereabouts in the day when the watchman descried Jehu driving furiously in the chariot. Behind the village are seen the blue hills north of Ramoth-Gilead, bounding the eastern horizon. On the right of the village is the slope of Gilboa, and on the left is the base of Little Hermon. In the foreground are some of the streamlets which rise in the undulations near the village, and flow westwards to join the Kishon. The good soil is covered with rising crops, and the stony ground with green herbage after the rain. The sky has that azure interspersed with white clouds, which is usually seen in the bright intervals between downpours of rain.

Turning our back upon Jezreel we face westwards, looking down the Plain of Esdraelon, right on to Carmel in the



JEZREEL.



distance, with the hills of Manasseh on our left, the hills of Nazareth being at some way off at our right.

The Kishon has its principal source among the hills of Manasseh somewhere between Dothan and the village of Kabâtiéh, already mentioned. After entering the Plain of Esdraelon, it passes by the reputed site of Megiddo, and that is the point to which we are now looking. Between this point and the Nazareth hills is the most fertile part of the plain. The Kishon has, however, another branch, fed by streams rising from Tabor or Little Hermon, and joining the main stream below, that is, to the west of the reputed Megiddo. The ancient ruins at Lujan are identified with the Legio of the Romans, and near to it the site of Megiddo was believed to be. Among recent authorities, however, Conder prefers to connect the site with the village of Majedd'a some miles off near the foot of Gilboa. At all events, the village of Taannak, near which we are passing, seems admitted on all hands to be the Taanach of which Deborah sang in her triumphal ode in conjunction with Megiddo.

Riding from Jezreel round the base of Little Hermon towards Nazareth, we see before us the reputed Plain of Megiddo, which is believed to be the Armageddon of Revelations—Har-mageddon, or hill of Megiddo. Historically, the

Plain is one of the great battlefields of Jewish times. Here was gathered the host of Jabin and Sisera, to be overthrown at a place which we shall presently see.

Near here, Shalmaneser the Assyrian broke the bow of Israel, in the declining days of that kingdom. This event must have occurred shortly before the final capture of Samaria. But its particulars are not given in the Second Book of Kings; allusion only is made to it by the prophet Hosea.

The next battle on this scene is that where Josiah, the good king of Judah, is slain,—the king of whom it is written that “like unto him there was no king before him that turned to the Lord with all his heart, neither after him arose there any like him.” He appears to have been in a sort of subject alliance with the Assyrians. The Egyptians were marching from Egypt against Assyria, evidently by the Mediterranean coast near Carmel, and entering the Esdraelon Plain, had reached Megiddo, where he encountered them. There he was shot mortally by an arrow in his chariot, and thence was carried dying or dead to Jerusalem for sepulture. Lamentations were sung for him, not only at the place of his burial, but also on the spot where he was stricken, somewhere near Megiddo. The reci-

tation only of the dirge is mentioned in Scripture. Josephus states that it was composed by Jeremiah. Perhaps it was the same as that in the 5th chapter of the Lamentations.

Leaving the plain of Megiddo on our left, and proceeding northwards, we pass near Solem, a modern village on the site of the ancient Shunem, where the Philistines encamped the day before the battle of Gilboa, and where Elisha brought back to life the widow's son who had been stricken by the heat on this burning plain in summer. Further on is the site of Nain, the scene of one of Our Lord's miracles. Both Shunem and Nain are near the foot of Little Hermon, or Mount Moreh, now called by the natives *Jebel-Duhy*.

The whole mountain of Tabor, which has for the most part been hidden from sight hitherto, now comes into full view—*est in conspectu*. Thus beheld, Tabor is perhaps the most beautiful, though not the most striking mountain in Palestine. Though not very high—2,000 feet above the sea—it rises right out of the Plain in isolated majesty. Its outline varies, of course, at very short intervals of distance. Its prevailing shape, by which it is usually recognised, is that of a broad dome. Its sides are steep and clothed with oak or terebinth forests, through which the grey rock frequently peeps. On the summit are the traces

of fortifications, "walls and great bevelled stones, Jewish and Roman" (Tristram); cisterns also, and the ruins of the castle erected by the Crusaders.

In the distance is seen the snow-white Hermon, thus recalling the text "Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy name."

In 1801, Clarke noted Tabor as "standing quite insular," and wrote thus of its appearance:—"It appears of a conical form entirely detached from any neighbouring mountain, and stands on one side of the Plain of Esdraelon."

The tradition which placed here the scene of the Transfiguration is no longer accepted. Indeed, "it must be rejected, as that event probably took place on Mount Hermon near Cæsarea Philippi" (Tristram, 1884). In his *Tent-work*, 1885, Conder writes—"In the accounts of Our Lord's Transfiguration, we read that whilst staying at Cæsarea Philippi, He retired with His disciples to 'a high mountain apart;' and there can be but little doubt that some part of Hermon . . . is intended." Moreover, that event occurred in a solitude, whereas Tabor was an occupied place.

Apart from this, however, Tabor is one of the situations strongly marked in the Old Testament history. It is

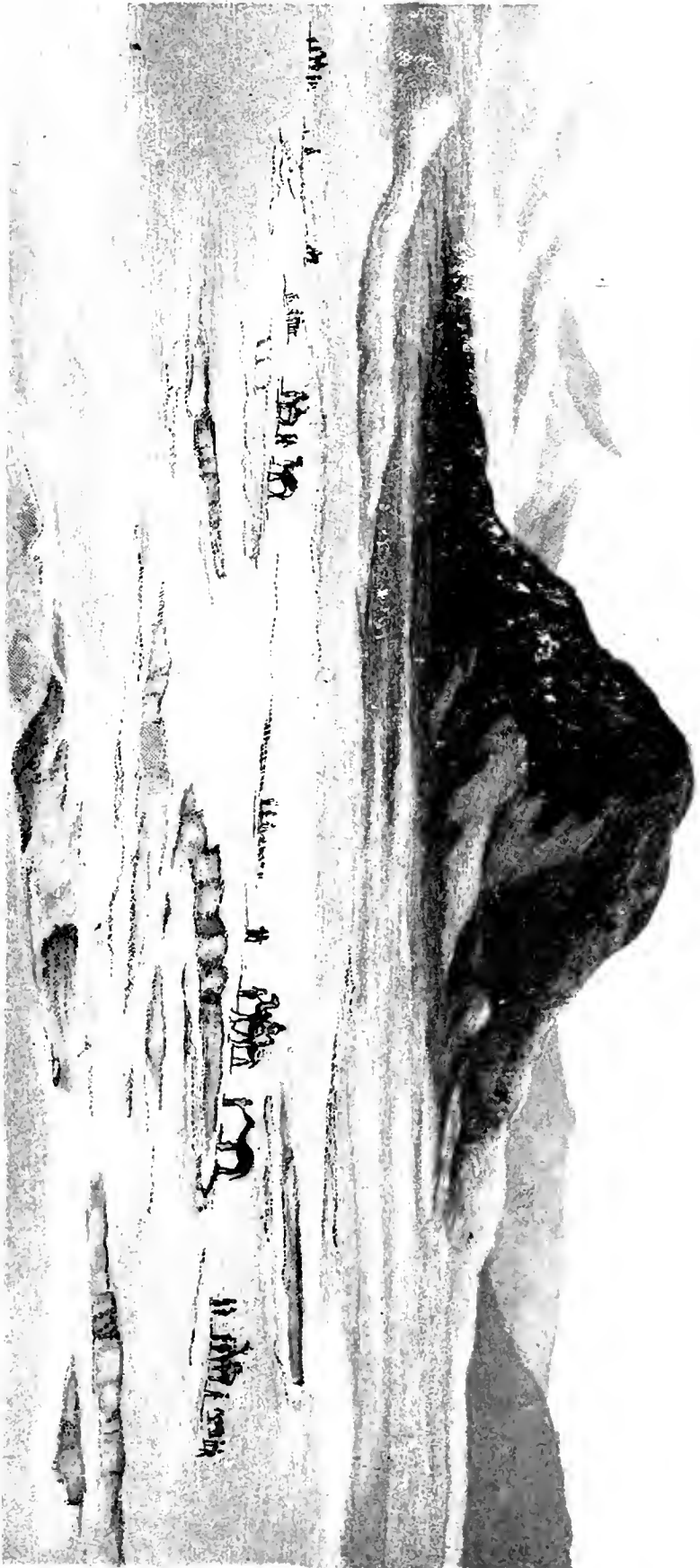
probably the mountain to which Moses, in the 33rd chapter of Deuteronomy, commanded the tribes of Zebulon and Issachar to assemble for sacrifices to the Lord of righteousness, Issachar being encamped in the Plain of Esdraelon, and Zebulon holding the hills of Galilee. It clearly appears to have been occupied by a town when Joshua's forces conquered the country. More particularly in the time of the Judges, it was the mountain whither the Prophetess Deborah directed Barak to assemble the soldiers of Zebulon, from the neighbouring hills of Naphtali who dwelt in the hills near Nazareth. This was to be the centre of the Israelite position in the coming contest with Jabin's host under the command of Sisera.

In order to understand the locality of this great battle, we must revert to that point in the Plain of Esdraelon when, rounding the base of Little Hermon, we first caught a full sight of Tabor. Riding northwards, in the direction of Nazareth, we approach a branch of the Kishon. Heretofore the river itself has been on our left, and we have crossed nothing save a few small feeder streams, the passage of which is quite easy in this bad weather. But now we must cross the broader and more quagmiry stream, which is a main branch of the Kishon, and which comes from Tabor.

The crossing of this stream is difficult after the recent rains, and we hastened to attempt it, lest more showers would fall and render it impracticable. It was crossed, however, without accident, both by our saddle-horses and our baggage-mules, though the water was high, with a swift current, and the mud very deep. There was enough to make us realise the Scriptural description of the Kishon in flood after a storm.

The situation is depicted in the illustration (XXVI). In the centre is Tabor, 1,500 feet above the Plain, which is 500 feet above the sea. In the background are the snowy Hermon and the trans-Jordanic mountains. On the right are the spurs of Little Hermon, on the left those of the Nazareth hills. In the foreground is the Kishon.

Recent research has shown that the catastrophe to Sisera's army occurred hereabouts on the Kishon, as Conder shows in his *Tent-work in Palestine*, 1885. The Canaanite camp under Sisera was in the southern part of the Plain of Esdraelon, near Taanach and Megiddo, as is set forth in Deborah's song of victory. The level ground there was suited for his nine hundred chariots of iron. His force had been collected here from all parts of the Canaanite dominions of Jabin, which apparently stretched from the Mediterranean



MOUNT TABOR.

coast north of Carmel to the base of Great Hermon, with their capital at Hazor south of that mountain. The ground near Megiddo was the most favourable that could be found for the operations of those chariots which constituted the principal arm of the force. Barak's force, consisting entirely of foot soldiers, had an unassailable position on Tabor, but must have come down thence to meet or to attack Sisera in the Plain. Probably Sisera advanced from Megiddo towards Tabor, with one branch of Kishon on his left flank, and the other branch (on which we are in imagination standing) on his front. The details of the battle are not given in Scripture; but a terrific hailstorm, with torrents of rain, descended to confuse the movements of the chariots. The foot soldiers of Barak took advantage of the storm to smite their enemy. The chariots were driven into the Kishon, and were swept away in the swelling current.

From this point we pass along the northern extremity of the Plain, with our faces towards the Nazareth hills. We do not forget that after the Christian era this Plain was the arena of several contests in mediæval and in modern history. The Crusaders and the Saracens contended here. In recent times the French and the Turks have fought here also. But our interest is fixed on the Scriptural events

which have made this Plain the most important plain on earth. Our Lord must have repeatedly crossed the Plain by the very route along which we are moving, and probably by other routes also.

Two of the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, were often crossing here, not as we cross, from south to north, but from west to east — that is, between Carmel and Jezreel. The Arabian aspect of some among the prophets, their rough but majestic bearing, their powerful stature, their rapid gait, their nervous eloquence, must have been familiar to the inhabitants of this Plain. Their garb, their gestures, their foreefulness, all suggestive of the wilderness, must have awed the gentler people of this more civilized region. He who is acquainted with the East of to-day can understand how, “revered by the people, but hated by the ruling class when their influence was directed against the court religion, the prophets, though solitary, poor and unaided, became powerful in times of religious revival.” (Conder, 1885.)

While we are unable to fix the local habitations or name the resting-places of the later prophets of Judah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, yet, with the two earlier prophets of Israel, Elijah and Elisha, their footsteps can be followed and their

movements throughout their lives can be traced. The spot whence Elijah was translated to heaven cannot be exactly known. Josephus writes, evidently alluding to the Scripture : “ Elijah disappeared from among men, and no one knows of his death to this very day.” But of Elisha he writes : “ Elisha performed wonderful works by prophecy, and such as were gloriously preserved in memory by the Hebrews. He also obtained a magnificent funeral.” (*Antiq.*, book ix. chap. ii. and viii.) Our attention is so fixed on the religious and prophetic functions of Elisha that it may be well to recollect the political position which he held. This is well expressed by Dean Stanley in his *Jewish Church*, Lect. xxxi. Elisha was “ the friend and councillor of kings. One king was crowned at his bidding and wrought at his will. Another consulted him in war . . . Even in Damascus his face was known. Benhadad treats him with filial respect ; Hazael trembled before him. Naaman hung on his words as on an oracle.” This mighty career was run among the places through which we are passing or whither we are tending.

As we ride on, the Plain is found fertile even to its northern extremity. As Fuller wrote, in 1650 : “ It is particularly observed of Issachar’s portion, he saw the land

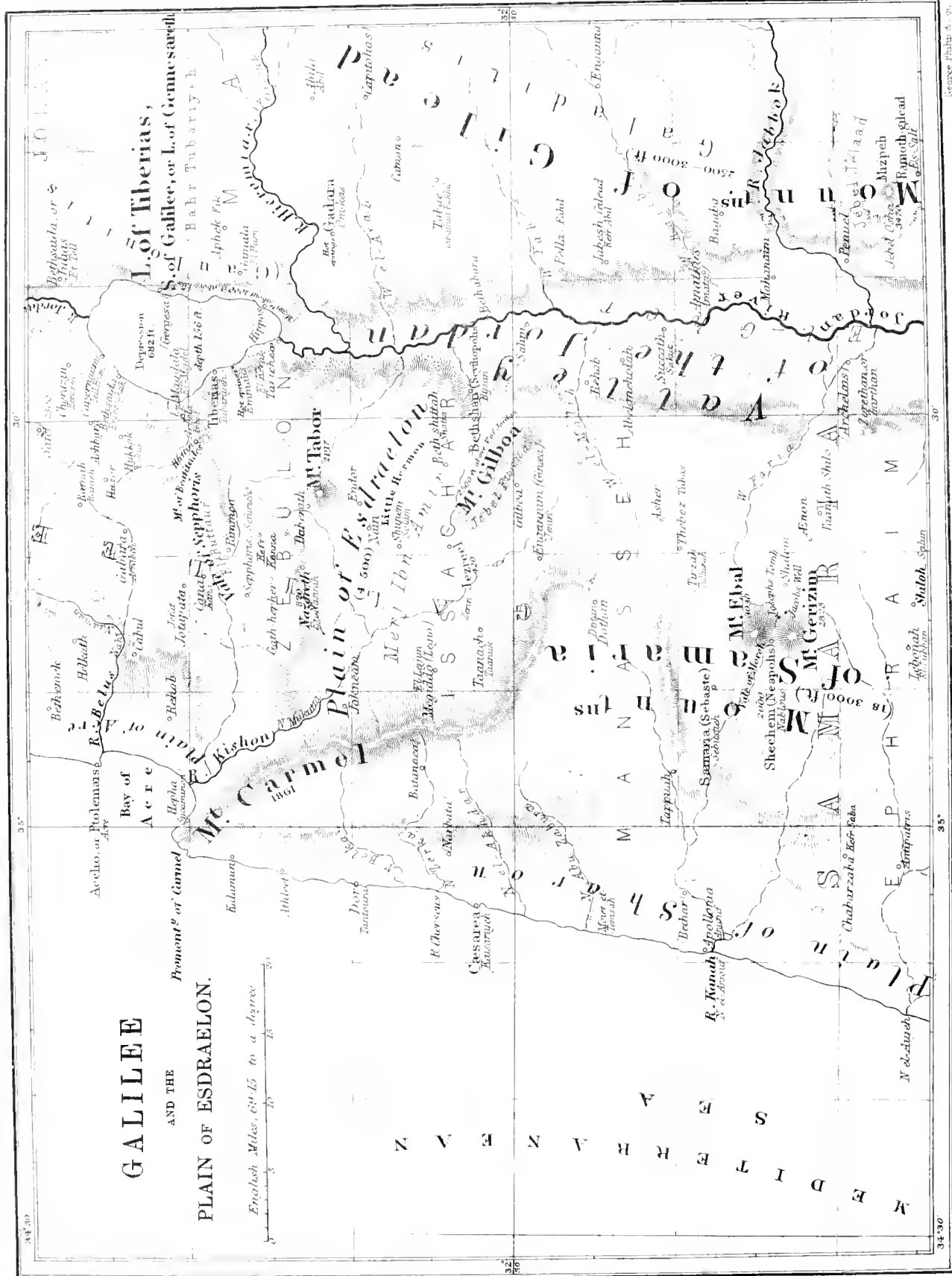
that it was pleasant, and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.”

Observing the sacred scenery, we feel that there may be the ear as well as the eye of faith. Thus, crossing the Plain from end to end, we seem to hear the cries of the drowning Canaanites under Sisera, the triumph-song of Deborah, the blare of Gideon's trumpets, the shouts of the Midianites in their confusion, the wailing of David over Saul and Jonathan, the dirge of the singing men and women from Jerusalem on the spot where the good king Josiah fell mortally stricken by an Egyptian arrow.

GALILEE

AND THE
PLAIN OF ESDRAELON.

English Miles, 15 to a degree



CHAPTER XIV.

NAZARETH.

Ascent from the Plain to Nazareth.—Traditional mount of Precipitation.—Situation of Nazareth.—Greek monastery.—Latin monastery.—My stay there.—Society for promoting Female Education in the East.—The Church Missionary Society.—Scene at the fountain.—Aspect of the people.—View of the town.—The Edinburgh mission.—Heights over the town.—View from there.—Promontory of Carmel.—German colony at Haifa.—Advantages of Nazareth for European residence.

OUR line of march is shown in the subjoined sketch-map. Crossing the Tabor branch of the river Kishon, and riding for a short distance along the Plain, we approach the Nazareth hills. Hereabouts the Mount of Precipitation becomes conspicuous. It is so called from being traditionally the point whence the Nazarenes sought to cast Our Lord down, as related in St. Luke's Gospel. This tradition is without authority, and derives no support from Scripture. Above Nazareth itself there are several precipitous crags, any one of which would be far better suited to the sacred narrative.

From the foot of the Nazareth Hills a sharp ascent begins. The roadway is stony, and in places consists of steps in the rocks. The passage, rising from the Plain to a height of several hundred feet, is formed by a ravine in the hill-side, and its sides show here and there the grey lime-stone. From the configuration of the country it is clear that this must have been the route always between Nazareth and Samaria, indeed one of the principal lines between Galilee and Judæa. When Our Lord journeyed southwards from Capernaum, or other towns on the Lake of Gennesareth, He would have gone by the foot of Tabor or by the Jordan Valley. But whenever He went from Nazareth to Samaria or Judæa, He must have journeyed by this way where we now are. Therefore this stony pathway up to, or down from Nazareth, must have been trodden by Him.

On reaching the brow of this ascent we find ourselves on an undulating plateau, and soon Nazareth comes into sight. From this, the first or lower view, the town seems to be nestling quietly in a hollow about eight hundred feet above sea-level. It is surrounded by green slopes, which, on the north-west side, are more marked in character, and may be reckoned as heights. From this point, then, the prospect is circumscribed. The town, according to a Syrian standard, is

clean and well-built, the natural drainage being good. It clings somewhat to the cliffs on the north-west side, and in that quarter the streets are steep. It has left the heights whereon the ancient village was partly built, and is now confined for the most part to the ground at their base. "The brow of the hill whereon their city was built," whence the men of Nazareth sought to cast Our Lord, is to be found on the cliffs above-mentioned. Tristram (*Bible Places*, 1884) writes: "In excavating the upper platform there have been recently found many traces of ancient buildings."

Tradition has marked a place as the dwelling of Joseph the carpenter, without any authority that can now be tested. But many a carpenter's workshop may be seen, the interior of which presents an idea of the interior of Joseph's dwelling as it must have actually been. The Greek community has a church and monastery on the alleged site of the Annunciation. The Latin, or Roman Catholic community, has similar structures commemorating the same event.

It was my fate to become particularly acquainted with the Latin monastery. For, being laid up with temporary indisposition, I took refuge there. The stormy weather, too, was unsuited for tent-life, so I was doubly glad of quiet shelter. The temperature was equable inside the thick walls of the

monastery, no want of fire was felt. The Superior kindly allotted to me, in my disabled condition, a light and airy chamber. Its walls, roof, and floor were all of stone; its furniture was simple, but the bed was excellent. The monks were hospitable and helpful, and one of them especially, Frère Jean, a Swiss by birth, was so good to me that I shall always remember him. He seemed to take much interest in my sketches, and in the memoranda which I was preparing during the leisure of this enforced inactivity. I was attended by a skilful doctor, an Armenian who had been medically educated in Scotland. He was employed by the Edinburgh Medical Mission, which had established a hospital and dispensary in the town.

Soon recovering, I was able to visit the fine structures and the efficient establishment of the Society for promoting female education in the East. The buildings are beautifully placed on a spur of the heights on the north-west side of the town already mentioned. They accommodate a large number of girls, both Christian and heathen, belonging to the various nationalities in Syria. The religious instruction is given in the vernacular Arabic as well as in English. On the Sunday I heard them sing their hymns in Arabic. The Church Missionary Society also has a mission here, with a school for

boys and girls. There is a Protestant population of several hundred souls, and a well-built English Church.

Thus the traveller will, at all seasons, find at Nazareth some cultured society from the British isles or from the Continent of Europe, more especially in the winter season. This society, too, will consist of ladies as well as gentlemen.

The most characteristic sight in Nazareth is the fountain where the women come in numbers every evening to draw water. They have a fair and ruddy complexion, sunburnt indeed, but not swarthy. Their features are regular, with a profile somewhat aquiline. Their head-dress, jackets, robes, display a variety of colouring. Around the head they have a pad whereon are strung the silver coins, which descend from mother to daughter, and from which the Parable of the lost piece of silver may have been taken. Their stature is tall and erect. Here, as elsewhere, the necessity of carrying daily on the head a pitcher full of water, straightens the figure, opens the chest, and with exercise imparts elegance as well as strength. The humble and the middle classes in and about Nazareth are handsomer than the peasantry in any country that I have ever seen. Marriage processions sometimes pass this way; I observed one where the costumes and the paraphernalia seemed to make the antique

past live again. The masonry structure over the fountain is not the same as that which must have existed in Jewish times. But the fountain itself, like other springs of the same sort in Palestine, has been used from ancient times, and must have been the principal fountain here in the days of Our Lord. The earliest Christian tradition affirms this also.

The water bursts forth from beneath the heights which overlook the town on the north. The point is near the road running through Nazareth to Tiberias, and on the main line between Samaria and Galilee. Around it is level ground suitable for the daily gathering of people to draw water. Near it is a green sward on which the traveller pitches his tents. As he watches the sight of an evening, the women coming singly or in knots, with the empty pitchers in their hands, and going away with the full pitchers on their heads, the bystanders from the town, the wayfarers from the north and south,—he may well imagine that such was the scene when Mary used to come with the Child Jesus to draw water.

Clarke wrote in 1801, regarding this place, “The spring is denominated the fountain of the Virgin Mary, and if there be a spot throughout the Holy Land that was undoubtedly honoured by her presence, we may consider this to have

been the place ; because the situation of a copious spring is not liable to change, and because the custom of repairing thither to draw water has been continued from the earliest ages."

Tristram (*Bible Places*, 1884,) writes thus : " Often and often may the Infant Saviour have passed with his mother, as the boys do now, following her. The path under the olive trees . . . is one of the few where we may be perfectly sure that we are treading in His earthly footsteps."

From the height close to the fountain is the upper view of Nazareth, as distinguished from the lower view already described. In the latter, nothing was seen except the town in the mountain-basin. In this upper view, the town is still seen in its nest, so to speak, amidst the hills. The " rim of hills, bare, rocky, and treeless," the " semi-circle of steep cliffs " (Tristram), are fully apparent. But further the position of the range is shown, relatively to the Plain of Esdraelon. The flat, pale-green expanse is seen in the distance. Beyond it the northern face of the Manasseh hills bounds the horizon with a long line of pearly-grey. We are looking south at the fifth of our great views.

Such then is the view of Nazareth, now called Nasrah or En-Nazirah, as shown in the illustration overleaf (XXVII.).

The town occupies the middle of the picture, and is beneath the eye. In it are seen the towers and spires of Christian churches, and the walls of Greek or Latin monasteries. Amidst these are one or two Moslem minarets. On the right, in an elevated position, is the spacious structure belonging to the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East. In the low hills beyond the town and overlooking the Plain, is seen a dip or cleft. This is the rocky road already mentioned, by which our Lord must have ascended and descended. In the distance are the Plain of Esdraelon and the mountains of Samaria.

The pathway in the foreground is the route from Nazareth to Capernaum, and close behind our stand-point is the new hospital built by the Edinburgh Mission.

Proceeding westwards from the height near the new hospital, we ascend easily to a more elevated level about 1,200 feet above the Mediterranean, to a point marked by a small Moslem shrine. From this point or hereabouts a prospect presents itself, which indeed for comprehensiveness and beauty is hardly to be surpassed. Canon Farrar, in his *Life of Christ*, thus describes this view as he saw it on Easter Sunday, 1870.

“To the north lay the fertile and narrow plain of



NAZARETH.

Asochis (now called Butauf), from which rise the wood-crowned hills of Naphtali; and, conspicuous on one of them was Safêd, 'the city set upon a hill'; beyond there, on the far horizon, Hermon upheaved into the blue the splendid mass of his colossal shoulder, white with snows. Eastwards, at a few miles distance, rose the green and rounded summit of Tabor, clothed with terebinth and oak. To the west . . . the purple ridge of Carmel, among whose forests Elijah had found a home; and Caifa with Accho (Acre), and the dazzling line of white sand which fringes the waves of the Mediterranean, dotted here and there with the white sails of the ships of Chittim. Southwards, broken only by the graceful outlines of Little Hermon and Gilboa, lay the entire plain of Esdraelon. . . . However peaceful it might then look, green as a pavement of emeralds, rich with its gleams of vivid sunlight, and the purpling shadows which floated over it from the clouds — it had been for centuries the battle-field of nations."

After this description by an earnest observer, a geographical summary of the view will suffice. The main points deserve to be carefully noted; for without doubt Our Lord must often have rested on this spot during the early years

of His life on earth. I had the good fortune to behold it during a lovely afternoon.

To the north, on a somewhat steep eminence overlooking the upland plain of Butauf, stands the town of Sefûrieh on the site of the ancient Sepphoris. As the strongest place in this Roman province of Galilee, Sepphoris plays a distinguished part in Josephus' history. Beyond Sefûrieh are seen the mountains of Naphtali constituting the northern boundary of Galilee. Among those mountains is the hill of Safêd, which, in some of the sunlight effects, is very conspicuous, and which will be further noticed hereafter. On their north-east end, the snowy cone of Great Hermon towers up. Then to the east the undulations of the uplands beyond Nazareth roll away to the foot of Kurûn-Hattin, a hill which will be mentioned again in this narrative. Nazareth itself is hidden from our sight by the ground on which we are standing. On the east again and the south-east are Tabor, Little Hermon and Gilboa. On the south is the whole plain of Esdraelon, bounded by the hills of Manasseh and Samaria. The aspect of the Plain is the same as that which has been described in the last preceding chapter. But the position is exactly reversed; we then regarded it from the south, we are now regarding it from the north. On the south-west is the whole of the

Carmel ridge stretching out with great length into the Mediterranean. At its foot and on its north side the sea forms a large bay. This is the Bay of Acre, forming the western part of our view. From our height, several hundred feet, and at a distance of fifteen miles, the sea has hues of tender blue. On its margin the sandy shore is clearly seen. The tops of the buildings in the town of Acre can just be descried. Between our point and the sea-shore are the low hills beneath the eye, which flank the Galilæan plateau. Thus the landscape comprises a broad expanse of sea and earth. The eye can range from the blue water and the yellow sand, to the snow-white summit reared against the azure sky. Green plains of large extent are contrasted with ranges of rugged mountains. But the scene is wanting in forests, though some woods here and there are to be found.

The position of Hermon, of the Plain, and of the surrounding mountains have been described in our last preceding Chapter XIII. The great feature yet to be mentioned is Carmel. One aspect of this mountain has been already described in our Chapter XII. But the characteristic aspect is that which now presents itself. Indeed, from no point can the geographical portion of the mountain be so well understood, as from that on which we are now placed.

In Chapter VIII. Carmel (now called Karmul or Mar-Elyâs) was shown to be geographically the western arm or branch of the Central Ridge in Palestine. Thus it juts out into the Mediterranean as an extended promontory, and is the one marked feature in the coast of the Holy Land from Acre to Ascalon. Most mountains of this height (1800 feet above sea level) have stately heads. But Carmel displays only a straight back which has breadth as well as length. On it are the woods, the glades, the shrubs and wild flowers, which caused this mountain-top to be regarded by the Jews as their national park. The position is further marked by the famous monastery of the Carmelite friars. The sides are scarped and almost perpendicular, rising right over the waves. At the base of the buff's and cliffs, a narrow strip of ground separates the rock from the water, and winds round the edge of the promontory. This line and the line by Dothan on the other side of the mountain were once of strategic importance. By one or both of them, the Philistines marched to do battle with Saul at Jezreel. Through them the Egyptian host came to overthrow king Josiah at Megiddo. As already noticed, the coast north of the Carmel promontory forms the Bay of Acre. The Kishon flows into this bay after draining the whole plain of Esdraelon. Just north of the Kishon

mouth is the German colony of Haifa, modern, clean and pleasant.

The memory of Elijah's sacrifice still survives locally, despite the centuries of Moslem rule. The view which we are now taking of the mountain is the one best suited for understanding that memorable event. The summit commanding a broad prospect over the drought-stricken land on one side and the sea shimmering under the cloudless sky on the other, the anxious watching for some sign in the heavens to herald the rain, the small cloud at last appearing above the sea-horizon, are all brought home to the mind.

This view being close to Nazareth helps to make the place what it is, the pleasantest station in all Palestine for European residents, and more advantageous in respect to comfort than Jerusalem, Bethlehem, or Nablûs. The heights on which we stand are salubrious and exhilarating. Their elevation suffices to mitigate the heat, and yet are free from the snow-storms which trouble Central Palestine in the winter. Cheerfulness reigns here, instead of the melancholy which broods over many places in the Holy Land. The fresh breezes from the Mediterranean can always be enjoyed. Within two days a European resident or sojourner may reach the monastery on Carmel, and the climate up there would be delightful to an

invalid. One day's march would take him to the German colony at Haifa on the coast, as we have seen, where the Levantine steamers often touch. He might, in one day's march again, reach the seaport of Acre, but it is to be recollected that steamers do not usually call there. Proximity to the coast, in event of accident or of the sickness incidental to the East, is always a consideration with Europeans in Palestine.

Our present view is the last of the six great views which we meet with during our journey.

It is represented in the subjoined illustration (XXVIII.). The sky is that of a fine afternoon which intervenes between spells of rain. The principal object is the long-stretching headland of Carmel. The Mediterranean is washing its feet and touching the sandy strand of Acre. Between the spectator and the coast line, are seen low hills which flank the Galilæan plateau. Nearer the eye are the rolling uplands which are but slightly cultivated and for the most part bare, but have at this season, the end of winter, a thin scanty covering of young herbage.

GALILEAN UPLANDS AND CARMEL.



CHAPTER XV.

GALILEE.

Ancient area of Galilee.—Upper and Lower divisions.—Heritage of Zebulon and Naphtali.—Historic hill of Kurûn-Hattin.—Plain of Butauf.—View of Safèd at sunset.—History of the place.—Snowy Hermon in the distance.—Road towards Tiberias.—Cana of Galilee.—Scene at the fountain.—Topography of the Galilæan plateau.—Atmosphere portending storm.—Village of Lubieh.—Near view of Kurûn-Hattin.—Possibly Mount of Beatitudes.

MARCHING from Nazareth north-eastwards, we are in the interior of Galilee. Its geography is before our eyes, its associations in our minds.

The name Galilee, pronounced locally Jalil, has been understood to come from a Hebrew word meaning "circuit," or circle, but the better derivation appears to be from the root meaning "to roll." The area was not a contracted one, but must have been extensive. The first mention of it in Scripture occurs in the 20th chapter of Joshua, where Kadesh-Naphtali is stated to be in Galilee. This Kadesh was near the lake of Merom

on the east, in the upper basin of the Jordan. Again, the 9th chapter of the First Book of Kings states that Solomon, in return for the timber used in building the temple at Jerusalem, gave King Hiram of Tyre twenty cities in Galilee. To this piece of territory Hiram gave the name of Caubul. Now that Caubul was on the west, not far from the Mediterranean. Thus ancient Galilee must have had one of its flanks resting on the land of the Phenicians, and the other on the land of the Syrians of Damascus. It comprised Zebulon's inheritance, and part of Naphtali's, all in the hills. It also embraced the inheritance of Issachar, on the Esdraelon Plain. The Jewish inhabitants, exposed to Gentile inroads, were wilder and rougher than their brethren in the south. They were "bewrayed" by the uncouth accent of their Hebrew. They were strict and orthodox in their faith and observance.

Josephus divides the territory into two parts: upper Galilee, with a watershed on the west, near the Jordan, 2,800 feet above the sea, and with Mount Jermûk, near the Mediterranean, 4,000 feet; lower Galilee, with some hills, 1,800 feet above the sea, with some maritime lowlands, and with the Plain of Esdraelon.

Having become a Roman province, Galilee acquired an undying name as the scene of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark,

and Luke, and as the place where Christianity was first unfolded to be a guide for human life.

Our march will be through the uplands of Lower Galilee, as above defined. These lie between the shore of the Mediterranean, about Acre, and the basin of the Jordan about the Lake of Tiberias, a distance of twenty miles from west to east. The breadth, from south to north, extends to the ridge near Nazareth, overlooking the plain of Esdraelon, to the mountains of upper Galilee.

In these Galilæan uplands a noteworthy hill rises up, named Kurûn-Hattin, and divides the area roughly into two parts, usually called plains. Of these the south-eastern or smaller is regarded as the plain of Hattin, and through it our march will run. The north-western or larger is well known as the plain of Butauf. Both plains are dotted with villages of ancient origin, and are fairly well cultivated. Their average elevation above the Mediterranean may be reckoned at 900 feet, and above the Lake of Gennesareth, which is on a much lower level, at 1,500 feet. The climate in the summer is cooler than that of the Acre coast, of the Jordan Valley, or of the Esdraelon Plain ; but not so cool as that of the highlands in Samaria and Judæa. There will generally be a current of fresh air from the Mediterranean to mitigate heat. In

winter the breeze will freshen to a gale, and though snow rarely or never falls, there will be storms of rain and hail.

On the evening before we started from Nazareth for Tiberias, I went to the height near the new hospital to obtain an outlook towards the Galilæan uplands. At that moment I beheld one of the finest sights which has been met with during my journey.

A brilliant sunset was following a stormy afternoon. The clouds, in violet-grey masses, were rolling across a golden sky. The rays of the declining sun left some parts of the mountains obscure in shadow, and lighted up others with concentrated brilliancy. Thus, looking northwards to the mountains of Naphtali, I saw that the sun-light had caught a square-topped steep-sided hill, and was literally illuminating it. The orange-colour of the hill was set off by the purple and blue of the mountains above and beyond. Attentive observation showed that the top must be fortified and inhabited. It is understood to be granite projecting from the midst of limestone. This is Safêd, already mentioned in the last chapter. Looking to the north-east, I saw that the same atmospheric effect was causing the snow-pyramid of Hermon to shine like a star in the midst of gathering

vapours. It was fortunate that the light should thus catch Safêd and Hermon simultaneously.

The light, too, set forth to advantage the position of Safêd. This has been regarded as the place to which Our Lord pointed, when He told the disciples that they were to be as a city set on a hill. Safêd answers to this description eminently well, being visible everywhere in this part of the country, and conspicuous from any of the hill-tops west of the Lake of Gemesareth. It must have been from one of these summits that our Lord delivered His Sermon on the Mount, and presented the image of a city on a hill as an example for human conduct.

Safêd is not mentioned in Scripture, nor in any classical work, unless it be the Sefh of Josephus in his history of the Jewish wars. No proof exists of its having been inhabited before the Christian era. But the probability remains that so valuable a position as this would never have been left unoccupied. Dean Stanley writes thus upon the question:—"Dr. Robinson has done much to prove that Safêd itself is a city of modern date. But if any city or fortress existed on that site at the time, it is difficult to doubt the allusion to it in 'the city lying on a mountain top' (Matthew v. 14)."

After the Christian era its history was famous. It was crowned with a spacious castle by the Crusaders. It was garrisoned by the Knights Templar, and in the end its Christian governor, having capitulated together with his garrison to the Moslem, was faithlessly murdered. It became one of the holy cities of the Jews, and a seat of Rabbinical learning. It has been twice overthrown by earthquakes, once in 1759 and again in 1837. Decadence has been the natural consequence of these disasters.

The view of Saféd, as I saw it that evening, is depicted in the accompanying illustration (XXIX.). In the middle of the picture is the citadel rock, standing out brilliantly against the purple mountains of Naphtali. On the right of it and in the distance is Hermon, snow-white amidst masses of grey vapour. In the middle distance are the low hills which flank the Galilæan uplands. In the foreground is the ancient and the modern road from Nazareth to Capernaum.

From this point we proceed the next morning on the road towards Tiberias, and soon arrive at the village of Kefr-Kanna, which is probably the Cana of Galilee in St. John's Gospel. The village is a large one, situated on a broad hillock; it is surrounded by olive-groves and fig-orchards.



SAFÉD, THE CITY SET ON A HILL.

For the latter the hedge consists of prickly-pear, a species of cactus which grows to a very large size in Galilee. Near the village are a fountain and a reservoir, both very ancient. These must doubtless have existed in the time of our Lord, and have since continued without material change. Clarke, who passed by this road in 1801, wrote thus: "About a quarter of a mile before we entered the village is a spring of delicious limpid water, close to the road, whence all the water is taken for the supply of the village."

Along the roadway, leading from the village to the fountain, strings of women are daily moving backwards and forwards to draw water. The scene at this fountain with the figures, the costumes, the rustic crowd, resembles that already described at the fountain of Nazareth. It is depicted in the illustration which forms the frontispiece of this book.

The best opinions now incline to fix here the site of Cana of Galilee. But in past times another village named Kanna, some seven miles off on the north side of the Buttauf plain, has been generally regarded as the Cana of St. John's Gospel. For this belief the only authority is tradition. We learn from St. John's Gospel that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was present at the marriage feast, and that He went

thence to Capernaum. Now the Kefr-Kanna, where we are standing, is close to Nazareth whence Mary might easily come, and is on the road to Capernaum whither He was going. Whereas Kanna of Butauf was at a short distance from Nazareth, and could hardly have been in neighbourly contact with the Nazarenes. It was also some way off the Capernaum road. Further, our Lord had come from Bethabara beyond Jordan, or as it should be written Bethania, and reached Cana on the third day. The position of this Bethania is not determined. If, as some authorities hold, it was near the Jordan opposite the valley that leads up to Jezreel, then the journey to Galilee could easily be accomplished within three days, and our Lord may have gone as far as Kanna of Butauf. But if we believe that He set out from some point to the south, near the fords opposite Jericho, then the journey to Galilee in three days would be hard and fatiguing, and He would have reached Kefr-Kanna only in time for the feast of the evening on the third day. There would not have been time to go as far as Kanna of Butauf. The probability is in favour of Kefr-Kanna being the Cana of Our Lord's ministration. It is sometimes called Kanna-ul-Jalil locally.

From this Cana of Galilee we march onwards to a

rocky hollow, environed with boulders and decked with flowering shrubs. The flowers on the shrubs have not come into bloom, but are beginning to appear and to give promise of their future beauty. The shelving ground is carpeted with plants that will shortly put forth flowers of every hue. Meanwhile, their verdure is exquisite and their dewy fragrance is refreshing. Seated on a stone in the depth of this hollow, embosomed in little hillocks just high enough to hide all objects round about, the traveller feels as if for a moment left alone with the rocks, the shrubs, the herbage. The temptation is strong to linger amidst the beauties of this recess in the heart of Galilee. But the dragoman quickly points to the sky with a warning that we must lose no time in proceeding to Tiberias. For a mist very unusual in Palestine, is stealing over the earth and sky, not quite obscuring the landscape, but draping the heaven in grey, and casting a leaden hue upon all objects. It reminds me at first of northern latitudes and is pleasant enough, but reflection convinces me that an atmospheric condition, so strange in Palestine as this, must portend mischief sooner or later. So we make as much haste as the clay and loamy soil, heavy after recent rain, may allow.

Crossing the ploughed fields, with the cereal crops just

springing forth, we pass by Lûbieh, a large village situated as usual on a hillock. Then the hill of Kurûn-Hattin comes in sight. Its form is marked decidedly as a massive oblong, without trees or brushwood but clothed with green herbage. On its flat top are two knolls, imagined by the country people to be horns; hence the name Kurûn-Hattin, "the horns of Hattin." The name Hattin is derived from a neighbouring village.

This then is the subject of the illustration (XXX.), with the grey sky, and our road in the foreground.

The hill or mountain is 1,200 feet above the Mediterranean and 1,800 feet above the Lake of Genesareth. It stands, as we shall find presently, on the ridge of the descent leading straight down to the Lake of Genesareth. It is a conspicuous object from the shores of the Lake and from nearly every part of the surrounding region. It is often called by modern authorities, as well as by tradition, the Mount of Beatitudes, in the belief that probably this is the place to which our Lord ascended in order to deliver the Sermon on the Mount. Certainly, of all places near the Lake, this is the one which accords best with the ideas suggested by the sacred narrative. But the language of Scripture on the point is not sufficiently



precise for a determination of the spot, and probability alone affords reason for identification. Clarke, who ascended it in 1801, wrote of it thus: "The Mount where it is believed that Christ preached to His disciples that memorable Sermon. . . . We left our route to visit this elevated spot, and, having attained the highest point of it, a view was presented, which, for its grandeur, has no parallel in the Holy Land."

Not for me, however, is this prospect, though the ascent is easy, for the atmosphere cast a veil over all distant objects. But I sketch carefully the hill itself, its sides greenish with tender grass and herbage after the recent rains, its grey rocks, its boulders determining the course of a streamlet at the base.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LAKE OF GENNESARETH.

First view of Lake of Gennesareth.—State of the atmosphere.—Descent from the ridge to Tiberias.—Present state of the town.—The Jews dwelling there.—The boat on the Lake.—Plain of Gennesareth.—Description by Josephus.—Sites of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida.—Desolate shore.—Sacred associations.—Herod the Tetrarch and Tiberias.—Ruins on margin of Lake.—Sulphur baths.—Sunset scene.—Storm at night.—Refuge in monastery.—View in the morning.—Lake after storm.—Mountains on the eastern shore.—Aphék and Gadara.—Siege of Gamala.—Departure from Tiberias.—Heavy weather on Galilæan plateaux.—Sefûrieh, the ancient Sepphoris.—Its history.

PASSING over the undulations of Hattin we soon reach the brow of the descent that leads straight down to Tiberias. By this time the obscurity, already described as resting upon earth and sky, had become somewhat deeper and thicker. Near objects only could be seen distinctly, distant objects could with difficulty be perceived at all. Arriving at the ridge which is here the flank of the Galilæan plateau, I was at first sight astonished to find before me nothing

but a vast blank which seemed to end in an abyss beneath my feet. Looking attentively, I began to see that the abyss was really the Lake of Gennesareth nearly 1,800 feet below the eye, and that the blank was the mountainous region beyond the Lake on the east. The sheet of water and the sky were of the same monotonous hue. The one was divided from the other by the mountains which were so hazy as to be but shadows of their proper selves. Lake, mountains, and sky, seemed as if merged in one vacant space. Such was my first sight of the sacred Lake, and to many this would be a sorry sort of view. Perhaps it was worth seeing for the sake of its strangeness. It must be quite different from that which is ordinarily beheld at this point by the traveller from Galilee. After riding for some time over the plateau with no distant prospect visible, he ascends the ridge. Suddenly the Lake blue as the sky above, and the purple mountains beyond, burst upon his delighted vision. I had no chance of seeing the view as it usually is, and can only imagine, from the accounts of other travellers, what it must be. Nothing tempted us to linger, on the contrary, everything portended atmospheric disturbance and warned us to advance quickly. The descent is comparatively easy, and in the course of an hour or more we

found ourselves at Tiberias on the western shore of the Lake.

Tiberias, now called Tabariyeh, is a small Turkish town, walled round and to some slight extent fortified especially on the side facing the Lake. On that side, the walls, being washed by the Lake, are somewhat picturesque. On the northern end is a Latin or Roman Catholic monastery, well situated and overlooking the water. Outside the walls in the same direction are the ruins of a castle. The streets of the town are poor and narrow, with the minarets of mosques here and there. Besides the Moslems there is a small Jewish population. The Jews here have an aspect of depression and seem to impersonate melancholy, their sallow faces being in contrast with their black robes. Outside the walls on the west side is a Jewish cemetery, where several renowned Rabbis, of the middle ages and of modern times, are interred. The Jews constitute the town as one of their four holy cities, and give it equal rank with the other three, Jerusalem, Hebron, and Safêd. Their belief is understood to be that the Messiah will rise from the Lake of Tiberias and reign at Safêd. The whole country hereabouts has suffered severely from earthquakes recurring at intervals of time. At the best, the modern Tiberias must

be the abode of sadness. But it looks doubly sad in this threatening weather. The ruins of the ancient Tiberias are at a short distance to the south of the present town.

As yet the surface of the Lake is smooth, and the air, though murky, is still. I therefore arranged to row in a boat and see something of the historic shore. Two boats only exist at Tiberias, one of which is procured for us. This fact represents an utter decline from the Christian era when the shore hereabouts was crowded with hundreds of fishing boats. However, the boat we have is good of its kind, and we row northwards. We soon pass a cluster of huts named Mejdal, the site of Magdala in our Lord's time. We observe the shore, which is at first hilly and then opens out into the Plain of Gennesareth, the ancient Chinnaroth. If the Plain of Esdraelon is the most historic in the world, that of Gennesareth is the most sacred. Within the area of Gennesareth many of our Lord's ministrations were vouchsafed to mankind. Josephus (*Jewish Wars*, book iii. chapter x.) who, as a contemporary historian, knew the locality well, as it appeared in our Lord's time, gave a remarkable description. Modern explorers have often adverted to this description, which may be cited here, as we are rowing in front of the very shore.

“Now this Lake of Gennesareth is so called from the country adjoining to it. Its breadth is forty furlongs and its length one hundred and forty; its waters are sweet and very agreeable for drinking . . . the Lake is pure and ends directly at the shores and in the sand The country also that lies over against this lake hath the same name of Gennesareth; its nature is wonderful as well as its beauty; its soil is so fruitful that all sorts of trees can grow upon it; and the inhabitants accordingly plant all sorts of trees there, for the temper of the air is so well mixed that it agrees very well with those several sorts. Particularly walnuts which require the coldest air, flourish there in vast plenty; there are also palm trees which grow best in hot air; fig-trees also and olives grow near them, which yet require an air that is more temperate. One may call this place the ambition of nature, where it forces those plants that are naturally enemies to one another, to agree together; it is a happy contention of the seasons, as if every one of them laid claim to this country It supplies men with the principal fruits, with grapes and figs continually during ten months of the year, and the rest of the fruits as they become ripe together through the whole year; for besides the good temperature of the air, it is also watered from a most

fertile fountain. The people of the country call it Capharnaum (Kefr-Nahum); some have thought it to be a vein of the Nile, because it produces the Coracin fish as well as that lake does which is near to Alexandria. The length of this country extends itself, along the bank of this lake, for thirty furlongs, and is in breadth twenty." (Whiston's translation.)

The notice of the fountain and of the Coracin fish has been much discussed by explorers. There is a spring called "The round fountain," which still irrigates the plain and produces this fish. (Conder, *Tent Work*, 1885.)

We now perceive little except desolation. But the luxuriance of the wild vegetation attests the capacities of the soil which had been left untilled for many centuries. Tristram (*Bible Places*) describes it as a wilderness carpeted with wild flowers. In several places the remains are found, not only of classical structures, but also of Jewish synagogues. We have but a vague and distant glimpse of the three cities joined in Our Lord's denunciation in the 11th chapter of St. Mathew's Gospel and 10th of St. Luke's. The village of Khan Minieh is thought to be that Bethsaida, as distinguished from Bethsaida Julias at some distance to the north. The village of Tel-Hâm probably represents Capernaum

or Kefr-Nahum. There was an ancient tomb of Nahum, which existed long after the Christian era, but that is now lost. (Conder, *Tent Work*.) It has not yet been determined conclusively whether the true site of Capernaum is at Khan Minieh or at Tel-Hâm. The two places are less than three miles apart. At all events, one or other of the ruins must comprise the synagogue in which our Lord was present. The site still known to the natives as Kerazah represents the Chorazin of Scripture.

These things we apprehend dimly from the boat, hoping to return on the morrow. Meanwhile we note the vacant beach, once the seat of a fishing industry; the silent shore, once resounding with the hum of multitudes; the blank scene, once gay with white sails and many-coloured costumes; the flat ground, once studded with houses and synagogues. On this deserted strand was moored the boat from the prow of which, as from a pulpit, our Lord delivered the parable of the Sower and the Seed. Within sight are the several features in the parable, as they were derived from the husbandry of those days, which indeed exists up to this day. There is the way-side, represented by the foot-paths winding through the cornfields in an unenclosed country; the stony places adjoining the ploughed

soil; the thorns springing up amidst the crops; the plots of good soil in the hollows of the undulating ground. In St. Matthew's Gospel, this parable is followed by other parables, which must have been spoken at nearly the same time and place. Hereabouts then is the scene of the parables, of the tares, of the mustard seed, of the leaven, of the hidden treasure, of the pearl, of the draw-net. Now is the moment to read the 13th chapter of St. Matthew from the 1st to the 35th verse. Here were the fishermen at their work, from among whom our Lord chose most of His twelve apostles. Here too, He held one of His last earthly meetings with them after the Crucifixion, as related in the 21st chapter of St. John's Gospel.

On the eastern shore are mountains replete with Biblical associations. But these are half-concealed by the haze. To the north, Hermon with his snowy head is ordinarily the prime object in the view, and forms the loveliest background to the blue Lake. But now in that direction there is nothing save the dullest blank.

In the spring season the borders all round the Lake are fringed with wild flowers and flowering shrubs, among which the iris claims admiration, and the oleanders "waving with their rosy tufts of bloom one sheet of pink." (Tristram). But

the time has not yet arrived for this natural adornment to appear.

Thus the ordinary beauties of this Lake-scenery were not beheld by me; and I must leave the description of them to those travellers who may have been present in the spring-tide and under a favouring sky. But then I saw atmospheric phenomena which set forth the sacred associations most impressively, as will be presently explained.

With some disappointment we turn our boat's head back towards Tiberias. The dragoman said, looking over the Lake's expanse: *Notre Seigneur a marché sur ces eaux.*

Passing by the modern Tiberias, we make straight for the south-west corner of the lake, and soon are opposite the ruins of the ancient city of which Josephus writes: "Now Herod the Tetrarch, who was in favour with Tiberius, built a city of the same name and called it Tiberias. Strangers came and inhabited this city, many inhabitants were Galileans also" (*Antiq.*, book xvii. chap. ii.). It does not appear that our Lord ever came to this semi-foreign city while ministering amidst the towns and villages of Gennesareth, a few miles off. The ruins are extensive, but almost shapeless. The ordinary progress of decay has doubtless been hastened by earthquakes. The masses of masonry not only extend to

the Lake's edge, but are also to be seen under water, and in several places project to some height above the surface, almost like towers. The projections are believed to be parts of Herod's palace, and the traveller wonders how the structure could have been built in the Lake at a little distance from the shore, like an island palace connected perhaps by a causeway with the mainland. The fact, however, is that earthquakes have here, as elsewhere, disturbed the original formation of the ground. Part of the mainland has doubtless been submerged, and with it many ancient buildings, of which portions only raise their heads above water. Here, too, the Lake has slightly encroached upon its old margin. The mountain with a serrated ridge and a jagged outline abuts the Lake, and forms a fitting background to the ruins.

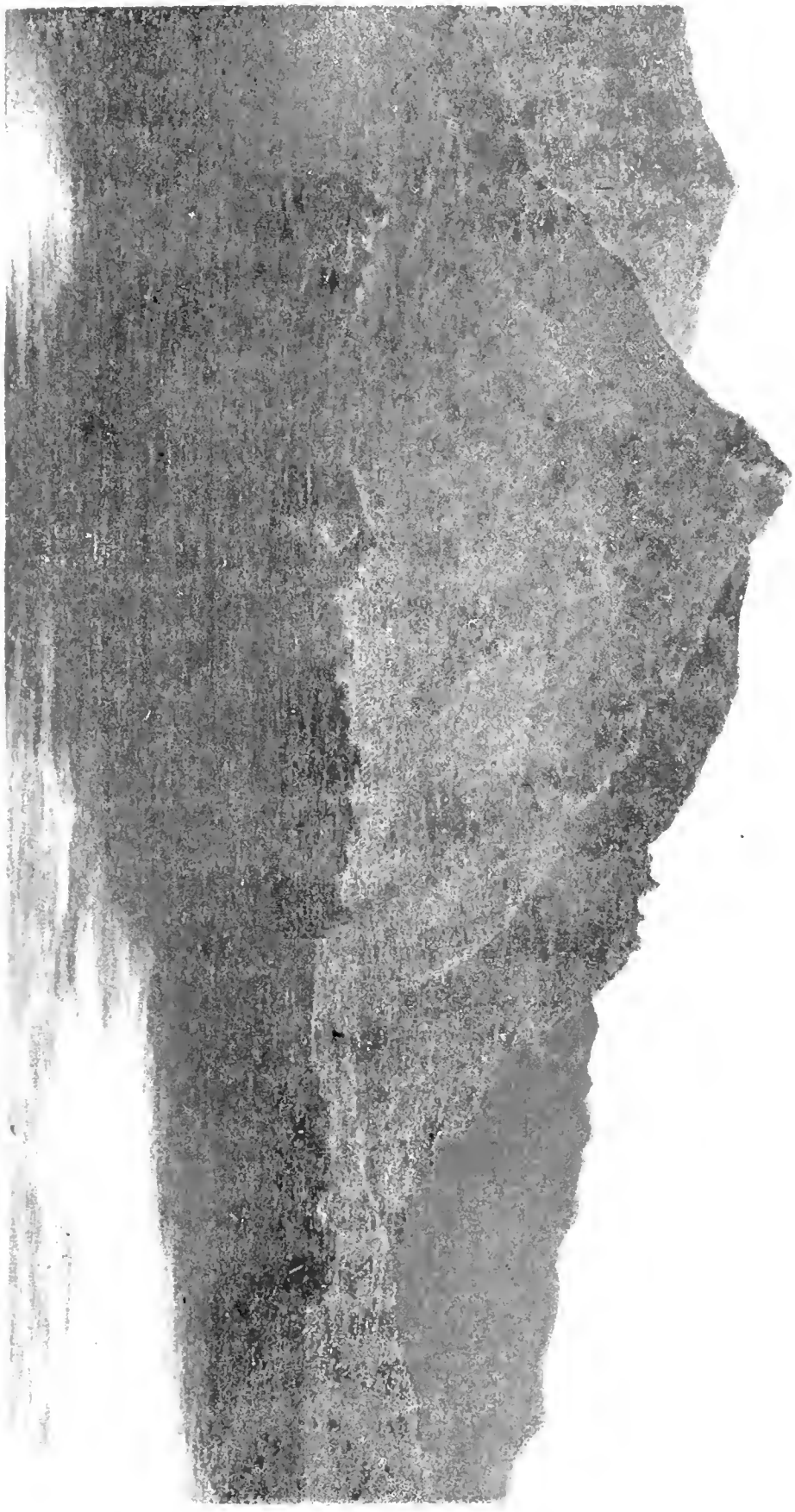
Rowing southwards we soon find ourselves opposite the hot springs, sulphurous and saline, at Hamâm, the Scriptural Hamath. Their healing power has been famed from the earliest ages, and their proximity was probably one of the reasons why Herod founded his Tiberias. They are still esteemed highly, and bath-houses are distinctly seen. The steam, too, from the hot springs is issuing forth. Rowing southwards again, we round a corner formed by the spur of

the mountain, and perceive the lower or southern end of the Lake where the Jordan finds its exit near the ancient Kerak, the Taricheæ of the Romans. This is the scene of the shocking events described by Josephus (*Wars*, book iii., chap. x.). The defeated Jews take refuge in their boats on the Lake. The Romans pursue and destroy the boats. No mercy is shown to the drowning Jews. If they lift their heads above water they are shot by darts. If they clutch the Roman boats their hands are cut off.

Turning back we re-pass the ruins of old Tiberias, and again approach the masonry protruding from the water of the Lake. Then at last the atmosphere favours us for a brief while. The declining sun breaks through the pall which has been overshadowing the landscape all day, and lights up the jagged eminences of the heights over our head. The golden sky appears through the broken clouds and sets off the mountain gloom. The broad shadows of evening enshroud the ruins, but close to me, as I stand in the boat, is the reflection of the gleams in the sky upon the surface of the Lake. Such a view as this is perhaps more noteworthy than the scenes usually seen here in fine weather.

This is the view depicted in the subjoined illustration (XXXI.).

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We return soon after nightfall to our little tents outside the city gate of the modern Tiberias. From the gleams of sunlight towards the evening, some hope had been felt that the weather might clear. The clouds had, however, rallied their forces and the sky was again quite over-cast. Some re-consideration of our position and of our future route now became necessary. I had come to Tiberias with the intention of deciding my further movements according to the state of the weather and the roads. Should all such circumstances be favourable, the best course would be to march from Tiberias to Baniâs, the ancient Cæsarea Philippi, at the source of the Jordan and near the foot of Hermon. Thence, a march across a spur of Hermon to Damascus is an object of desire to all travellers. But this is not to be contemplated save in good weather; and after the bad weather occurring at intervals during many days past, there is no hope of accomplishing this; indeed, an attempt to cross the spur of Hermon under snow would be dangerous. But if the storm now threatened or impending should pass away, or should prove less than our anticipation, then I might journey across the plain of Gennesareth northwards to Baniâs. Thence turning westwards I might proceed to Safêd and to the plain of Butauf. From that point the march to the coast of Acre

would be easily practicable. For this modified plan, however, the cessation of stormy weather would be essential. Baniâs might indeed be reached from Tiberias even in bad weather, and as the northernmost point of our Lord's journeying it is fraught with the highest interest. But if such weather should prove persistent, as it very possibly might at this season, the end of winter, then a traveller, after having arrived at Baniâs, might find himself in the midst of snow-storms and surrounded by hills under snow over which transit would be dangerous. Thus he might be cooped up there for several days unable to escape. This mishap, as I learnt afterwards, did actually befall some travellers who had marched from Tiberias to Baniâs three days before this time. If then the expected storm should come during the night, indicating that more snow must be falling over Baniâs and Hermon, there would be nothing for it but to march back by the road along which we had come, as far as Cana. Hence a short detour would bring me to Sefûrieh, an excellent halting-place. From there again, one day's march would suffice for reaching Acre on the Mediterranean. This route might be troublesome as every other route during any continuance of the bad weather; but at all events it would be practicable. From Acre, the route up the coast of Tyre and Sidon to Beyrout, would be

of the highest interest. If then the rain and wind should continue, the last-named alternative must be adopted.

There is not much leisure for these reflections inside our little tents. Very soon the storm begins, and we must make haste to obtain shelter before its full fury shall be upon us. The servant quickly strikes the tents before they shall be blown away by the blast. The horses and mules are speedily stabled inside the town, and the dragoman remains in charge of my little establishment. I myself am kindly sheltered in the Latin monastery. The superior was a Frenchman of a pale and melancholy countenance, evidently a person of culture and meditation. He received me with somewhat courtly politeness, and, after some conversation, conducted me through a long corridor to a chamber of which the roof, walls and floor consisted of solid stone masonry. The window was strongly bolted and fastened, as the storm had reached its full swing. The rainfall was like a sheet of water, and the wind had freshened to a gale. Despite the confusion and roar of the elements outside, quiet reigned inside the thick walls of the monastery. While listening to the external tempest, I was able till bed-time to read and write, to consult authorities, to verify charts. No chance remained of my being able to inspect the plain of Gennesareth on the coming day, or do

anything except retire by way of Sefûrieh to the Mediterranean coast at Acre. Even to succeed in retiring thus, would be deemed fortunate, for in such weather a detention of two or three days at Tiberias was to be apprehended. It is impossible to describe the thoughts which coursed through my mind, when I found myself on the shore of the Lake of Gennesareth under such circumstances. I recall Dean Stanley's words regarding "the most sacred sheet of water that the earth contains," and "the peaceful presence" that once stilled the storm.

I note, too, Robinson's account of the geographical position of this lake, which "may be compared to a great regulator controlling the violence of the Jordan, and preventing its inundations."

At daybreak I threw open the casement to behold the view, looking eastwards over the lake. It was worth any hardship, or any disappointment in other respects, to see the wild spectacle which presented itself. Literally the heavens were hung with black, and cast their murky hue upon the Lake. The outline of the darkling hills on the opposite or eastern shore was but dimly perceptible. The gale of the night was still blowing, and had lashed the surface of the Lake into waves. Our boat of the previous evening, moored securely to the shore,

was dancing and tossing about. Had she been loose, she would hardly have lived in the raging Lake. The water was dashing up against the flight of stone steps which led from the shore up to the monastery. The bastions stood boldly out in massive strength defying the storm, while the palm-trees were bending and reeling with the blast. The rising sun, however, burst through the heavy vapour, and some few rays streamed through the rifts between the black clouds. This struggling light tipped the hills on the opposite or eastern side of the Lake. The edges of the mountains were thus lighted up, and seemed like golden fringes amidst the surrounding gloom. The prospect, thus beheld, comprises Aphek, Gergesa, Gadara district, all scenes of Scriptural events, and Gamala, famous in the wars of the Jews, as recounted by Josephus. The region is now called Hauran. The name of Aphek is preserved in the existing town of Fik. It is the scene of the striking events set forth in the 20th chapter of the First Book of Kings. Here it was that Benhadad, the Syrian King of Damascus, having numbered his host, came up to fight against Israel under Ahab. "And the children of Israel were like two little flocks of kids, but the Syrians filled the country." Nevertheless, the Israelites were completely victorious. Gergesa is now called Khersa ; there were the devils cast out and the herd of swine destroyed. There sat

the man at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. Though the town of Gadara is to the south beyond our range of vision, yet before us lies the district of Gadara and the Gadarenes, where, as we learn from the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, our Lord ministered. The ruins of Gamala are reported as existing on the crest of the acclivity which Josephus describes in his *Wars*, book iv. chap. i. : "The city hangs so strangely that it looks as if it would fall down upon itself, so sharp is it at the top." After a heroic resistance to the legions under Vespasian and Titus, the brave Jews inflicted heavy loss on their enemy. They pent up the Roman soldiery in the steep and narrow streets, "ground them to powder amidst the falling houses," and "suffocated them in the dust of the ruins." The garrison made its last stand in their rocky citadel. Thus "they cut off all those that came up to them." Then a storm arose so that "they could not stand upon their precipice by reason of the violence of the wind." At last, in despair, "They threw their children and their wives and themselves also down the precipices into the valley."

From my chamber window I was able to sketch leisurely his sacred and historic scenery. The storm still raging recalled to mind the Scriptural accounts of tempests on the Lake. An attempt is made to portray the scene in the illustration (XXXII.).



The clouds, the gleams of sunshine, the bright edges of the dark mountains, are all rendered as I saw them. The view is looking eastwards across the Lake to the district of Gadara. In the foreground are a solitary palm amidst the precincts of the monastery, a flight of steps at the end of a street in Tiberias, against which the water is being driven by the storm, and the outworks of Turkish walls.

Manifestly nothing could be done at or near Tiberias that day, and immediate use must be made of any opportunity which the weather may offer of returning to the Galilæan uplands, on the way to the Mediterranean coast. During the early part of the day the rain ceased, the wind abated, and the weather generally moderated. So we set out for Hattin and Lûbieh, ascending by the same road as that by which we had descended. On reaching the brow of the ascent we had a view of the western sky, and perceived that thence fresh storms were fast rolling up. Violent squalls with hail poured down upon us one after another at short intervals of time, and our progress over the heavy soil was slow. The gusts from the Mediterranean swept the plateau of Galilee from end to end. Their course being easterly and ours westerly, they were head winds impeding our advance. Consequently the rattling hail was blown straight in our faces, and after a time the horses refused to confront it. So when the squall came up

we turned the horses backs to it. just as guns are limbered around, and so endured the hail. After a while, the hail abating, we advanced for a quarter or half an hour. Then the next squall would come, compelling us to limber round again. That subsiding, we moved on again, and this alternating procedure lasted for several hours. The dragoman behaved with patience and self-possession, and the horses showed all the endurance we could expect. The baggage-mules would, we feared, be far in the rear, and fail to catch us up in the evening. Nevertheless, while unavoidably falling behind, they managed to move on ; and the conduct of the muleteer that day was most praiseworthy. We hoped at all events to reach, by the afternoon, the Cana of Galilee, already described. There the roads diverge ; one, the main line, going to Nazareth, the other a branch line going to Sefûrieh. We might have to halt at Cana, and spend the night in a cottage. But if possible we would go on to Sefûrieh, where shelter would be obtained in the monastery, though the baggage might fail to reach us there that night. Arriving at Cana, accordingly in the afternoon, we found the weather improving and the western sky clearing. We therefore advanced straight to Sefûrieh. The road became stony, and consequently easier for the horses in comparison with the wet loam. Hereabouts a fine view was perceived of the Butauf plain, and the moun-

tains of Naphtali beyond. The town of Sefûrieh, the classic Sepphoris, soon appeared. Arriving there we were kindly received in the Latin monastery, and, after all, the baggage did come up by nightfall.

Sepphoris was the capital of Galilee during the century preceding the birth of Christ. When Herod the Great was conquering this region, his first step was to march upon Sepphoris (Josephus, *Wars*, book i. chap. xvi.). It may cause some surprise to read this sentence: "But when Herod had reached Sepphoris in a very great snow, he took the city without any difficulty . . . and he gave an opportunity to his followers that had been in distress to refresh themselves, there being in that city a great abundance of necessaries." It would hence appear that the climate in this part of Galilee was less temperate in winter than it is now. On the day of my arrival the weather, as we have seen, was severe; snow had been falling heavily on all the mountains, but on the Galilæan plateau we had met with hail only. That night, inside the monastery walls, the temperature was pleasant without any fire.

In the evening there was leisure for reflecting upon Galilee as it was just before and just after our Lord's time. After defining the geographical limits of the upper and lower

Galilees (already explained in our chapter XV.), Josephus writes thus:—

“ These two Galilees, of so great largeness and encompassed with so many nations of foreigners, have always been able to make a strong resistance on all occasions of war ; for the Galileans are inured to war from their infancy, and have always been very numerous . . . for their soil is universally rich and fruitful, and full of plantations of trees of all sorts, insomuch that it invites the most slothful to take pains in its cultivation by its fruitfulness ; accordingly it is all cultivated by its inhabitants, and no part of it lies idle. Moreover, the cities lie here very thick.” (*Wars*, book iii. chap. iv.)

The region is still cultivated, indeed, but is thinly and poorly wooded. It has, however, miserably deteriorated since this description was written. Its decay must have begun immediately afterwards, as appears by what follows in the narrative of Josephus, who writes that when it revolted against the Romans, “ Galilee was all over filled by fire and blood, nor was it exempted from any kind of misery or calamity.”

The fortunes of Sepphoris probably culminated at the time when, as Josephus writes: “ Herod (the Tetrarch) built

a wall about Sepphoris, which is the security of all Galilee, and made it the metropolis of the country." (*Antiq.*, book xvii. chap. ii.) Afterwards it remained firm in its allegiance to the Roman Emperor. When the Jewish revolt broke out, Josephus had many affairs to conduct in regard to it, both military and political, as related in his autobiography.

The next morning the weather was favourable, and we marched for Acre, on the Mediterranean coast.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CRUSADES.

Approach of the Crusaders to Acre.—Fearful diminution of their numbers.—Their advance to Jerusalem.—Their rendezvous near Lydda.—Their first view of the Holy City.—Siege and capture.—Scene at the Holy Sepulchre.—Hospital of St. John.—Frere Gerard.—The Knights Templar.—Godfrey de Bouillon elected Chief.—After his death Baldwin crowned King at Bethlehem.—Kingdom lasts till 1187 A.D.—Advance of Saladin from Damaseus.—Christian forces assembled at Sefûrieh or Sepphoris.—They move to Hattin Plateau.—They give battle there and are disastrously beaten.—Subjugation of Palestine by the Saracens.

THE journey which I have undertaken to illustrate pictorially is now concluded. It remains only to mention in a supplemental manner some matters which could not properly find a place in the foregoing narrative.

Marching from Tiberias to Sefûrieh or Sepphoris, we have for the last ten miles been passing over ground which is specially classic in the history of the Crusades, and regarding which the local information is complete. It is well that

the grave events, which happened here, should be viewed in the light afforded by geographical enquiry in recent times. Further, this is not the first occasion on which we have in our journey come upon the tracks of the Crusaders. But I have purposely refrained from mentioning historic associations of this character; for it is better to keep sacred history apart from all other history, even though it relates to the vindication of Christianity. In this chapter, then, I will very briefly notice those localities on our journey which are connected with the history of the Crusades.

It will be remembered that the first Crusaders, in 1097 A.D., did not sail straight for the coast of Palestine, but went round by south-eastern Europe and the Levant coast, taking cities and conquering provinces as they moved on. Thus they gradually fought their way to Acre, which lies not far beneath us as we stand at Sefûrieh. On this hard-contested way they left behind them much both of their armed strength and of their resources. By the time they left Acre victoriously for the advance upon Jerusalem, their original force of several hundred thousand fighting men had dwindled to less than fifty thousand. Mills, in his *History of the Crusades*, vol. i. p. 240, writes: "Forty thousand only encamped before Jerusalem; of these, 21,500

were soldiers, 20,000 foot and 1,500 cavalry." He adds, significantly, that of those who left their native countries for the Holy Land "850,000 had already perished."

From Acre they marched round the sea-washed strand at the foot of Carmel, mentioned in our Chapter XIV., and down the coast past Cæsarea to Joppa. It must have been somewhere between Ramleh and Lydda, mentioned in Chapter II., that they marshalled their array under Godfrey de Bouillon, Tancred, and Raymond de Puy, for the march upon Jerusalem. Though in the chronicles of that time the topography is seldom or never precise, yet we may be practically sure that they marched by the valley of Bethoron, mentioned in our Chapters II. and IX., to the plateau of Gibeon.

Accustomed to the forest-clad mountains of the Lebanon, they were repelled by the aspect of the Judæan hills. Michaud, the excellent historian of the Crusades (*Histoire*, 1841), thus describes the effect upon their minds: "Cimes bleuâtres, que le ciel paraît avoir privées de sa rosée bien-faisante, sont sans verdure et sans ombrages . . . leur physionomie a quelque chose des tristesses d'Israël, et rappelle aux voyageurs la poésie austère et mélancholique des prophètes." (Tome i. p. 215.)

From the neighbourhood of Gibeon they must have moved

to Scopus, mentioned in our Chapter IV., and there caught their first sight of Jerusalem. As we have seen in Chapter IV., a finer view was hardly obtainable, and it must have impressed them indescribably.

Fuller, in his *Holy Warre*, written more than two hundred years ago, thus describes the scene in his old-fashioned English :—

“ Discovering the citie afar off, it was a pretty sight to behold the harmonie in the difference of expressing their joy; how they clothed the same passion with divers gestures, some prostrate, some kneeling, some weeping; all had much ado to manage so great a gladnesse.”

Michaud particularises the scene thus :—

“ Tout à coup Jérusalem leur apparût . . . le nom de Jérusalem vole de bouche, en bouche, de rang en rang. Les uns sautent à bas de leurs chevaux et se mettent à genoux; les autres baisent cette terre, foulée par le Sauveur . . . plusieurs jettent bas leurs armes et tendent les bras vers la ville.” (Tome i. p. 217.)

From this point the descent to Jerusalem was easy, but then a new difficulty presented itself in the want of water. In our Chapter III. I have adverted to the natural dryness of Jerusalem and its surroundings, which rendered necessary a

vast storage of water within the city. On the approach of the Crusaders the Moslem enemy, himself well supplied with water inside his walls, destroyed the few fountains or cisterns that existed outside. On the other hand, the rubbish of ages accumulated in the Kedron valley enabled the Crusaders to assault the temple enclosure by means which would have been impracticable in ancient times.

After the capture, a procession of warriors in penitential garb proceeded amidst solemn chants to the Holy Sepulchre.

William, Archbishop of Tyre, writing in 1181, thus describes the strange scene in his *Gesta Dei per Francos* : “ Tandem vero urbe ad hunc modum ordinatâ, armis depositis, in spiritu humilitatis et in animo verè contrito, nudis vestigiis, lotis manibus, et sumptis mundioribus indumentis, cum gemitu et lachrymis, loca venerabilia quæ Salvator propriâ voluit illustrare et sanctificare præsentîâ, cœperunt cum omni devotione circuire et cum intimis deosculari suspiriis ” (p. 760).

Godfrey de Bouillon was elected to the chief authority in 1099, but was not invested with any kingly dignity.

The hospital of St. John, already mentioned in our Chapter III., had long existed, and proved most beneficent in the care of those who had been wounded during the siege and capture. It was then under the direction of Gerard, a

man of truly Christian virtue. He took this occasion to form the ministrants of the hospital into a monastic body, called Hospitallers. He is mentioned thus by L'Abbé Vertot : " Le bienheureux Gérard, le père des pauvres et des pelerins . . . en engageant les Hospitaliers au service des pauvres et des pelerins, s'étoit contenté pour toute règle, de leur inspirer des sentiments de charité et d'humilité " (pp. 58-9). On his death Raymond de Puy gave them a military organization, and they became the White - Cross Knights. They erected the fine structures, of which the ruins are now seen in the Muristan, as described in our Chapter III. " Le nouveau maître des Hospitaliers fit dessein d'ajouter à ces statuts et aux devoirs de l'hospitalité l'obligation de prendre les armes pour la défense des Saints Lieux, et il résolut de tirer de sa maison un corps militaire." (Vertot, p. 59.)

Meanwhile another kindred body had sprung up. Michaud writes : " Une foule d'hommes impatientes d'échanger le bourdon et la panetière contre le glaive des combats . . . quelques gentilshommes se réunirent près du lieu où avait été bâti le temple de Salomon. . . . Leur réunion donna naissance à l'ordre des Templiers."

The Templars, thus springing up, were further organized by Hugo de Payens, and became the Red - Cross Knights.

They must have had some fine structures on Mount Moriah, but the exact spot does not seem to be known.

Both of these illustrious Orders had their beginning within Jerusalem soon after the year 1100, on the capture of the Holy City by the Crusaders. The charitable spirit of St. John's Order survives in an organization still existing. The word "Templar" is still a synonym for Christian effort. It is therefore instructive to note the origin of these Orders as described by Helyot in 1714, by the Abbé Vertot in 1819, and more recently by Porter in 1883; though the subject cannot be pursued here.

On the death of Godfrey in 1100, Baldwin was elected King. It has just been mentioned that Godfrey never was crowned. As Michaud explains, quoting from the old French chronicler: Godfrey "ne vult (disent les Assises) estre sacré et corosné roy de Jérusalem, porce qui il ne vult porter corosne d'or là où le roy des roys porta corosne d'espines."

Baldwin was crowned king of Jerusalem by the Patriarch in the church which we have already seen at Bethlehem. The kingdom, thus established, lasted till 1187, when on one fell day it was broken beyond recovery. This event is called by historians the battle of Tiberias, though it was really the

battle of Hattin. It was fought on the undulating ground (which we, in imagination, crossed in our last preceding chapter) between the village of Lûbieh and the base of Mount Kurûn-Hattin. It was concluded on the summit of the Mount.

In the early part of 1187 the Saracen sultan Saladin was provoked by the Christians, who had attacked a caravan from Damascus. He thereupon gathered a large force for the invasion of Palestine, which was then the kingdom of Jerusalem. The Christian forces are assembled under the Christian king at Sefûrieh. The events which ensue are described by Robinson in the third volume of his *Biblical researches*. He was thoroughly acquainted with the locality and the ground. He follows mainly the authority of the German historian Wilken, who wrote in 1817. On the evening of the 4th July, 1187, a council of war is held at Sefûrieh by the Christians, while Saladin and his Saracens are encamped on the heights over Tiberias, about fourteen miles off. At first the king and the barons are for fighting, but then a fresh turn is given to the discussion, which is so interesting locally that I translate a passage from Wilken thus :—

“ Count Raymond counselled them to hold fast and avoid

a battle, beseeching the king not to abandon their position at the fountain of Sefûrieh, but to await there the attack of Saladin. He supported this counsel with strong reasons. The country between Sefûrieh and Tiberias was nowhere favourable to the Christians, while it offered every advantage to the Moslems, inasmuch as the roadways were steep, rocky, and altogether arduous for the knights and their heavy horses. Along the whole line there was no water. It would be easy for the Saracens to drive the Christians to such a position where they (the Christians) would be in dire want of water at the hottest season of the year, so that they and their horses would languish from thirst."

He might have added that at Sefûrieh they had a secure line of communication with their stronghold at Aere, on the Mediterranean coast, only twelve miles off, whence they could draw reinforcements if needful, or whither they could in extremity retire.

His advice was adopted by the council of war, but was that same night set aside by the king, who ordered an advance towards Saladin's camp near Tiberias. The next day the Christian force, consisting of 2,000 knights and 8,000 foot soldiers, mostly troops of the best description, proceed to the ground near the villages of Lûbieh and Hattin,

at the base of the hill Kurûn-Hattin. They come up in the afternoon and immediately engage the Saracens, whom they find there in great force.

On that day there were no cloudy skies, nor cool humid breezes, nor grassy slopes, nor running streamlets, as there were on the day of our visit, all which I have described. On the contrary, the sky must have been like brass, the air hot as from a furnace, the ground thirsty, the streamlets dried up. The armour and accoutrements of the Christians were unsuited for this climate, and must have proved heavy encumbrances. Their stout horses, reared in other latitudes, were suited for weight-carrying, but not for rapid evolutions under these inclement skies. But the Saracens, lightly clad and armed, mounted, too, on steeds bred in the wilderness, were in their native element. Still the Moslem was quite unable to withstand the serried ranks of the Christians, or the disciplined charge of their chivalry. The only chance for the Christians was to cut their way through the Saracen host, and so press on to Tiberias downhill, where they had a castle still holding out, and where they could obtain water in abundance. But, alas! after some indecisive fighting, they resolved to stop and bivouac for the night on this parched and waterless ground.

I translate Wilken's description of what followed, as it refers to the place where we have in imagination been standing:—

“The night was fearful. The Saracens pressed close on the Christian encampment, stopped all the passages leading to and from it, set on fire the grass and bushes round about the spot, and with an overpowering smoke aggravated the sufferings of all in the camp. The Christians, afflicted with the most tormenting thirst, spent the whole night under arms, awaiting with terror and anxiety the morning which might deliver them from this miserable position.”

The fatal morning shows to the Christians the Lake of Gennesareth, well within sight and in all its beauty. But their way to it is cut off; and they are only tantalized by beholding the blessed haven that they are destined never to reach. Again they engage the Saracen host. But after a desperate fight, the remnant of them rally on the summit of Kurûn-Hattin around the Holy Cross which they had carried into action, as the Israelites of old carried the Ark. They are there either killed or taken prisoners.

Wilken thus describes one episode in this most melancholy scene:—

“The troops dissolved their military array, and crowded round the Holy Cross. The Moslems pressed on, and their

showers of arrows grew thicker every moment. The Bishop of Acre, who carried the Cross, sank down pierced by an arrow, and with his dying effort handed over the sacred wood to the Bishop of Lydda."

This defeat was followed within a few months by the loss of the whole kingdom, and the Crusading power was broken for ever. The results of piety, genius and valour, won by ninety years of contest, were lost in one day. Gallant efforts for restoration or recovery were indeed made by Richard the Lion-hearted and the saintly King Louis. But the misfortune of July 5th, 1187, on the heights of Hattin, was never retrieved.

Those who study on the spot the circumstances of this lamentable event, can instantly realise the error into which the Christian army was betrayed. Had the leadership been as good as the fighting power of the troops, had the strategy been suitable to the ground and the climate, all might have gone well. If the Christians had remained inside Sefûrieh, Saladin must either have tried to take it, or must have marched into the Palestine districts, leaving it untaken in his rear. He would probably have failed to take it. He might even have been cut off from the line of communication with his base at Damascus. In either case his inva-

sion of the kingdom would have been frustrated, and he would have been in danger of disaster. But by advancing from Sefûrieh to Hattin, the King of Jerusalem cast away his own advantages and transferred all the favourable chances to the enemy's side.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MISSIONARY HOPE.

Ezekiel's vision at Chebar.—Fountain flowing from Moriah.—Rising of waters in Kedron valley.—River with verdant banks.—Flood flowing into Dead Sea.—Its vivifying effect.—Its multitude of fishes and fishers.—The trees whose leaf never fades and whose fruit fails not.—Religious analogy.—Establishment of Christianity among civilized nations.—Its diffusion among the heathen.—Fountain of Moriah the spring of life.—Rising river, the extension of Missions.—Dead Sea vivified.—Heathendom accepting the True Religion.—Multitude of fishes, representing the converts.—The fishers are the Missionaries.

It is hard to summarize the thoughts which crowd upon the mind of a traveller after the conclusion of a journey in the Holy Land. He knows not where to begin the account of his reflections. If once he began, he would hardly know where to end.

Equally difficult is it to select out of super-abundance any single topic to be specially presented. Nevertheless one subject seems particularly fitting to be adduced by me, as a termination to my narrative.

The Prophet Ezekiel, in his exile home, by the waters of the river Chebar in Chaldæa, is entranced by visions regarding the future of the Holy City, which had just fallen to the Assyrian captor. In his 40th and 47th chapters we read :—

“In the five and twentieth year of our captivity . . . in the visions of God brought He me unto the land of Israel . . . and behold, there was a man whose appearance was of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed, and he stood in the gate . . . and behold, a wall on the outside of the house round about . . . Afterward, He brought me again unto the door of the house; and behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward; for the forefront of the house stood towards the east, and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house at the south side of the altar. . . . And behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand; the waters were to the loins. Afterward, he measured a thousand, and

VALLEY OF JEHOSHAPHAT.



- Gethsemane
- Bethany Road
- Hill of Olives
- Siloam
- Tophet
- Brook Kedron
- Onar Mosque
- Beautiful Gate
- Antonia Tower
- Tomb of the Virgin
- Absalom's Tomb
- East Wall of Jerusalem
- East Wall of Jerusalem

it was a river that I could not pass over ; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in. Then he brought me and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I returned, behold at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and the other. Then said he unto me, these waters issue out towards the east country, and go down into the desert and go into the sea, which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it came to pass that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live, and there shall be a very great multitude of fish because these waters shall come thither ; for they shall be healed ; and everything shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even to En-eglaim . . . And by the river upon the bank thereof on this side and on that side, shall grow up all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed ; it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the Sanctuary, and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.”

In this wonderful passage the allusions clearly refer to the temple enclosure at Jerusalem, to the subterranean foun-

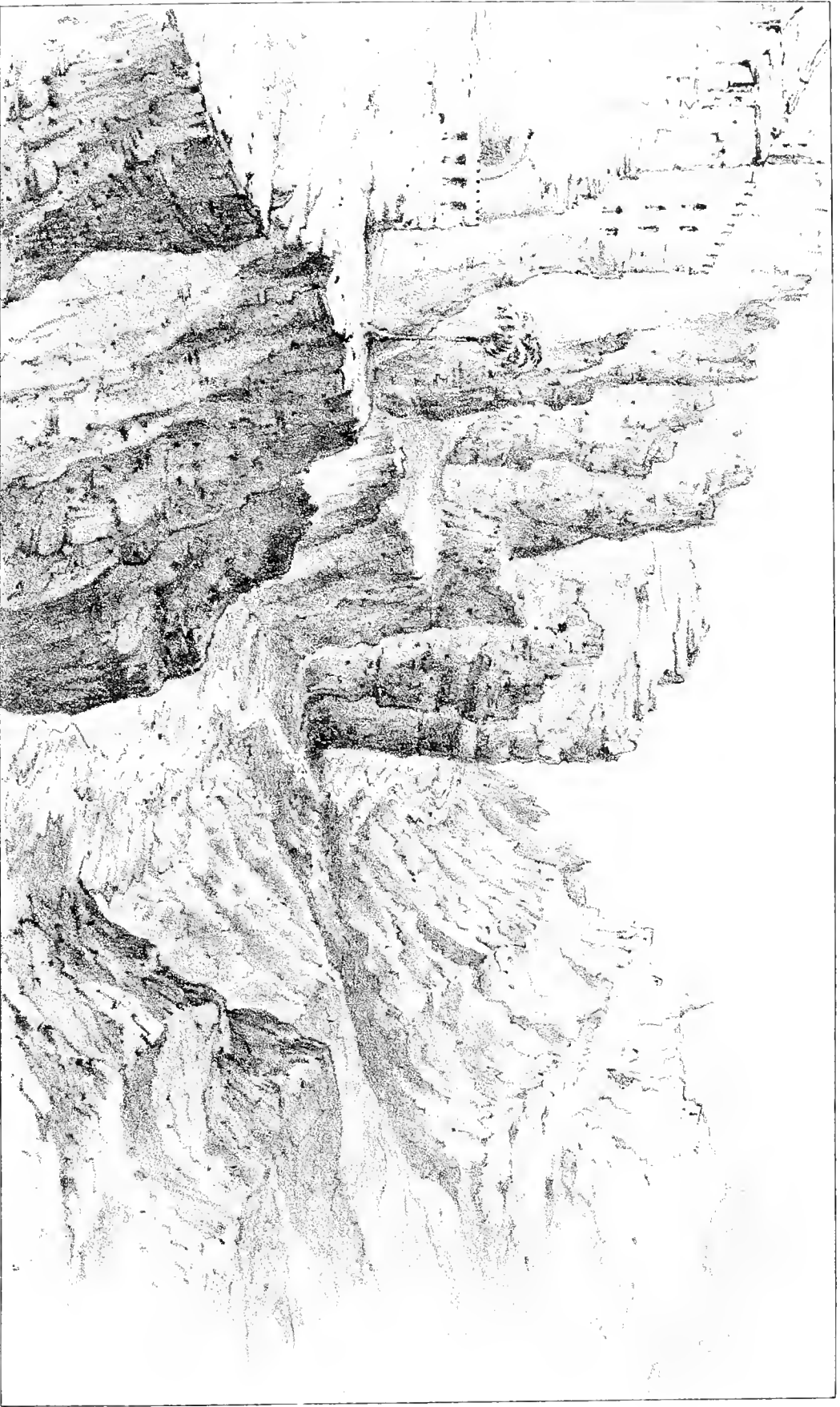
tain underneath the Moriah rock, to the valley of Jehoshaphat, to the bed of the Kedron down to its mouth in the Dead Sea, to the Salt Sea itself between the two points on or near its shores, where sweet water was found, namely En-gedi, which we have already seen, and En-eglaim, which is not identified with certainty, but is probably the spring of Beth-hogla between Jericho and the Jordan mouth. The mention of these points fixes the localities in the sacred topography. The house whither the Prophet has been conducted is the Sanctuary of the Lord. The waters are none other than those of the fountain beneath the Temple vaults. Dean Stanley well describes it as the "treasure of Jerusalem, its support through its numerous sieges, the *fons perennis aquæ* of Tacitus, the source of Milton's

Brook that flowed

Hard by the oracle of God.

But more than this it was the image that entered into the prophetic idea of Jerusalem. 'There is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.' 'Draw water out of the wells of salvation.'" (*Sinai and Palestine*, chap. iii.)

Another prophet, Zechariah, had used the same beautiful



LOWER RAVINE OF THE KEDRON FROM THE CONVENT OF MAR SABA.

image. "In that day shall be a fountain opened to the house of David . . . And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former (or eastern) sea, and half of them toward the hinder (or western) sea, in summer and winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." We should mark that here the Prophet joins together the two ideas, the outflow of living waters, and the recognition universally of God's sole kingship in the world.

A greater One than the Prophets evidently referred to the idea which all men had of this fountain, when He said, "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

Now, whatever may be the application of Ezekiel's vision to the ultimate destiny of the chosen people, the language is forcibly applicable to the influences which have radiated, and are still radiating, from Jerusalem, as the seat of Religion, to the ends of the earth and among all sections of the human race. But, besides its general purport, the vision is specially suitable to the progress, condition and prospects of religious missions and missionary enterprise throughout the

world. Though this Scripture was in the first instance addressed to the Jews, it is written for our learning also.

The imagery, with its varied features must have struck powerfully those natives of the country to whom the vision was related 2,500 years ago, as it strikes to-day every one of us who sees the Kedron valley—the waters welling up from the fount in the heart of the sacred rock, till they become a gushing, rushing stream of endless abundance, inundating the valley of Jehoshaphat under the east face of Jerusalem—rising fast, to the ancles, the knees, the loins—passing by Hinnom and Tophet—filling with their mighty volume the deep and precipitous ravine of Mar Saba. Suddenly the vision reverts to the new-formed river, and on either bank goodly trees are already growing, where before nothing had been visible save the dreariest wilderness. Surely all this denotes the rapid spread of the true Religion within a few centuries, among the most progressive and energetic nations of mankind, and foreshadows the further diffusion which is yet to take place among the unconverted races.

But the imagery does not end with the rift and chasm of the Kedron at Mar Saba and the desert of Judæa. The River of Life flows right into the Dead Sea. The salt waters of that sea are healed—just as erst Elisha in a

lesser instance, had healed the fountain of Jericho—that is to say, they are rendered sweet and fit to sustain animal existence. Wherever the river mingles with the brackish element, there everything begins to live. Because of these sweet waters there are fishes innumerable, and the fishers stand upon the shore. Trees also grow up whose leaf fadeth not and is for medicine, and whose fruit shall not be consumed, that is, shall not fail nor be exhausted.

The application of this imagery to religious missions among the heathen is so suggestive as hardly to need indication. The Dead Sea is the mass of humanity which the true Religion has not yet leavened. The fast-flowing river, which has already caused verdure to spring up on its bank, is the tide of Gospel truth rising to the uttermost shores of the earth. The leaf, that is for medicine and fadeth not, is the eternal doctrine which is preached. The new fruit, that is for meat and never fails, is the virtue fostered by the teaching. The draught of countless fishes that have sprung into a new existence, represents the millions of young and old to whose hearts the Truth has penetrated. The fishers waiting on the brink are those who labour for the conversion of souls, and who serve their Lord as messengers of his Gospel in distant regions.

In the fulfilment of this evangelizing work, imposed upon us as an obligation by Divine Command, we may be thankful to reflect that Britain, despite all failures and shortcomings, is striving to perform her part, and that while among all nations her sphere is, in this respect, the widest, her resources the largest, and her responsibility the strictest, so are her efforts the most strenuous and her work the most effective.

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