

Moses Their religion was an abomination to the Jews, being a profane mixture of Judaism and paganism. For these reasons the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. The term Samaritan became to a Jew suggestive only of reproach, inasmuch that when they would express their deepest disgust and abhorrence of Christ, they said, "Thou art a Samaritan and has a devil." For the same reason the Jews avoided traveling through Samaria, and when compelled to pass through the country, carried their own provisions, and refused the entertainment of the people.

While engaged in examining the ruins and present status of Samaria, I was considerably annoyed by an Arabian youth who insisted in following me wherever I went, calling for "bakhshish." At last I made a pass at him without hitting him, after which he disappeared. I never saw such impudence as these Arabs exhibit. Whenever a decently dressed European on the travel makes his appearance in any Arab town it is the signal for the general cry of "bakhshish." Even little children, mere infants, who as yet are unable to talk plain, are taught by their mothers to call for the much coveted bakhshish when they see a white stranger.

After spending about an hour and a half in Samaria we continued our journey to Nablous, distant about six miles in a southeasterly direction, where we arrived at 4 p. m., in time to attend the Church of England afternoon service. I put up with the Rev. Christian Falscheer, the Protestant missionary, of Nablous. He is a German by birth, but has spent over thirty years of his life in his present position in Nablous. After the services the Arab servant of the house accompanied me a short distance upon the slope of Mount Gerizim, to view the town from an elevation; he then piloted me through the narrow, crooked streets of the town, many of which were arched over and were actual tunnels under tall buildings. At length we reached the quarter of the Samaritans where I for a small fee was conducted into the old synagogue, and shown a very old copy of the pentateuch (the five books of Moses), which these people claim to have been written by a great grandson of Aaron, but which can not possibly be older than the Christian era. As I had been told that a more modern copy is generally exhibited to visitors instead of the original, I insisted on seeing a second copy, which was finally permitted; and thus I have reason to think that the old copy was actually shown me. It was written upon parchment and mounted on rollers.

The quarter of the Samaritans is in the southwest part of the town. Their synagogue consists of a small, white-washed chamber, the pavement of which is covered with matting, and must not be trodden on with shoes. Their worship is interesting. The prayers are repeated in the Samaritan dialect, although Arabic is now the colloquial language of the people. The men were white surplices and red turbans. The office of High Priest is hereditary, and Yakub, the present holder of it, is a descendant of the tribe of Levi. He is the president of the community and, at the present time, one of the district authorities. His stipend consists of tithes paid by his flock. He took great pains to explain by signs and gestures what he thought I should know about him and his relics; and when I was leaving he handed me his portrait, I thought as a token of friendship and remembrance. But I was soon reminded of an extra bakhshish. At first he stuck up two of his fingers and cried out franks. This of course, to a man of ordinary intelli-

gence, meant two franks. I was about handing back the specimen of the photographer's art, instead of the money, when up came one finger only, and so I paid him his frank and passed on; and the face of Yakub is on exhibition in my private collection to this day.

Shechem, under the name of Nablous, is still an inhabited city of 20,000 souls. Sheltered in quiet seclusion between Ebal and Gerizim, "the mounts of blessings and of curses," which tower high above it, like lofty walls on either side, and surrounded by groves and gardens, this ancient town, the Sichem or Shechem of the Old Testament, and the Sychar of the New, presents a scene delightful in itself, and of surpassing interest in its historical associations. It is on the line of the central or middle route from Jerusalem to Galilee, at the distance of 35 miles from Jerusalem and about 40 miles from Nazareth, and midway between the coast of the Mediterranean and the Jordan, in a narrow dell between the famous summits of Ebal and Gerizim. The valley which separates these mountains opens at the distance of two miles east of Shechem into a fertile and beautiful plain, extending from eight to ten miles from north to south, and varying in width from two to four miles. This is the plain of Moreh, whose luxuriant fields afforded an inviting place of encampment for Abraham, and of pasturage for his flocks, wasted and wearied by reason of their long march from their former abode in the east; for Shechem is the first place in the land of Canaan where the great Patriarch made his temporary home. From the time of Abraham's arrival till the final overthrow of the Jewish nation, Shechem was an important landmark in the geography of Palestine. Here God renewed His covenant with Abraham. (Gen. 12:6.) Jacob, on his return from Padan-Aram, pitched his tent over against this city, at Shalem, on the east of the plain. Here was also Jacob's field, a parcel of ground which he gave to his son Joseph. (Gen. 33:18,19.) His sepulcher is there to this day. At the distance of about 600 feet from Joseph's tomb, is Jacob's well, at the mouth of which the Savior sat in His interview with the woman of Samaria. (John 4:5.) Here was enacted the terrible tragedy connected with the dishonor of Dinah by the son of Hamor, prince of the country. (Gen. 34.) Here Jacob kept his flocks, even when at Hebron, fifty or sixty miles distant. At Dothan, fifteen miles northwest, Joseph was betrayed by his brethren (Gen. 37). The Israelites, immediately after their return from Egypt, here ratified the law of the Lord. While six tribes were encamped on Ebal and six on Gerizim, the ark and the attendant priests in the valley below, pronounced the blessings and the curses, and all the assembled multitude raised to heaven their solemn Amen (Deut. 27). Here they buried the bones of Joseph. Here Joshua met the assembled people for the last time (Joshua 24: 1, 25, 32). Shechem was allotted to Ephraim and assigned to the Levites. It was the scene of the treachery of Abimelech (Judges 9), the parable of Jotham and of the revolt of the ten tribes. It was and ever has been the abode of the sect of Samaritans, a little remnant of whom still go up on Mount Gerizim to worship God on that mountain, as did their forefathers in the time of the Savior (John 4: 20). It was captured by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, under Hosea and repopled by a strange people, and again in the days of Nehemiah and of Ezra (2 Kings 17; Ezra 4: 9). A vast temple, the ruins of which still remain, was built here by Sanballat, in the time of Alexander the Great, which two hundred years

later was destroyed by the Maccabees. ANDREW JENSON.

A LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND.

Elder McDonald writes to Wm. McDonald, Cottonwood, as follows:

Te Puke, Bay of Plenty, Oct. 18, 1897.
—I suppose you have heard of the hard time I had coming over here on the ship. Well, for my part I would sooner be on the land, where everything is not moving around so much. Many sights were to be seen as we came along, both on land and on sea. The first place we stopped after leaving America was Hawaii, but I did not get a chance to go on land, as the people in the town had the fever and no passengers were allowed to go on land except those who were going to stay. So if I was the first place we got a chance to step on land. There are about 350 in this group of islands and they have a good climate for growing coconuts and bananas. From there we went to Sydney, Australia. Sydney is a large town but is built in such a crooked shape that a person would lose his way if he did not look out where he was going. We spent two days taking in the sights; then we came on to Auckland. It was a rough ride; the waves were like mountains and many of the sailors thought the ship was going to sink. I only ate 25 cents' worth of cakes in five days. I was quite sick when arriving in New Zealand. I spent two weeks with the Elders at Auckland and among the European Saints. From there I went to Maoridom. It did not take me long to get into their ways, although they are much different from what we have at home. They are a great people for having big feasts where all gather together and have a good time, and when they are going through some of their war dances, it would almost scare a newcomer to see them dance and pull faces. I have taken a great deal of notice of this people since coming to this country and find they are much like their old forefathers in their ways and religious beliefs, of which the Book of Mormon gives an account. Some of them must be the pure blood of Nephi. Many blessings are promised to this people, if they will only keep the commandments of the Lord. Many of them have joined the Church and are trying to live up to its principles and are waiting patiently for the day to come when they can gather to Zion.

The Maori people are a very intelligent race and some of them very large. Those who have received the Gospel seem to be advancing in farming and in every other way much faster than the others. Some are good speakers and many of them in the southern district can repeat the Ready Reference from beginning to end, from memory. There are in the Church about four thousand. We have in our district nearly two hundred but they are in a scattered condition. It is a large district and keeps us on the go. We have a better district for sight-seeing than any other in this land. There are warm springs, geysers, lakes and other things of curiosity. The work of the Lord is increasing in this part as well as others. We have baptized about twenty and blessed about the same amount of children since my arrival. Every once in a while we find a good, honest soul who is willing to receive the Gospel. When we came through Sydney there were no Saints, but now there are over fifty. Many of the Europeans are investigating the Gospel. We are not doing much European work. There are three Europeans in this district. One of them is an old gentleman about seventy years old. We visit him. He lives alone and is