

SOME WAYSIDE PLACES IN PALESTINE.



JACOB'S WELL.

THE student of the Gospel according to St. Luke gathers the impression that in the time of Christ Palestine must have had a large number of thickly settled cities and villages. Such, indeed, was the fact. The district of Galilee alone, says Josephus, contained 204 places, each with an average of 15,000 inhabitants. That would give the 2000 square miles of Galilee a population of quite 3,000,000. What a number of people Jesus must have reached, then, in his short ministry, aided by "the twelve" and the chosen "seventy"; for Luke declares "that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God."

The modern visitor finds no little difficulty in verifying this record. All that I can hope to do is to round out the series of descriptive papers which have appeared in this magazine¹ by presenting notes and illustrations of some wayside places which have not had attention. Some of these gain fresh interest because they are involved in the Gospel record selected for this year's International Lessons.

In the time of Christ Samaria seems to have formed the southern border of the Plain of Esdraelon, extending all the way from the

Carmel hills on the west to the Jordan depression on the east.

The district of Galilee covered all that lovely region which was apportioned to the tribes of Issachar, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali; and the little cluster of Galilean towns which we shall visit are, with one exception, located in lower Galilee, upper Galilee having already had our attention.

Coming up from Shiloh we soon cross the line which separates Judea from Samaria. After an invigorating climb along the shoulder of Mount Gerizim, a descending bridle-path appears, which leads down to the most sacred spot in all the Vale of Shechem—Jacob's Well. Not very far away, surely, must be the very spot where the Saviour held the conversation with the Samaritan woman. Beneath one of the ruined arches of the church which once stood here, a few feet below the surface and reached by rude steps, is the mouth of the well. Its sides are splendidly walled, and one can see his face reflected in the water sixty or seventy feet below. The original depth of the well was over a hundred feet, and it is seven and a half feet in diameter. A person not acquainted with the condition of the country might wonder why so much expense of time and money was undertaken in order to provide such a well, when a great abundance of water is supplied to the neighboring valley by the bordering mountains, Ebal and Gerizim. It was really a safeguard against marauders. It is also true that the custom of sinking wells on an estate began as far back as the time of Abraham and Isaac, and these old wells are still guarded with the most jealous care. While the photograph was being made my old Samaritan guide, Jacob es Shellaby, sat by the broken arch which covers the well, and then led me down to the great flat stone at the mouth. Through a circular hole in the stone the natives pass their skin vessels and bring up the water, which flows alike from the deep-sunken arteries of the mount of cursing (Ebal) and from the mount of blessing (Gerizim). The Jew, the Samaritan, the Christian, and the Mohammedan alike reverence it, and it is no uncommon thing to find them praying together near at hand; one with his face turned religiously towards Gerizim, another facing the east, a third gesticulating in the direction of the vale between the mountains,

¹ "The Sea of Galilee," December, 1887; "From Dan to Beersheba," April, 1888; "Sinai and the Wilderness," July, 1888; "From Sinai to Shechem,"

December, 1888; "Round about Galilee," January, 1889; "Round about Jerusalem," May, 1889; "Three Jewish Kings," October, 1889.



JOSEPH'S TOMB.

while the fourth bows with his face turned towards the scattered ruins of the church which the Crusaders erected over the sacred site. The mountains are there just as Jacob, Joseph, Joshua, and Jesus saw them — Ebal northward, with its high terraces of prickly pear; Gerizim rising in the south from its rich grain fields and groves of walnut and sycamore.

About an eighth of a mile across the valley from Jacob's Well, and near the base of Mount Ebal, is the traditional tomb of Joseph. It is marked by a rude inclosure twenty feet square and twelve feet high. The interior of the structure is divided into two sections, of which the one to the south is the tomb. It is about six feet long and four feet high, and resembles the common tombs erected in all parts of the country in memory of Moslem saints. I do not remember any more enchanting walk in Palestine than the descent from Shechem down the valley to where it begins to widen and then northward to Joseph's sepulcher. The rugged peaks of Moab puncture the hanging mist and catch their share of color, and the rocky face of Ebal stands out in fine contrast to the splendid olive groves and the highly cultivated fields of the valley. Farther on, rising from a great mass of

olive trees, is a picturesque old tower, half covered by clinging vines, called Jacob's Tower. It is said to have been the home of the patriarch when he sent Joseph over to Dothan to look after his brethren. The nearer we approach it the higher it seems to reach up the side of Mount Gerizim, near which it stands, and the great trees are dwarfed by it.

The present inhabitants of Shechem devote a great deal of time to their religion, and it is interesting and picturesque to see an assemblage form on a "religious day." The people come in from the neighborhood in companies, dressed in every variety of clothing, and moving along under the shade of the splendid trees without much apparent purpose. Many stop at the wells and quench their thirst; others lave in the stream or rest upon the rocks and grass. The scattered groups on the highway gradually become a dense throng and press onward to some designated place. As

the multitude increases the excitement grows, and in all directions heated debates go on. At last a low, flat-roofed building, with a great open space near it, is reached, and the people halt. On the housetop, with green turban, stands the "holy man," who works his audience up to a frenzied condition, and then sends them away ready for any violence to which their fanaticism may lead them. Shechem is not a pleasant place for Christians.

The pride of Shechem is its olive groves. The olive, no matter how young, always looks old and care-worn when it stands alone. When cultivated in orchards or groves, however, nothing in the country is more beautiful. The bark seems to granulate and scab as soon as it becomes of any thickness, and the short stems hopelessly twist before they have any girth; but nature averages her favors, even with the olive, for an abundant foliage is supplied to hide all deformities. When the cool breeze disturbs the leaves they turn first their green and then their gray sides to the light, with the steady movement of the palm branch.

Just as the center of the town of Shechem is reached we notice that the water-shed no longer flows Jordanward, but begins to

meander westward on its journey to the Mediterranean. Soon after the mountains are left behind a wide basin opens to view. On each side of the river the terraced hills incline gently like the banks of the lower Rhine, and long lines of aqueducts, and now and then a vine-covered Roman arch, rise up and remind one of the Hauran. The clatter of mills is heard, and the tinkling of bells announces the near presence of flocks; repeatedly we see an adventurous sheep or goat, stationed on a protruding rock, lowering its head with threatening aspect and stamping its forefoot in anger at our audacious approach.

After an advance of about a mile and a half westward the glen narrows and the inclines on each side grow more precipitous. In a little time the dragoman leads northward up a steep and stony road. The sound of water is left behind, and the trees and flowers are exchanged for obtruding stones and rank thorn bushes. Journeying on, after a tough grapple with a bare, bald ridge, the fertile valley and the brook again are seen. The sides of the hills in all directions are dotted with fig, sycamore, and olive trees. Apples, pomegranates, and apricots also abound. Every knoll is crowned with a village, and life and prosperity are indicated by the sounds which come from them. The narrow bridle-path follows the valley, descends through splendid groves, and then, turning abruptly to the west, leads upward, say five hundred feet, to the summit of the oval hill upon which historic Samaria stands. Only the eastern side is approachable. In other directions the inclines are so regularly terraced and so thickly clad with verdure that they have the appearance of being under a high state of cultivation. The hills encircling Samaria cause the elevation on which the place stands to look like a cone rising from a great crater. Towards the sea is visible the top of Mount Carmel; towards Galilee, Mount Tabor; towards the Jordan, Hermon, Little Hermon, and Gilboa; and southward, Ebal and Gerizim; while in the north, like the light clouds above them, rise the snowy peaks of Mount Lebanon.

The usual camping-place of the sojourner

is at the top of the hill near some fruit trees, and only a short distance from the ruins of the old Church of St. John. A requisition was made upon the camera there one morning, which resulted in a curious picture, showing examples of architecture representative of three periods in the checkered history of Samaria. The first is the black tent of the Arab, probably in no respect different from the ones inhabited by the patriarchs when they watched their flocks in the adjoining fields; the second is the squalid stone domicile of the permanent dweller in



“WITHOUT PURSE AND SCRIP.”

Samaria; and the third is a picturesque portion of that remarkable memorial of the indomitable energy and genius of the Crusader, joined perhaps with suggestions from the Saracen.

I am free to confess that I did not meet the proverbial good Samaritan as I journeyed through this much-favored country. If one meets a tiller of the soil he will sidle off as far as the narrow path will allow, and scowlingly watch the traveler's approach. The offer of a piaster will bring him to a standstill.

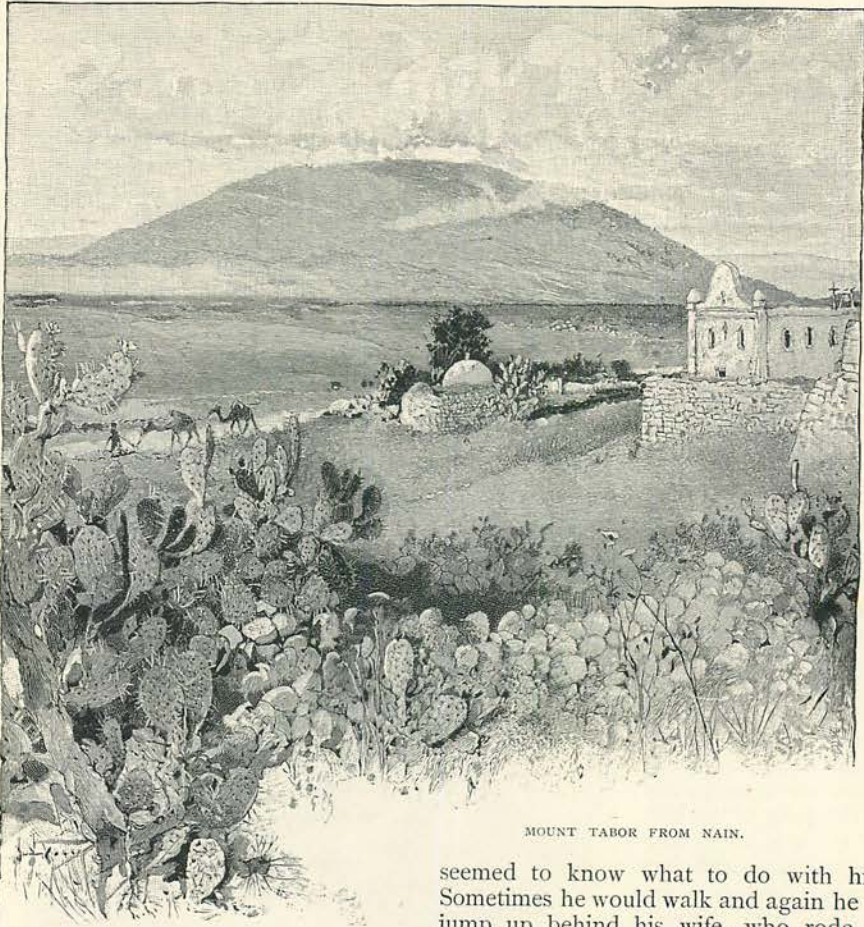
“How far is it to Nain?”

“God knows,” comes the fervent answer.

“How long will it take to go there?”

“As long as God pleases,” he answers, with a shrug of his shoulders and a pull at his pipe.

“Shall I reach there by noon?”



MOUNT TABOR FROM NAIN.

"If God permit."

"But may I hope to make the distance in an hour?"

"As God may direct," he answers, walking away.

"Is Nain distant, or is it very near?"

"There," he answers, moving his finger through a wide arc. If one extracts a more neighborly spirit than this from a Samaritan he must have the mysterious power of a dervish.

As I drove away from the Samaritan's country I heard rude music and the firing of guns. A wedding feast had been going on in the valley below, and the bride and the groom, with an attendant procession, were coming towards us. A crowd of young people accompanied the happy twain, with the intention of fulfilling the Bedouin idea of hospitality by seeing the guest a half-day's journey on his way. The groom was the guest. He had come over from Shechem for his bride, and was taking her home. He was a tall, well-built swain, but very awkward, and hardly

seemed to know what to do with himself. Sometimes he would walk and again he would jump up behind his wife, who rode cross-legged on a mule. She was a pretty little creature, with merry, bright eyes. She and her still more merry attendants gave me a good opportunity of studying the faces of the Samaritan women, for their faces were not veiled. All were in holiday costume, and were singing as they went; the young men in front and at the rear taking up the song in responsive verses. The hills which rise right and left as one rides down from Samaria to Jenin are beautiful. Some of them are of considerable height; some are bare and rocky, though the greater number are verdure-clad. The surroundings of the homes on the mountains are sometimes very attractive, for the people have a way of winning their vineyards to grow where to a stranger's eye there seems but little soil. The tall and majestic date tree is much more frequently seen here than it is either south or north, and is always a sure sign of a neighboring habitation. Near a group of mulberry trees and lofty palms a roadside fountain was found. Around it, some beating their laundry with olive-wood clubs upon the stone water-troughs and some filling

their water-pitchers, were a number of girls. The faces of some of them were very pretty and bright. It was not surprising that in these days they should know the use of the camera; and no sooner had a chance shot been made at them than each particular water-jar stood on end and the unfortunate disciple of Daguerre was beset for bakshish, and almost belabored by the black-eyed water-carriers. One poor little girl had no jar, and had substituted a square tin can which had served originally to carry American kerosene.

It was just at sunset that my path led me across a plain and up the hill which brought me to the outskirts of the town of Jenin, close to the southern border of the Plain of Esdraelon. The departing sun gave its last touch of color to the head of the minaret of the little mosque which overtopped even the palm trees. Our Moslem attendants were all down upon their knees, with their faces towards Mecca, and the village fell asleep in the shadows.

In Palestine one may choose his route but not his resting-place. His conductors have their "stations," where it is the custom to halt for the night, and they do not willingly change. Jenin is not a large town, but it is rather more attractive than the majority of its neighbors, not only on account of the beauty of its natural surroundings, but owing to the abundant water supply, which is brought by a covered aqueduct from the hills back of the town.

One of the first things that impress one, when he rides out from Jenin towards the north and overlooks the vast plain, is the fact that not a single tree appears to break the landscape.

For the ride from Jenin to Nazareth we took the road that led us around the shoulders of Mount Gilboa, and then along the red soil roads through the pleasant fields until we reached Shunem, the proper "station" for the noontide rest and lunch. The town is entered by a long avenue of monstrous prickly-pear plants, the horrid arms of which reach out on all sides, as if to conceal the ugliness of the unsightly town. It is not all ugliness at Shunem, however, for some pretty gardens are there. In one of them I saw a number of lemon trees as high as apple trees, with all stages of fruitage going on, from the fragrant blossoms to the ripe ovals of gold which hung from the sturdy branches in great abundance. Through the huge cacti the Arab women could be seen beating their clothing on stones at the brookside.

A glance to the northwest reveals the gray

outlines of Mount Carmel with the wide plain between; but the best outlook from the Shunem housetops is in the opposite direction, and takes in that peculiar range known as "Little Hermon." Little Hermon is shapeless and barren and holds no historical interest, yet it provides an attractive feature in the landscape. It presents its best side towards Shunem.

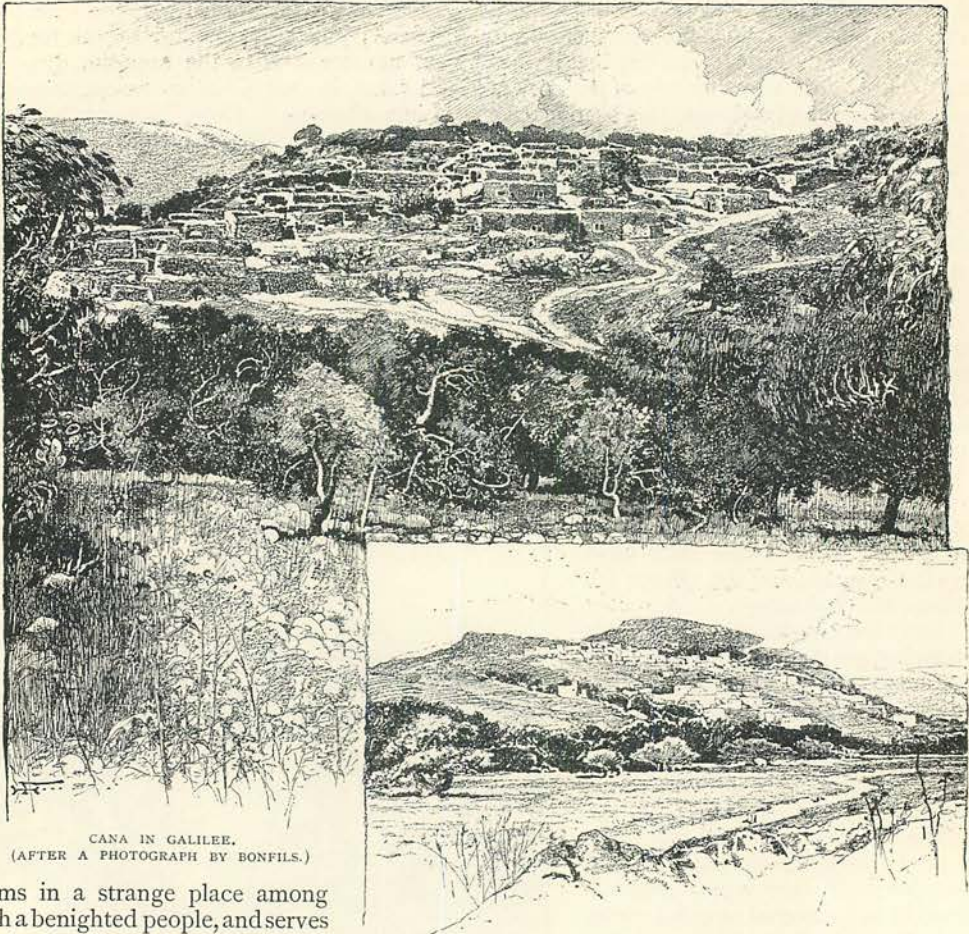
None of the generosity which characterized the "great lady" of Shunem seems to mold the conduct of the modern Shunemite towards the stranger; for when I plucked a single lemon blossom from a tree overhead to send to America in a letter I had just written to a little girl,



THE CASTLE OF JEZREEL.

one of the nabobs of the town, who had stood watching my comrades and me, flew at me in a great rage and demanded bakshish. I had proved myself to be a thief as well as a trespasser, and it turned out to be one of those occasions where I found myself unable to dispense justice. I referred the case to my wise dragoman, who had quite an altercation in my defense.

Jezreel must also have received a Divine visit. Its location is central, and its position as a military stronghold admirable. Its approach is from the east. On the northeast there is a steep cliff, quite a hundred feet in height, from the top of which the view is grand. The Arabs call the town Zerim. Their houses are dreadfully humble and comfortless, and all the wealth of the town seems to have been used for the preservation of the ancient tower which stands among the houses. It



CANA IN GALILEE,
(AFTER A PHOTOGRAPH BY BONFILS.)

GENERAL VIEW FROM THE WEST. (DRAWN FROM NATURE.)

seems in a strange place among such a benighted people, and serves to show with what reverent care they preserve what they consider holy. If Ahab and his four hundred priests worshiped Astarte here, and Herod kept up the unholy rites, it is a holy place in the eyes of the present dwellers at Jezreel, but none the more holy because Jesus did missionary work among their predecessors. The same crescent moon that shone as the symbol of Astarte shines for Mohammed their prophet, and for this they honor and preserve Jezreel's tower.

From Jezreel to Nain is a ride of but an hour. The western base of Little Hermon is on one side, and the broad expanse of the valley of Jezreel is on the other. As soon as Little Hermon is passed Mount Tabor is seen, and the prospect widens; then, soon after, the gilt cross on the convent at Nain shines out. Few and poor enough are the houses of Nain. Heaps of rubbish and the rough-quarried debris of better days surround the memorable town. The nearest hillside abounds with rock-tombs, and a number of shrines and holy places are dotted about.

Not more than a dozen miles from Nain

there is a hopelessly desolate little town which can be seen from half a dozen places already mentioned in these journeyings. It is almost north of Nain, and is well worth a visit. If one journey there early in the morning, his horse ought to carry him from Nain in less than three hours. It is the place where Christ met the rejoicing wedding party and performed his first miracle — Cana of Galilee. I do not know of a ride of its length in Palestine which is more lovely, or which presents so many points of interest as this does. Before one gets fairly down into the plain he may see the rosy light coming over the Anti-Lebanon range, tipping the minarets of Jezreel and Shunem. Gilboa and Little Hermon will also have their feathery, pink-hued caps. Before the first hour is gone he comes to the Fountain of Jezreel and begins to meet the modern young Gideons as they come back to the pastures with their flocks after watering them at the fountain. As we too stop to water our horses at the fountain we cast our eyes upward to see if we can

make out the outlines of the ruins on Mount Tabor. The fog is flying around the summit; but there, peering through it, looking five times their real height, their fine details brought out by the morning light and the blue background of the sky, are the gray towers and bastions placed there by the Crusaders. Forging the stream, we now push our horses up towards Tabor, and above the fog line. Nain and Shunem and Jezreel rise up behind in the distance. We soon place Mount Tabor between us, and hurry on.

In half an hour we see on the left a hill topped by a little village. It is Sefurieh, the ancient Sepphoris, and is all that remains of the old-time capital of Galilee. It was an important place until Herod Antipas came into power and made Tiberias the seat of government. The caravan tracks which cut across the country now bewilder us somewhat, for we are in doubt which one to choose. However, they all lead to the Mecca of the present expedition. If the face is kept well towards the northwest one comes out all right. Here and there we meet a group of women with bundles of twigs on their heads. Already they have been up the side of Mount Tabor, among the scrub oaks, where they gather the scraggy merchandise which they are now carrying to the wood market in Nazareth. Now the scene grows still more animated, for men and boys, and women too, are seen driving towards Nazareth long lines of asses laden with newly cut

grass. In the proper season figs and olives take the place of grass, for the trees abound. The narrow plain is beautiful, and provides the space for a last gallop before reaching the almost deserted village of Cana of Galilee, known to the Arabs as Kefr Kenna. The chief entrance to the town resembles that of Shunem, a lane skirted by thickly set prickly-pear plants. The houses remind one of those at Magdala. They are of mud and stone, surrounded by the refuse of the stable, and have miserably constructed arbors of cane on their unsafe roofs. They appear to be in the last state of ruin, yet there are plenty of ruins of an earlier date and of a better grade lying around in every direction. An old sarcophagus serves as the public water-trough, and is kept supplied by a cheery little stream which comes from a neighboring spring. "Dutch" ovens smeared with mud are standing near some of the houses. They might be taken for tombs only they are not whitewashed. Down towards Nazareth and over in the direction of Mount Tabor the views are particularly fine. The hills are not so high, so steep, nor so bare as those in lower Galilee. They are usually wooded to their summits and fall gradually down to the valleys. There is not the appearance of thrift that there is about Nain and Shunem, for the reason, perhaps, that the neighborhood is infested more by wandering marauders, who care nothing for the cultivation of crops so long as they find pasture for their flocks.

Edward L. Wilson.

THE SELF-PROTECTION OF MR. LITTLEBERRY ROACH.



IT used to seem curious to me that the poor make earlier marriages than the rich. Not reared to expect luxuries, knowing that two persons in entire accord can live more cheaply together than apart, usually they mate young. Having little besides themselves and their affections to give, they exchange these brief courtships, and go cheerfully to the work and to the enjoyment of their joined lives, in which there is scarcely anything to lose but much to hope for. The rich, contrariwise, often make delays from one and another cause, less seldom follow the promptings of their own hearts, are more concerned about the conveniences of such alliances, and sometimes are solicitous as to whether or not they may be made to give more than they receive.

Such always heretofore had been the matter

with Mr. Littleberry Roach, who, although ever open-mouthed in praise of the other sex, was, at forty-five, still a bachelor. Unfortunately for any conjugal experience to him, he found himself, at twenty-one, the inheritor of six negroes and three hundred acres of well-stocked land—a fortune for those times. In spite of the gauntness of his long figure, the absence of smoothness from his visage and his manners, knowing that many a cap was to be set for the sake of other things that he had, he put himself upon his guard against feminine influences except such as were backed by property qualifications equal to his own. Yet he would admit freely his weakness in the presence of manifest beauty, even when undowered. Often had he been heard to say about thus:

"Yes, sir; yes, sir; when I see a putty girl it always warm me up, no matter what kind o' weather, and I feel like I were a kind o' break-in' out, like people does 'long o' heat, or the