

THREE JEWISH KINGS.



ZION'S GATE, JERUSALEM.

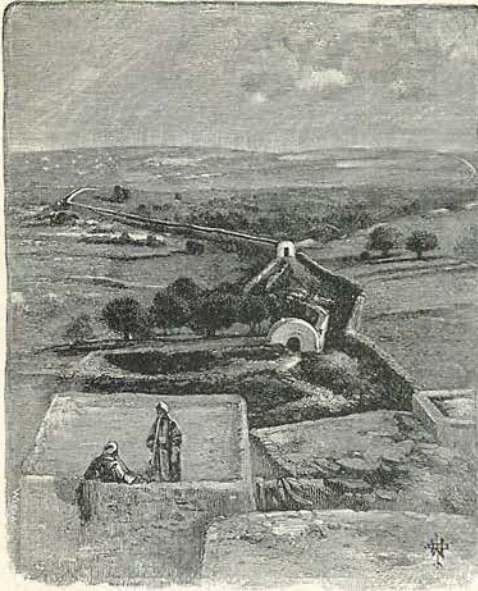
IN the twenty-first chapter of Judges a Jewish city is located with unusual exactitude—"On the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah." The Bible name of the city is Shiloh. The modern Arab calls it Seilûn. It was the chief resort of the Israelites for a long time before the gates of Jerusalem were opened to them. There, after the battle of Ai, Joshua had moved the Tabernacle from Gilgal, and made it his headquarters until his death; there the division of the land took place; there Eli lived; and there Samuel spent his boyhood and was "established to be a prophet of the Lord."

The route from Bethel to Shiloh is exceedingly rough; but the large olive orchards, the rich grain fields, and the millions of flowers which come into view compensate one for the hard traveling. As the journey proceeds the scenery grows sublime. The mountains rise higher, come more closely to one another and narrow the valleys; then, for a time, they are lower and farther apart, and the widening valleys present a picturesque and busy scene. The brown-armed peasants are plowing; girls clad in gay attire are pulling tares from the grain, and children, singing merrily, are helping them. Frequently the tinkling of a bell attracts attention to the pathways which wind around the cliffs, and a tall Bedouin, with a striped *aba* and a long fowling-piece swung across his shoulders, is

discovered guiding his flocks of sheep and goats. A long caravan of camels and donkeys laden with American kerosene may often be seen trailing slowly and demurely along the narrow, zig-zag mountain paths. It is one of the busiest neighborhoods in Palestine. The cultivated fields line both sides of the "highway"—only a narrow bridle-path—until the ruins of the old crushed city are made out. What remains of Shiloh is located on a knoll a little higher than its neighbors. As soon as this is reached all the light seems to go out of the picture, so quickly do you climb from the delightful to the desolate. Some walls of an old castle, quite four feet thick, are standing. Several sturdy buttresses brace them up, and broken columns, capitals, and here and there a doorway tell how Shiloh was built to bear the brunt of battle; but they also tell what the Almighty "did to it for the wickedness of . . . Israel." At the southern base of the hill is a low, square building which the Bedouins call a mosque. In it the cattle now gather to escape the fierce rays of the sun when the shade of the splendid old terebinth which stands close by cannot accommodate all. The camera has done its best, with such rough material, to secure a representative view of



AT SHILOH.



SCOPUS FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

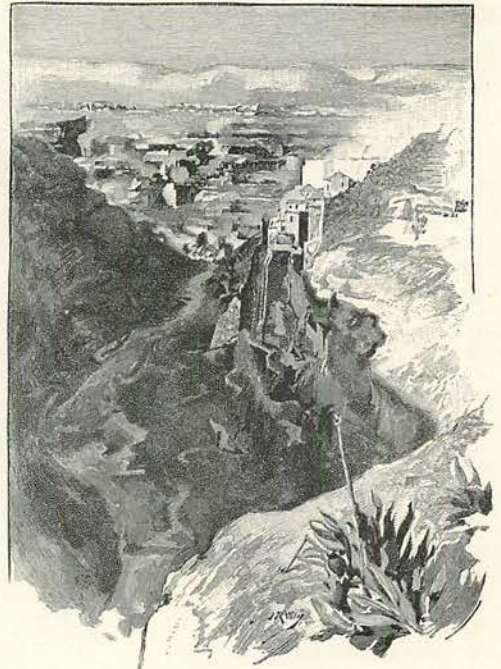
Shiloh. Part of the walls of the ancient city are in the foreground, while beyond, on the side of a second hill, are the ruins of the building to the thick walls of which reference is made. The prospect is not a familiar one; and yet almost every Christian child on the face of the earth is told the story of the youth who became the great prophet of Shiloh. Probably Hophni and Phinehas, the renegade sons of Eli, descended this very pictured hill when, bearing the sacred ark with them, they went forth to the fatal battle of Ebenezer, where they lost their lives and the ark of God was taken. Not very far away "Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God." It may have been very near this "that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died."

Matters did not move on prosperously at Shiloh. Consequently on all sides the opinion grew that some of the neighboring nations were managed better. The Israelites had long been in the grip of the Philistines. Among other sore grievances forced upon them was the necessity of carrying their plows and other farming implements to the Philistine blacksmiths for repairs; because no Israelite was allowed to swell the bellows and swing the sledge lest he forges spears and armor, to say nothing of making iron chariots such as some of the invaders had. The hearts of the older and more serious Israelites were broken by seeing the masses forsake the God of Egypt, the God of Sinai, the God of the Wilderness of Kadesh, the God of Eli, for the diabolical worship of Baal

and Ashtaroth. For twenty years after the ark was taken no priest offered sacrifice, and but few were reverent enough to visit it while it rested quietly at Kirjath-jearim. The only ray of sunshine in all this moral and physical darkness was the devout Samuel. It was he who kept alive what little grace there was left. His work was a personal one for a time, for he did not dare at first to call a public assemblage. But when the Philistines found it was an injury to them and to their gods to hold the stolen ark, they concluded to restore it, and did indeed with great pomp send commissioners with it to Beth-shemesh. Samuel, with keen insight, understood their fear, and grew more bold. He called the famous assemblage of Mizpeh; prayed for the people; sacrificed a lamb at the altar "wholly unto the Lord: . . . and the Lord heard him." The battle of Mizpeh followed; the Philistines were defeated, and so subdued that no more trouble came from their quarter while Samuel lived.

The Bible does not define the location of Mizpeh as exactly as it does that of Shiloh. Nevertheless it is agreed that the long ridge called Scopus, which continues northward from the Mount of Olives, is the spot where Samuel took the oath of allegiance from the wandering people, and that not far from there he set up the stone of Ebenezer.

How marvelous is the view! You can see from the hill of Scopus better than from any other point how much lower is the hill on which

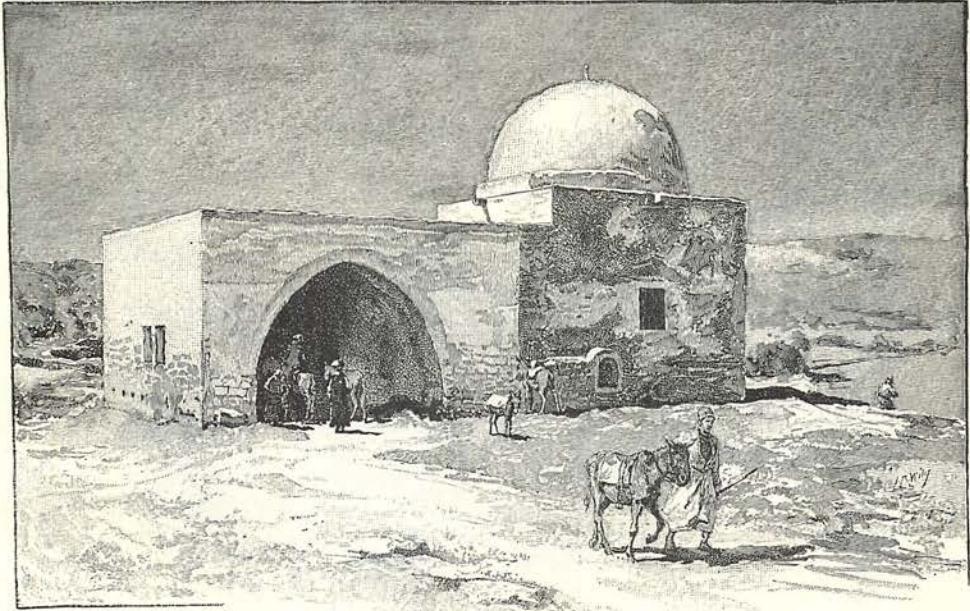


THE CAVE OF ADULLAM.

the holy city is located than any of the surrounding heights. The descent of the Valley of the Kedron and its depression appear much greater than when you are standing in the valley. The roofs of the houses of Siloam and the olive trees of Olivet appear small. Then there are the minarets, the broad domes, and the old gray walls of the city of David, with all of which we are familiar. A few minutes after the feet are turned descending towards Shiloh, the long mountain ridge, like a curtain, hides the historical theater from view, and the aspect presented by nature is desolate enough. The final battle with the Philistines occurred thereabouts. Israel seemed content with Samuel's

no fanatical pilgrims about, you may climb to its roof and obtain a very satisfactory view of the small Mohammedan *wely*, or tomb of a saint, and the hilly country around it. Bethlehem is in full view, and at night seems brought very close by its glimmering lights and the sounds which come from it, though it is a mile away.

While Saul was king down in the fields of Bethlehem, within sight of where Jesus was born more than a thousand years afterwards, David was occupied tending his father's sheep. It makes his history seem very real to visit fields just outside of Bethlehem, say towards the south-east. At first the slopes of the hills



RACHEL'S SEPULCHER.

government until the work grew too burdensome for him, and he sent his sons, Joel and Abiah, as his deputies, to the southern districts, with their headquarters at Beersheba. Then arose again, more strenuously than ever, the cry from the elders and from the people, "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations." Though the aged Samuel was displeased at this at first, the people refused to obey his voice, and in time a king was brought into Samuel's presence and anointed.

This interview and the parting of Saul and Samuel took place but a short distance from Rachel's sepulcher, about two miles south of Bethlehem. The surrounding country cannot have changed much during the thirty centuries and more which have passed away since Jacob set a pillar upon the grave of his wife, unless the stones have increased. If there are

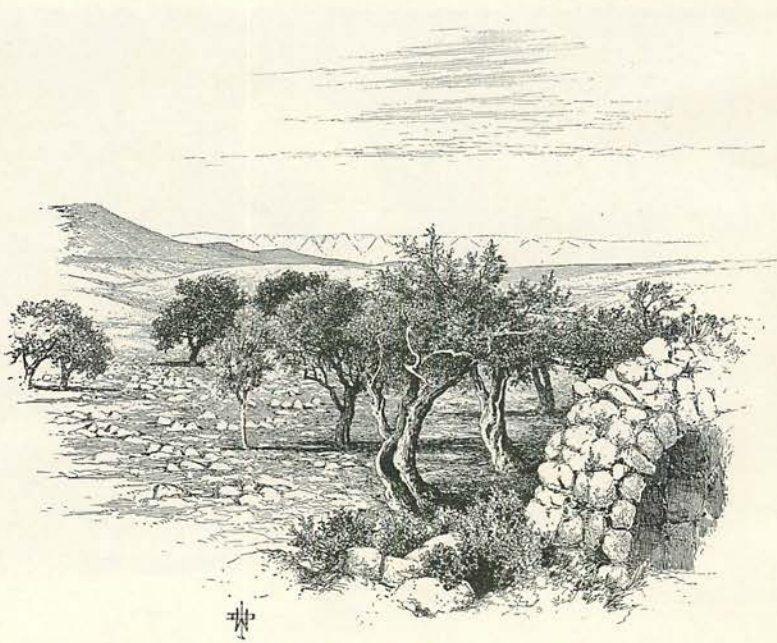
seem barren and lifeless; but when you are upon them you will see that they are green, with plenty of highly tinted flowers growing in families everywhere. The monotony of the scene is broken by groups of olive trees and by the flocks of sheep which gather under them in the heat of the day. You may see young shepherds practicing with their slings, and sometimes putting their home-made weapons to a use which you had not suspected. If a member of the flock strays too far away from his fellows he is first gently called, "Tally-henna, ya giddi" ("Come here, you kid"). But if that does not avail, he is brought to his senses by a stone sent whizzing after him from the shepherd's sling.

In one of the Bethlehem fields you may see the ruins of a strongly built stone structure. It is called the "Shepherd's Castle." Great

blocks of stone, which seem to have formed part of the "castle," lie under the neighboring olive trees. There are several caves close by, which are used now for the protection of the sheep during the colder weather. The long line of dark in the far distance is a part of the hills of Moab. The Dead Sea lies sunken near their western base. No place made familiar by the history of David is very far away. Here David was when Samuel visited the house of Jesse, the father of David, and Jesse sent for his son to come home and meet the man of God. Much of history was written upon the few miles of country which came within his circuit.

The women's quarters are next, separated by tent-cloth and rugs. An improvised divan of the same material is the only piece of furniture in the "hospitality tent."

On such a sumptuous article of antique furniture my companions and I sat and suffered "hospitality" for nearly four hours. A fire of twigs was first built. That was very welcome, for the night was chilly. Twenty-five natives, who, attended by one old veiled woman, came to share the fire and the feast, were not so agreeable. Each one brought a "contribution," usually some twigs for fuel. Coffee was made with great ceremony. Several of the men took part in bruising the blessed bean in a wooden



WHERE DAVID WAS A SHEPHERD, NEAR BETHLEHEM.

The humblest Bedouin does his best to reserve what he dubs his "hospitality tent," and is always willing to entertain strangers, be they "angels unawares," or probable subjects for brigandage after they are a half-day's journey from his quarters. I have good cause to remember always the "hospitality" I accepted from a murderous tribe of Azazimehs not more than a dozen miles away from where David guarded Nabal's flocks. A "feast" was part of the programme, and it was as full and as good as the one which David gave—"a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine"—when the ark was brought into Jerusalem, and it was served with much ceremony. In an Arab village the tents are arranged on three sides of a plot of ground with the fourth side open. The "hospitality tent" is usually at one end, near the open.

mortar, with a pestle almost as long as the arm. Tune or time was kept with the rude implements. If a younger person than the one officiating at the pestle entered the tent, he politely resumed the labor and caught up the tune. The coffee was boiled in a ladle and the water was cleared in the same utensil. Often-times water is as scarce as coffee—always less plenty than milk. Three times the mocha was served in tiny china cups, one of which had been broken and was mended with copper bands and wire. Next a sheik was sent out with sword in hand to slaughter a sheep for the feast. While he was gone a two-gallon bowl of *leben*, or sour goat's milk, was kept in circulation, all drinking from it. The plenteous American mustache came in protectingly useful then. If it was smeared with the dainty lactate the "hospitality" giver was content.



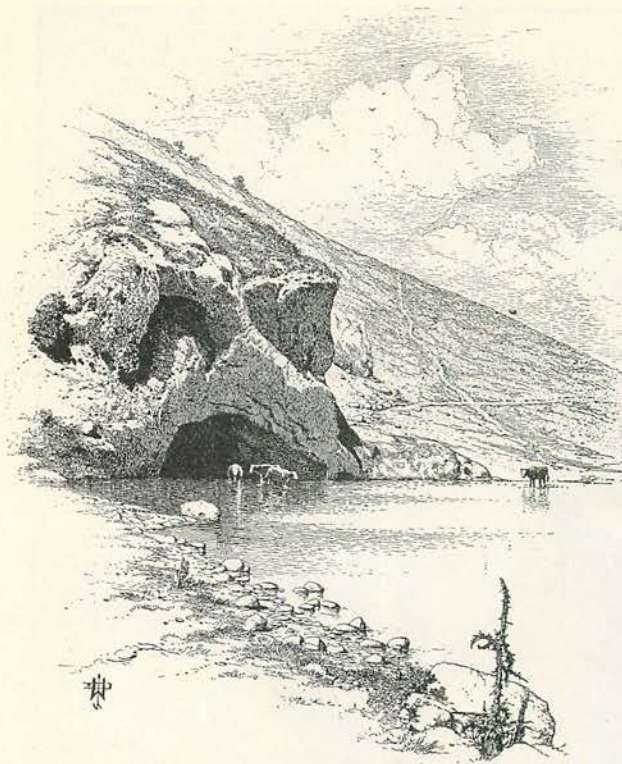
MODERN JEWS AT JERUSALEM.

How long this ceremony would have continued no one could have conjectured had not a cross-eyed Azazimeh, a nephew of the sheik, come in late and hungry from some marauding jaunt and emptied the bowl. It was the only cause for gratitude we had during the entire feast. In about three hours a great wooden bowl was brought in, filled with stewed meat and barley pancakes — by no means a distasteful combination. With fingers all helped themselves from the same bowl until all were satisfied; then the feast ended. For this accommodation on our part we were treated next day very much as David was by the children of Keilah, for we were not allowed to depart until we had fully paid for the hospitality, with usury added.

Surely these wild people show more of the characteristics of the Bedouin David and his outlaw band than do the modern Hebrews who flock to Palestine and lead an idle, dependent life in order that they may end their days in the land of their forefathers.

RUNNING across the whole country from south-west to north-east, beginning at the Mediterranean just north of Mount Carmel and reaching up like the arm of some great giant submerged in the sea to the mountains which line the west side of the Jordan, and then reaching between the ranges to the very shores of the sacred river, is a vast plain. If you could obtain a topographical view of it from a balloon, the Jordan side would present the appearance of a mutilated hand. The mountain ridges would appear to you like fingers; their highest peaks as knuckles; and the narrow valleys, to carry out the simile, as the spaces between the fingers reaching to the Jordan. This lovely expanse is the plain of Jezreel, or, in softer Greek, the plain of Esdraelon.

Our observations begin at Jenin. It is a typical town of northern Palestine, with its fruit gardens, its lovely water supply, and its groves of palms. There, too, is the inevitable broad dome of the mosque, and, overreaching all in height,

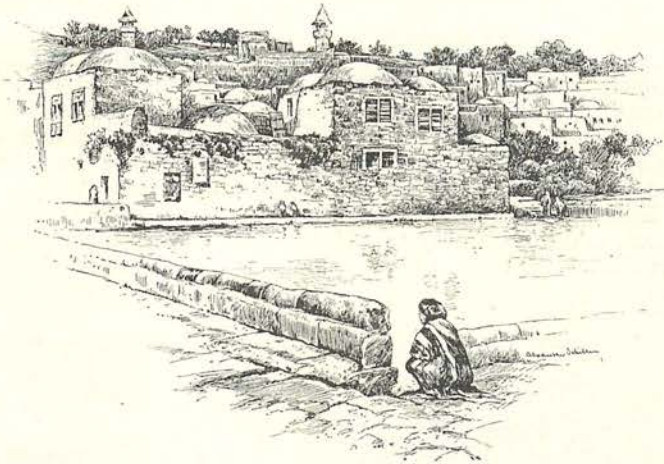


MOUNT GILBOA AND THE FOUNTAIN OF JEZREEL.

the slender minaret whence the muezzin cry may be heard from Samaria to Galilee. The views from this minaret are worth a journey to Palestine to see. The backward look towards Shechem and Samaria affords a new view of Ebal and Gerizim, and not only covers a splendid country under a high state of cultivation, dotted with olive groves as fine as any south of Damascus, but embraces a region full of thrilling history. In some places the long lines of the broken arches of an aqueduct lifted high in the air remind you of the Roman Campagna. Down in the fields near Samaria, if your observations are made in the afternoon, you may see strange-looking vertical masses of light arranged in a long eccentric row, at irregular distances from one another. Sometimes they look like specters, sometimes like masses of water thrown up by some deep artesian power as if intended to irrigate the fertile fields wherein they have been marshaled by kingly direction. They are, indeed, the granite remnants of the great colonnade of Sebaste, which Herod built, reflecting the strong sunlight as it comes to them from across the plain. Right among them you may also see picturesque ruins of the crusader's day. Then, when your eyes fall nearer to your lookout, you will see a richly cultivated country. The whole region is hilly. The rocks protrude from the hills

on every side, yet every spot of ground from the bases to the summits presents testimony to the thrift of the husbandman. Every valley has its stream even now. The tiniest of these is made to drive the wheels of some primitive flour mill. You may see the long line of the Mediterranean on the left. Turning to the north and west, besides the mountains already named, far beyond you may see the spurs of the Anti-Lebanon range with the snowy peak of Mount Hermon looking like the light surrounding clouds. The eastern slopes of Gilboa and Little Hermon lead your mind down to the long, dark, and narrow depression which marks the course of the winding Jordan, and another depth of shadow, at that distance looking almost as round as a well, discloses the location of the Sea of Galilee. At your feet, beginning as soon as you look beyond the borders

of the village, is the lovely plain. The rich carpeting supplied by nature is indescribable. There are no fences between the vast undulating plots of green and gold and pink and gray; but the narrow roads, with soil as red as the shale of northern New Jersey, mark out the boundaries for the Bedouin husbandmen. A silvery stream, whose starting-point cannot be made out, may be discerned finding its way down from west to east. It is the river Kishon, on whose borders Sisera was defeated; where, while he was awaried and asleep, Jael drove the tent-pin through his head and fastened it to the ground; and where Elijah slew the priests of Baal. This view in the springtime looks like a great garden under the highest state of cultivation. The position of the plain supplies the key to its bloody record. It is a broad avenue, open at each end, and has drawn to battle within its narrow limits the Philistines of the western coast, the Israelites of the east, and the Syrians from the north. Later on the armies of the Assyrians and of the Egyptians passed and repassed, rested and manœvered, previous to the awful struggles which followed. Even Napoleon here pitted his handful against a Mussulman horde that outnumbered him ten times or more. It has always been the main avenue for ingress and egress of the nomadic as well as the civilized



THE POOL IN HEBRON WHERE DAVID HUNG THE MURDERERS OF ISH-BOSHETH.

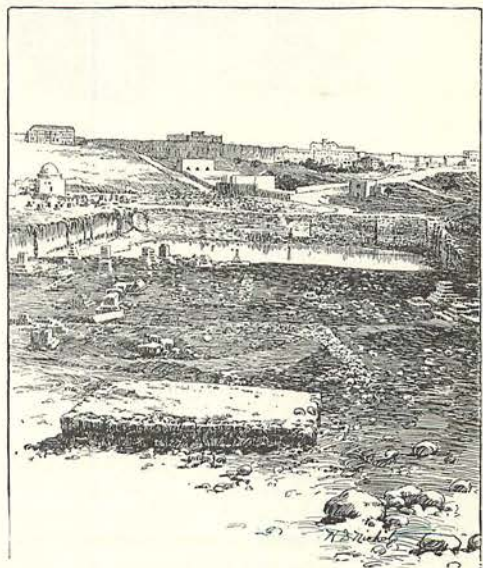
peoples who combated one another that they might possess the rich land surrounding.

The mountains and the towns which come within the broad encirclement of the eastern half of the plain are what most interest us now. We climb to the top of Mount Gilboa first. Its summit is almost bare. On the western incline every few rods there is a well or pit sunk into the solid rock. It is said that Joseph's brethren hid him in one of these pits, for the plain of Dothan is only a short distance away from the base of the mountain. Such pits are plenty in Palestine, and have been sunk to catch water when the winter torrents come rolling down. They have been provided by some kindly Jacob so that the thirsty traveler may find refreshment on the way.

The range of mountains known as the Little Hermon, the fountain of Jezreel, and the villages of Jezreel, Shunem, and Endor are the points of interest which come into the line marked out by the International Lessons, and they are all within an hour or so of the summit of Mount Gilboa—all within the borders of the plain of Esdraelon. There are only about twenty houses at Jezreel now, and the people are very squalid. Yet they support an ancient tower where they insist upon entertaining strangers at their own expense. Their hospitality does not create a desire to remain with them during the season, but the view from their tower compensates for all the loss of appetite caused by their curdled goat's milk and unleavened bread.

Endor lies near here. There is not much to attract one, except the number of caves or caverns which have been hewn in the cliffs overlooking the village. If bats are witches, as some maintain, and witches are bats, then Endor has lost none of its ancient reputation. At least the appearance of things

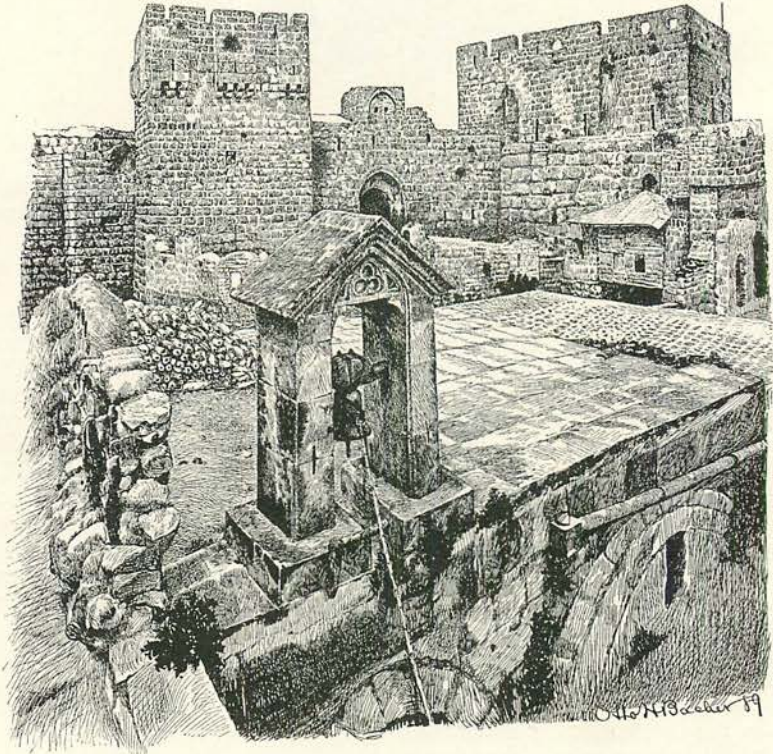
thereabouts is uncanny enough, and you will be glad to spur your horse back towards the fountain of Jezreel. This fountain holds the next interest for us. It is a beauty spot and a natural wonder. When on Mount Gilboa, if you have a guide who knows the country, you may ride northward until you come to the point where the mountain abruptly ends, as though a section or at least a part of the slope had been cut away, as is often the case in railway construction: hold your guide's hand while you look over, and you will hear the trickling of water, the splashing of cattle, and the voices of their chattering attendants. They are all a hundred feet below you, where is a wide cavern walled by conglomerate rock, from which the waters break forth with suffi-



GHION, WHERE SOLOMON WAS ANOINTED.

cient force to turn a little mill. This is the fountain of Jezreel. The rocky sides and the top of the cavern are lined with ferns, and water plants abound. The water flows perennially. After emerging from its source the stream widens into a small lake and feeds one of the winding tributaries which contribute to the waters of the Jordan. The husbandmen of the plain of Esdraelon bring their cattle and their flocks here to drink, but they guard them well, for the visits of the invader are still frequent.

Philistines to stand fight. It was his last battle, and it went hard with him. Three of his sons, including Jonathan, were killed; many of his men were slain, and the rest of his army fled, leaving their king, lying wounded by the arrows of the archers, upon Mount Gilboa. In this dreadful plight Saul pleaded with his armor-bearer to finish the dire work of the enemy, but even that favor was refused him. In his desperation he seized a sword, fell upon it, and died. His armor-bearer immediately followed suit. Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul,



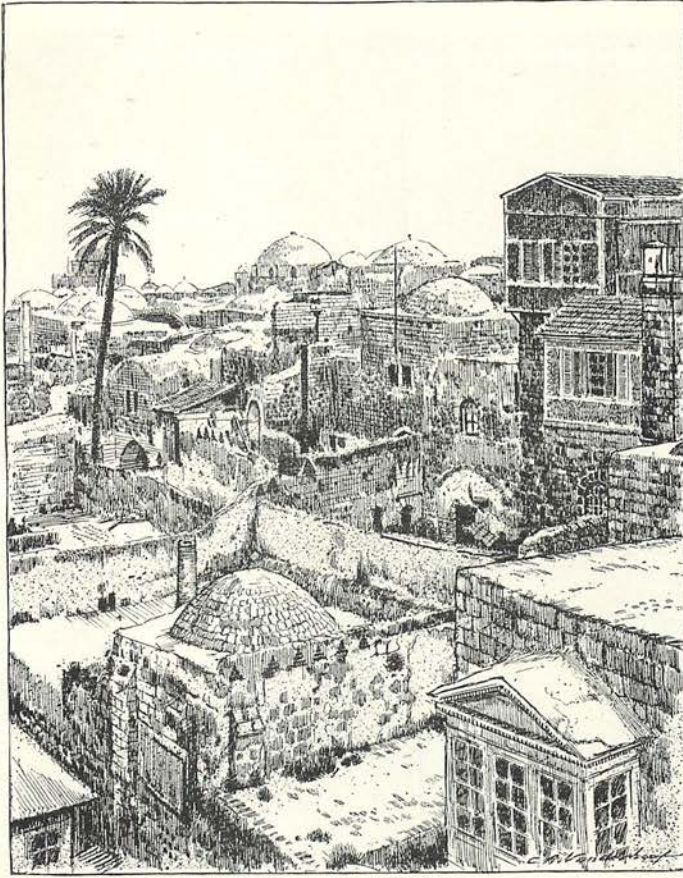
THE TOWERS OF DAVID AND OF JESUS.

It was in Shunem that Saul made his last stand against the Philistines, and gathered his forces together on Mount Gilboa. It was part of his usual tactics to choose a height for his headquarters, rather than the low land. From his encampment on Gilboa he could witness the marshaling of the Philistines across the valley. His spies could creep about among the thickets and watch the enemy's every movement. The reports of his scouts filled him with trembling and fear. He sought for Divine direction in the matter, but it was not given him. He was forsaken of God and down in spirit. In his tribulation at nightfall he left his quarters disguised and went around to Endor to consult a witch. He obtained no comfort from the necromancer and next day was forced by the

had but a short reign, and then David came to the throne.

Comparative quiet now reigned for a time. David was recognized as king by all the elders of Israel. He was only thirty years of age when he began to reign at Hebron. He remained there seven years and a half. Everything grew and prospered under his hands; but Hebron was too small for the capital of so great a king. "Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion . . . and called it the city of David." His next step was to convey the ark there. He reigned in Jerusalem over thirty years.

Gihon, with its lovely gardens, where Solomon was anointed, was just in the valley below the royal palace—scarce a stone's-throw from



THE CITY OF DAVID NEAR ZION'S GATE.

the strong gate of Zion. There is a great reservoir there now, which for many centuries has been one of the water supplies of Jerusalem. Pictured with the western sides of the city it forms one of the most interesting views—so full of history—in the neighborhood.

Edward L. Wilson.

OVER THEIR GRAVES.

OVER their graves rang once the bugle's call,
 The searching shrapnel, and the crashing ball;
 The shriek, the shock of battle, and the neigh
 Of horse; the cries of anguish and dismay;
 And the loud cannon's thunders that appall.

Now through the years the brown pine-needles fall,
 The vines run riot by the old stone wall,
 By hedge, by meadow streamlet, far away,
 Over their graves!

We love our dead where'er so held in thrall,—
 Than they no Greek more bravely died, nor Gaul,—
 A love that's deathless! but they look to-day
 With no reproaches on us when we say,
 "Come! let us clasp your hands, we're brothers all,"
 Over their graves!

Henry Jerome Stockard.