

in rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem, but their offer was rejected. And when they tried under the leadership of Sanballat to hinder the Jews from completing their work, they were defeated and driven away; whereupon they commenced to build a temple of their own on the Mount Garizim. But this sanctuary was destroyed by John Hyrcanus, in 129 B. C., and the gap between the Jews and the Samaritans became greater and greater. At the time of Christ the word "Samaritan" was an expression of greatest contempt. "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil" (John viii, 48) was a charge hurled against Christ; and so great was the fanatical feeling that a Jew would have nothing to do with a Samaritan. He would not even travel through their country. Hence in travelling from Jerusalem to Nazareth a Jew would go down to Jericho and follow the Jordan valley, preferring the longer way and the chances of falling into the hands of the robbers to any contact with the Samaritans. These facts throw much light upon the gospel passages relating to the Samaritans and the travels of our Lord.

The Samaritans have endured much from Roman Emperors, the crusaders and the Mohammedans, but have managed to outlive it all, although their number is very small.

The sect are strict monotheists and great enemies to the worshiping of images. They believe in the existence of good and bad spirits, a resurrection of the dead, and that Messiah will appear 6,000 years after the creation of the world. They keep the Sabbath and other Jewish holidays and offer sacrifices on Mount Garizim. They have circumcision and allow a man to have two wives in case the first has no children. They have a high priest who claims to be a descendant of Levi, and his office is inherited by his eldest son. This dignity is supported by tithing.

They have in Nablus a synagogue in which an old codex, containing the five books of Moses is kept. This codex is covered with a metal case, very curiously engraved. It is no doubt very ancient—probably one of the most ancient manuscripts in existence, and has a high value to text critics. The Samaritans themselves claim that the manuscript was written by Abisna, Aaron's great-grandson; but this is not generally believed.

Not very far from Nablus is a well which is called Bir Jakub (Jacob's well). This is a deep water reservoir or cistern about twenty-five metres deep, and it is thought to be the well by which our Lord held His memorable discourse with the Samaritan woman. In the first century of our era a church was built on this place, but of this edifice only miserable ruins remain.

It was somewhat late before we left Nablus. The day was wet and the road indescribable. But a faint idea of the feature of the road over which we traveled on the 20th day of February may be obtained by supposing one of our most rocky Utah creeks dried up and used for a

road, without any grading or leveling whatever. Besides, it went through a wild, narrow valley, interesting only for the immense amount of labor which had been laid down on the hill side in order to make the cultivation of the vine and olives possible in soil which seemingly consisted of nothing but pebbles. We had a long, fatiguing ride this day.

The sun was already setting. We had passed Ain el-Haramije (the "Robber Springs") and were coming out of the long, dark valley; but there was no place visible where we could apply for a night's quarters. We were not prepared to camp out, and besides, being without weapons, to camp out in this country sometimes means to be stripped of everything, and even killed. We had therefore no other choice but to continue our wearisome journey. Finally, the shadowy outlines of a village were seen on a hill, but as it was dark all round, we could form no true conception of the distance. After a short consultation we decided to make our way towards it and to test the hospitality of the natives.

It must have been a great surprise to these sons of Ishmael to find their little village invaded by cavalry at this time of night, for they all fled in various directions. Good counsels were dear. Our Arabian guides on this occasion acted splendidly. One of them succeeded in catching a small boy and by mere force compelled him to show us the way into the heart of the village. This done, he simply held him and talked very loud, explaining that we wanted to stop over night. Finally, a woman peeped her head out to see what was going on; another did the same, and another, and still another, until we had gathered quite a little crowd. Then a man came and a few more men, the crowd increasing all the time. Much talking, much consultation, much discussion followed. Everybody talked at once, our guides displaying all their eloquence in our behalf. It was a diplomatic negotiation, lasting three quarters of an hour before the final agreement was entered into, namely, that we should be permitted to stop overnight in consideration of some substantial recognition of hospitality in form of backschish.

We were now introduced into our lodgings—one of the best houses in the village. This house consisted of an old ruin, patched up and fitted out so as to meet the claims of an Arabian family. It had one room, furnished in one corner with a platform or elevation covered with a straw mat. On this mat we were invited to seat ourselves. In another corner was a fireplace, very primitive though, with no outlet for the smoke—a fact which we were soon made aware of by the thickness of the atmosphere and the tears that were forced out of our eyes. Our hosts took no notice of the smoke, but rather added to it by burning cigarettes as liberally and as gracefully as any "dude" from America. They formed a ring round the fire, and smoked and chatted while the

lady of the house prepared their supper, which consisted of boiled rice. This was passed round to the various members of the family, all dipping with their hands, thus facilitating the dish washing to a great extent. When everyone had eaten his share, the lady of the house scraped the pot with her hands and hung it up for future use.

As soon as supper was over a couple of our hosts came up to us and a friendly conversation took place. We were informed that the reason why the inhabitants had fled from us on our first appearance in the village was that they took us to be Turkish officers who had come to gather taxes, or something else; and they were always on the "underground" when government officials came there. It seems that the government is very much dreaded, and yet the people are loyal—from religious motives at least. Indeed it is doubtful whether any other government on earth could have the influence with their people that the Turkish government still has. We were also informed that the people here, to a certain extent, believe in polygamy, but that very few could indulge in the luxury, "because," said they, "a nice girl here is too dear. Nobody can afford to buy more than one. Why, you cannot get a nice girl in this place for less than 5,000 plasters." (\$200; quite a fortune here.) Thus we chatted away a couple of hours, and finally rolled ourselves up in our blankets for the night. We all slept in the same room that night—our little company of travelers, including our guides; the inhabitants of the house, old and young, three horses and our donkey—not to mention the myriads of fleas, which did not sleep at all. Yet we felt to thank God for having preserved us on our journey so far, and for the humble shelter we had found in this strange, far away country. The name of the village is Zebrud.

Next day we were up before the sun and in our saddles. Slowly our horses carried us over the wretched road. The first noteworthy place we passed was Betin, the ancient Bethel, that is, the house of God. It is now nothing but a poor village. We also rode through Ramallah, a neat little town, where we stopped for a few minutes. Later we passed Tuleil et Tul, where a few ruins still testify to its former greatness. According to Robinson, this is the ancient Gibeon Benjamin, known in Scripture history for the fearful crime committed against a woman, which resulted in the almost total destruction of the tribe of Benjamin. (See Judges, chapters 19 and 20.) Subsequently we rode over to Scopas, where once Titus with his legions camped, and about two o'clock p.m. we entered Jerusalem through the Damascus gate. Our journey is thus far completed. In Jerusalem a highly-needed rest must be indulged in. There is much here to be seen and learnt when the mind is open and the heart is willing to profit by the experiences of life.

I hope to be able to describe Jerusalem in my next.

J. M. S.