

CORRESPONDENCE.

JENSON'S TRAVELS.

Saturday, July 4, 1866.—I ascended the hill called Jebel Sikh, standing back of Nazareth northwest. From the top of a tomb known as Neby-Sain, which stands on this height 1,600 feet above the level of the sea, the view is simply grand. It commands a complete survey of the little valley in which Nazareth lies. Over the lower mountains to the east peeps the green and partly cultivated Mt. Tabor, to the south of which are the Nebi Dahl (Little Hermon), the villages Endur, Nain and Zerim and a great part of the plain of Esdraelon (as far as Jenin.) To the northwest Mt. Carmel projects into the sea, to the north of which is the Bay of Acre, the town itself being concealed by intervening hills. To the north stretches the beautiful valley or plain of El-Buttauf, at the south end of which rises the ruins of Sefuriyeh; to the northeast is seen Safad on an eminence, in the midst of confused ranges of hills, beyond which rises the majestic Mt. Hermon. To the east beyond the Sea of Galilee are the distant hills of Jolan.

At 2:30 p.m. I left Nazareth on horseback, accompanied by an Arab muleteer on foot, and commenced my overland journey to Jerusalem. We descended the hills on a very rocky and steep path to the plains of Esdraelon below, meeting on our way ever so many camels and donkeys laden with grain in the sheaves from the harvest fields on the plain. Their destination was Nazareth. After reaching the plain we took a southerly direction, passing to the right of and within easy view of the villages of Nain, where Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus (Luke 7: 11-15), and Zerim, the ancient Jezreel. We also passed to the right of Little Hermon, called Nebi Dahl in Arabic tongue, and Gilboa (Yebel Fakur). Directly on our route were the villages of El-Fuich and Mukebelch, while both on our right and left numerous other villages were seen on the great plain. We arrived at Jenin, about twenty miles from Nazareth, a little after sundown, and I put up for the night with Dr. Nasif Kavar, a Syrian who could talk English. He treated me kindly, felt greatly interested, so he said, in our conversation, and charged me nothing direct for stopping with him. The servants, however, did not forget their bakshish.

The great plain of Esdraelon is twenty miles long from east to west and from eight to twelve miles wide. The range of Carmel constitutes its southwestern and the Bay of Acre its northwestern boundary. The mountains of Gilboa, Little Hermon and Tabor define its eastern; but between these it sends off arms down to the valley of the Jordan. This plain presents an undulating surface of great fertility and beauty, which preserves an average level of 400 feet above the sea. For thousands of years it has been the highway of travel, and the battlefield of many nations. "No field under heaven," writes Lyman Coleman, in his *Historical Book and Atlas of Biblical Geography*, "has so often been fattened by the blood of the slain." It has been the chosen place for encampment in every contest that has been carried on in this country from the days of Deborah and Barak until the disastrous march of Napoleon Bonaparte from Egypt to Syria. Egyptians, Persians, Arabs, Jews, Gentiles, Saracens, Turks, Crusaders, Druses and French warriors out of every nation which is under heaven, have pitched their tents upon the plains of Esdraelon, and have beheld their ban-

ners wet with the dew of Hermon and Tabor. In the history of the Jews this plain is frequently referred to under the names of Megiddo and Jezreel.

North of Esdraelon for thirty miles are the mountains of Galilee, presenting a confused succession of hills and mountains, which form a country singularly picturesque and beautiful but highly productive. Beyond the mountains of Galilee rise the lofty ridges of Lebanon, whose peaks often lift their heads into the regions of almost perpetual snow and ice and condense the clouds of heaven and send them off borne on the cold winds of the mountains to refresh the scorched and thirsty plains which are opened out before them. The headwaters of the Jordan spring from the southern base of Lebanon, which may be termed the great condenser, refrigerator and fertilizer for the land of Palestine; and in this regard sustains the same position to that land as do the Wasatch mountains to the valleys of Utah.

The village of Nain lies on the north slope of Little Hermon, about six miles in a straight line southeast of Nazareth, but considerable farther by road. It consists of wretched clay huts. Near it are rock tombs. Between Nain and Nazareth, but much nearer the last named town, is the so-called Mount of Precipitation, over the perpendicular ledge of which the people of Nazareth were about to throw Christ on a certain occasion.

Nebi Dahl is supposed to be identical with the hill Moreh mentioned in Judges 7:1. It was first called Hermon by St. Jerome and has since been known as Little Hermon; its top is 1,815 feet above sea level. On the southwest slope of Neby Dahl lies the village of Sulem, which anciently was a town of the tribe of Issachar. The form Sulem is found in the word Shulamite. (Song of Solomon 6:13.) Here, too, probably stood the house of the Shunammite woman. (II Kings 4:8.)

Zerin is the ancient Jezreel, a town of Issachar. Close by was the scene of the great battle fought by Saul against the Philistines. The Israelites were posted around Jezreel (I Sam. 29:1), while the Philistines were encamped at Sunem on the opposite Jebel Dahl. Saul fell here. (II Sam. 1:21.) After Saul's death Jezreel remained for a long time in possession of his son Ishbosheth (II Sam. 2:8,9.) Jezreel was afterwards the residence of King Ahab and Jezebel. On the vine-clad hill lay the vineyard of Naboth, where Joram, Ahab's second son, was afterwards slain by Jehu. In the book of Judith Jezreel is called Esdraelon. In the time of the Crusaders it was mentioned as Parvum Gerinum. The modern town is situated on a northwest spur of the Gilboa mountains, which forms the watershed between the Mediterranean and the Jordan basin. The hill on which the town is situated is partly artificial, and slopes down on almost every side. There are ancient wine presses on the east and southeast slopes.

The Gilboa mountains, called by the Arabs Jebel Fakus, reach an elevation of 1,717 feet above sea level at the highest point. It runs from southeast to northwest. The north side toward the valley of Jezreel is precipitous and stony. On the east lies the Ghor or Valley of the Jordan. The mountain was anciently included in the territory of Issachar. Though it at present presents a bare appearance and is used as arable and pasture lands, it was probably covered with timber in olden times.

Sunday July 5, we continued our journey from Jenin about sunrise and traveled through a hilly country with small plains and narrow valleys intervening. We also passed through and near several villages, some of which are mentioned in Bible history. A short distance on our right we passed the ruins of the ancient Dothan (Gen. 37: 17), for which reason it is still called Jubb Yusuf (Joseph's Pit). In the time of Elisha a village seems to have stood here (2 Kings 7: 13). We met lots of people traveling, some on camels, others on horses, donkeys and mules, and many on foot. Among the latter were a large number of very dirty-looking and ragged women carrying fuel and other heavy burdens on their heads. The heat during the middle of the day was very oppressive, and my umbrella, which had served as a parasol, burst in several places, thus leaving me exposed to the full powers of the sun. At 11:30 a. m. we arrived at the village of Sebastich, the ancient Samaria, where I viewed the ruined church of St. John, in which Moslem attendants pointed out the tomb of John the Baptist, the tomb of Obadiah (I Kings 18: 3) and the tomb of Elisha, and many other absurdities," all for the purpose of exacting money from pious pilgrims. I also walked through the village to the top of the hill, on the eastern slope of which, just above the village threshing floor, is a dozen or more columns without capitals, forming an oblong quadrangle. They are supposed to be remains of the ancient temple which Herod the Great is said to have erected in honor of Augustus "on a large open space in the middle of the city." The top of the Samaria hill is 1,542 feet above the level of the sea, which in Isa. 28: 1, is compared to a crown and commands an unobstructed view including the Mediterranean on the west. Samaria is surrounded by ranges of gently sloping hills. Numerous villages are visible, but none of them have any historical significance so far as it is known. On a terrace on the south side of the hill runs the street of columns with which Herod embellished the town. The columns, all of which have lost their capitals, are 16 feet high. The colonnade was about 20 yards wide and over 1,800 yards in length. It runs around the hill, but is often interrupted, or is buried beneath the soil. The whole hill, which rises to the height of 330 feet from the surrounding valley, is terraced from base to top, and ruins abound everywhere. The hill stand isolated in the valley.

Samaria was built by Omri, one of the kings of Israel about 926 years before Christ and he made it, instead of Tirzah, the capital of the kingdom of Israel. After that the city became distinguished in the history of that kingdom, and of the prophets Elijah and Elisha, in connection with the various famines of the land, the unexpected plenty of Samaria, and the several deliverances of the city from the Syrians. It continued for two hundred years the seat of idolatry, and the subject of prophetic denunciations, until the carrying away of the ten tribes into captivity by Shalmaneser. Five hundred years afterwards it was taken by John Hyrcanus, and razed to the ground according to words of prophecy (Mich. 1: 5-6). The prejudice and enmity of the Jews toward the Samaritans in the days of the Savior was most bitter, even more so than towards the Galileans. The Samaritans were remnants and representatives of the revolted tribes. They had been the most violent antagonists of the Jews in the re-building of the temple in Jerusalem. They had erected another temple on Mount Gerizim. They rejected the sacred books of the Jews, with the exception of the book of