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"THROUGH SAMARIA"

TO

GALILEE AND THE JORDAN

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THE FOUNTAIN OF THE VIRGIN AT NAZARETH.

182580

"THROUGH SAMARIA"

TO

GALILEE · AND THE · JORDAN ·

Scenes of the Early Life and Labours of

OUR LORD

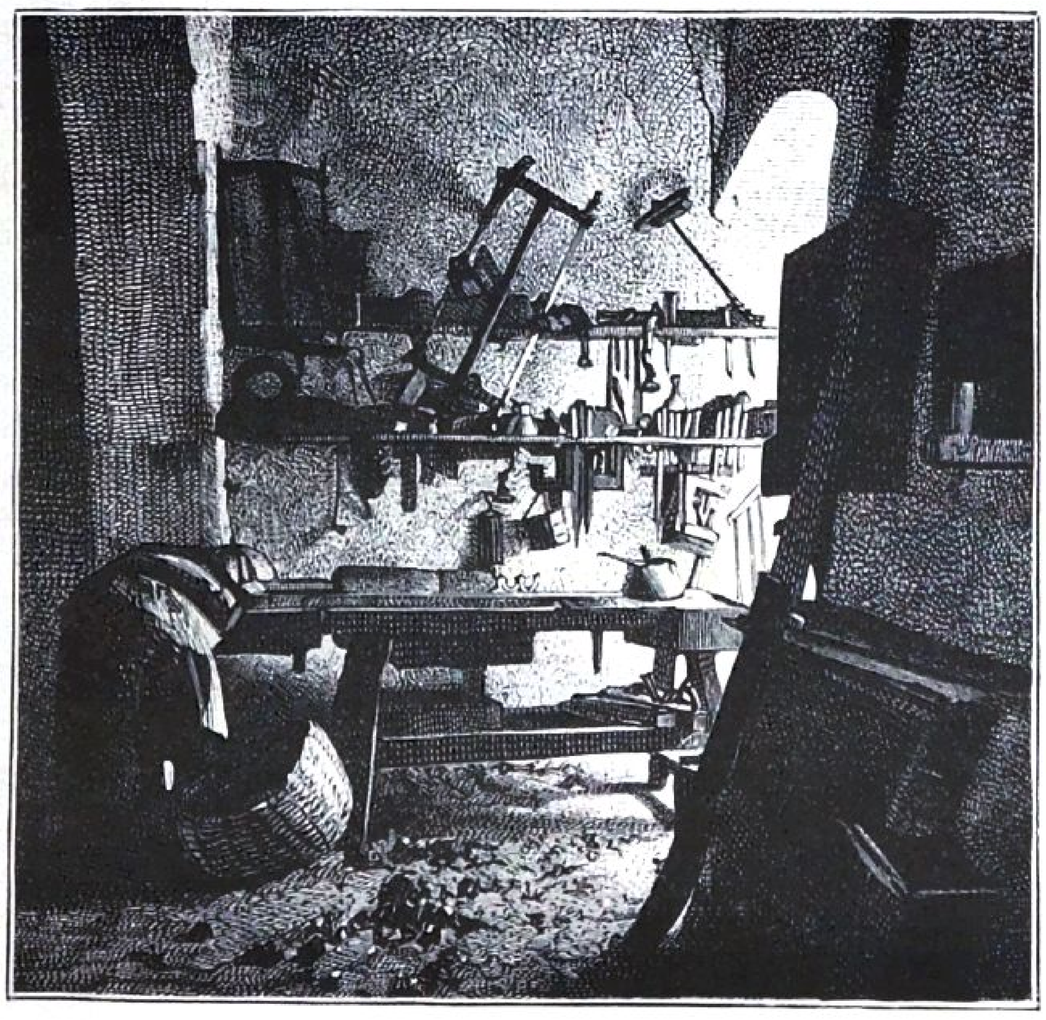
BY

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&c. &c.



A CARPENTER'S SHOP AT NAZARETH

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PREFACE.

TWO years ago I published my previous work on "Jerusalem, Bethany, and Bethlehem," designed to illustrate memorable events in sacred history, and especially those of the last days of our Lord's life on earth. I now issue a companion volume. I take my readers away from Jerusalem, through Samaria in the footsteps of Jesus by Jacob's Well, to Galilee. I visit Carmel, Tabor, and Hermon. I describe in passing the wondrous acts of Elijah, Deborah, Barak, and Gideon. I attempt to picture the early home of Jesus in Nazareth; the scenes amid which he grew up from childhood to manhood; his baptism in the Jordan; his miracles by the Sea of Galilee; and his transfiguration on Hermon.

I write only of places I have myself seen. The Bible was my constant companion in my journeys. I read the history, the prophecies, parables, and miracles, amid the old scenes. What I aim at in this volume is to place before the minds of my readers the same instructive pictures that flashed vividly before my own mind when I read my Bible in the Holy Land. If I succeed in this to any extent, I shall feel that I have not travelled and written altogether in vain.

J. LESLIE PORTER.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BELFAST,
September 1888.

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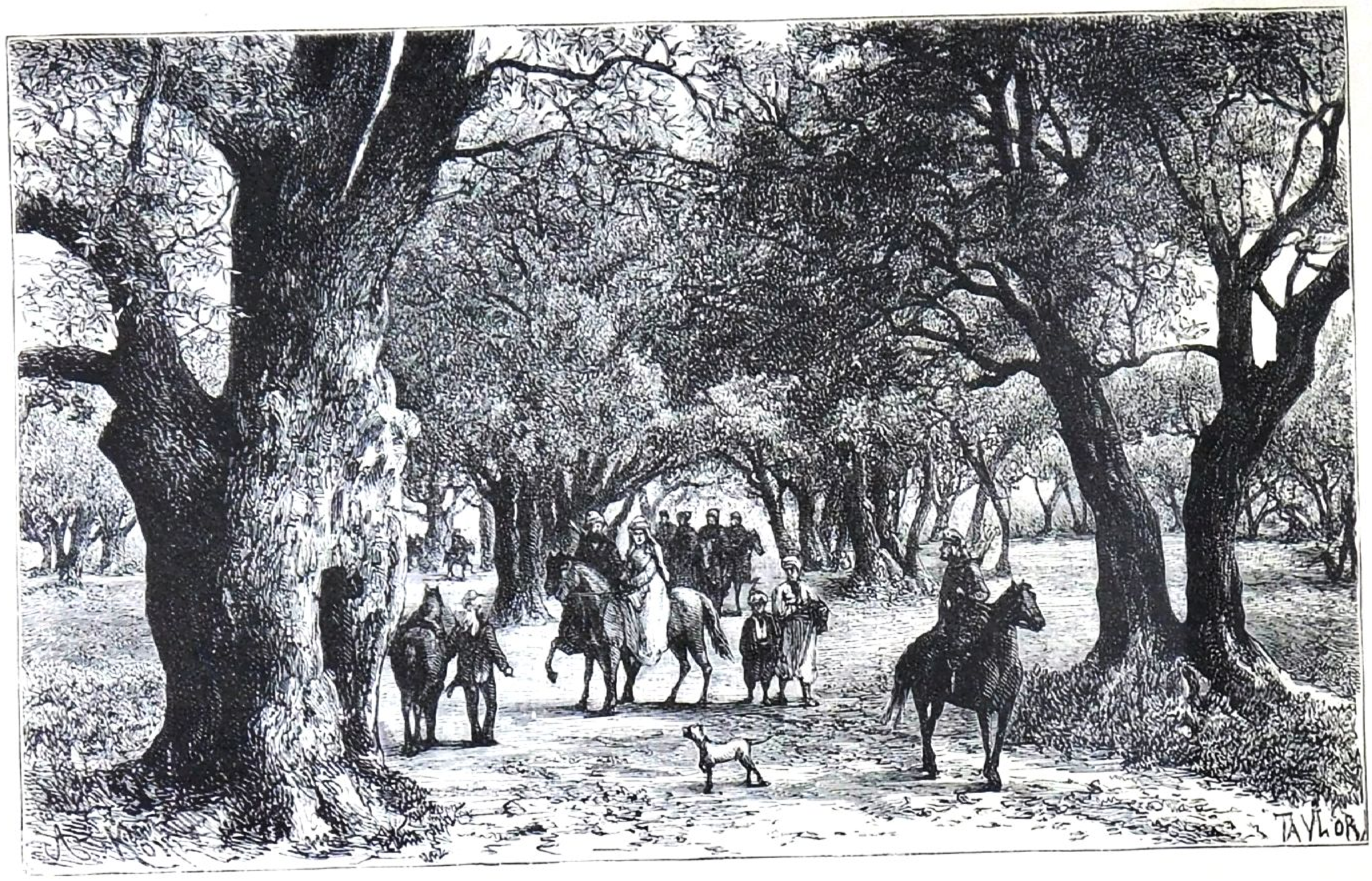
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bright flowers, recalling our Lord's beautiful words: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Leaving the gate of Jerusalem by the road to Samaria and Galilee, we pass close to the Tombs of the Kings; then over the ridge of Scopus, where we see on the right the conical hill on which Gibeah of Benjamin stood, and on the left Mizpeh of Samuel, with its conspicuous minaret. A three hours' ride brings us abreast of Bethel, and we look over its ruins to the hill top where Abraham and Lot parted, dividing the promised land between them. The road now traverses the heights of Benjamin, with wild ravines



OLIVE-TREES IN THE VALLEY OF SHECHEM.

running through them down to the deep Jordan valley. This is the mountain stronghold of that warlike tribe, in which it "ravened as a wolf in the morning, and at even divided the prey" (Gen. xlix. 27)—now wrested from the Philistines on the western plain, now from the nomad "children of the east" beyond Jordan.

The road, rough and stony, dives down from the uplands into a glen. The scenery soon becomes picturesque, and occasionally grand. There is more verdure here and there, and more cultivation in the open valleys, reminding us that we have passed from the rocky fastnesses of Benjamin into the territory of Ephraim, to whom, in prophetic blessing, the Jewish lawgiver promised "the precious things of the fruits of the sun, and the chief things of the ancient mountains, and the precious things of the everlasting hills,

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SHILOH.

THERE is nothing to attract one except the name and the grand associations. There is no beauty, no grandeur of outline, no richness in the scenery. The whole region round Shiloh is featureless—rounded hill-tops destitute of verdure, paved all over with flag-like fragments of whitish limestone. Over one of these, which projects from the table-land into a bleak broad valley, are spread the now desolate ruins of the famous old city—ruins which at a little distance we can scarcely distinguish from the natural rocks and stones that encompass them. Yet, strange to say, this forbidding and barren-looking region is all cultivated, the hill-sides and glen-banks in terraces, and the table-land above in little patches from which the loose stones have been gathered and thrown into heaps. Even the ruins of the old city have been converted into rough terraces, and the courts of the deserted dwellings are now miniature corn-fields. Sheep and goats may be seen browsing on the scanty herbage, and leaping lightly from rock to rock. The shepherds and husbandmen one meets with, in their tattered costumes, usually armed with old musket, or formidable *dibbûs* (club), are almost as wild-looking as their country.

On approaching the ruins we come to a square structure with massive walls and sloping buttresses. The lintel of the door is ornamented with wreaths and *amphoræ* in relief. What it was originally designed for it is impossible to tell. It may have been a synagogue in that early age when the Jews, driven from Jerusalem, settled in Northern Palestine. Then it may have become a church in the Crusading age; then a mosque; and lastly a place of defence. Within are a few fragments of columns of a debased Corinthian style. The interior is about twenty feet square, and one notices several distinct kinds of masonry in the walls and buttresses. The name now given to it is *Jâmia el-Arbaîn*, "Mosque of the Forty." Adjoining it on the east is a smaller mosque, in which the prayer-niche is perfect. Close to the ruins of the town, at the southern base of the *tell*, is a square building of more modern date. The interior is divided by a row of pillars into two aisles, and at the south end is a prayer-niche. It was perhaps at one time a church, though more recently a mosque. Some call it *The Mosque of the Eternal*, others of *Yeteim*. Beside it is a large evergreen oak, evidently of great age, and the only forest tree in this bleak region.

But by far the most interesting relic of antiquity in Shiloh is a level area of scarped rock on the top of the hill. It is about one hundred yards long by thirty wide. The surface has been hewn in places to a depth of at least seven feet; and here and there are

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tion of Shiloh has been described: "On the north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah." In our pilgrimage journey from Judæa to Galilee, especially when we cross the upland and have Lebonah before us, we could not fail to distinguish fallen and deserted Shiloh.

MEMORIALS OF SHILOH.

STANDING on that scarped rock, with the ruins around me, my mind wandered back two-and-thirty centuries. I saw the hosts of Israel, flushed with victory, gathered on the neighbouring heights under their great leader Joshua. He stood, most probably, on this spot, with the chiefs of the people grouped near him. They had assembled to set up the Tabernacle and the Ark, in a secure mountain stronghold, in the centre of the country. Joshua abruptly addressed them in these stirring words:—

"How long are ye slack to go in to possess the land, which the God of your fathers hath given you? Appoint from you three men from each tribe: and I will send them, and they shall walk through the land, and describe it according to their inheritance; and they shall come back unto me."

Then, when the delegates were chosen, he specially addressed them:—

"Ye shall describe the land into seven portions, and bring the description hither to me, and I will cast lots for you here before the Lord your God."

The men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven portions *in a book*, for the seven tribes who had not yet received their inheritance. It was the first great national survey; and it shows a people far advanced in practical knowledge, and even in literary skill, acquired doubtless during their residence in Egypt. The results of the survey appear not only to have been given in writing, but also to have been mapped out in that book which was brought back to Joshua in Shiloh. Then, in solemn assembly of the leading men, Joshua assigned by lot to each of the seven tribes its own possessions, delivering to each its official topographical register.

A few years later Shiloh was the scene of another incident of national importance, possessing also a romantic interest. The tribe of Benjamin, by an act at once cruel and disgraceful, brought upon itself a terrible punishment. It was all but exterminated—not a soul male or female being left alive except six hundred men who took refuge in the rock Rimmon. So intense was the national feeling against the tribe, that the other tribes bound themselves by oath not to give their daughters in marriage to the remaining Benjamites. What was to be done? Was one of the tribes to be extinguished? "And

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good old man; and he shrunk from communicating such a terrible message. But Eli seemed to read his thoughts and feelings—to know also that the divine revelation was one of woe to him. So he called Samuel, and said,—

"What is the thing that the Lord hath spoken unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he spake unto thee."

Thus adjured, Samuel felt that however painful to himself, however harrowing to his honoured and frail old master, he must tell. And he did tell him all. Eli was deeply moved; but he showed in that moment of supreme and hopeless agony more of the true spirit of religious submission than he had ever done before.

"It is the Lord," he said; "let him do what seemeth him good."

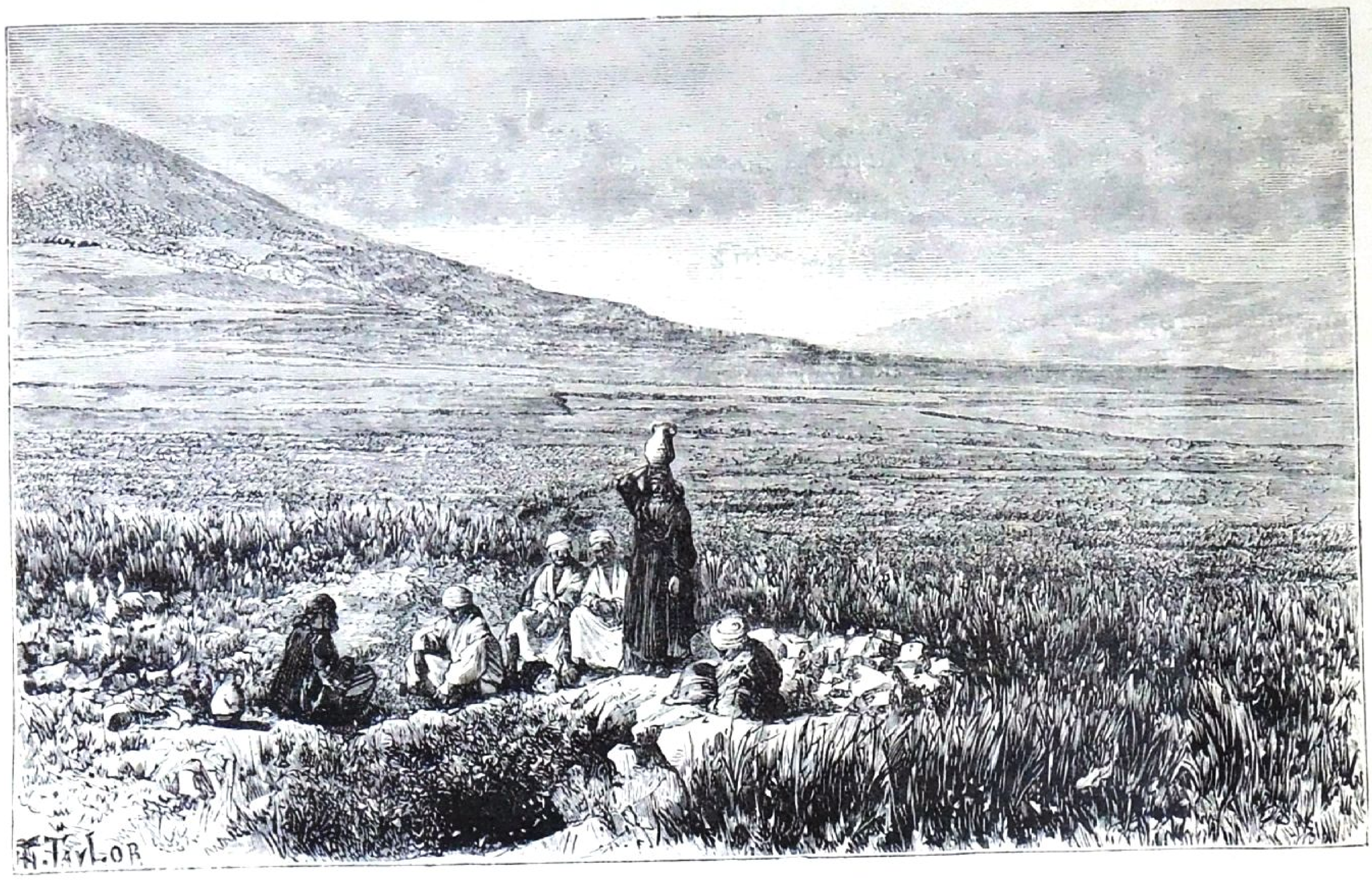
The fulfilment came swiftly; and as I stood on that bare, sacred rock in Shiloh, the tragic details flashed before my mind with a vividness I had never before realized. News came to the assembled priests that the Israelites were defeated by the Philistines; that the Ark of the Lord, which they had recklessly carried to the battle-field, was taken, and Eli's two sons slain. The result is told with dramatic power. Eli had gone out to the top of the rock beside the Tabernacle, to watch for and await a message from the army.

"And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon his seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of the tumult? And the man hasted, and came and told Eli And the man said unto Eli.....Israel is fled before the Philistines, and thy two sons are dead, and the ark of God is taken" (1 Sam. iv. 12, *et seq.*). On hearing this Eli fell dead; and as the capture of the ark was fatal to Eli, it was fatal also to Shiloh. The city fell to rise no more. Its destruction became a solemn warning to Israel; for centuries afterwards the prophet Jeremiah said, "Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel" (vii. 12).

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here is the city Shechem which figures in almost every chapter of Jewish history; here are the mountains Ebal and Gerizim; here are the ruins of the Samaritan temple on the top of the latter; and here, just beneath and in view of the ruins, is "Jacob's Well;" and here also, on the other side of Moreh, east of Shechem, is Shalem. Journeying thus, with the Bible in our hands, one feels ready to say with Sterne in his "Sentimental Journey,"—"I pity the man who can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and say, 'Tis all barren. And so it is; and so is all the world to him who will not cultivate the fruits it offers."

I rode up the plain, along the northern road, following the footsteps of Jesus, to



JACOB'S WELL AND THE PLAIN OF MOREH.

Jacob's Well, and dismounting, I sat down on a great stone at the mouth of the well. It is still deep, seventy feet or more. Sitting there, my mind wandered away back eighteen centuries. Time cannot limit thought; and the mind has the wondrous creative power of grouping anew before it striking events, recalled by memory, or read in history. It was so with me as I sat by Jacob's Well. I seemed to see advancing towards me a group of travellers; their leader in mien and face singularly attractive, though dressed in the costume of a Galilean peasant—an under-coat fitting closely, and bound round the waist by a girdle; over it a long loose robe, open in front, and woven throughout without seam; on his naked feet pointed shoes of rough leather; on his head a closely-folded linen turban. His face, of the purest Jewish type, bears the impress of intellectual power, deep thought, intense earnestness, and above all, and dominating all, of tender, loving sym

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offers for giving divine instruction. "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her,—

"Give me to drink."

The woman saith unto him,—

"How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a Samaritan woman? for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans."

Jesus answered,—

"If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

The woman replied,—

"Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?"

Jesus answered,—

"Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up into eternal life."

The woman saith,—

"Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw."

Jesus saith,—

"Go, call thy husband, and come hither."

She answered,—

"I have no husband."

Jesus saith,—

"Thou saidst well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband."

The woman replied wonderingly,—

"Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain" (pointing up to Gerizim and its temple); "and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

Jesus answered in words that riveted her attention and touched her heart,—

"Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

The woman replied with still increasing interest,—

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inhabitants, the great majority Moslems. It occupies one of the finest sites in Central Palestine—a rich and beautiful vale about half-a-mile wide, abundantly watered; having on its south side the steep ridge of Gerizim, clothed with grass and foliage; and on the north Ebal, bleak and bare, as if the curse rested on it. In the centre of this vale, where a recess in each ridge forms a great natural amphitheatre, was held the assembly of the twelve tribes, six ranged on one side and six on the other. There the Law was read, and the blessings and the cursings pronounced in the hearing of the vast multitude—the blessings from Mount Gerizim, and the cursings from Mount Ebal (Deut. xi. 29).

Nabulus is prosperous and improving. Its streets, with a few exceptions, are still narrow, gloomy, and tortuous; in some places the projecting windows and frequent archways make them look like tunnels. There are many remains of former wealth and grandeur —marble and granite columns, sculptured pediments, elaborate Gothic and Saracenic portals, with here and there stately houses of more recent date. One old mosque with a tall minaret is conspicuous on the south side of the town. On the minaret is a Samaritan inscription, and the Samaritans say it formerly belonged to one of their synagogues.

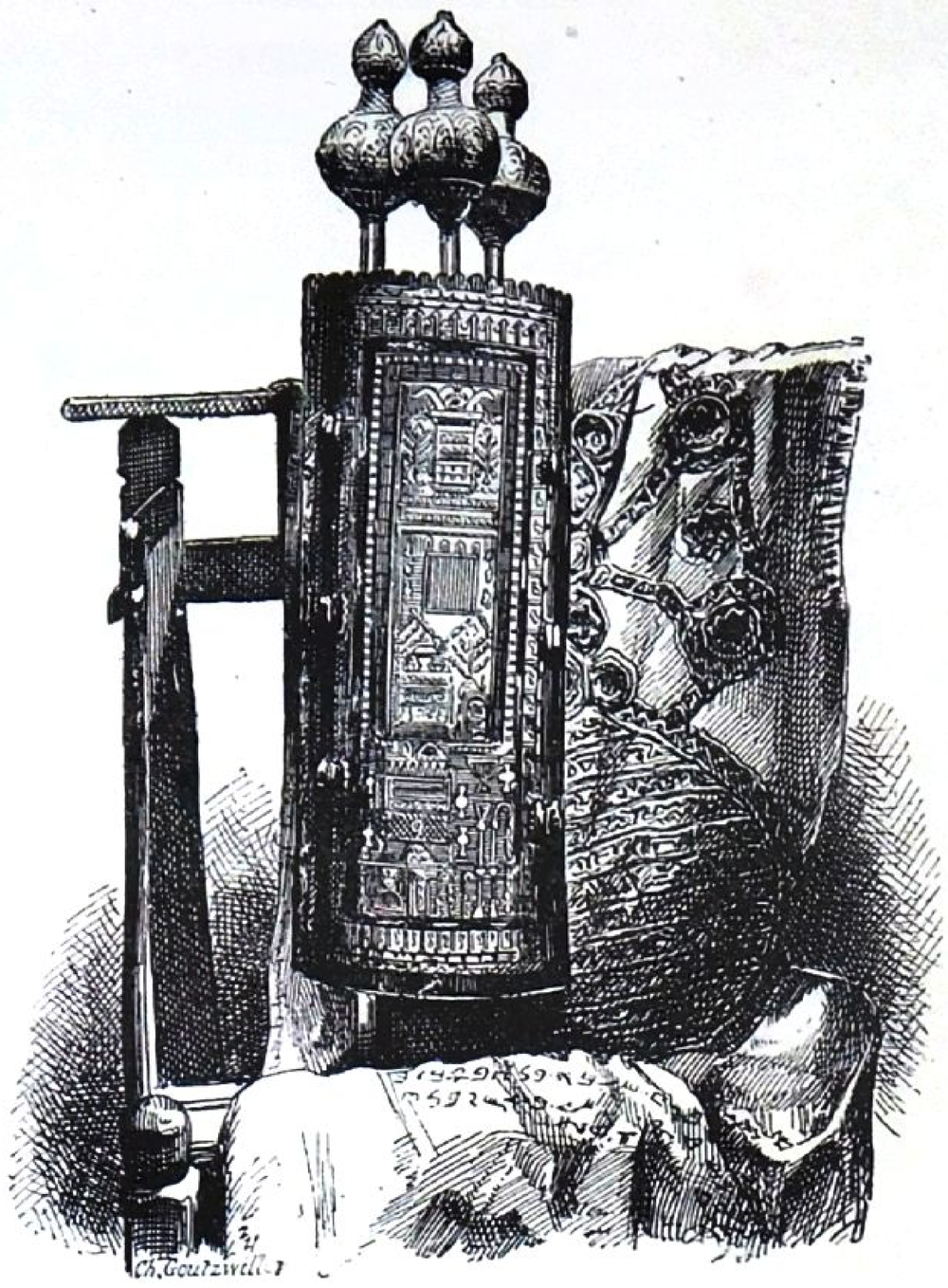
Nabulus is now the only town in Palestine which contains a remnant of the old Samaritan people. They cling to it, and to their sacred Mount Gerizim, with remarkable tenacity and devotedness. They number only about one hundred and sixty, and for generations they do not appear to have greatly increased or diminished. They do not intermarry with others, yet they are a healthy and stalwart people. Their origin is well known. When the ten tribes were taken captive by the Assyrians, their country was colonized by strangers from the east. But the colonists were few in number, and the land, to a great extent lying waste, soon became infested with wild beasts. The colonists suffered much, and attributed the scourge to the anger of the local deity, of whose worship they were ignorant. They therefore asked for Jewish priests to instruct them in the old national faith; then being thus taught, as the sacred writer tells us, "they feared the Lord, and served their own gods" (2 Kings xvii. 24–41).

Such was the origin of the Samaritans. In after times they were joined by renegade Jews, who brought with them a copy of the Pentateuch. When the returned Jewish captives from Babylon proposed to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem, they indignantly declined the proffered aid of the Samaritans, who thereupon resolved to erect a temple of their own on Gerizim, about the year B.C. 420. Shechem now became the capital of the new sect, and became at the same time an asylum for apostate and disreputable Israelites. Hence the bitter enmity between the two nations—"The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." To this day the feeling is as intense as of old.

The Samaritans believe in one lawgiver, Moses; they believe in the coming of the Messiah as a prophet, but nothing more; they believe in a resurrection and a future state. They observe the great feasts enjoined in the Pentateuch. Their observance of the

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was wrapped in a scarf of crimson satin, embroidered with letters of gold thread, in the Damascus style. It is a strip of parchment, very long, about fifteen inches wide, rolled on two brass rods, one being fastened to each end. The writing is on transverse columns, each column seven inches wide, and containing about seventy lines. The letters are small, rude, and irregular, of the oldest Samaritan type. The parchment is of a yellowish-brown colour, much stained and worn, especially at the place where it is always exposed to the view and touch of the people on the Day of Atonement.



CASE IN WHICH THE MANUSCRIPT OF THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH IS KEPT, NABULUS.

The manuscript is enshrined in a beautiful silver cylindrical case, about thirty inches long by twelve in diameter. It opens down the centre. One of the sections has a plan of the tabernacle; the other has different ornaments, all in *repoussé* work, well executed and parcel-gilt. The case was probably made in Italy, but the date is unknown.

The manuscript contains the entire Pentateuch, and the Samaritans affirm that it was written by Abishua, son of Phinehas, three thousand five hundred years ago. This, of course, cannot be credited; but, judging by the appearance of the vellum and the character of the writing, I should say that it may be as old as the sixth century.

MOUNT GERIZIM.

THE Samaritan holy place on the top of Gerizim is reached by a steep winding path from the town up the hill-side. On the summit is an extensive plateau, wild and rocky. At its eastern end is a prominent knoll, the crown of the mountain impending over Jacob's Well, and commanding a view of the entire plain of Moreh and the mountains and hills round it. On the knoll is a rectangular enclosure, measuring two hundred and fifty-five feet by two hundred and forty. Only the foundations of the

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temple was on the crown of the mount now occupied by the ruins of the castle and church.

About two hundred yards below the ruins, at the foot of the knoll on the west, is a level area, where the Samaritans encamp at the Feast of the Passover. On its eastern side is a small rectangular plot, surrounded by stones, like the foundations of an old building. In its centre, when I last visited it, was a trough a foot deep and four feet long, filled with ashes and calcined bones, the remains of the lambs which are burned according to divine command (Ex. xii. 10). Beside this enclosure is a circular pit three feet in diameter and eight or ten deep, in which the lambs are roasted.

I had once an opportunity of witnessing a part of this solemn feast. The tents of the whole community were pitched on the area facing the mountain top. Beside the trough were two large metal pots full of water, and the pit was filled with dry brush. Some of the older men recited portions of the Law. Near sunset eight or ten men in white robes stood round the pit and kindled the brush. They also kindled wood in the trough. Precisely at sunset six lambs were brought forward; then the priest in a loud voice repeated the words of Exodus xii. 6 in Hebrew, and while he was speaking the lambs were killed. Their still quivering carcasses were washed with water; then, when properly cleansed, each was pierced lengthwise by a strong wooden spit, and carefully suspended over the fire in the open pit, which was covered, till the bodies were fully roasted, according to the command, "They shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire."

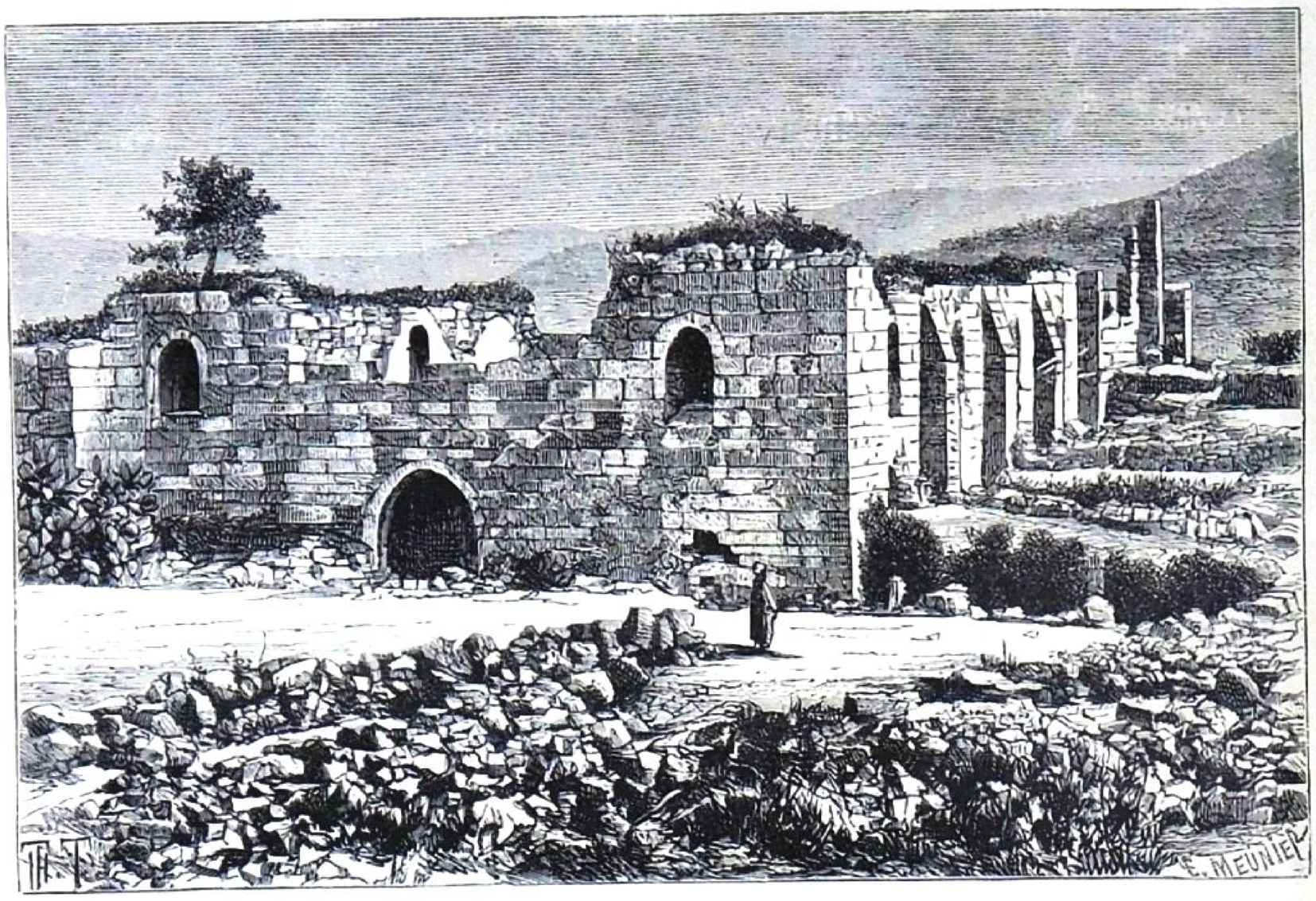
I did not remain for the conclusion of the feast, which took place during the night; but it has been described by others. About midnight the covering of the pit-oven is torn off, and the great column of smoke and steam rises into the still sky. Then the blackened flesh is dragged out and divided among the people, who eat "with shoes on their feet, their loins girded, and staff in hand." They eat standing and in haste. When the feast is finished, the fragments are carefully collected on a wooden hurdle, and placed over a newly kindled fire, where the whole is consumed—"Ye shall let nothing remain until the morning; and that which remaineth until the morning ye shall burn with fire." It is an interesting and remarkable festival, bringing before one with singular vividness the tragic events of that night of lamentation and rejoicing in the land of Egypt more than three thousand years ago, when the first-born of the Egyptians were smitten by the avenging angel of the Lord and the Israelites were set free.

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stud the hill-sides and summits, every one looking like a little fortress. At length we get a view of *Sebustieh*, the modern name of Samaria, standing on the side of a low isolated hill.

The site, if less beautiful, is more commanding than that of Nabulus. In the centre of a great basin, encompassed by picturesque mountain ridges, rises a flattish, oval-shaped hill, perhaps four hundred feet high and ten or twelve miles in circuit. The top is nearly flat, and the sides descend in terraces to the encircling vales below. Groves of olives cover the southern side and the valley at its base, while single trees and groups dot the other sides and the summit.

On approaching Sebustieh the first object to attract attention is the Church of St. John the Baptist, a large building, erected probably during the Crusades, but now almost



RUINS OF THE CHURCH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST AT SAMARIA.

completely in ruins. The roof is gone. At the east end is a semicircular chancel, richly ornamented with carving. The columns dividing nave and aisles are in bad taste. I observed in a modern wall inside several marble tablets with crosses of the Order of the Knights of St. John. The church was evidently founded on the site, and constructed partly of the remains, of one of the old city gates, which accounts for the different styles of architecture we observe in the building.

Under a little cupola within the building is the reputed tomb of the Baptist, called by the Arabs *Neby Yahya*. It is a deep grotto containing six *loculi* for bodies in two tiers; small holes are left at the end for visitors to look into them. Tradition says that this vault was first the prison of the Baptist, and afterwards his tomb. Be this as it may, the tomb is evidently much older than the church. The masonry is massive, and the

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omniscience. No amount of political sagacity could have foreseen what he predicted, and no depth of philosophical speculation could have inferred it. Here are his words, written seven centuries before the time of Herod: "I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as the plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover [lay bare] the foundations thereof" (i. 6).

The tragic history of Samaria may be told in a few sentences. Omri, King of Israel, bought the hill from Shemer, and called it after the name of its original owner. He founded the city, and made it the capital of his kingdom. Ahab, who married Jezebel of Sidon, built here an altar and temple to Baal, and thus polluted the land. The city passed through many strange vicissitudes before Herod's time, when it attained its greatest splendour. In it Philip "preached Christ," and founded a church; and in the early centuries of our era it became the seat of a bishopric. Now its glory is gone; the site of its famous temples and palaces is covered with corn-fields and vineyards, and the ancient capital of Israel is represented by a village of some sixty hovels.

There is a rugged path from Samaria over the mountains eastward to Tirzah, another early capital of the kingdom of Israel for a very brief period. It stands amid olive groves on a hill-side, looking down on the green meadows and fountains of the upper valley of Faria, most probably that *Ænon* where John "was baptizing" (John iii. 23). It may have been its charming situation that suggested the words of Solomon, "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah" (Cant. vi. 4).

But the direct road from Samaria to Galilee, the road doubtless along which our Lord travelled after his short sojourn in Shechem, runs among the hills due north. The country becomes richer and more picturesque as we advance. The hills are generally clothed with thin forests of evergreen oak, the upland plains are larger and better tilled, the villages are more numerous and apparently more prosperous, and the inhabitants seem to be a hardy and thrifty race. In two hours we pass Jeba, doubtless some ancient Gibeah. There is a mellow look of age about the place, and its heavy old tower and the massive stones in some of its houses point to former strength and greatness. Then winding over a marshy plain, which in winter becomes a lake, we pass the castellated heights of Sanûr, formerly held by a powerful family of feudal chieftains, who ruled and plundered the surrounding country. They are now fortunately more given to the arts of peace than the arts of war. After passing the plain below Sanûr, we ascend a wooded ridge, from which we get commanding views over the undulating region to the west and north. In a retired valley some miles distant, on the west, we see the village of *Dothan*, still retaining its ancient name, and calling to mind the sad but romantic story of Joseph and his brethren.

Dothan contains nothing now of antiquarian interest or of natural beauty to attract attention, yet it occupies a place of no small importance in Bible history. The site of the

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dwelt in Dothan. He resolved to capture the prophet, and surrounded the town with his troops. Elisha's servant, seeing them, thought all was lost. Rushing in, he cried, "Alas, my master! what shall we do?" "Fear not," was the reply: "for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Then, when his eyes were opened at the request of Elisha, "he saw that the hills were full of horses and chariots of fire." The result is recorded with graphic power by the sacred historian (2 Kings vi.). The name of Dothan was thus made famous in Scripture history.

We now approach the northern confines of Samaria, where a series of long winding ravines open from the mountains into the plain of Esdrælon. These were the passes so often defended by "the ten thousands of Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh," against invaders from the north. Manasseh's territory lay along this frontier. Among these hills Gideon, the great hero of the tribe, was trained to battle; and down these passes he led his little army against the hosts of the Midianites in the valley of Jezreel. Our road leads down the same wildly picturesque pass to the ancient city of *En-Gannim*, where we enter GALILEE.

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priests of Baal were executed by command of the prophet Elijah. Turning eastward, we follow in the track of Ahab's chariot to the site of the royal city of Jezreel. We see the place of the vineyard of poor Naboth; we see the rocky hill where the palace of Ahab once stood, and where such terrible vengeance was executed on the infamous Jezebel. Looking up the hill-side from that now dreary site, we see those naked rounded tops and sides of Gilboa where Saul and Jonathan fell; and we are almost forced to believe that the touching words of David, in mourning over the death of Saul and Jonathan, had been fulfilled to the very letter: "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew nor rain upon you, nor fields of offerings." Then we can look across the valley of Jezreel, lying just below us, to the little village of Shunem, where Elisha raised the Shunammite's son from



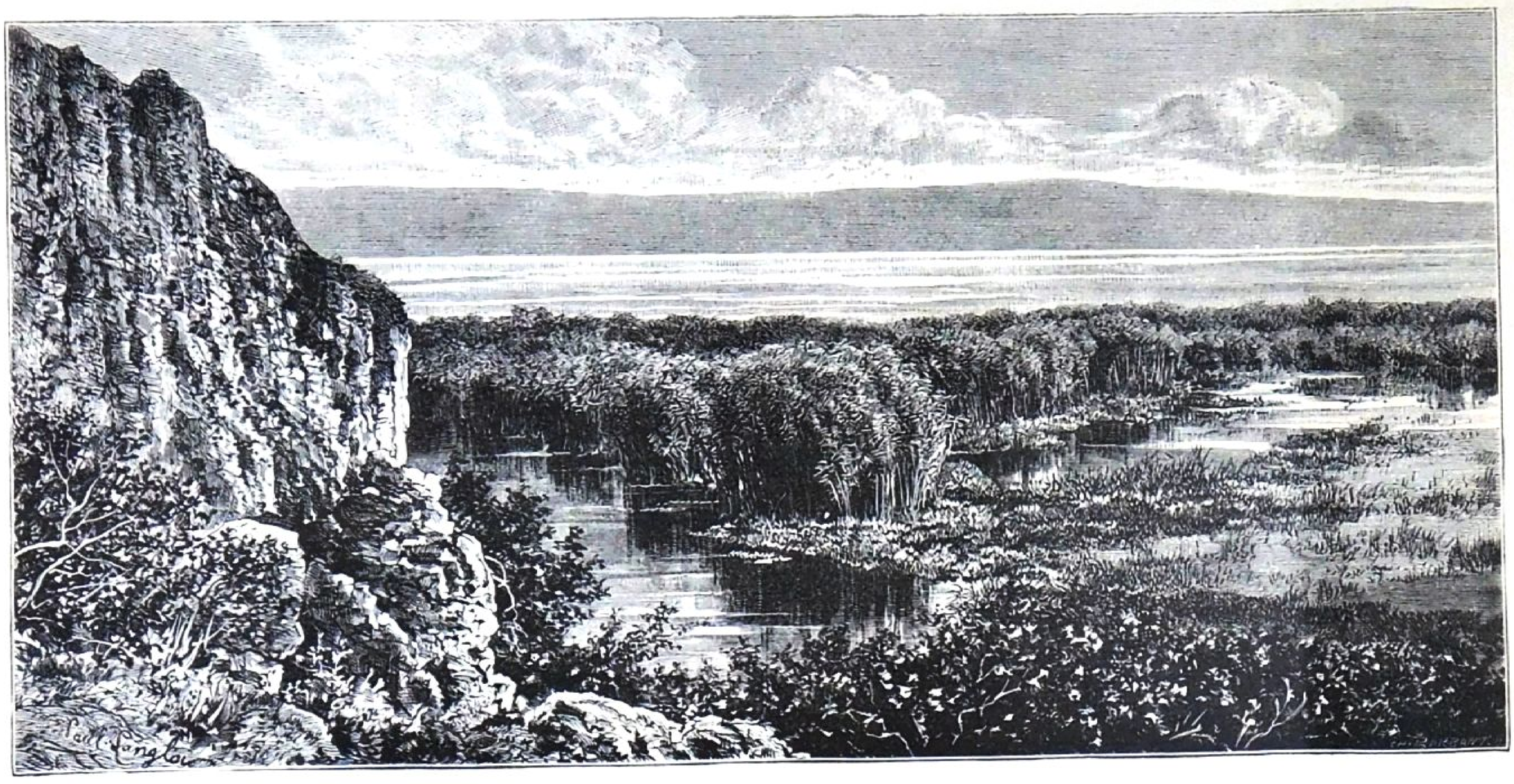
ARAB WOMAN OF NAPHTALI.

the dead. And above it rises the hill of Moreh, over which the infatuated Saul went in the night to consult the witch of Endor.

It is thus that the events of early Jewish history can be studied with fresh interest as we wander through Galilee. Reading the Books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel, after traversing, as I have done, the whole of Galilee and the valley of the Jordan, seemed to me almost like a new revelation. The battle-scenes became so vivid; the acts of Deborah and Barak, the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, the romantic stories of Gideon, of the witch of Endor, and of the brave and adventurous men of Jabesh-Gilead—all flashed before my eyes as real events enacted on the old stage. The wonderful correspondence between Bible history and Bible lands, the perfect adaptation of each incident to the place in which, and the surroundings amid which, it occurred, struck me with irresistible force. The sacred historians must have been perfectly familiar with the topography and general features of the country, and they must themselves have been either eye-witnesses

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habits and occupations of all classes of its inhabitants. His discourses and vivid illustrations, especially those recorded by the synoptic evangelists, are filled with allusions to the scenes that were ever before him in Galilee, and with metaphors and lessons suggested by them. It is a noteworthy fact that of his thirty-two beautiful parables no less than nineteen were first spoken in Galilee. They were addressed to his disciples, who were almost all Galileans. And it is no less remarkable that of his entire thirty-three great miracles twenty-five were wrought in this province. His first miracle was at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, and his last, after his resurrection, was on the shore of Galilee's sea. In Galilee our Lord delivered the "Sermon on the Mount;" and the discourses on "The Bread of Life," on "Purity," on "Forgiveness," and on "Humility." In Galilee he called his first disciples; and there occurred the



Ain et-Tineh and Papyrus Swamp, Sea of Galilee.

sublime scene of "the Transfiguration." In fact, the entire province is encircled with a halo of holy associations connected with the life, works, and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

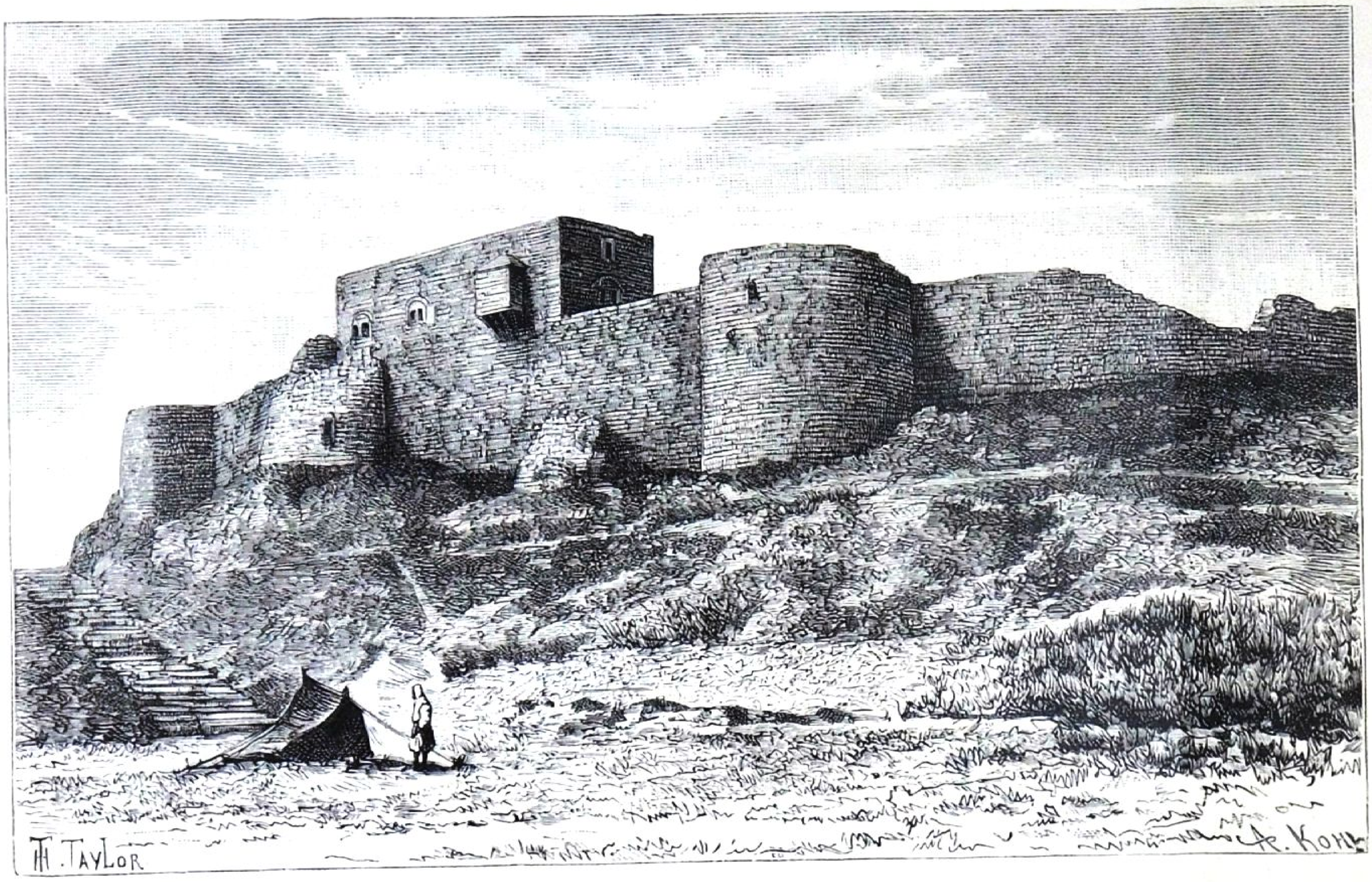
Wherever one goes, over its hills, across its broad plains, among its towns and villages and ruins, along the shores of its lake and the banks of its streams and rivers, he treads on "haunted holy ground." He has before him and around him at every footstep scenes that recall some of the grandest achievements of God's ancient people, and some of the most marvellous displays of Divine power, wisdom, and love. I have repeatedly passed through every section of Galilee. My first journey dates more than a quarter of a century back, and my last only a few years. I have surveyed the country from the summit of Mount Tabor, from the bleak brow of Gilboa, from the flowery ridge of

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grove and almost every tree; pigeons are cooing up in the rocky sides of each hill and in the wild crannies of every cliff and glen; the gay plumage of jays is seen shooting from side to side as we ride along; the shrieks of storks sound shrilly overhead as they pass in their periodical migration; while hawks innumerable float gracefully above grove and field; and huge vultures and the great imperial eagle are high in air, watching for a poor stray kid or a dead carcass.

ORIGIN OF THE NAME GALILEE.

THE name Galilee originated in the earliest commercial relations of Jew and Gentile. It is a Hebrew word signifying "a circuit," and was first given to a little upland plain among the mountains of Naphtali, embracing a few towns and villages which



RAMPARTS OF THE CASTLE OF TIBNÎN, UPPER GALILEE.

Solomon offered to Hiram, king of Tyre, in payment for his services in cutting down and forwarding timber for the great buildings in Jerusalem, and for the assistance rendered by his architects and masons towards the construction of the temple. Hiram, however, whose great want was grain for his island capital and his fleet, and who seems to have expected a section of one of the rich plains of Central Palestine, or it may be of Sharon,

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THE SEA OF GALILEE.

THE most remarkable physical feature of Galilee is the great depression of its lake, and of the whole valley of the Jordan. The surface of the lake is no less than seven hundred feet below the level of the ocean. Its shores are thus much hotter than any other part of the province; in fact, their climate is tropical, and the vegetation is tropical, while the neighbouring hills and upland plains have the balmy air, and generally the fruits, flowers, and agricultural products, of Southern Europe. The harvest along the shore, by Tiberias, and on the little plain of Gennesaret, is a month earlier than on the table-land and hill-sides, a mile or so distant to the east and west.

Another remarkable characteristic of the province is its thermal springs. The country is volcanic, and has suffered greatly from earthquake shocks. Hot springs are found at several points, but especially in or close to the deep valley of the Jordan. There is one beside the lake, about a mile south of Tiberias. It was known at a very early period, and gave the name *Hammath*, which means "warm springs," to an old city of the Canaanites, allotted by Joshua to the tribe of Naphtali (Joshua xix. 35). The water issues from the base of a steep hill of trap rock, at a temperature of 144° Fahr. It was celebrated in Roman times, and Pliny speaks of the virtues of its waters. There is another warm spring in the wild glen of the Hieromax, just below the ruins of Gadara, east of the Jordan, a few miles south-east of the lake.

The Sea or *Lake of Galilee*, historically one of the most interesting, and physically one of the most remarkable, in the world, has yet none of those sublime features which give to the lakes of Switzerland and Italy, and to some of those in England and Scotland, their great charm. There is nothing of picturesque beauty or richness in the scenery or environs; nor has it, on the other hand, that stern, wild, desolate grandeur which characterizes the Dead Sea, and which awes and attracts one when viewing it from the ramparts of Masada, or the cliffs of the wild goats at Engedi. The Sea of Galilee is an oval-shaped expanse of clear water, like a huge natural basin, with uniformly-curved shore-line, and naked slopes of dark rock and dark shingle rising steeply and regularly to an encircling table-land. On the east the table-land is almost perfectly flat, and when seen from a distance the bank of the lake looks like a huge wall. On the west the outline is somewhat varied by rounded hill-tops and deep wide glens. In these respects the first view of the lake, especially if one approaches it from Nazareth, is disappointing. There are no bold rocky promontories jutting far out into deep water, and there are no winding bays running

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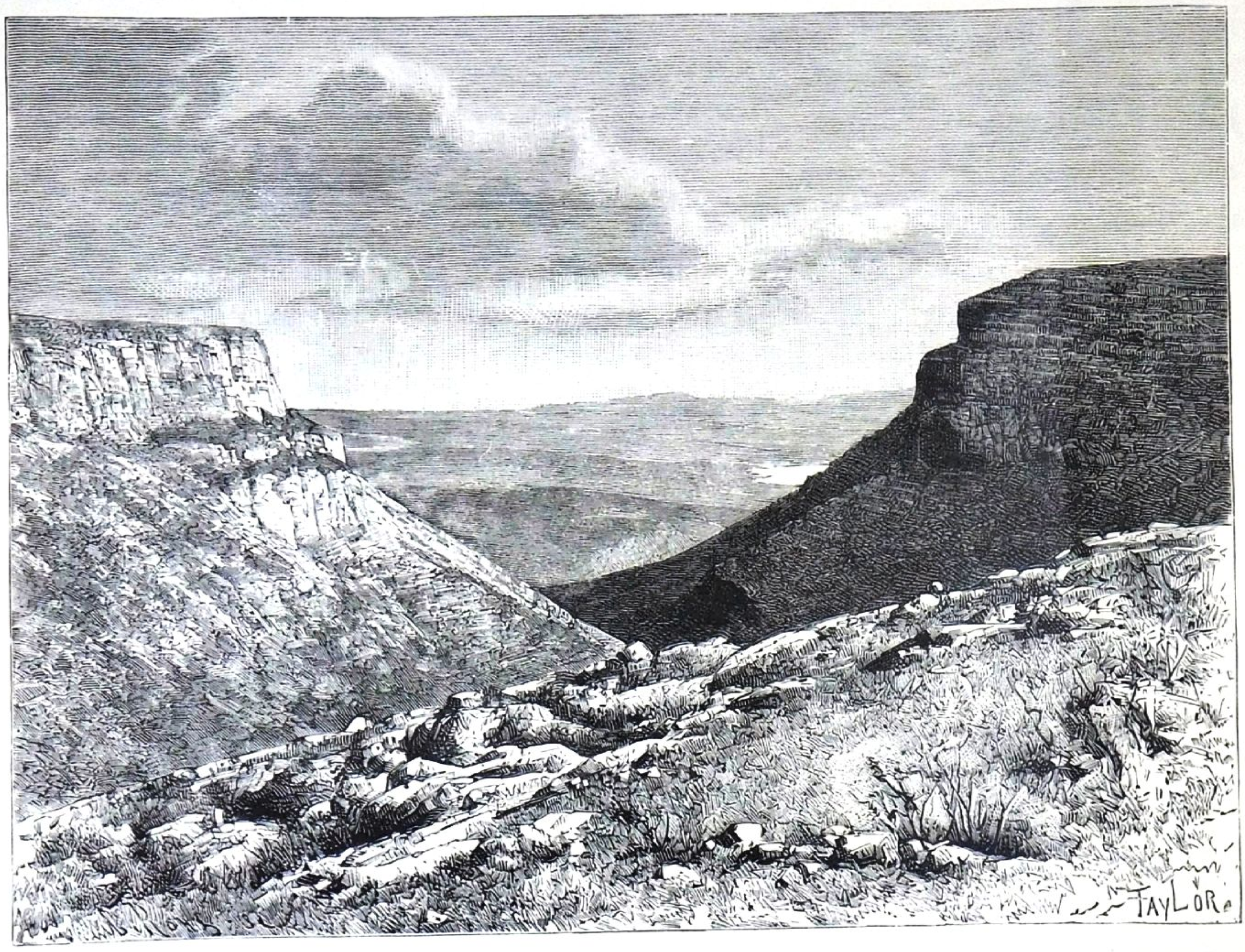
And yet the Sea of Galilee has still not a few attractions. Nature has not left it altogether destitute of beauty. True, when the sun is high and the sky cloudless, and when the enthusiastic pilgrim looks down from some commanding spot on the neighbouring hills, there is a dreariness, a uniformity in the entire scene before him; there is a coldness in the unvaried gray colour of hill and bank and shore that offends the artistic eye, and wearies and disappoints those accustomed to the picturesque outlines and rich colouring of the lake scenery of Western Europe. But let him go down to the strand, as I have often done, and wait there till the sun declines, and he will be enchanted with the deep ethereal blue of the glassy lake, and with the marvellous rich tints which gradually come out, as if from the pencil of some mighty invisible magician artist, and make the whole encircling walls of that vast amphitheatre bright and beautiful with the delicately blended shades of pale rose, pearl gray, and deep purple; and he may watch them until they fade in the gloom as the stars appear overhead and mirror themselves in the water. Or, when he reaches the margin of the lake, he may turn northward, and there, on the horizon, far away up the valley of the Jordan, is the majestic cone of Hermon, overtopping all other peaks and ridges, and piercing the bright blue sky with its glittering crown of snow. I have often sat there, on the crumbling walls of Tiberias, and by the old baths of Hammath, and the broken piers of the bridge of Tarichæa, enraptured with that grand evening view. The silence was profound. The utter loneliness and absolute stillness of the scene were most impressive. It sometimes seemed to me as if all nature had gone to rest.

VIEW OF THE LAKE FROM THE HEIGHTS OF GADARA.

I CAN never forget my last visit to the Sea of Galilee. It was even more impressive than my first. The point of view was different, and many of the associations were different. I had ridden all day long through the oak forests of Gilead, after an extensive tour among the strange old cities of Bashan, and a passing survey of some of the towns of Decapolis, and an inspection of the singular troglodyte dwellings in the adjoining hills. A Roman road, its pavement in places almost perfect, marked here and there with chariot wheels, brought us at length to a projecting spur of the ridge; the deep wild ravine of the Hieromax on the right, and a wooded glen on the left. On the rounded top of this spur stood the city of Gadara. Its ruins were all round us as we halted beside a great cistern to encamp for the night. There were shattered walls, multitudes of prostrate broken shafts, and tastefully carved capitals, nearly concealed by huge thistles and thorns

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The whole was to me like a new revelation of a large section of Gospel history. But what a change has taken place since our Lord's time! The country was then teeming with life and activity and industry. At least ten populous towns, with numerous villages, studded the shores of the lake and the adjoining hill-sides. The lake too was covered with fishing-boats; the uplands were swarming with flocks and herds and shepherds; the fields with yokes of oxen, and husbandmen. The region around the lake was at that time the most densely peopled in a densely-peopled country. Now the people are gone;



RUINS OF ARBELA (BETH-ARBEL), SEA OF GALILEE.

the cities and villages are gone: the angel of destruction has swept over the land, leaving ruin and desolation behind. Gadara, Gergesa, Chorazin, Capernaum, and the two Bethsaidas, are in the dust—their very ruins almost hidden by jungles of thorns and thistles, emblems of the curse. Fishing-boats and fishermen have alike disappeared; merchantmen no longer frequent marts of commerce; there is no traffic; and the very roads along which merchandise was carried are well-nigh obliterated. No signs of present occupation or habitation around the lake are visible, except the half-ruined city of Tiberias, and the few huts that mark the site and bear the name of *Magdala*.

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two large theatres, there is a spacious forum, there are several temples, and there is a "Straight Street," running from a gateway at the east end of the city, along the crown of the ridge, to a pile of ruins, probably another gate, on the west. The street had a Corinthian colonnade on each side. Many of the columns and capitals are there, but not one standing. It is remarkable that all the important cities of Palestine and Syria—Samaria, Cæsarea, Gerasa, Bozrah, Damascus, Palmyra—had their "Straight Streets," running through the centre of the city, and lined with stately rows of columns. The most perfect now remaining are those of Palmyra and Gerasa, where long ranges of the columns still stand. The "Straight Street" of Gadara must have been very imposing, stretching along the crown of the ridge from the great eastern gate to the forum and the western gate on the point of the ridge near it.

Gadara is not mentioned in the Old Testament, and the city probably did not exist, at least under its Greek name, in early Jewish times. The first notice of it I find in history is when it was taken by Antiochus the Great, about two centuries before Christ. It afterwards became the capital of a Roman province, and was then adorned with those sumptuous public buildings the ruins of which now lie prostrate amid jungles of thorns and thistles. Nearly all the old streets can be traced, with their Roman pavement, but wars and earthquakes have ruined all besides. The marks of the chariot wheels are as distinct, and in places almost as deep, as I have seen them in the streets of Pompeii.

Gadara was captured by Vespasian on the first outbreak of the Jewish war, and its inhabitants were put to the sword. The city itself, with its circle of dependent villages, was burned. At a later period it again rose to importance, and became the seat of a bishop in the early Christian Church. The name of its bishop occurs in the records of the Council of Nice. It had a noble cathedral, the ruins of which are now as desolate as those of the Roman temples and theatres near them.

THE MIRACLE OF THE DEMONIACS.

IN recent times Gadara derived its greatest interest and importance from its being the reputed scene of our Lord's miracle of healing the demoniacs. It cannot be denied that there is much in the site and surroundings to suggest the identity, and also to illustrate some of the remarkable incidents of the miracle. We read that when Jesus had crossed the lake, "there met him a certain man out of the city, who had devils; and for a long time he had worn no clothes, and abode not in any house but in the

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The narrative of Mark would appear to indicate as much, for he describes the demoniac of whom he speaks as running to meet Jesus, and worshipping him; and then he adds, "he besought Jesus that he would not send *them* away out of the country." The plural pronoun may, of course, refer to the spirits, but it may also refer to the two men.

Again: Mark and Luke lay the scene of the miracle in "the country of the Gadarenes;" Matthew in "the country of the Gergesenes." It may be noted here that some of the best Greek manuscripts have "Gadarenes" in all three passages. Other manuscripts, also of high authority, read *Gerasenes* in all three; while in Matthew some manuscripts have the word *Gergesenes*. These variations may have arisen from the fact that Gadara was the more important city, the capital of a large province. Matthew was a native of Capernaum, and was familiar with the whole locality. He knew the little village of Gergesa, and mentioned it to indicate the exact scene of the miracle. Mark and Luke, on the other hand, were not Galileans—the latter, in fact, was a Greek; and they were consequently not so familiar with the villages on the borders of the lake as Matthew. They knew Gadara, however, as an important Roman city; and the scene of the miracle being within its subject territory, they use the more general expression, "country of the Gadarenes." There is thus in the details of the narrative just so much of variety as one would expect from independent historians.

A few details of my personal experience in Gadara during my last visit may serve more clearly to show my readers some of the characteristics of the country and the temper and habits of its people. After a wide tour through Bashan and Gilead, already referred to, we travelled in the line of the Roman road, amid splendid oak forests, to Gadara. Among the most remarkable places we visited were the subterranean or cave villages. They cannot be seen from even a short distance, and the first objects one observes are groups of women and children, with perhaps some sheep and goats, playing or moving about on the open, grassy hill-side. On drawing nearer, if there be a somewhat numerous or formidable-looking party—as was the case with myself—women, children, sheep, and goats suddenly disappear, as if swallowed up by an earthquake. Then probably one or two men, well armed, rise above the ground to reconnoitre. We ride on, and at length find ourselves on the brink of a spacious open pit, round the sides of which, excavated in the soft calcareous rock, are the cave-houses of the people. I found them communicative, friendly, and industrious. The soil on the hill-sides and in the valleys is well and widely cultivated. Under a good government this whole northern section of Gilead would be peaceful and prosperous. But at present the peasantry are spoiled on the one hand by the wandering Arabs of the desert, and on the other hand by the exactions of those who farm the revenues of the Turkish Government. The regular taxes upon the products of the soil are heavy enough; still they could be easily paid, leaving a handsome profit to the cultivators, were it not for the dishonesty and rapacity of those who collect them. The

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found matters still more serious. A large section of the hostile tribe was encamped in the immediate neighbourhood, and they, driven into open rebellion by the rapacity of tax-gatherers and Kurdish troopers, were now making the roads unsafe for all travellers. Two of the so-called rebels were, unfortunately, captured by our Kurdish guards as we rode along, and dragged before us. A gun was taken from one, and the other, attempting resistance, would have been killed on the spot by the Kurds, who had their swords at his throat, when I interposed and summarily disarmed the Kurds. I afterwards brought the two Arabs to our tent and gave back the captured gun, greatly to the delight of the owner, and to the disgust of our friends the Kurds. The Arabs, before they withdrew, advised us not to remain in Gadara for the night, and to move across the Jordan as quickly as possible. The advice seemed friendly, and we resolved to follow it.

We now gave orders to strike the camp at midnight, and to march for the Jordan bridge at the earliest possible hour on the following morning. The accounts given us by our guides, corroborated by the remarks of the two friendly Arabs, were anything but reassuring. One of the Kurds told me that, a few days previously, he and a party of his troop had shot an Arab chief whom they found plundering a friendly village. Only a few weeks before our visit, the herds of cattle and horses of the Pasha of Damascus had been swept away from the neighbouring plain of Jaulan, where they had been sent to graze; and the Arab tribe that took them—a section of the *Bene-Sukhr* now encamped near us—had very curtly refused to give them up, and openly defied the Government. Fortunately we had completed our tour east of the Jordan, and our true policy was to get back to the west with the least possible delay.

A NIGHT-MARCH.

THE moon was full and shining gloriously in a cloudless sky when, at midnight, our tents and baggage being carefully packed on mules, our muleteers and servants in their places, we mounted our horses and set forth on what we all felt to be an adventurous night-march. With difficulty we had secured a couple of local shepherds to conduct us by a practicable path down the mountain-side, among the rocks, and scrub, and thickets of underwood, and sparse oak forests. The scene was wildly picturesque as the column of march was arranged in the moonlight. The two shepherd guides, with a Kurdish trooper, rode in front, the muleteers and servants followed in single file, with our brave little Maltese dragoman in the centre to keep order and prevent straggling. We brought up the rear with the other Kurdish trooper, to guard against surprise. Soon

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Greek, probably of the age when the Seleucidæ ruled Northern Palestine and Syria; but the superstructure, at least in its present state, is of much more recent date. There is one large central arch, spanning the main stream. On one side are two small arches, with four others, like windows, over them. On the other side of the main arch is one small arch below, and two over it. The object of such a singular mode of construction it would be hard to determine. The arches are all pointed, and the whole was most probably rebuilt or repaired by the patriotic chief Daher el-Omar, to whom Galilee is indebted for some of the greatest and most useful of its recent public buildings.

The peculiar physical conformation of the Jordan valley is here seen to advantage. There is a plain, or valley, from three to four miles wide, almost perfectly level, having a deep alluvial soil of unsurpassed fertility, though now to a large extent neglected. It is shut in on the east and west by steep and rugged mountain ridges; that on the east rises on an average nearly five thousand, and that on the west nearly three thousand feet above the valley, which runs due south from the Lake of Tiberias to the Dead Sea, a distance of seventy miles. It has had names varying from age to age with the peoples who have in succession ruled the country, but each name descriptive of some leading physical feature. It was the *Arabah*, or "low-lying plain" of the early Jews; it was "the great plain" of the later Jews; it was the "great desert" of Josephus; and it is the *Ghor* of the modern Arabs, a name almost equivalent to the Hebrew *Arabah*. As a whole it is now a desert. True, a few patches of this northern section are cultivated, and also a few round Jericho; but the rest is a wilderness. In spring, when I last crossed it on my way from Gadara, and also when I crossed it a few weeks earlier at the ford of Damieh, in going to Ramoth-Gilead, it was covered with most luxuriant vegetation. In summer the sun scorches all vegetation except where there is water, and in early autumn the whole becomes like a parched desert.

Down the centre of the plain winds a ravine, from two hundred to three hundred yards wide, and from fifty to one hundred feet deep. Through this ravine the Jordan flows in a still more tortuous course—now sweeping closely along the western, now turning abruptly to the eastern bank. Its curves are often sharp, and not unfrequently it doubles back. Everywhere it is fringed with thickets of willows, tamarisks, reeds, and gorgeous flowering oleanders. The river has thus two distinct sets of banks. The inner banks confine the stream; they are of soft alluvial soil, and are ordinarily from five to ten feet high; but the height decreases when the river is in flood, and in spring they are usually overflowed. The outer banks are much higher and less regular; they in fact confine the whole gorge. The scenery of this gorge is striking. Lynch thus describes the upper part, and his description I found perfectly accurate:—"The high alluvial terraces on each side," he says, "were everywhere shaped by the action of the winter rains into numbers of conical hills, some of them pyramidal and cuneiform, presenting the

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The shore is now lonely, the surrounding country is almost desolate, the cities and villages in which he taught are gone; but the sea is there, the sandy beach is there, and the scenery around is the same as that on which he so often looked: the massive wall-like bank of the plateau of Bashan; the great cone and glittering ice-crown of Hermon; the rich plain of Gennesaret; and the steep hill on the other side of the lake where he fed the multitudes. The flowers still deck the fields, the birds fill the air, the turtle-doves send forth their sweetly plaintive voice—all reminding us of his beautiful parables and instructive metaphors. We cannot forget him as we tread the shore of this lake or look out on its silent waters. The scenes and incidents of the synoptic Gospels come before our minds here with a freshness and vividness altogether new. The *religio loci* invests Galilee with undying interest.

The mind is often led away back, also, ages beyond New Testament times, by ruins we see at every turn, and by names we hear from the lips of every peasant and shepherd we meet. The very salutations of the ordinary wayfarer recall the familiar stories of prophets and patriarchs, and recall the words of Jesus and his disciples: "Peace be with you;" "The Lord be with thee;" "The Lord keep thee;" "Let my lord live;" "Go in peace." These and like salutations, familiar to Bible-readers, are on every tongue on the highway and in village street; spoken, too, in a language closely resembling the Hebrew. The most common greeting of the Arab, in city or country, is, "Peace be upon thee," or "God be with thee;" and the reply is Biblical, "On thee be peace." In parting, the common expression is, "Please God, you go in peace." In passing a field of reapers this salutation is universal, "May God bless you," or "May God bless your labours." Another characteristic of Eastern modes of salutation is noteworthy. They are not unfrequently so prolonged as to become wearisome, and a positive waste of time. The profusely polite Arab asks so many questions after your health, your happiness, your welfare, your house and other things, that a person ignorant of the habits of the country would imagine there must be some secret ailment or mysterious sorrow oppressing you which you wished to conceal so as to spare the feelings of a dear sympathizing friend, but which he, in the depth of his anxiety, would desire to hear of. I have often listened to those prolonged salutations in the house, the street, and the highway, and not unfrequently I have experienced their tedious monotony, and I have bitterly lamented useless waste of time. Such greetings were most probably in the mind of our Lord when he charged his disciples to go forth on their mission of mercy to the people, and added, "Carry no purse, no scrip, no shoes; and salute no man on the way" (Luke x. 4). Theirs was a work of urgency which left no time for empty compliments and prolonged greetings.

The forms and gestures ordinarily used in salutations are the same to-day as they were in New Testament times, and even in the days of the patriarchs. Kissing on both cheeks, laying the head on the shoulder, embracing the neck and breast—one observes

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of the village or tribal chief is met with all over the country. Then in passing through the squalid lanes of Tiberias, and in climbing the airy heights of the holy city of Safed, one observes the flowing dress, the embroidered fringe, and the stately tread of the Jewish rabbis—fitting modern representatives of the mien and costume of the proud Pharisees and supercilious priests who frequented the temple courts in our Lord's time. One also meets, in the fields and on the hill-sides, industrious husbandmen clad in short coats carefully girt up for labour, and working with implements as primitive in design and as simple and rude in make as those used in the fields of Boaz. One sees the yoke of oxen dragging a plough, the pattern of which has doubtless come down unchanged from the patriarchs; while the ploughman wields a goad as formidable in size and strength as that with which Shamgar slew the six hundred Philistines. Along the southern shores of the lake, and in the valley of the Jordan, both above and below the lake, the wild Arabs of Gilead and Bashan and Arabia are constantly prowling, like the Amalekites and Bene-Kedem of old, clad in raiment of camel's hair, and leathern girdle, and loose kerchief bound on with the double fillet of twisted wool; such as were worn by Ishmael, by Elijah the Tishbite, phet of Gilead, and by John the Baptist; such, too, as may be seen figured on the oldest monuments of Egypt. The village festivals, the celebrations at the ingathering of the harvest, and the vintage, remain unchanged. So also do the marriage customs. The bride is decked in gorgeous apparel, with long veil, plaited hair, jewels of gold, and tinkling ornaments; the bridegroom has his embroidered "coat of many colours," and the train of rejoicing friends and relatives, singing and dancing as they follow. The harvest fields are also interesting. There are the reapers and gleaners, and the stately proprietor moving from field to field like Boaz, speaking familiarly and with words of encouragement to all. The native princes, now known by their Arab title, *Emir*, are occasionally seen, splendidly



YOUNG MOSLEM WOMAN OF GALILEE IN BRIDAL DRESS.

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occupied by the commercial Phœnicians. But be this as it may, we learn from Strabo that under the Romans it was one of the principal fish-markets on the lake, and that its name was derived from its being a place used for salting fish. This seems probable, for the Greek word means a "place for preserving or pickling." It is also worthy of note that near the shore, about a mile distant east of the Jordan, is a hamlet bearing the Arabic name *Semakh*, "a fish."

Tarichæa obtained some celebrity during the Jewish war. It was occupied for a time and fortified by Josephus, the well-known Jewish historian and general, and it was made one of his principal Galilean strongholds. But Titus, seeing its strategical importance, captured it, put its inhabitants to the sword, and left it in ruins. It never recovered, and though at times inhabited by a few families of Arab fishermen, and commanding one



RUINS OF THE BRIDGE OF TARICHÆA ON THE JORDAN.

of the leading passes over the Jordan, it has for centuries been desolate. The ruins are picturesque, and the artist finds in them, and in the broken arches of the bridge over the river on the one side, and of the viaduct over the isthmus on the other, with the lake behind, and Hermon and Lebanon in the far distant background, beautiful subjects for his pencil. Both bridge and viaduct have long since been broken down and useless.

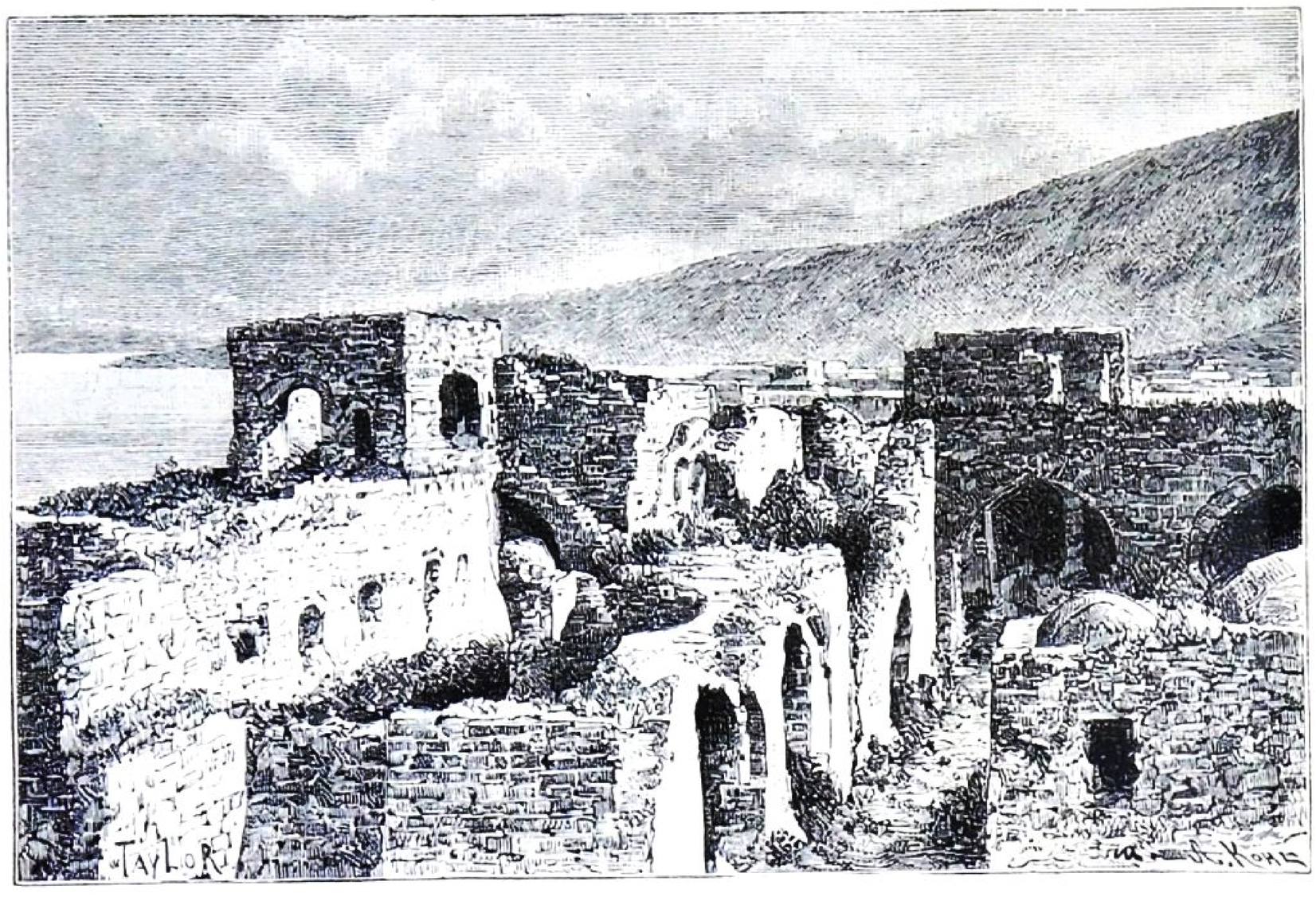
From this deserted but interesting site one gets a good view of the northern section of the Jordan valley. We see how the Sea of Galilee lies in a huge basin, oval-shaped. Its length is twelve miles from where the upper Jordan falls in to where the lower Jordan issues out; and the current belief is that the river runs through intact, never mingling with other water. The extreme width of the lake is six miles. The rugged mountain ridge on the west projects considerably at this point, narrowing the valley, while the ridge

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"fenced city" of Canaan which stood on the spot, and was allotted by Joshua to the Levites out of the tribe of Naphtali. The Arabic word for "bath" is from the same root, so that we can trace both the name and history of this now dreary site back to the division of the country among the tribes of Israel.

TIBERIAS.

A PLACE still more celebrated than the baths of Hammath is now before us, also close upon the shore of the lake—the city of Tiberias. As we approach from the south it looks very picturesque, its battlemented wall rising sheer out of the water, sweeping round the dark, closely-packed mass of houses, and terminating beyond them on



RUINS OF TANCRED'S CASTLE, TIBERIAS.

a high projecting crag of black basalt. A nearer approach shows that the wall is shattered to its foundations; that large sections of it are prostrate, allowing one to ride out and in over the ruins; and that the houses of the city are for the most part like the encircling wall. The more modern houses look as if they had shrunk away back from the tottering ramparts to the margin of the lake. The town has at present only about two thousand inhabitants, a third of whom are Jews.

Nowhere in Galilee, nowhere in Syria, can one see more fearfully displayed the terrible effects of earthquakes than in Tiberias. That of January 1st, 1837, was the most

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with his disciples, as recorded by John, took place after the resurrection. Could the real scene be identified, it would be among the most interesting in the whole of Palestine. And it could not have been far distant; it must certainly be within the range of vision when one takes his stand on the commanding cliff beside the old castle on the north of the town. Thence not only is the town visible, but a long reach of shore-line on both sides



Jewish Woman and Children, Tiberias.

While standing on that cliff beside the large ruined building called Tancred's Castle, I read the words of the evangelist: "After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself," etc. While I read the simple yet graphic narrative, with the sea before me where the miraculous draught of fishes was made, and with the pebbly beach below me where the fire of coals may have

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calm waiting for that further development of truth and historic reality in the Church of Christ more fully symbolized in his later writing, the Book of Revelation.

Tiberias is not one of the very ancient Bible cities, at least not under its present name. May it not stand, however, on the site of Hammath? At the bath there are no ancient remains, and along the whole shore between it and Tiberias are many traces of massive foundations and walls, as if a great city had occupied the spot. In the New Testament the name Tiberias is only mentioned thrice, and each time in connection not so much with the city as with the lake. The first mention is in these words: "After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias" (John vi. 1, 23, and xxi. 1). It will be noted that the name only occurs in the Gospel of John, which is of a much later date than the other three. He gives the lake its Roman name from the city which in his days was made the capital of the province of Galilee. Josephus tells the story of the origin of the city. It was founded in A.D. 16 by Herod Antipas, the murderer of John the Baptist; and he named it Tiberias in honour of his patron, the Emperor Tiberius. It became the favourite residence of Herod; and probably for this reason our Lord seldom, if ever, visited it during the course of his public ministry. He kept more to the north, among the populous towns that there bordered on the lake. Another reason why he apparently avoided Tiberias was the fact that it was largely inhabited by Greek and Roman colonists, and his mission, as he tells us, was "rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. x. 6). It was in the palace of Herod in Tiberias that the daughter of Herodias danced, and that in



KULAT IBN-MA'AN (FORTRESS OF ARBELA), NEAR TIBERIAS.

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The walls, which now look picturesque in their ruins, were built so late as last century by the powerful local chief Daher el-Omar. The tombs of a number of Jewish Rabbis of distinction are shown on the rugged slope of the hill behind the city; among them are those of Jochanan, Akiba, and the great Maimonides. The modern Jews deem it almost as high an honour to have their bones laid beside the celebrated tombs of Tiberias as in the Kidron valley, under the shadow of the temple wall, or on the lower slopes of Olivet.

The little community of native Christians have likewise their cherished traditional holy places. They lie close to the shore, north of the Jewish quarter. There the pilgrim may visit a Latin convent and church, cleaner and in somewhat better repair than most other buildings in the town. They are said to stand on the spot where the miraculous draught of fishes was brought to land, and where our Lord addressed to the apostles who had gathered around him the beautiful words recorded by John to which I have referred above. It will thus be seen that while Tiberias possesses little of natural beauty to attract attention, there are in and around it many points of intense interest for the Bible student, the Hebrew scholar, the historian, and also for the geologist. The antiquary and the architect, too, and even the artist, may find subjects to attract their attention, especially on what appears to be the older site south of the city. There one sees on every side fragments of granite and marble columns, portions of broken friezes, and great foundation-stones that seem to point away back to early Jewish times. There are parts of a sea-wall remaining, about twelve feet thick. Unfortunately those primeval ruins have long been used as a quarry for the more modern buildings. There are traces of an aqueduct, which it is supposed brought an abundant supply of pure water to the town in the Roman age. In the streets and lanes one occasionally encounters interesting groups of Jewish women and girls, whose costumes, if not their faces, will attract the artist. There are combinations of colour, and quaint styles of head-dress, and forms of gold and silver ornaments, and arrangements of jewels on head and neck and arms such as one rarely meets with elsewhere. This arises from the mixture of nationalities; for we have here the Polish Jew, the Jew from Algeria and from Spain, from the Crimea and from Germany—each importing, in dress or personal ornament, some relic of his distant home.

MAGDALA.

AN hour's ride northward along the rugged shore brings us past a lofty projecting cliff to the side of a little crescent-shaped plain of surpassing fertility. On one side of it is the winding, sandy beach; round the other sweeps an irregular line of steep

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human beings, yet we see groups of women and naked children squatting on dust-heaps round the dark holes that serve for doors. I stopped to talk with them. The children ran frightened into their houses, and the women, with the look of misery in their pale, haggard faces, begged piteously for *bakshish*. Yet this is *Magdala*, the only inhabited spot now in the "land of Gennesaret," and the native village of MARY MAGDALENE.

How strange that this wretched hamlet should have given a name to one of the most devoted attendants upon our Lord, and, next to the Virgin Mother, to the most renowned and honoured woman in Christian history! Strange also that some of the most splendid churches in the world should bear to this day the name *Magdalene!* From her humble home in Magdala, Mary followed and with unfaltering devotedness served her Lord and Saviour. In Galilee, in Judea, in Jerusalem, she appears to have been always with him. When he was betrayed she followed him to Calvary; and when he was nailed to the tree she, with his mother, and the "other Mary," and the "beloved disciple," stood by the cross. Even in death she would not leave him. At the door of the rock sepulchre, which she must have looked on as his final resting-place, she sat in lonely, silent sorrow during the waning light of that terrible day of anguish. And on the resurrection morning, "while it was yet dark," we find her there again, with sweet spices to anoint his dead body. Then, to her intense surprise, she saw that the heavy stone door of the sepulchre, which had been so carefully shut and sealed, was rolled away; and turning round immediately, she ran to Peter and John, and said in piteous accents, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him." Fear and consternation fell upon them all when they saw the empty tomb, and the others left the place. But Mary would not go. She stood without weeping; "and as she wept she stooped, and looked into the tomb, and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." When they spake to her she turned away, and then in a moment her love and devotion were rewarded, for Jesus himself stood before her. She was the first to see the risen Lord, and she was the first to hear and to bear away his glorious message of comfort to the disciples and to mankind: "Go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God."

Such were the scenes that flashed before my mind, and such were the thoughts that accompanied them, as I sat on one occasion under the great willow, *Zizyphus spina-Christi*, or "Christ's Thorn," which grows near Magdala, and read the whole touching story of that Mary Magdalene whose name has for long ages been a household word throughout Christendom. It was there on the pebbly strand close by doubtless she first heard the Master's voice. It was in that village she first realized, in healing virtue, his almighty power; and it was there she first learned those lessons of wisdom and love and mercy which strongly and permanently attracted her, so that she followed his foot-

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IRBID—BETH-ARBEL.

WE turn away, reluctantly perhaps, from the hamlet of Magdala, with its holy associations and instructive lessons, and wander westward up through luxuriant verdure and foliage, to the mouth of a wild ravine which opens into the plain a few hundred yards from the village. Its banks are rugged cliffs of naked limestone, a thousand feet or more in height. The general scene is grander than any I have met elsewhere in Galilee, and there is something more than natural scenery to attract attention. On both sides of the glen, but chiefly on the left, half way up from the plain of Gennesaret to the table-land, are large and remarkable caves. Some of them are natural, others manifestly artificial, and all reconstructed for purposes of habitation and defence. In places they are ranged over each other like stories of houses, with doors and windows, all hewn in the natural rock. The path that leads up to them is partly built of solid masonry, partly cut in the side of the cliff, and it is so constructed as to be easily defended against assailants. The caves are of great extent, and internal communication between them is made by artificial doors and long galleries. In front, towards the glen, the larger caves have curtain walls and battlements, so that the whole is rendered an almost impregnable fortress. In the interior are great cisterns hewn in the rock, to which rain-water was formerly conducted from the ground above by artificial channels, which one still sees in the side of the cliff.

There is, as well as I could estimate, ample accommodation in the caves for a garrison of six hundred men or more. The main entrance in the glen below was flanked and strongly defended by two little round towers. There are also loopholed galleries in the face of the rock, so planned that a heavy fire of arrows and javelins could be directed on besiegers. One of the more spacious lower caves appears to have been used as a stable, and in this respect reminded me of the still more extensive and remarkable excavations in the cliffs of Arak el-Emir, beyond the Jordan, some distance south of Ramoth-Gilead. Interior staircases led from the stables and chambers near them to the higher caves. The existing masonry both of the interior stairs and the outer battlements is not of high antiquity. There are pointed arches and specimens of delicately-chiselled stone-work such as one sees in the Saracenic structures of Damascus and Cairo. They may be of any age from the tenth to the fifteenth century. On a large stone over one of the doors are rudely-carved figures in relief of two lions facing each other. I have seen many such in other parts of Syria, both east and west of the

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Just above the caves of Kulat Ibn-Ma'an, on the side of a rich plateau, lie the desolate ruins of *Irbid*, the Arbela of Josephus and the later Jews, and the Beth-arbel of the Bible. The city of Beth-arbel is mentioned by the prophet Hosea in a very obscure passage: "Therefore shall a tumult arise among the people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces with her children" (Hosea x. 14). The words would seem to suggest the perpetration of some such brutal act as Josephus records of the capture of the caves in the glen below. In the after history of Israel, especially during the great war against the Romans, there are scenes of equal ferocity. Some of the incidents in the siege of Jerusalem, and some of those which occurred in the defence of the great fortress of Masada, on the shore of the Dead Sea, even surpass in atrocity what took place in the glen of Irbid.

Arbela was evidently a city of considerable size and importance. It was defended by strong walls, and some of its buildings were constructed of massive well-hewn stones. The most imposing ruin is a synagogue, which stands on the brow of the ravine. Two columns remain in their places, fine monoliths of hard limestone; and there is also a huge door-post of the same material. A number of pedestals and shafts and well-wrought capitals of various sizes and styles of architecture are lying about on the site. The synagogue was the work of the Jews who inhabited the principal towns of Galilee during the early centuries of our era. They were manifestly a rich and prosperous people; and they have left many relics of their architecture, chaste in style and profuse in ornament, in this and other towns of the province, which we may have an opportunity of inspecting hereafter. Irbid was captured by the Moslems when they overran Syria in the seventh century, and this synagogue was then converted into a mosque. The *mihrab*, or "prayer-niche," is in the south wall.

Here, as in other cities and villages and on conspicuous eminences in Galilee, we can see what a series of changes and revolutions this country has passed through, and what a variety of religions have been professed and practised by its successive peoples, each race and sect leaving its distinctive mark upon the monuments. I have seen on mound and hill-top the rude dolmens, cairns, and stone-circles of the primeval Canaanites; I have seen the massive stylobates and cyclopean walls of Phœnician Baal-temples; I have seen the chaste and beautiful fanes of the Greeks and Romans; I have seen the pretentious synagogues of the later Jews; I have seen the composite churches of the early and medieval Christians; and I have seen the light and graceful mosques of the Saracens—all now alike ruined and deserted. Palestine is emphatically a land of ruins, and in no province of the land are ruins more abundant, and in some respects more striking and instructive, than in Galilee.

The whole shore of the Sea of Galilee along the side of the "land of Gennesaret," and

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country, as ready materials for the building of the caravansary. Over a large area between the caravansary and the lake are traces of very ancient foundations and irregular heaps of rubbish. I also saw in some of the terrace walls of the adjoining hill old building stones. The sides of the hill and its flat top seemed to me to have the appearance of having been at one time occupied by buildings, which were probably ranged along the steep slope, like many of the mountain-towns in Lebanon. But the most noteworthy relic of antiquity on the spot is an aqueduct hewn in the rock, round the side of the hill, just above the fountain. It brought water from the copious fountains of Tabighah, half a mile distant to the east. The water appears to have been intended to supply the wants of a town, and not merely for purposes of irrigation.

A question of much interest and no little importance from a Biblical point of view now suggests itself. What town stood here? Opinions differ widely upon the subject. This is not the place for controversy, or for minute investigation of ancient authorities and modern arguments. I may just say that after careful study of early geographical notices, and after repeated examinations of the surrounding region, I feel inclined to agree with the late Dr. Robinson, one of the most learned and careful of Biblical geographers, that this is the site of the long-lost CAPERNAUM; and if so, it is among the most interesting spots in Galilee, indeed in all Palestine. It is more intimately associated with the early public life and work of Jesus than any other. He was born in Bethlehem; he was "brought up" as child and youth and man in Nazareth; but when he was rejected and driven out by his townsmen, he "came down" to Capernaum (Luke iv. 31) and "dwelt" there (Matt. iv. 13), so that it was thereafter called "his own city" (Matt. ix. 1).

Capernaum and the adjoining plain of Gennesaret became the chief scenes of his teaching, miracles, and parables. Here he healed the demoniac in the synagogue (Mark i. 24–28); here he cured Peter's wife's mother, who was "taken with a great fever" (Luke iv. 38); here he restored the paralytic to health and strength (Matt. ix. 2); here he cured by a word the centurion's servant who was "ready to die" (Luke vii. 1); here he restored Jairus's daughter to life (Mark vi. 31); here he instructed Peter to get the tribute-money from the mouth of a fish in the lake (Matt. xxvii. 24). Near Capernaum he called his first disciple, Matthew, who was sitting "at the receipt of custom" (Matt. ix. 9); near Capernaum he delivered "the Sermon on the Mount" (Matt. v.); near Capernaum he taught the multitudes who gathered round him in the fields and along the shore in the beautiful parables of the "Sower," the "Tares," the "Treasure hid in a Field," the "Merchant seeking goodly Pearls," and the "Net cast into the Sea" (Matt. xiii.). In Capernaum he gave the discourse on "fasting" at the feast in the house of Matthew (Matt. ix. 17); on "formality," to the hypocritical Pharisees (Matt. xv. 1); on "faith," to the assembly in the synagogue (John vi. 22); and on "humility," "forbearance," and "brotherly love," to his disciples (Mark ix.)

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is unknown. Sir George Grove has truly said: "The doom which our Lord pronounced against Capernaum and the other unbelieving cities of the plain of Gennesaret has been remarkably fulfilled. In the present day no ecclesiastical tradition even ventures to fix its site, and the contest between the rival claims of the two most probable spots is one of the hottest and at the same time the most hopeless in sacred topography. Fortunately nothing hangs on the decision. The spots in dispute are (1) Khan Minyeh, and (2) Tell Hum, three miles distant. The arguments in favour of the former are fully stated by Robinson in his learned 'Biblical Researches.' They are chiefly founded upon Josephus's account of his visit to the place, and on the testimonies of successive travellers from Arculf, in the seventh century, to Quaresmius, in the seventeenth. The arguments in favour of Tell Hum date from a much later period, but have been strongly urged by recent writers." Wherever the true site of Capernaum may be, the traveller of to-day and the thoughtful reader of the Gospels at home cannot fail to recall our Lord's most striking judgment on an unbelieving city: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom, which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day. Howbeit, I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matt. xi. 23, 24). If the city stood at the Fountain of the Fig and on the commanding hill above it, or if it had in any way attained to celebrity, as is not improbable, then in either case we see how appropriate is the description "exalted unto heaven;" and then looking at the disputes about the site, and the utter disappearance of the name, the judgment appears terribly graphic and the fulfilment literal, "thou shalt go down unto *Hades*," unto a state of absolute annihilation — site and name both disappearing.

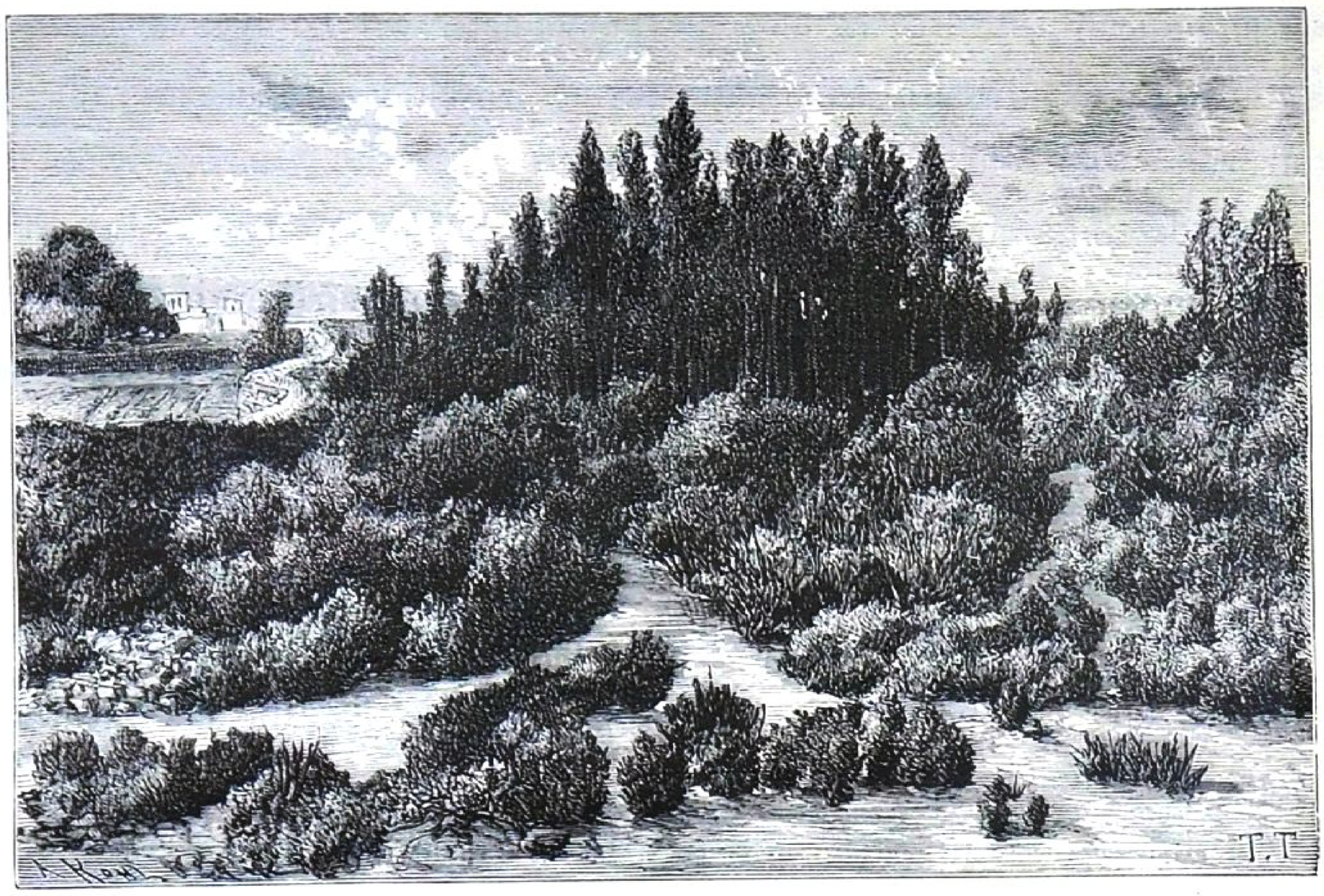
Dean Stanley has some very striking and suggestive notes on the environs of the Sea of Galilee. I insert a brief extract: "In the Old Testament only its name occurs as Chinnereth, either from a town on its banks, or, more probably, from its oval shape, the 'Lake of the Harp.' Situated in the midst of the Jordan valley, on the great thoroughfare from Babylon and Damascus into Palestine, its waters seem to have answered a purpose like that served by the Lake of Lucerne, between Italy and Germany. Hence the value to Naphtali of 'the sea of the south,' to compensate for 'the sea of the west' enjoyed by the kindred tribes of Asher, Issachar, and Zebulun. Along its banks the depth of its situation produced a tropical vegetation unknown in the hills above. This fertility reaches its highest pitch in the land of Gennesaret. The contrast with the present aspect of the sister lake on the south gives the natural features of the Sea of Galilee a peculiar interest. If the southern lake is the sea of death, the northern is emphatically the sea of life."

The Sea of Galilee and its whole environs, in our Lord's time, teemed with life—with

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BETHSAIDA OF GALILEE.

THE hamlet of Tabighah, consisting of a ruinous mill and two or three mud hovels, stands in a little retired bay, half a mile or so from Ain et-Tineh. Here the abundance of the waters attracts attention. There are copious fountains, streams, pools, ruined aqueducts, and great reservoirs—a rare sight in a thirsty land. There are large mills too, now mostly mere heaps of ruins, said to have been built last century by that



STREAMS FROM THE FOUNTAIN OF THE JORDAN.

famous native benefactor of his country, Daher el-Omar. All the fountains are brackish, with one exception, and it is surrounded by a heavy circular wall, and is called Job's Fountain; but why, history and tradition are alike silent. The largest fountain bursts from the base of the hills about a quarter of a mile above the hamlet; and here, round the chief source, is an octagonal reservoir of ancient and massive masonry, evidently constructed to raise the water to such an elevation as to send it along the excavated aqueduct, round the side of the hill, over Ain et-Tineh, apparently for purposes of irrigation. Josephus speaks of a fountain of "Caphernaum," which irrigated the plain of Gennesaret. The name seems to suggest that it watered the town of Capernaum as well as the adjacent plain. The remains of an aqueduct can still be traced from the reservoir towards Ain et-Tineh; and there can be no doubt the water of the

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perhaps from fuller information obtained from Peter, that James and John "were partners with Simon." Luke does not give the account of our Lord's call to the apostles, but he inserts another very interesting narrative of the miraculous draught of fishes at the same place in the boat of Peter, and, as it seems to me, from a study of the whole connection of events, at the same time. It is probable that the incidents occurred together, or consecutively, with only a very brief interval between the time when Jesus first saw Simon cast the net into the sea and the time when he entered the boat and told him to "launch out into the deep." Be this as it may, the narrative of Luke is very circumstantial, clear, and natural. The closing words seem to combine the call of the disciples with the miraculous draught: "And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their boats to land, they left all, and followed him" (Luke v. 1–11).

Bethsaida is associated with Capernaum in the prophetic judgment pronounced by Jesus on account of gross neglect of his teaching. So now we see that, not only in their utter ruin and the desolation of their sites, but in the very disputes about their locality, it has been more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for them. Though fallen from their ancient greatness and grandeur, Tyre and Sidon still exist, while Capernaum and Bethsaida have disappeared apparently for ever.

PROBABLE SITE OF CHORAZIN.

THE most extensive and in many respects the most interesting ruins on the shores of the lake are those of *Tell Hum*. I do not refer now to sacred or historic interest, but to the ruins themselves viewed from an architectural and antiquarian standpoint. They lie close to the beach, some two miles east of Tabighah. They cover an area about half a mile long by a quarter broad. They are completely desolate, and they are covered with such dense thickets of thorns and thistles, that I found it extremely difficult to force my way through, so as to make a thorough exploration. I succeeded on two occasions, and was amply repaid for my toil and trouble. Some of the ruined buildings exhibit much taste in design and no little skill in execution. The best are copied from Greek models, and the attempts of both architect and sculptor to follow the antique are sufficiently evident. They are not always successful, and when one has seen the splendid examples of Greek art in the grand temples of Baalbek he feels at once the vast inferiority of the imitations at Tell Hum. What was lacking in artistic genius the builders of Tell Hum attempted to supply by profuse decoration.

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buildings. It has been found that the main original building measured only seventy-five feet by fifty-seven, and that "in the interior there were four rows of columns," seven in each row. A comparison of the building with others in the province leaves no room for doubt that it was a Jewish synagogue, which may have been remodelled for Christian worship. Additions of a later date, and somewhat different style, have been made to the eastern side. Here we observe a rectangular adjunct, with three doors on the north and one on the east. The exterior walls had profusely ornamented pilasters, like those of the more ancient building. So far as has been discovered, the two buildings, though so close together, were distinct, as there is no door of communication; and from their plan they would seem to have been used for distinct purposes.

It is interesting from an historical point of view to note in how many of the little cities of Galilee, especially near the lake, are remains of large and imposing synagogues. They show how rich and influential the Jewish communities must have been in this province during the early centuries of our era. I have already stated that shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem a large body settled in Tiberias, and there established their Sanhedrim or chief council. The Jewish Patriarch of Tiberias was the acknowledged head of the nation throughout the Roman Empire. Even the Babylonian Jews, with their chief who was styled the "Prince of the Captivity," submitted to the authority of the Patriarch, who was under the protection and patronage of the Roman emperors. For this reason, and to support with befitting splendour his court in Tiberias, liberal contributions were remitted to him from every country in which the Jews had settled. The emperors appear to have encouraged and aided the erection of splendid synagogues, in some respects resembling the heathen temples with which the whole of Syria was at that time studded. In Cæsarea, Samaria, Gerasa, Rabbath-Ammon, and Bozrah, are many fine specimens of temples of the age of imperial Rome, and one cannot but conclude that the same class of architects, sculptors, and masons were employed on the synagogues. The style is theirs, and also the general character of ornamentation and masonry, but to some extent debased. Another distinction may be observed: in the details of carved ornament everything is avoided that would offend Jewish feeling, prejudice, and religion. Figures of heathen deities are never introduced; and even figures of men and animals, that appear so conspicuously on Greek and Roman temples, are very rarely found on the synagogues. The doors have, as a rule, deep and carefully wrought mouldings; and the lintels are usually ornamented with elaborate carving in high relief;—in some the seven-branched candlestick, like that so well known on the Arch of Titus in Rome; in others, which I shall notice afterwards, the recumbent figures of animals, now much mutilated, but which possibly were intended to represent the paschal lamb; in others, great wreaths of vine branches, leaves, and bunches of grapes, sometimes extending round the entire door; in others, pomegranates and apples; and in others, a vase, perhaps to represent the

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sented by Tell Hum? If my view be correct about the sites of Capernaum at Ain et-Tineh, and Bethsaida at Tabighah, then without any reasonable doubt Chorazin stood at Tell Hum. Some able geographers have questioned this; and a considerable number, including men of great learning and research, maintain that Tell Hum is the modern representative of Capernaum. The question will probably never be satisfactorily determined; though if the site were thoroughly explored, and excavations made in and around the principal buildings, some inscription might be discovered that would settle the controversy. Until that is done, speculation and argument will be unavailing to carry conviction to the mind. There is no evidence, historical or topographical, absolutely conclusive. Fortunately, the point is of little consequence. Far the most valuable fact is certain and unquestioned, that the principal scene of our Lord's acts and teachings, of his miracles of power and grander miracles of love and mercy, lay along those three miles of shore between the plain of Gennesaret and the ruins of Tell Hum. On that beach, glistening now as then with pearly shells, he often walked and taught. His disciples were constantly with him; and eager multitudes pressed upon him to hear words such as had never before been heard on earth. Looking abroad from the top of that little tower-like structure in the midst of the ruins, I saw the entire coast from Tiberias round to the foot of the hills of Bashan, and the whole expanse of the lake from the place where the upper Jordan falls into it to the distant point where the lower Jordan flows out of it. It was a grand view, for it embraced the theatre of nearly all the incidents of our Lord's public life during the three years of his ministry, and also of the final interview with his disciples after the resurrection.

There is no indication in the New Testament of the exact situation of Chorazin further than that it was on the shore of the lake and near Bethsaida. Jerome, who spent many years in Palestine during the later part of the fourth century, and who made Scripture topography a subject of special study, tells us that Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin stood on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and that Chorazin was two miles from Capernaum. Willibald, who travelled in this country in the beginning of the eighth century, describing his journey northward from Jerusalem, states that he went from Tiberias to Magdala, and from Magdala to Capernaum; thence to Bethsaida, and thence to Chorazin, where he found a Christian church. From Chorazin he proceeded to the Fountain of the Jordan.

The places mentioned appear to have still existed when he visited them, and to have retained their old names. This being so, it seems to me that the sites I have indicated are the true sites of those old cities. It is strange that their names should have since entirely disappeared. This is very unusual in Palestine. In no other case, so far as I remember, has the name of any city so famous and so intimately connected with the life and labours of our Lord entirely disappeared. There is not even a local tradition on

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BETHSAIDA-JULIAS.

BEFORE us at Keraseh are some spots memorable in connection with the life of Jesus. On the far side of the river, two miles or more distant, but distinctly seen in the clear Syrian atmosphere, is a little isolated *tell*, rising out of the fertile plain like an island in that sea of verdure. The *tell* is the site of Bethsaida, called *Julias* to distinguish it from the Bethsaida near Capernaum. It is covered with heaps of old building stones, a few of them roughly hewn; but there is no trace of ancient wealth or grandeur. There may be, and probably are, imposing remains beneath the heaps that now cover the site, and in the large caves which the local Arabs have for generations past used to store their grain, which grows luxuriantly on the surrounding plain. The Arabs are an industrious and peaceable people—rare qualities in this land of lawlessness and pillage. Morally, however, they are degraded, and physically weak, like all their fellows in the Jordan valley.

This Bethsaida was originally a poor village, inhabited, as its name implies, by fishermen (*Bethsaida*, "house of fish"). "Philip, tetrarch of the region of Ituræa and Trachonitis" (Luke iii. 1), enlarged it, as Josephus tells us, in the first years of our era, and called it *Julias*, in honour of Julia, daughter of his patron, the Emperor Augustus.

The adjoining country has a deeper sacred interest. It was the scene of one, and perhaps of two stupendous miracles. The first miracle was the feeding of five thousand men; and I read the account of it with fresh interest on this spot. Jesus was at Capernaum, hearing from his disciples an account of the mission on which he had sent them forth. The multitudes gathered round them, and pressed upon him so closely that in order to secure peace and privacy he led the disciples into a boat, and crossed over to the north-eastern side of the lake, near the mouth of the Jordan, in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida-Julias (Luke ix. 12; Mark vi. 30; Matt. xiv. 13). The eager people saw him leaving, and they saw the direction in which the boat went, so they ran on foot along the shore, crossed the Jordan by the ford where it enters the lake, and reached the landing-place near the foot of the eastern hills before the boat. When he saw the vast crowd of men, women, and children pressing after him to hear his words, and when he saw that they lingered on, though weary and hungry, in that desert place, until the darkness of evening was gathering round them, his heart was moved with compassion, and his love—incomprehensible, divine, all-embracing, all-controlling—moved him to the very highest exercise of Divine power—to create food for them. The closing act is told with much

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were fed by Jesus under somewhat similar circumstances, but at a later period. The miracle is given only in the first and second Gospels, not by Luke. The exact spot is not definitely described: all we know is that it was "a desert place," and far away from town or village; and that, after feeding the people, our Lord went in a boat with his disciples to Magdala,—which would seem to indicate that he crossed over from the east side of the lake, Magdala being, as we have seen, in the plain of Gennesaret (Matt. xv., Mark viii.).

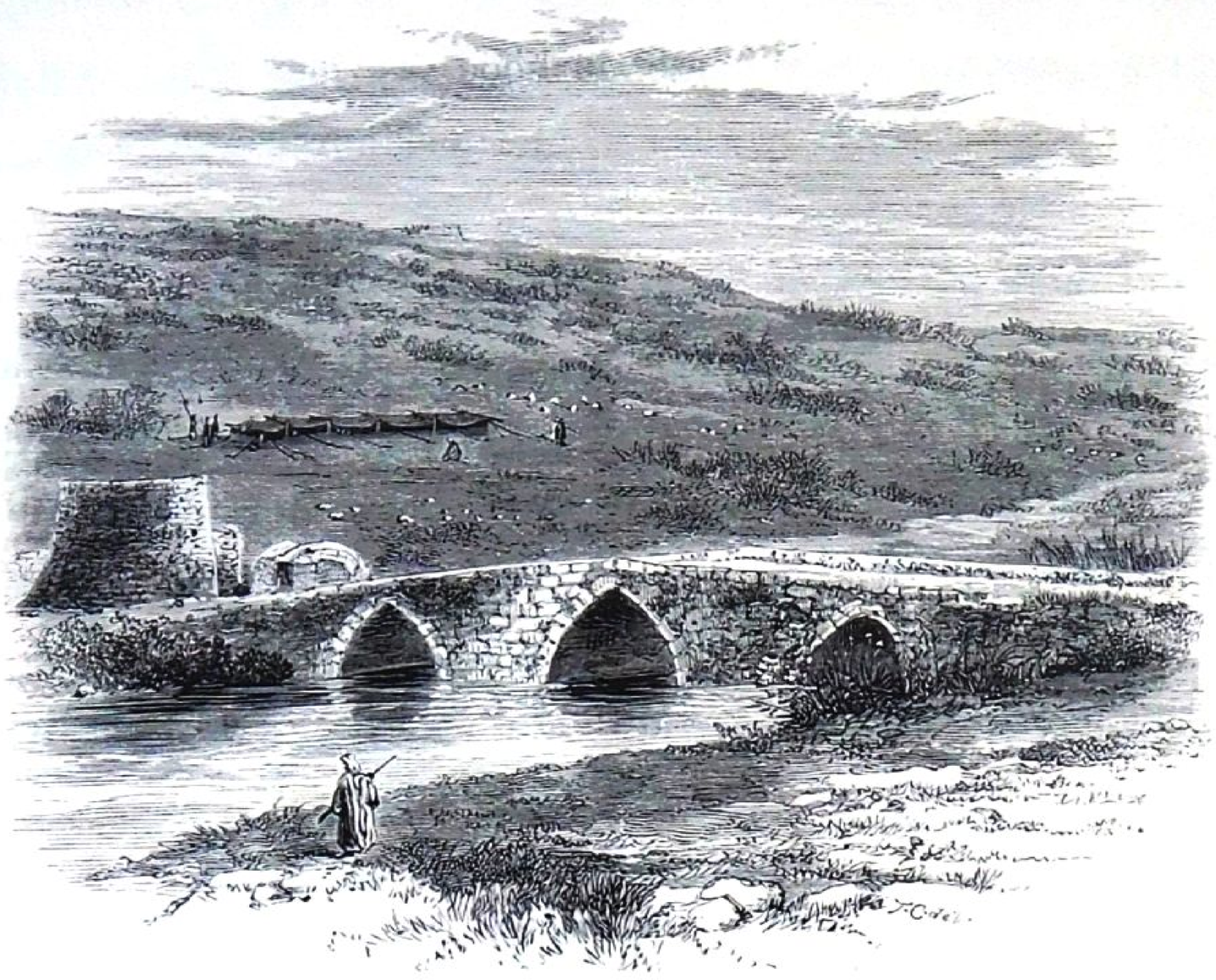
Bethsaida-Julias was the scene of still another miracle recorded by Mark only (viii. 22–26). Jesus had passed through a portion of Phœnicia, near the great cities of Tyre and Sidon, and thence crossed the chain of Lebanon and the valley of the Upper Jordan to the east side of the Sea of Galilee. Then "they came unto Bethsaida; and they bring to him a blind man, and beseech him to touch him." To such a piteous appeal Jesus never turned a deaf ear. He touched and healed the blind man. Having done so, our Lord passed on northward with his disciples. They travelled probably along the eastern bank, passing the place where the only bridge on this section of the river now stands. It has a singular name, *Jisr Benât Yakûb*, "The Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob." Thence he proceeded through a very rich and thickly-populated district unto the "towns of Cæsarea-Philippi," situated around the Fountain of the Jordan, at the base of Mount Hermon. Thither we may follow him.

THE UPPER JORDAN.

AFTER leaving the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and the interesting remains of its famous old cities with all their sacred associations, one feels that the valley of the Upper Jordan is somewhat dreary. True, the scenery is fine. The mountain ridges rise grandly on each side, and Hermon, with its glittering ice-crown, towers over all. The waters of Merom sleep peacefully in the deep valley between Hermon and Lebanon; and the Jordan shoots like an arrow through its dark rugged glen, dashing in sheets of foam, here over black rocks, there against projecting cliffs, and yonder between thickets of oleanders and papyrus brakes. There are no cities or even populous villages now in that rich valley. There are swamps in which buffaloes and wild swine revel, and where Arabs construct their huts of reeds and long grass. As one travels along, the whole scene has a dreary and desolate aspect, which is not enlivened even by visible ruins; for though ruins exist, the rank vegetation has covered them all over, leaving the face of the country more like a section of an American prairie at the foot of the Rocky Mountains than a valley in Lebanon.

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musketry, constructed, doubtless, for defence, perhaps also to shelter government officers who, when the road is safe, collect a toll from passengers. On the eastern bank of the river, a hundred yards or so above the bridge, is a large khan, now in part ruined and overgrown with thorns and thistles. I passed it twice, and found no occupants either in it or in the tower. The khan has a spacious open court with a handsome square reservoir in the centre, having a fragment of a marble column at each corner. There are round the court ranges of vaulted chambers, still habitable, and capable of affording shelter to passing travellers, and even large caravans. As it stands on the main road from Damascus and the Hauran to the whole of Western and Southern Palestine, it is still much frequented, and doubtless has been so from a remote period. Traces of a Roman

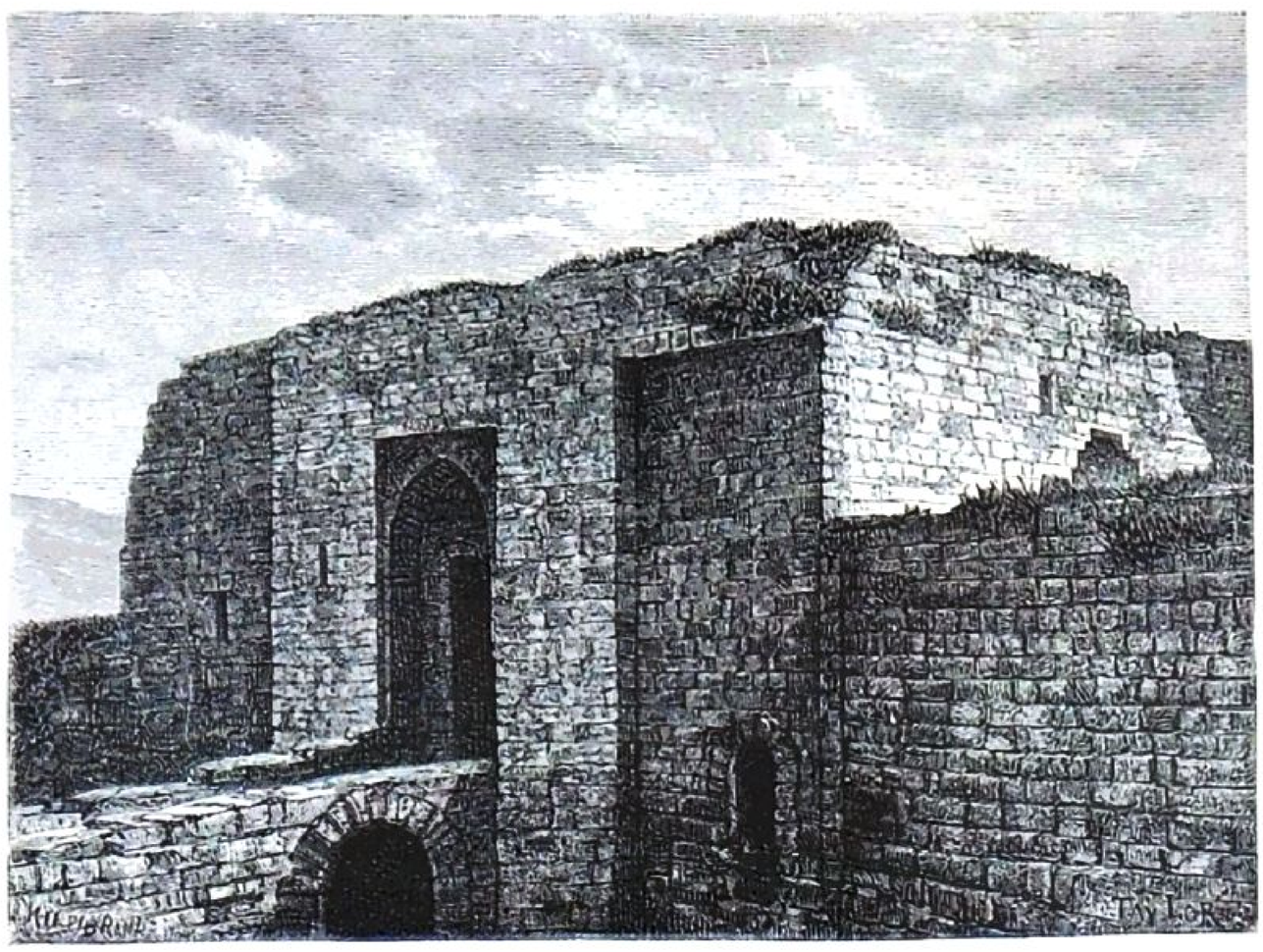


JISR BENAT YAKUB, OVER THE JORDAN.
(*From the South.*)

road exist on both sides of the bridge, and I have on more than one occasion travelled along it up over the southern spurs of Hermon to the plains of Bashan and Damascus. And this road was doubtless traversed ages before the days of Roman rule in Syria by the warlike monarchs of Babylonia, Assyria, and Persia. Up the Jordan valley Abraham pursued the kings of the east who had plundered Sodom and the Cities of the Plain, and had carried Lot captive. At Dan, beside the Fountain of the Jordan, he "divided himself against them by night, he and his servants, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the north of Damascus, and he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people" (Gen. xiv. 15, 16). In returning to Hebron, the patriarch's nearest and easiest route was by this highway and ford. One can easily picture Abraham and

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some think, on the summit of the mountain ridge of Naphtali, for there war-chariots would be useless. I saw several old sites among the mountains bearing the name *Hazûr*, but none of them seemed to me to suit the requirements of the Bible narrative; and the name, which means "a fortified place," is not uncommon in Galilee. On one occasion, when travelling from Khan Jubb Yusef up the western side of the great valley, I saw one old site which appeared to me suitable for an ancient stronghold such as Hazor. It is about six miles north of the khan. It is a large scarped mound or *tell* on the bank of a deep though not precipitous glen. Beside the *tell* is a broad terrace, evidently the site of an ancient town whose citadel may have been perched on the top of the *tell*. A village called Waggas stands upon the site, and in the sides of the glen and the rocks around it are many excavations, indicating a place occupied from a very remote



GATE OF THE CASTLE OF HUNIN (BETH-REHOB).

age. On the plains near it chariots would have ample space for exercise, and there is an easy road down to the shores of the Sea of Galilee southward, and up the Jordan valley into the plain of Cœle-Syria and on to Damascus northward.

One thing strikes the thoughtful traveller here, and in many another part of Palestine—the silence, the loneliness, the strange desolation of the country. A shepherd with a few sheep or goats; a string of camels, mules, and asses bearing grain from the plain of Bashan to some port on the Mediterranean; at long intervals a little group of Western travellers in their strange-looking costumes, and faces red and blistered with the sun; then, perhaps, in a specially secluded glen, half-a-dozen Bedawin with tufted spears, mounted on their fleet desert horses, watching for a favourable opportunity to strip the unwary. But the steady march of mail-clad men and the noisy concourse of merchants are heard no more. The great fortresses that resisted the invaders or

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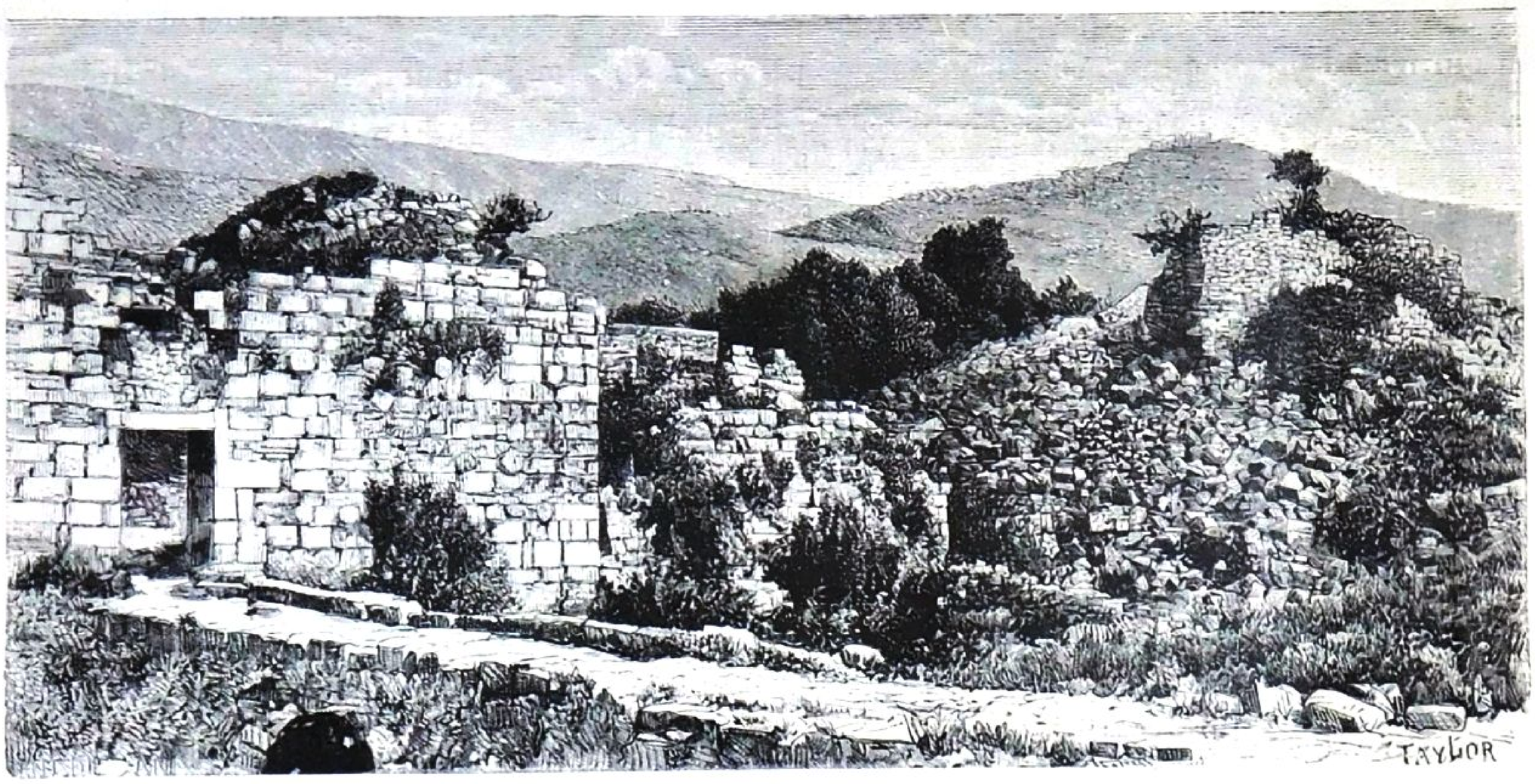
mules to keep pace with me. I met a number of Arab cavaliers; they were all friendly, but they gave deplorable accounts of fighting, and pillage, and massacre on the way to Tiberias. I took it for granted that there were some disturbances, but that the harrowing details were gross exaggerations. I resolved to spend the night at the bridge of the Jordan, under the protection of the guard of Turkish soldiers usually stationed there in their little watch-tower. But when I reached the bridge late in the afternoon, my horses weary and my servants worn out, I found that the soldiers were gone and the place deserted. Evidently their departure was sudden and unexpected, for their old beds, and some of their cooking vessels, and even remains of food, were lying there. My horses required rest, and the servants and muleteers were exhausted with the long journeys of the three preceding days, and with an anxious and sleepless night. I could not proceed; and indeed there was no safe resting-place nearer than Safed, four or five hours distant. So I resolved to select a good camping-ground and remain for the night.

After some search I found a piece of level meadow close to the bank of the Jordan, and almost surrounded by a morass, impassable to horses, and not very safe at night even for footmen. Here I thought we were safe from any sudden raid of wandering Bedawin, and we might be able even to defend tents and baggage against ordinary marauders. When the tents were pitched I took my gun and wandered along the river bank, in the hope of getting a duck or two for breakfast. I saw numbers swimming and flying in the distance. I sat down at length close to one of the side arches of the bridge, but soon heard from my servant a cry of alarm. He pointed in an excited manner across the river, and on rising the sight was not encouraging. Some eight or ten mounted Arabs, armed with spears and guns, were advancing quickly to the bridge. After calling to the servants and muleteers to prepare for an attack, I took my place again close to the arch, and stood there with as much coolness as I could command, as if watching for ducks. I did watch for ducks, it is true, but I also watched the Arab cavaliers. They rode to the centre of the bridge, and halted when they saw me standing below with my gun. They looked at the tents, at the horses and mules, and at the four armed men, and they began deliberately to discuss a plan of attack. Seeing me in European costume, they seemed to take it for granted I did not understand what they were saying. I listened most attentively while they arranged the mode in which they would carry off tents, baggage, and horses; finally determining that it would be more prudent to lie in wait somewhere near until night had set in. When they had got their plan to all appearance settled, and were taking a good look at me and my servants, a flock of ducks came sweeping down on wing right above the channel of the river. As they neared the bridge they rose higher in the air, so as to get clear of the Arabs. When they got directly overhead I fired, and one came tumbling down into the midst of the horsemen. I fired another barrel, and a duck with broken wing tumbled over and over, and then

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CÆSAREA-PHILIPPI, AND THE FOUNTAINS OF THE JORDAN.

I HAVE stated that when our Lord left Bethsaida he travelled up the Jordan valley to the "towns of Cæsarea-Philippi." Cæsarea stands on a terrace of Mount Hermon, at the upper Fountain of the Jordan, and the direct route to it lay along the eastern bank of the river and the waters of Merom. Here again, therefore, we are in his foot-



ANCIENT BRIDGE AND GATE OF CÆSAREA-PHILIPPI.

steps; and at some point along this road occurred the most remarkable of his conversations, and of Peter's confessions of faith. A comparison of the statements of the three evangelists would seem to indicate that the journey was ended, and that having reached Cæsarea, they were resting beside the great fountain, or among the oaks on the mountain-side near it; at any rate, in some retired spot, for Jesus was "praying alone." The incident is introduced by Luke in a peculiarly solemn manner; but each evangelist gives some little special touch of his own, so that the narrative studied in harmony becomes singularly circumstantial and graphic. Matthew and Mark insert a topographical note, enabling us to identify the line of route, and the place at which they had arrived. Luke adds a fact of deeper interest and meaning—no doubt obtained from Peter, when he was "tracing the course of all things accurately from the first," as he informs us in

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Syria, at the base of that mountain, which itself was called Baal-Hermon (Judges iii. 3), the primeval Canaanites established the worship of one of their Baals.

Otherwise the name of this place does not occur in the Old Testament, nor in early Jewish history. It was under the rule of Herod the Great that it became definitely historic. Then, as we are informed by Josephus, Herod, having accompanied Cæsar Augustus to the sea, on his departure from the country, returned, and erected in his honour a magnificent temple of white marble at Paneas. He says, in describing its situation, that under it was a deep cave in the mountain side filled with water, from which issues the river Jordan.

Philip the tetrarch, son of Herod, and his successor in the government of the north-eastern portion of his kingdom, including Paneas, enlarged the city, and called it *Cæsarea*, in honour of the Roman emperor. In order to distinguish it from the other and better known Cæsarea on the sea-coast, he subsequently added his own name; hence the double appellation given in the New Testament, *Cæsarea-Philippi*. After the destruction of Jerusalem, we are told that Titus celebrated his victory by public games of great splendour, held in the amphitheatre of this city, in which Jewish captives were compelled to fight with each other and with wild beasts, for the entertainment of the brutal Roman soldiery and the no less brutal public. Centuries later the inhabitants embraced Christianity, and Cæsarea became the seat of a bishopric.

The temple of Cæsar is gone, and its ruins lie buried in the cave which Josephus describes, and a part of which is still visible. But the waters of the fountain gush forth in great volume from among the ruins, and break into numerous channels through and around the scattered remains of the old city—here dashing in sheets of foam down a rocky bed, and scattering spray over thickets of oleander; there rushing madly onward among fallen columns, sculptured blocks of marble, fragments of granite, and colossal building stones, until at length the whole river plunges headlong in separate cataracts over a precipice into a deep, dark ravine. The fountain was the parent of the city, and the cave from which it springs was the parent of the shrine which gave the city its Greek name, *Paneas*, and perhaps also its older Semitic name, *Baal-gad*. The name signifies "Baal of Fruitfulness," or "Good Fortune," and it is specially applicable to this beautiful and fertile spot, where water sparkles all around, and its murmur, so sweet in a hot Eastern clime, fills the air. In Greece the worship of Pan was usually associated with caves and grottoes, and fountains ever played and sparkled round the shrine of the silvan deity. The words of the poet would be as appropriate to Paneas in the day of its pride and splendour as to any sanctuary in Greece :—

> "'Twas sweet of yore to see it play,
> And chase the sultriness of day,
> As springing high the silver dew
> In whirls fantastically flew,

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the inscriptions informs us that the niche, with apparently a temple adjoining, was dedicated to Pan by one of his priests. Another contains a dedication to "Pan and the Nymphs," probably the mythical Naiads of the fountain.

One remarkable episode in the long and eventful history of Cæsarea-Philippi has served to impress it more deeply upon the mind of the Bible student and on the heart of the Christian than all the pomp of Syrian, Greek, and Roman idolatry, and all the splendours of art and architecture,—it is Peter's confession of Christ's divinity and divine mission, together with the mysterious promise of our Lord which immediately followed: "Thou art Peter, and *upon this rock* I will build my church." Upon the long and tangled controversy which has arisen from the words I do not care to enter. But one thought rose in my mind when I read the words upon the spot. May not the expression "upon this rock" have been suggested by the view of the great rock below which the Cæsarean temple then stood? Be this as it may, however, it was somewhere near the fountain and the cliff that Peter's confession was made, and our Lord's remarkable promise given. Here also Jesus foretold to his wondering disciples his approaching sufferings and death at Jerusalem; and now again Peter was as usual rash. He who had been a moment before so forward in his profession of faith now made a characteristic exhibition of mingled forwardness and faithlessness. He took Jesus aside from the other disciples, and "began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee" (Matt. xvi. 22). But Jesus at once sternly and openly silenced his too impetuous disciple: "Turning about, and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men" (Mark viii. 33). Other solemn lessons of deepest interest and importance for the whole Church, and for all time, our Lord taught during his short sojourn at Cæsarea-Philippi.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

THE true scene of the *Transfiguration* has been long misplaced. No definite description of the place is given in the Gospels. No specific name is attached to the "high mountain apart" where it occurred by any of the sacred writers, though the event is recorded by three evangelists (Matt. xvii. 1; Mark ix. 2; Luke ix. 18). A comparison of the three narratives shows that it must have occurred on some "high mountain" not far distant from Cæsarea. There is one, and only one, lofty and conspicuous mountain here, and it is Hermon. On Hermon, therefore, the highest mountain in Palestine, and in many respects the most interesting and remarkable

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sweeping along its base is Esdraelon. Here, on the south, deeply depressed, is the Sea of Galilee; and the narrow valley through which the Jordan flows far beyond it seems to dissolve in the distance between the parallel ranges of Samaria and Gilead. On the north lies the plain of Cœle-Syria, between another pair of parallel but much loftier mountains —Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. On the east, the plain of Arabia stretches from the base of Hermon to the horizon, having Damascus, the oldest city in the world, nestling in one corner in its paradise of verdure by the banks of the river Abana. What a multitude of stirring memories does that wonderful view evoke! What a multitude of holy and historic places are crowded before the eye in that matchless panorama!"—*Five Years in Damascus.*

On the highest peak of Hermon are some interesting remains, which I was the first, at least in modern times, to discover and describe. Round a projecting rock about fifteen feet high, which forms the crown of the mountain, is a low circular wall of massive stones, roughly hewn, and evidently of remote antiquity. It is about sixty yards in diameter. In its centre is the rock, in which is an excavated cavity eight feet deep and as many in diameter. Within the stone circle on the southern brow of the peak are heaps of hewn stones, some of them with drafted edges like those of the temple wall of Jerusalem, others have mouldings in the Greek style, and on one is a fragment of a Greek inscription, but now illegible. I was able to recognize at least two distinct and widely-separated eras in the ruins. The excavated central rock and the rude circle of great stones round it are of Canaanite or Phœnician origin. I have seen many such on high peaks in the ranges of Lebanon, and also in Palestine, both east and west of the Jordan. They are the "high places" of Baal which Moses commanded the Israelites utterly to destroy. His words in the Book of Deuteronomy are very emphatic: "Ye shall surely destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: and ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire: and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods; and ye shall destroy their name out of the place" (Deut. xii. 2, 3; compare 2 Kings xvii. 10, 11).

In two passages of Scripture the name *Baal-Hermon* is given to this great mountain (Judges iii. 3; 1 Chron. v. 23); and Jerome tells us the reason. It was because on its summit stood a remarkable temple, in which, he says, the heathen from Paneas and Lebanon worshipped their sun-god Baal. As I stood amid those ruins on the top of that central rock where the Baal-fires blazed in early times, and in the evening looked westward over glen and mountain, and far away beyond the long line of burnished gold that gleamed and sparkled across "the great sea" to the glowing orb of the sun, whose departing splendour illumined sea and sky,—when I beheld that glorious sight, I could scarcely wonder that men in olden times, unenlightened save by the fitful flashes of heated

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Subsequent writers repeat the story with additional details, and one tells us the monument was destroyed by a Roman emperor. The whole story is evidently apocryphal.

THE CASTLE OF BANEAS.

THE Castle of Baneas, or, to give it its proper name, *Subeibeh*, is among the most imposing buildings in Palestine. Others, like the Temple of Jerusalem and the Mosque of Hebron, have more historic and sacred interest attached to them; but in commanding situation, extent, and strength, Subeibeh is unrivalled. It crowns an isolated peak, which rises at least fifteen hundred feet above the town, and is the most conspicuous object in the neighbourhood. The path up to it is steep, rugged, and very difficult. It took me a full hour of painful climbing on a strong and sure-footed Arab horse to reach the gate. I was well repaid for the toil. The magnificent view alone would repay one. As seen from the plain of the Jordan on the west, and from the opposite ridge of Naphtali, the castle appears to stand on the apex of a conical peak; but on reaching the top I found that it occupies the culminating point of a narrow ridge, which is joined by a lower ridge to the mountain chain on the east. The only practicable road to it from Baneas leads diagonally up the southern declivity of the hill, then along the summit of the narrow ridge, then up a zigzag path among huge fragments of rock and thickets of hawthorn and prickly oak and holly to the foot of the eastern tower, then along a ledge of rock which skirts the southern base of the ramparts, exposed at all points to missiles thrown from above. We finally reach a flight of stone steps leading up to a portal in a round tower at the south-west corner. There is but one entrance, and it is so placed as to be practically inaccessible so long as the fortress is held by an active garrison.

The building covers an irregular area about five hundred yards long from east to west, by two hundred in greatest breadth. It is narrow in the middle, and bulges out at each end to suit the shape of the top of the rock. The interior is very uneven. The natural rock rises higher in places than the encircling walls. The western end of the castle stands on the very brow of the steep hill, whose sides are in places scarped to give additional strength. The walls here are very massive, and apparently of high antiquity. Many of the stones measure from eight to twelve feet in length, by about four in thickness, and they are drafted along the edges in a similar manner to those in the Haram walls of Jerusalem and Hebron. The masonry is very fine, and most carefully executed. Judging by the examples of similar work I had seen in Jerusalem, Sidon, and Gebal, I concluded that this part of the castle was at least founded originally by Phœnician architects.

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The early history of the Castle of Subeibeh is unknown. There is no notice of it before the time of the Crusades. The first record I can find is that it was captured by the Christian host in the beginning of the twelfth century. But it must have existed long before that period; and the fact of its having been besieged and taken after a hard struggle shows that it was then a place of importance and strength. Its position commanding the city of Baneas, and the great road from the rich valley of the Jordan to Damascus, made its possession of great strategical value. We know that from the very earliest times the Phœnicians held the city of Dan and the surrounding plain; they would therefore naturally desire to strengthen their position there, and to defend one of their principal granaries from hostile tribes of the eastern desert. And no spot was more



Birket er-Ram (Lake Phiala).

suitable for defence than the peak of Subeibeh. Subsequent to its capture by the Crusaders it passed through the customary varied fortunes of Syrian strongholds—now taken by Moslems, now by Christians, each destroying, repairing, or rebuilding, as best suited their purpose. Nureddîn, father of the more famous and better-known Saladin, took it by storm in 1163; and thenceforth the Crescent waved over its battlements, until it was abandoned in the seventeenth century. Since then it has been unoccupied, except occasionally and temporarily by a few goatherds. The solidity of its walls alone has prevented that utter ruin which we have noticed in other towns of Galilee. Had it not been for the earthquakes, which have committed such fearful ravages on the towns and villages of this district, the Castle of Subeibeh might still have remained perfect almost as when built; but no strength of wall can resist the terrible shock of an earthquake.

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DAN, OR LAISH.

THE fountain of Baneas may be regarded as the upper though not the most distant fountain of the Jordan; but the great fountain is that in the plain, four miles below Baneas, beside the ruins of the old border city of *Dan*, and the still older *Laish*. The road to it from Cæsarea winds through scenery more like that of an English park than a Syrian wilderness;—groves of oak and hawthorn; thickets of myrtle, tamarisk, and wild roses; clumps of ilex, dwarf palms, and gorgeous oleander, all garlanded with white and pink convolvulus. Between them are pleasant glades carpeted with grass, and spangled with scarlet anemones, cyclamen, poppies, and star of Bethlehem; streamlets, too, flow and murmur everywhere, sparkling in the sunlight. Nowhere in Palestine have I seen a region so surpassingly rich and beautiful. *Tell el-Kady*, the site of Dan, is in the centre of this grand plain; but it is so densely covered with cane-brakes, bushes, thorns, and gigantic thistles, that it requires close inspection and no little labour to discover any remains of the ancient city. Here and there, however, we see great mounds of rubbish and a few shattered fragments of walls cropping up over the tangled thickets.

The modern name, *Tell el-Kady*, the "Hill of the Judge," is remarkable, and suggestive of a name more ancient. The Hebrew name *Dan* means "judge," and we have here doubtless just an Arabic translation of the Hebrew. Two things attract special attention—the site of the northern border city of Palestine, and the chief fountain of the Jordan. The *tell*, or "mound," is cup-shaped, about three hundred yards in diameter; and its rim, at the highest part on the south, has an elevation of about eighty feet. At the western base of the *tell* the water bursts forth from the level ground, forming a large, deep pond, and then rushing away southward with great force among stones and mounds of rubbish, and huge roots of trees from which it has torn the soil. It is the largest fountain in Syria, and the largest I have seen in any country. Its position, too, is very singular. The surrounding plain, for a considerable distance, is perfectly level, and there is no hill nearer than the base of Mount Hermon. Another smaller fountain, or perhaps a portion of the same great fountain, springs up within the *tell* and runs off through a break in the rim, driving two or three mills in its course, ere it joins the main stream outside. The united waters flow swiftly in a deep winding channel down the plain southward. The river is called *Led-Dan*; perhaps a corruption of *Ed-Dan*, "The Dan." It is joined, a few miles to the south, first by the stream from Baneas, and shortly afterwards by another smaller stream from the fountain of Hasbeiya, which we shall see

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for larger possessions. They consequently sent a band of spies to search and bring back a report. The spies travelled through the country to the extreme north, and at length reached this beautiful plain. They were struck with its great natural fertility. They returned, and reported accordingly to the chiefs of their tribe. Their report was faithful and graphic: "They came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt in security, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; for there was none in the land possessing authority, that might put them to shame in anything; and they were far from the Zidonians" (Judges xviii. 7). The people of Laish were unprotected. They had no local chief of energy or warlike spirit; and a rugged mountain range separated them from Zidon. To the unscrupulous Danite spies the town appeared in all respects favourable for attack and capture.

Their report of the nature of the country was even more encouraging: "We have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good; and are ye still? Be not slothful to go, and to enter in to possess the land. When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and the land is large: for God hath given it into your hand; a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth." They could not resist such an appeal at once to their courage and cupidity—a fertile soil, an easy conquest, abundant water, luxuriant grass clothing the plain and forests covering the adjoining hills. They resolved at once to invade the country; and Laish, with its territory, fell an easy prey.

The conquest was almost as fatal to the Danites as to the conquered. The Phœnicians who had settled there were far removed, we are told, from their native city Zidon, and from the protection and influence of their townsmen. The same might now be said of the Danites who settled in Laish. They were far removed from their brethren and from their national sanctuary. Not over scrupulous about things civil or sacred, they carried off teraphim and a graven image from the house of Micah in Mount Ephraim, on their march northward; and they set these up in their newly-acquired city, and established an irregular, indeed an idolatrous, priesthood and mode of worship: "The children of Dan set up for themselves the graven image; and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land. So they set them up Micah's graven image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh" (Judges xviii. 30). And the idolatrous practice did not end here. On the shrine thus sinfully consecrated by the Danites Jeroboam afterwards built a temple, and set up in it one of his golden calves for the purpose of weaning the affections of the people from their legitimate sovereign, their national sanctuary, and the true God (1 Kings xii. 28). The old name Laish was changed to Dan; and that name is now most familiar to the Bible student in connection with the northern border of Israel. The expression, "From Dan to Beersheba," is almost as familiar to the Bible reader in our day as it was to the ancient Israelite. (1 Sam. iii. 20; 2 Sam. iii. 10.)

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the foundations of four at least, and there were probably others. Their plan and style of masonry show high antiquity. This, in fact, appears to have been one of the noted high places of the Canaanites or Phœnicians dedicated to their Baalim. There is another ruined temple a few miles distant, called Hibbariyeh. The situation is very fine. It stands in an open basin, at the mouth of the grand ravine of Shiba, which here looks like a huge rent in the side of Hermon. The temple front is towards the chasm, and the summit of the mountain which towers directly over it. The building is not large, but it is very massive, some of the stones measuring as much as fifteen feet in length. At each end is a portico, inside which are ornamental niches. Along the wall, near the foundation, is a deeply-moulded ledge; and above is a deep, rich cornice. Dr. Robinson has rightly said that "this is one of the best-preserved and most beautiful specimens of the many ancient temples with which Lebanon, Anti-Lebanon, and the valleys between are



VILLAGE OF HUNIN—MOUNTAINS OF NAPHTALI.

thronged." There is another temple, almost exactly similar in style, size, and general plan, on a little hill beside the village of Mejdel-Anjar, close to the Damascus and Beyrout road. Unfortunately, it is not now so perfect as that of Hibbariyeh; but the walls of the cell are almost entire, consisting of a projecting basement of enormous stones. The walls are of bevelled masonry. The portico is gone; but the columns lie as they fell, in huge fragments, one being twenty-four feet long. The massive monolithic jambs of the doorway have defied time, and retain their places. The interior is ornamented with fluted Ionic semi-columns, supporting a rich cornice, and having intervening niches for statues. This little temple is even superior in style and ornament to that of Hibbariyeh. Other temples round the base of Mount Hermon are much larger, and in situation grander, but none are more chaste and beautiful than that of Mejdel.

It is a noteworthy fact, that within the last few centuries Druze *khulwehs* have to some extent taken the place of Greek temples round the base of Hermon. They are

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At the southern end of the plain is a low ridge separating it from the great plain of the Huleh; and upon the ridge is a large mound, with a village called *Ibil-el-kamah*. This is the site of *Abel*-beth-maachah. It is interesting to note that in the time of the Jewish monarchs the descriptive addition *Beth-maachah*, "House of Maachah," was attached to distinguish this town from other Abels; so now the additional designation *El-kamah*, "Of the Wheat," is given to distinguish it from other Ibils. It is a small place, but the site is fine, commanding both the plain of Ijon and the much larger plain of Huleh, with the parallel ranges shutting in the Jordan valley.

THE MOUNTAINS OF NAPHTALI.

HAVING marched so far, the Assyrian general saw two routes before him—one to the left, through the marshy plain of Merom, scarcely safe in the upper part for cavalry and chariots; the other to the right, up the somewhat steep incline to the table-land of Naphtali, rich in cattle, and studded with those "store cities" which the Syrians of Damascus had previously taken from Asa, king of Israel.

We are told that Tiglath-pileser captured the cities of Ijon, Abel, Janoah, and Kedesh. There was another noted city in this region, *Beth-rehob*. The names of Janoah and Beth-rehob have disappeared, though the others still exist. Beth-rehob was well known in the early history of Israel, since it served to indicate the exact site of Laish, or Dan, which is described in the Book of Judges as in the "valley that lieth by Beth-rehob" (xviii. 28), and the same place is mentioned in connection with the journey of the spies who were sent by Moses into Canaan. It is said of them that "they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath" (Num. xiii. 21). The natural route of the spies would have been along that ridge of hills which bounds the upper valley of the Jordan on the west.

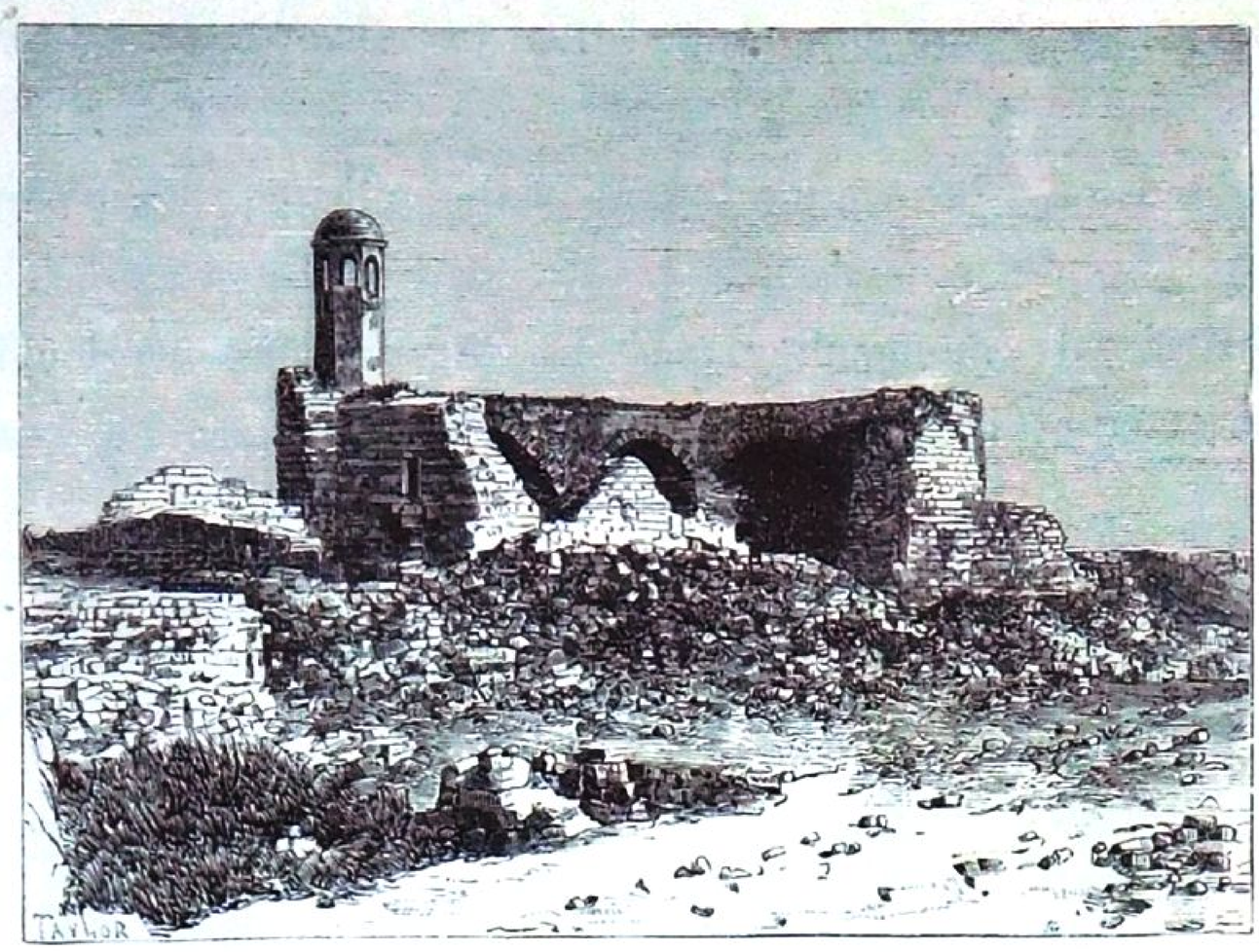
HUNIN—BETH-REHOB.

JUST at the place where the road begins to descend from the plateau of Naphtali to the plain of Dan stands the village of *Hunin*, beside which are the remains of one of the largest and strongest fortresses in Galilee. Its origin is unknown, and it is not

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people have been afraid to live within its shattered walls, although there are some chambers still habitable.

The view from the brow of the hill outside the fortress is very fine, embracing the entire valley of the Upper Jordan, with the lake of Merom in its centre, and the whole mountain range on its eastern side, from the snow-capped cone of Hermon away far



Ruined Mosque at Hunin.

southward to the table-land of Bashan and the blue mountains of Gilead. From this point the scenery of the eastern range looks specially rich and grand. The outline is varied by numerous conical peaks and deep dark valleys, while the sides are almost all covered with forests of oak.

KEDESH-NAPHTALI.

THERE is a somewhat steep ascent from Hunin to the table-land of Naphtali; and a well-formed road, Roman or earlier, leads up to it, close to the brow of the ridge, and commanding extensive views. The highlands of Naphtali, which we now enter, present a pleasing contrast in many respects to the flat, marshy plain of Merom, and the monotony of the Jordan valley, and still more so to the bare and parched hills of Southern Palestine. Here we have beautifully wooded hill-tops, wide grassy upland vales, frequent tracts of well-cultivated fields waving with grain, interspersed with olive groves, orchards of apples, mulberries, and apricots, gardens of pomegranates, and even a few

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The modern village bears the old name *Kedesh*, which means "holy," doubtless because it was a sanctuary of the primeval Canaanites, perhaps also because it was made a "city of refuge," and therefore a sanctuary, by the Israelites. It stands on the top of the ridge—a collection of poor houses built of old stones, mud, and the ruins of ancient structures brought together at random. In and around it, on the top and sides of the ridge, and scattered over the plain below, are the remains of Jewish, Greek, Roman, and Arab buildings—tombs, temples, synagogues, mosques, and private residences—showing former wealth, taste, and splendour. Nowhere in Galilee have I seen a more remarkable collection of ruins. There are no traces of fortifications like those of Hunin or Cæsarea, or other sites on the northern border, some of which we have already seen, and others we shall see presently; but the sacred and sepulchral remains of Kedesh are unique. From the very earliest age Kedesh was "holy," and, as was the case in other holy places, devotees sought to make it their last resting-place. It was the city of refuge for the tribes in the north of Palestine, and this gave it special importance in the estimation of all Jews (Joshua xx. 7). Its name would seem to imply that even before the conquest it was a "holy city" of the Canaanites, consecrated doubtless to their god Baal.

But the chief celebrity of Kedesh centres round the story of Barak and Deborah, one of the most stirring and romantic, and tragic too, in the Bible. Kedesh was the birthplace of Barak; and here in his mountain home he must have witnessed the tyranny of Jabin, whose capital and stronghold was not far distant, probably, as I have already indicated, in the plain of the Jordan at the foot of the hills of Naphtali. For twenty years, we are told, Jabin ruled Israel with a rod of iron. "The captain of his host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles," doubtless some hill fortress not far from Hazor. "And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel" (Judges iv. 2, 3). Such oppression must have strongly moved the patriotism of Barak; but what could he do? what could a down-trodden people do against such a formidable enemy? After long and weary years of servitude and suffering, Deborah the prophetess, who then judged Israel, was inspired of Heaven to free her country. She, in obedience to the divine command, sent a message from her home in "the hill country of Ephraim" to call "Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali." The message was in these startling yet cheering words: "Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded, saying, Go and draw unto mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali, and of the children of Zebulun? And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand." Independent altogether of divine appointment, the thoughtful reader will see that there was something appropriate in the selection of Barak,

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And as Kedesh was the scene of the first act in that exciting drama, so its upland plain became the scene of the last act. It is thus told in the simple yet graphic language of the sacred historian: "Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And he turned in unto her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. And he said, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. And he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No. Then Jael took a tent pin, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the pin into his temples, and it pierced through into the ground; for he was in a deep sleep. So he swooned and died" (Judges iv. 17–21).

It was an act, as it would at first sight seem, of almost unparalleled treachery and cruelty. Reading, however, the triumphal song of Deborah which follows, and in which she says, "Blessed above women shall Jael be; blessed shall she be above women in the tent;" then in language of great poetic beauty and power the deed is recorded—reading this, and glancing back at the dark touches given of Sisera's life and acts in the previous parts of the triumphal song, and indicated in the whole Bible narrative, one feels that there must be something behind. The oppression of Israel under Jabin and Sisera must have been terrible. The princes and nobles were exterminated; the people were ruthlessly robbed; even the means of protection and defence were taken from them. "The rulers ceased in Israel, until I Deborah arose." The very religion of the nation was proscribed. "They chose new gods; then was war in the gates: was there a shield or a spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?" Twenty years of such savage cruelty, of such crushing outrage and wrong, of rapine and murder, had not only broken the spirit of the nation, but had gone far to drive out feelings of common humanity. The Kenites, too, the old friends and allies of Israel, had felt the yoke of the unscrupulous tyrant, and had been witnesses of many a dark deed of blood. Jael may have had her own tale of woe, and the sufferings of her own people to avenge. Now the arch-oppressor was in her power—in her very tent. She, with a spirit not unknown in the East—not unknown even in the West in times of intense excitement, when law is in abeyance, and when the feelings of humanity have been outraged—she may have considered herself designated by a mysterious Providence as the avenger of her country's wrongs, the executioner of a blood-stained tyrant. It is only when we take into consideration the dark history of the period, and the wild character of the people, that we can fairly judge of the tragic act of Jael.

May there not also have been another and deeper feeling inspiring the mind of the

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one on each side, are perfect, richly ornamented with wreaths of fruit, flowers, and vine branches.

But the most remarkable ruins of Kedesh are its tombs. The city was a great cemetery, and its sarcophagi and mausoleums are unequalled in Palestine for massive grandeur and richness of decoration. One meets with them at every turn, in and around the village, on the slopes of the hill, and in the plain below. Unfortunately, they are all broken and overthrown, and the best sculptures on the lids and sides of the sarcophagi are defaced, evidently by design, so that now it is in most cases difficult to make out what the figures and carvings were intended to represent. Some of the sarcophagi are used as drinking-troughs for cattle, some are almost buried in rubbish, some are built into the walls of the modern houses and the enclosures of gardens and court-yards; but a number are still so placed that they cannot fail to attract the attention of the antiquary, indeed of every visitor, and to excite their admiration.

Not far from the village, out on the little plain, is a very remarkable group of tombs. They are on a stylobate of heavy masonry, six feet high, with a deeply-moulded cornice. One double sarcophagus is in its place. It was made for two bodies, laid side by side, but in opposite directions, as is shown by the raised pillows for the heads. The other sarcophagi, which originally stood on the stylobate, are overturned and broken. On a lower platform there are also huge double sarcophagi. All are elaborately ornamented with sculpture in high relief, on sides, ends, and lids. Garlands of fruit and foliage are held up at the angles by nude and winged figures. There are shields, swords, and javelins, evidently the work of Greek or Roman sculptors. Standing apart from this singular group is a tomb of fine masonry, square outside and cruciform within, with vaulted roof. It contains *loculi* for eleven bodies; but the whole is now ruined and the ornaments defaced. I have seen tombs similar in style in the eastern parts of Bashan, in the villages of Anti-Lebanon, and in Palmyra. They are manifestly Greek or Roman; and the general character of the masonry, decoration, and construction, show both skill and taste. Except where overthrown by earthquakes, or purposely mutilated, the tombs remain perfect as when built. The stone is compact limestone, almost as white and close-grained as marble. There are at least a hundred tombs and sarcophagi more or less broken in and around Kedesh.

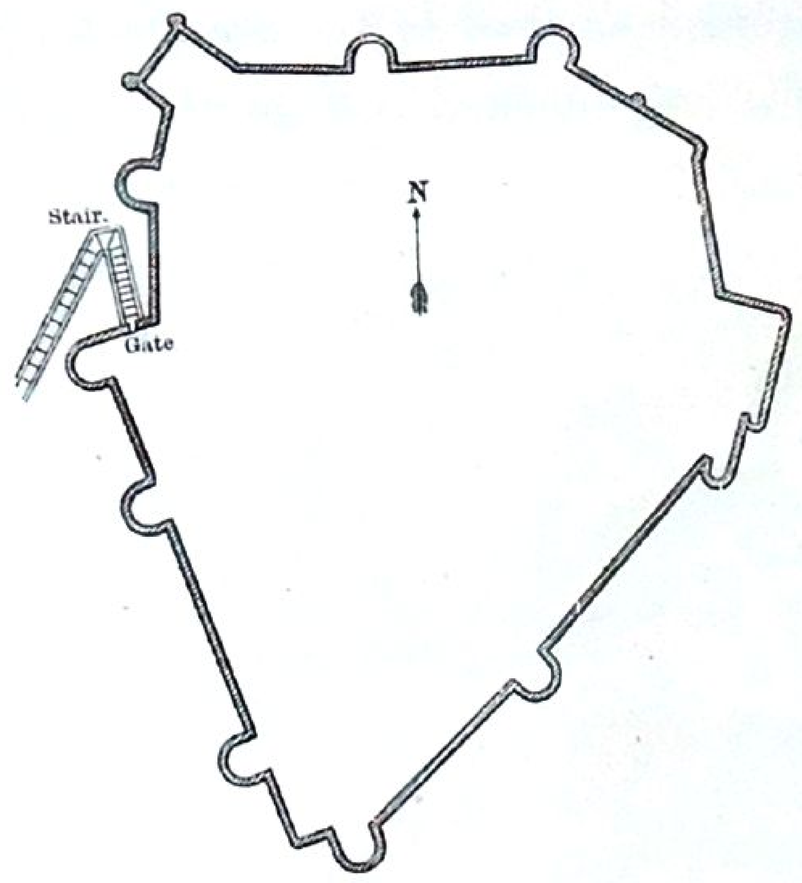
The history of Kedesh after the Jewish age is unknown. The Greeks and Romans must have attached special importance to the city, as they adorned it with splendid temples, and expended much labour, wealth, and taste upon its tombs. There is no evidence of its having ever been one of the seats of Jewish learning in Galilee in the early centuries of our era, like Tiberias, Arbela, and Safed. This seems strange, since it was one of the ancient cities of refuge, and therefore held in high honour. Here, however, we are in the garden of Northern Palestine, surrounded by a country rich and

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quaint and striking appearance on the top of the massive mediæval walls and colossal foundations of a still more remote age.

The castle, we are told, was erected early in the twelfth century, on the site of a much older one, by the Crusading knight Hugh de St. Omer, who was then lord of Tiberias. The name he gave it was Toron, an archaic French word signifying "little hill," an equivalent of the Arabic *Tell*. After the death of its founder, his successors assumed the name of the fortress, and were called *De Toron*. They held it till the fatal battle of Hattin, in which the Christian host was overthrown by Saladin, and the power of the Crusaders finally broken. The last lord of Toron was taken prisoner in the battle, and soon afterwards the castle itself was captured by Saladin. During the succeeding centuries it was neglected, and, like many another stately edifice in Galilee, gradually fell to ruin.

In comparatively recent times the *sept*, or perhaps more properly *sect*, of the Metâwileh rose to power in this part of the country, assumed the local government, and their chief, seeing the strength and commanding position of the castle, took up his abode in it. His authority is recognized by the Turkish Government; and his people have shown themselves to be brave, hardy, and industrious, if somewhat exclusive and fanatical. The Metâwileh, from a religious point of view, are followers of Aly, son-in-law of Mohammed. They hold that Aly is the only lawful Imâm; and that the supreme authority, in things spiritual and temporal, belongs of right to his descendants. They are allied in faith to the Shiites of Persia, but are looked upon as heretics by other Moslems. They are almost as scrupulous in their ceremonial observances as Hindus. They will neither eat nor drink with those of another faith, nor will they use the ordinary drinking or cooking vessels of others. I have seen a Metâwileh woman deliberately break a little water pitcher which I had unwittingly put to my lips. The great body of their people reside in the valley of Cœle-Syria and the mountain chains of Lebanon, where they are noted for their turbulence; but the section settled in Tibnin, under the sway of the distinguished house of *Aly es-Sughir*, have a better name, and are industrious and prosperous.



PLAN OF THE CASTLE OF TIBNIN.

The plan of the castle is peculiar. It was adapted evidently to the form of the hill on which it is founded. Its ramparts, round and square and oblong, must have been formidable as defences at the period when they were built. Even now, though much

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fact unique, and are of the highest antiquity, for there is no mention of Ramah after the time of Joshua. It would seem that this plan of excavating graves in the rock was a favourite mode of sepulture among the mountain tribes. I have seen hundreds of them in various parts of Lebanon. Sepulchral chambers hewn in the rock, like those around Jerusalem, are common in the lowlands of Palestine and in the hill country of Judah, but not in Lebanon, and they are rare in the mountainous regions of Galilee. In Lebanon, however, where the rock is very hard, and the flat surfaces are favourable for excavating single graves, one meets with those coffin-like tombs near every old town and village; I have even seen them on the mountain-side where now there are no traces of old habitations.

After passing Ramah we see many villages to the right and left, as we ride through a picturesque and fertile country. One of the largest and most prosperous is *Bint Jebeil*, inhabited by Metâwileh. Not far distant is *Marûn er-Râs*, said to be the native place of the priest *Maron*, the founder of the sect of the Maronites, who have for many centuries formed a majority of the inhabitants of Lebanon, and are among the most enterprising of the people of Syria. Marûn is an ancient site, for there are ruins in it, and on one is a fragment of an early Greek inscription.

Another interesting place is *Dibl*, close to which is a remarkable rock tomb called Hazzur. There was an arch of masonry of the Greek or Roman age over the entrance. The arch unfortunately fell a few years ago. Below the arch the rock has been hewn away, and a sloping passage made down to a sepulchral chamber in which is a fine sarcophagus. There are several other rock tombs in the neighbourhood.

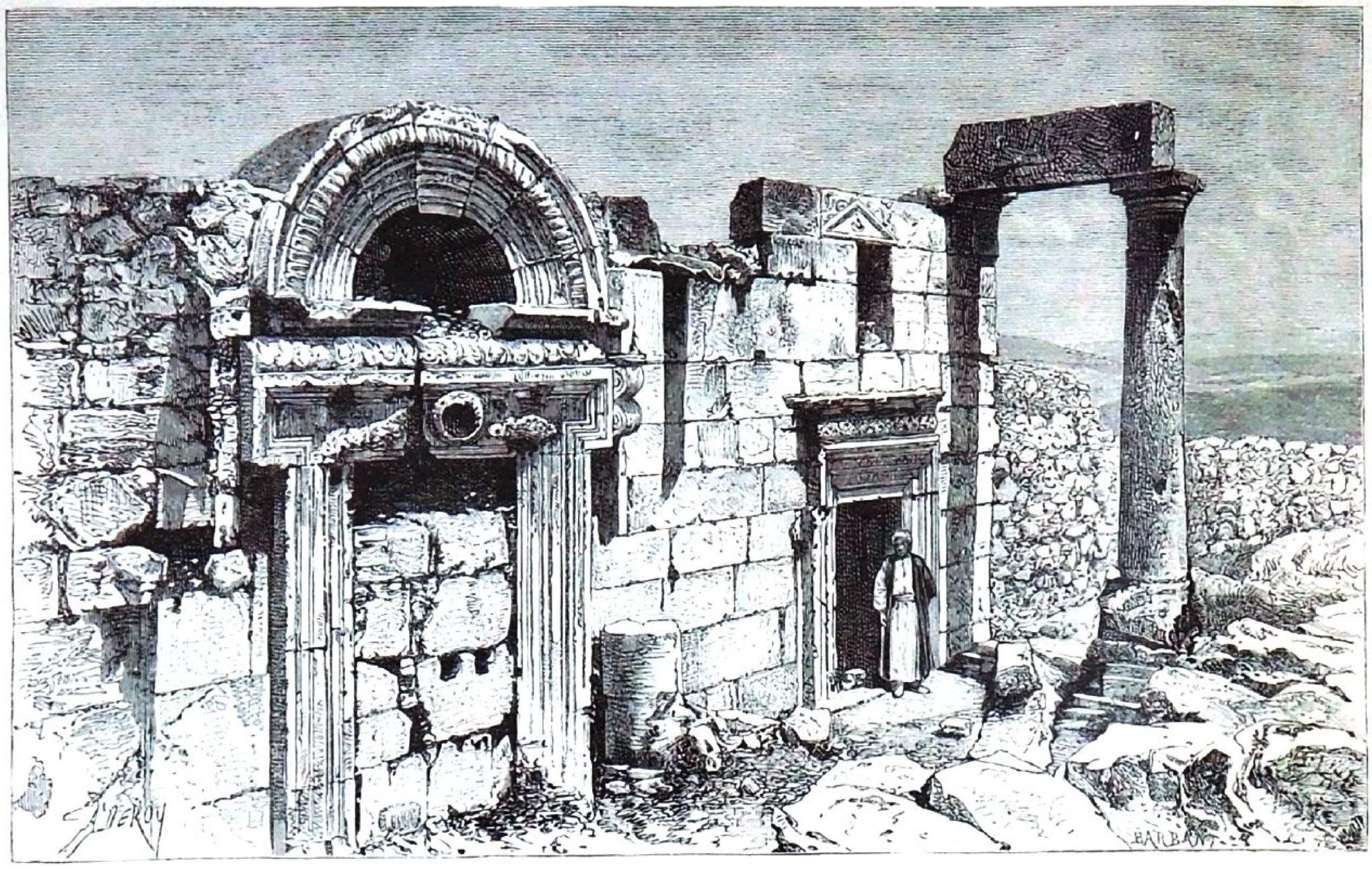
EL-JISH—GISCALA.

AMONG the cities fortified by Josephus during the last Jewish war was *Giscala*, which still retains its old name in the Arabic form *El-Jish*. It was a large village, but suffered terribly in the earthquake of 1837. The Christian inhabitants were at prayers in the church at the time of the first shock. The building fell on them, and it is said that more than a hundred perished in the ruins. Not far distant is a circular pit, about a hundred yards in diameter and twenty deep. Its sides are covered with pieces of lava, basalt, and pumice, apparently ejected from the cavity at a comparatively recent period. This seems to be at least one of the centres of those terrible volcanic convulsions which have during past centuries spread desolation and death over Galilee. I was much interested in inspecting it, and I think it would repay some accomplished geologist to give it a thorough scientific examination.

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KEFR BIRIM.

ABOUT two miles from Giscala is the large and prosperous village of *Kefr Birim*, inhabited by Maronites, who have imported to this region much of the industry and sturdy independence which their kinsfolk have shown for many centuries in their native Lebanon. The village is perched on the top of a conical hill, like most others in



RUINS OF A SYNAGOGUE AT KEFR BIRIM.

this region. It is an ancient site, and there are numerous ruins and old tombs near it. It is strange to see in Kefr Birim the simple rites of Christianity practised, and Christian worship regularly conducted in a rude church, while all round are the imposing remains of ancient Jewish synagogues, and the tombs of some of the most honoured of Jewish rabbis. In the village is a very large synagogue, its façade almost perfect, having a central and two side doors, ornamented with chaste moulding and elaborately sculptured cornices and architraves. Within the walls a modern, rudely-built dwelling rests against the massive old masonry, and Christian children now chant their prayers where the Jews of old solemnly intoned the Psalms of David. This synagogue had originally an open court

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MEIRON.

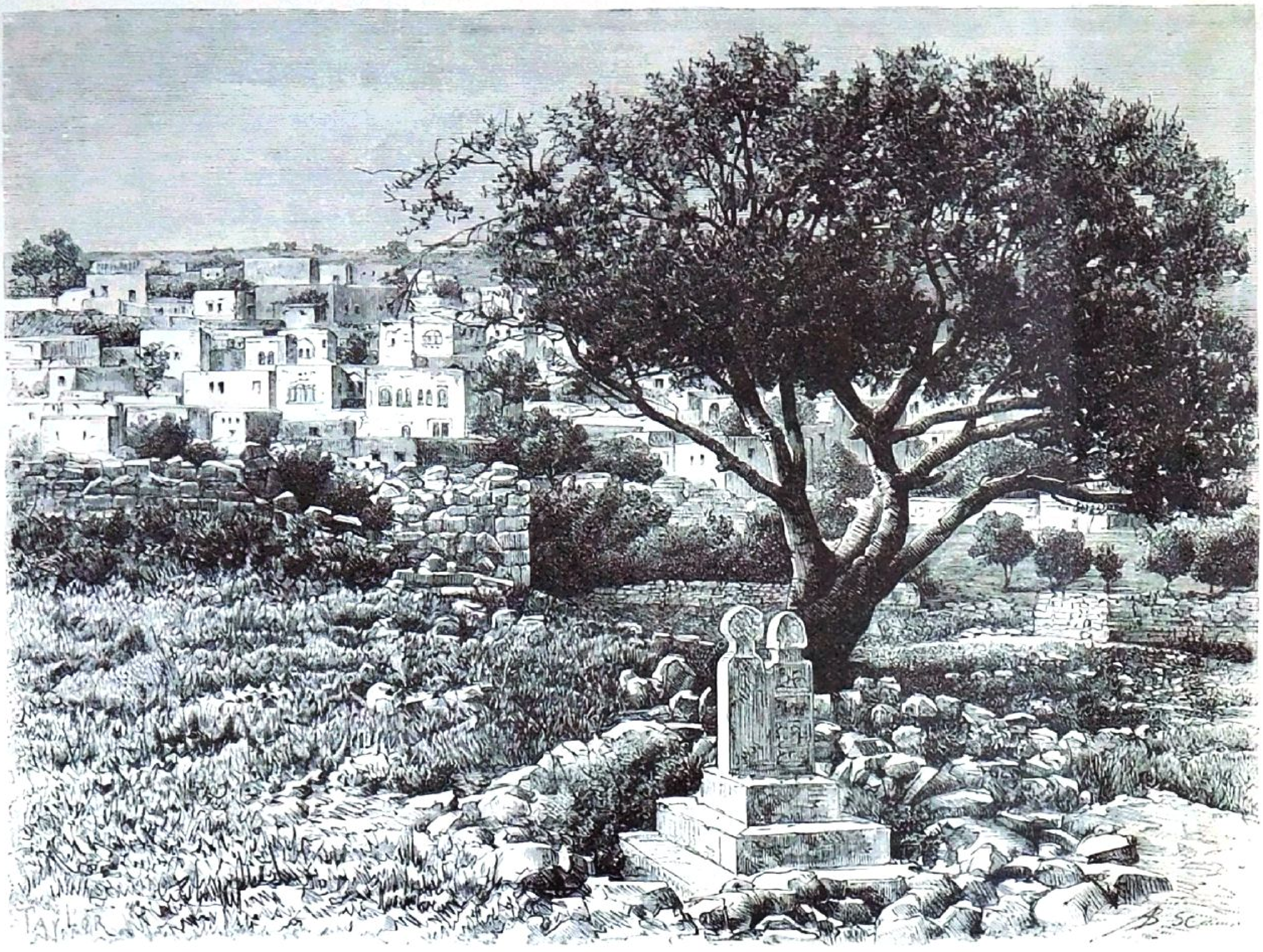
MEIRON is the most celebrated of the Jewish places of pilgrimages in Northern Palestine. It stands on a rocky hill about four miles south of Kefr Birim, and the same distance west of Safed. The name does not occur in the Old Testament, but it is probably the *Meroth* which Josephus fortified with other cities in Upper Galilee. It is mentioned by the well-known Jewish traveller and writer, Benjamin of Tudela, who visited it in the thirteenth century, and says it contains the tombs of two of the most learned and famous of the Jewish doctors, Hillel and Shammai. Rénan describes Meiron as "a veritable reliquary of Jewish antiquities," possessing the best preserved Jewish necropolis in the country. It is not, however, the Judaism of the Hebrew prophets, or of the age of the apostles, one touches here; it is that of the Talmudists who flourished between the second and sixth centuries of our era. The tomb pointed out, and still venerated, as that of the younger Hillel, is a beautiful type of sepulchre. It is a great, irregular, but almost cruciform rock-hewn cave, measuring nearly fifty feet in length by the same in breadth; and it contains no less than thirty-two sarcophagi, with excavated recesses for five more. Strange to say, though the sarcophagi remain with their lids in a good state of preservation, there are no inscriptions, and it is only an old tradition that attaches to them the names of Hillel and his thirty-six companions. There are many other rock tombs, large and small, some plain, others profusely ornamented, reminding one of the hundreds in the valley of the Kidron, and in the rocks and glens about Jerusalem.

But the tombs to which the Jews now make pilgrimages from far and near are not those hewn in the rock, which are manifestly of high antiquity; they are much more modern and in all respects much less interesting graves. They are within a neatly-kept enclosure, each covered by a small whitewashed cupola. The place looks like a section of a Turkish cemetery in Constantinople or Damascus rather than the sacred burying-ground of Jewish rabbis in Galilee.

The synagogue of Meiron is the most striking ruin in the village, and in point of style and decoration ranks next to those of Kefr Birim. The southern façade and its main door are in good preservation, with a smaller door beside the central one—a curious arrangement. The jambs are monoliths, moulded with much taste, though not ornamented with carving and sculpture like those of Kefr Birim. The site of the building is remarkable. It stands on a platform hewn in the eastern slope of a great rock. The

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Meiron and Kefr Birim were deserted or became unsafe, the Jews removed to this commanding hill. In the seventeenth century the schools had already begun to decline, funds were not supplied, the synagogues fell to decay and ruin, and the Jews of Safed soon lapsed into that state of poverty and misery in which we now find them. It is painful to see the worn and wasted faces of the men, and still more painful to see the older women with hollow cheeks and sunken eyes and tottering steps—pictures of long-continued and almost hopeless suffering. Then the contrast between the aged matrons and the young maidens is inexpressibly touching. Sorrow has not yet reached the latter.



SAFED.

The depressing influences of poverty and unceasing scorn and contempt have not yet been felt by them—at least in full force. We can see still the bright smile, the quick glance, the deep, dreamy, thoughtful look, characteristic of the race. We can see, too, in not a few that classic perfection of feature, that brilliant Oriental type of expression, form, and bearing, which have ever distinguished the pure descendants of Abraham, especially those trained up in their own Eastern home. In conversing with them, one cannot fail to mark here and there, both in young men and maidens, traces of intellectual power and of mystic thought, such as we might suppose must have marked the youthful

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the castle. The whole southern section of Galilee lies before one like a vast panorama. The plain of Esdraelon spreads out from the deep valley of the Jordan on the east across the country to the shore of the Mediterranean on the west. Beyond it are the long and apparently continuous ranges of Carmel, Samaria, and Gilboa. Tabor rises gracefully in the foreground like the segment of a sphere. To the left beyond it is the bleak ridge of Moreh. Still farther to the left, in its deep basin-shaped depression, lies the Sea of Galilee. On its eastern side rises the bleak, rugged ridge of hills which constitutes the sustaining wall of the table-land of Bashan; and over that table-land the eye roams until it meets on the distant horizon the pale-blue mountains of Bashan. It is a magnificent view, and has few equals in Northern Palestine.

RAMAH OF NAPHTALI.

AMONG the mountains a few miles from Safed is a fertile valley; it might be called an upland plain, it is so wide and flat. Fine groves of olives and clumps of fruit-trees diversify its surface, and give it a park-like aspect. At its upper end, on the lower slope of a rounded ridge, stands the large village of *Ramah*. Its houses are substantially built, some of them of well-hewn stones, evidently ancient. There are also a few rock tombs in the hill-side, and there are traces of foundations, as if large buildings had once stood there; but there is nothing else to indicate the site of an old city. Yet this seems to be the only existing trace of Ramah, that fenced city of the Canaanites which Joshua gave, with Kedesh and Hazor, to the tribe of Naphtali (Joshua xix. 36, 37).

LOWER GALILEE.

WE now descend from the highlands of Naphtali, spurs of the great range of Lebanon, into the richer but no less picturesque district of *Lower Galilee*. It reaches from the lake and valley of the Jordan on the east to the shore of the Mediterranean on the west. It embraces some of the most fertile sections of Palestine—the valley of Jezreel, and the plains of Esdraelon, Acre, and Asochis; some of the most famous hills—Tabor, Gilboa, Moreh, and Carmel; and some of the most famous towns—Nazareth, Capernaum, Nain, Endor, and Shunem. It was the home of Jesus during

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celebrated as the scene of perhaps the fiercest battle ever fought between the Crescent and the Cross. On the field of Hattin the power of the Crusaders was finally broken by Saladin. It was a terrible conflict. The flower of the Christian host, under the weak king of Jerusalem, Guy de Lusignon, lay for weeks in idleness and fatal indecision beside the great fountain of Seffurieh on the plain of Asochis, a few miles north of Nazareth. Some of their chiefs had acted recklessly and even treacherously with the Moslems. Raymond, lord of Kerak, a strong but much-exposed outpost, had plundered a Damascus caravan, and obstinately refused to give up either merchandise or merchants, though it was done in time of truce, when Moslems and Christians were mutually bound to abstain from all acts either of open warfare or robbery. It was a disgraceful act, and it was terribly avenged. Saladin was stung to madness. He marched rapidly from Damascus; passed round the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee; captured Tiberias, then garrisoned by a strong force of Christians; and encamped on the wide plateau between Tabor and Hattin. Saladin's army consisted mainly of light horse, who swept round the mail-clad Christian knights, galled them with showers of arrows and javelins, and wearied them out, while keeping at a safe distance, and carefully avoiding their charges with the lance. It was an unequal conflict. The active Moslems were accustomed to the climate, and were able to get their supplies of food and water in the surrounding country, which was all open to them; while, on the other hand, the scorching sun, thirst, and exhaustion did their fatal work on both men and horses of the Crusaders.

There were divided counsels also in the Christian army. The more sagacious advised the construction of an intrenched camp, and the concentration of the whole force within it, beside the fountain, there to await the combined attack of the enemy; but the foolish advice of the Grand Master of the Templars, the reckless daring of his followers, and the fickleness of the poor king, aided to no inconsiderable extent by the skilful manœuvres of Saladin, brought on a crisis. The unceasing and daring attacks of the Moslem light horse, now on the main army, now on detached parties of the Christians, stung the proud knights to madness, so that at length they resolved to abandon their strong position and assail the Saracens in the open plain. In the plain there was no water, and the Moslems simply surrounded the Crusaders, assailing them wherever they saw a favourable opening; now retreating, and again advancing at another point, thus keeping up an unceasing conflict throughout the whole day on that burning plain. Hemmed in on every side, men and horses utterly worn out with fatigue and thirst, all hope failed. A few of the knights cut their way through the encircling host, and escaped to Acre. Another little band gathered round the leaders and the "holy cross" which they had brought into the field, and retreated in a compact body to the top of Hattin. There, however, they were helpless. They could not escape. Without water, without food, without hope of succour, nothing remained but submission. After repeated charges,

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I could to bind up their wounds; and I engaged women, chiefly Jewesses, to bring food and water to the sufferers. It was sad to see those young and strong men abandoned and hopeless. The Turkish pasha of Acre, so far as I could learn, had sent no aid, though he had troops and stores only some ten hours' ride from Tiberias. Such is a specimen of Turkish rule in Syria. I had many opportunities during my residence in the country of seeing even worse instances of neglect, mismanagement, and tyranny. Two days after visiting the wounded Kurds in Tiberias, when riding over the scene of the conflict to Tabor, I saw several dead bodies, with vultures hovering over them. It was a terrible illustration of the well-known words of our Lord, "Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles [or vultures] be gathered together" (Matt. xxiv. 28).

Some days later I visited the camp of the victorious Hawâra, beside the fountain of Harod at the foot of Gilboa. I was invited to a banquet by the chief, and found him and his followers quietly dividing the spoil taken from the Kurds. They seemed to have no fear of the Government, or of being called to account in any way for their attack upon the irregular troops. They said, indeed, that they were safe, for they were under the protection of the English vice-consul of Haifa. Whether this was so or not I cannot now tell; but if so, it is only one of many instances I could give of the unjustifiable interference of foreign consuls in the internal affairs of Turkey. Sometimes interference is necessary and salutary. Everything depends upon the character of the consul. As a rule, however, when native Arabs or Levantines are put into such a position, their object is to make money, and their authority is mischievous.

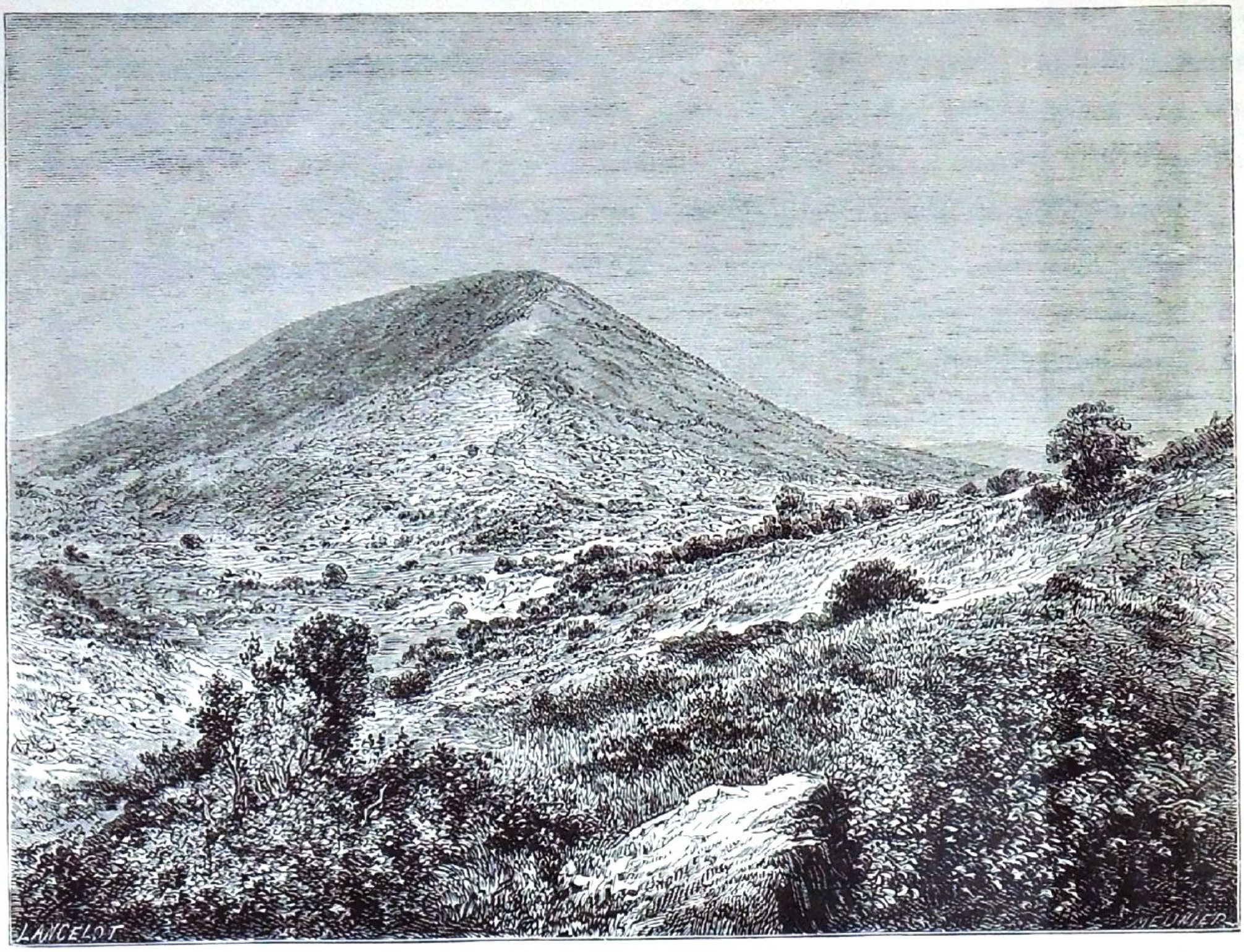
KHAN ET-TUJJAR.

THE road from Hattin to Tabor runs through delightful, park-like scenery. Thin forests of oak clothe the uplands on each side and the face of Tabor, which rises straight before us with its graceful rounded top and gently sloping sides. There are here and there along the path thick clumps of evergreens, holly, myrtle, and prickly oak, with quiet winding glades between, carpeted with luxuriant grass and spangled with bright flowers. About half-way from Hattin to Tabor is a large caravansary called *Khan et-Tujjâr*, "The Merchants' Khan." There are two buildings; one a regular khan, or way-side resting-place for caravans and merchants, with its open court and ranges of little cell-like rooms round it, and its stables and magazines, and tanks for water, and a mosque. The other building is fortified like a castle, with loopholed towers at the angles. Both were erected about three centuries ago by Senan Pasha of Damascus. There is

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forests of evergreen oak. From the hills to the east and west it is a truncated cone, not quite regular, but with here and there an indentation which reminded me when I first saw it of the rude cut in the original edition of Maundrel's "Travels." From the plateau of Hattin on the north, the general outline is nearly the same as from Esdraelon, but it does not seem so uniform, as its side is seamed with naked rocky glens, divided by ridges covered with trees.

My first visit to Tabor, now many years ago, had something of adventure in it. It was on a beautiful morning in the month of May, in a flood of glorious sunlight, and with



JEBEL ET-TUR (MOUNT TABOR).
(From the North-West.)

the dew still sparkling on the grass, that I rode to the north base of the hill. My companion had been on the top before, and did not wish to undertake the fatigue of a second visit. He consequently rode away to the right, round the western base and down to the village of Deburieh, where we were to encamp for the night; while I set out with a single attendant, who was himself ignorant of the road. Our way soon led through a camp of Arabs, who I learned had come to this place, like the Midianites of old, from beyond the Jordan to feed their flocks on the rich pastures of Esdraelon. They are a lawless race, whose hand is still more or less against every man. I therefore felt

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hot sun, and thirst compelled me to search for water, even at the risk of more encounters with the wild denizens of this wild spot. I saw several cisterns—some dry, some with water, but so deep that I could not reach it. At last I found one with water in the bottom far down. A stone stair once led to it; it was now so broken that to descend seemed almost hopeless. Yet pressed by burning thirst I scrambled down with difficulty, holding firmly by an overhanging branch. Just as I reached the water, and was stooping to drink, a panther sprang from a dark corner, and bounded up to the opening above. It there turned and growled; but soon slunk away and disappeared. I was a good deal relieved when I heard the voice of my servant calling loudly as if alarmed; which he was, for it turned out he had seen the panther, and feared that I had come to grief. When he heard me shout in response, as if from the bowels of the earth, he could not find me for a time; but my continued calls brought him at length to the mouth of the cistern. The difficulty now was to get me up. I succeeded with no little exertion in reaching the top, and explained to him the state of the case. He was greatly frightened; for he had seen the panther, and affirmed it was a lion as big as his horse. He handed me my gun, and carefully examined his own, and also his pistols. I knew there was no danger; but he was not satisfied until he had put the horses in a little room we discovered, and took his stand at the door to defend them and himself from any intruder, man or beast.

Such was Mount Tabor when I first visited it, more than a quarter of a century ago. I wandered for hours among its ruins and tangled thickets—now trying roughly to sketch a broken arch or ruined chapel; now sitting on some higher tower of the old wall and looking out on the grand view it commands. The silence was profound and most impressive. I thought on that striking description given by Scott in the "Lord of the Isles" of some similar scene of ruin and desolation conjured up by his poetic fancy:—

"Yes! 'twas sublime, but sad,—the loneliness
Loaded thy heart, the desert tired thine eye;
And strange and awful fears began to press
Thy bosom with a stern solemnity.
Then hast thou wished some woodman's cottage nigh,
Something that showed of life, though low and mean;
Glad sight its curling wreath of smoke to spy,
Glad sound its cock's blithe carol would have been,
Or children's whooping wild beneath the willows.
Such are the scenes where savage grandeur wakes
An awful thrill that softens into sighs."

Such feelings I often realized amid the desolations of Palestine's old cities; and nowhere did it seem more impressive than on that bright, sultry day when I stood alone amid the ruins on the top of Mount Tabor, where not a sound was heard, and where the vast panorama around appeared to be lonely and silent as the ruins.

Tabor is different now, as we shall presently see; but even yet, though there are little

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and some Greeks; and they are bitterly opposed to each other, but when I asked the reason and the nature of the points on which they differ none could tell me. So it is not unfrequently in the East, and unfortunately in some Western lands where better things might be expected. The divisions in the Christian communities are a fruitful source of weakness; they are pointed to with no little scorn by other religions, and they largely prevent the civilizing influences which the grand doctrines and precepts of the gospel might produce upon the peoples of the world. Amid the ruins on the top of Tabor are those of several chapels, some of high antiquity. One, from its general style and the character of its masonry, appears to have been built in the earliest ages of Christianity; another was evidently founded, or at least largely repaired, by the Crusaders, and is perhaps that which we are told Tancred, Count of Galilee, erected for the monks of Cluny.

There was something to me intensely interesting in Tabor, in its conspicuous position in the centre of Galilee, and in the vast panorama it commands. The hill itself, with its venerable ruins, connects the remote past with the present, and calls up to one's mind some of the most memorable events in Jewish and mediæval history. Like most other prominent hills in Palestine, it was a Canaanitish high place; it afterwards became a sanctuary, or at least gathering-place, for the northern tribes of Israel—their MIZPEH, in fact, to which Moses probably referred when he pronounced the prophetic blessing on Issachar and Zebulun: "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy tents. They shall call the peoples unto the mountain; there shall they offer sacrifices of righteousness" (Deut. xxxiii. 18, 19). Tabor may be here indicated prophetically; and the gathering of the tribes to this mountain by order of Deborah the prophetess, to fight against Jabin and Sisera, those powerful enemies of God's people, may have been at least one of the events indicated. In Christian times the tradition of sanctity was continued, and Tabor became in ecclesiastical tradition the Mount of Transfiguration. Churches and convents were built upon it in honour of that grand event as early as the fourth century. Some remains of those churches still exist. The Crusaders entered into the then current belief with their customary enthusiasm, founded a Benedictine monastery, and filled it with monks brought from the splendid establishment of Cluny in France. It struck me that the remains of the chapel and adjoining massive buildings at the south-east corner of the area are relics of the stately edifice erected by Tancred. I observed on their walls well-known Crusading symbols and crosses. It is interesting, as one stands amid these ruins and on this most conspicuous high place, to have his thoughts carried along the course of history from the remote age of the Baal-worshipping Syrians to the Jews roused by the inspired command and patriotic devotion of Deborah; to the early Christians founding shrines in honour of one of the grandest events in gospel history—the Transfiguration; and then to the Crusading knights, animated by a noble if mistaken enthusiasm, planting in the distant East a branch of the most magnificent monastic

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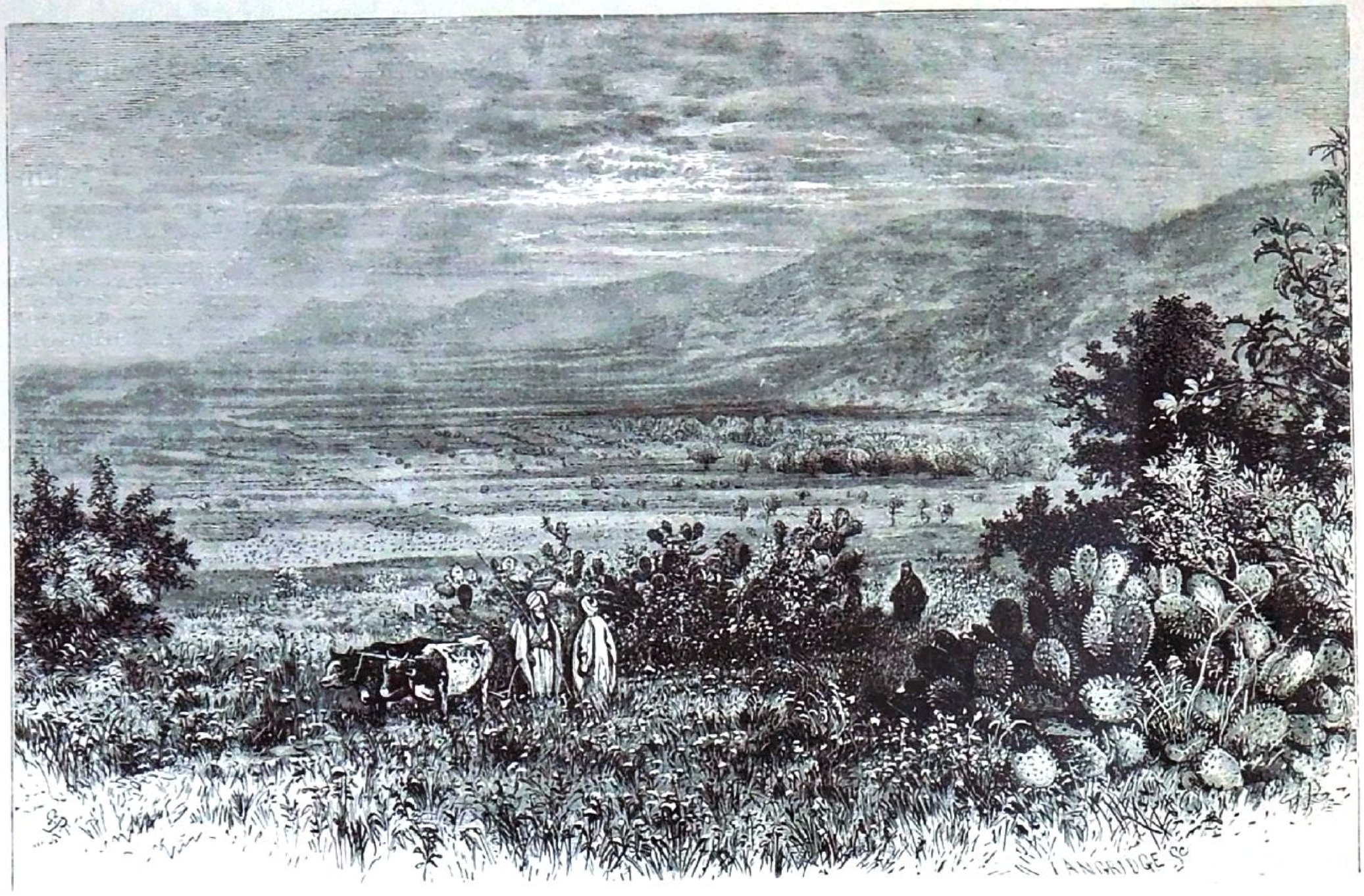
view, was the command of the prophetess, "Go and draw towards Mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali, and of the children of Zebulun." Advancing over the hills of Naphtali, and through the wooded upland passes of Zebulun, they were safe from any flank attack, and could reach Tabor without much fatigue. Sisera supposed that in the plain to which he directed his march, and to which he hoped to entice the raw, unskilled levies of Barak, the Israelites would be at his mercy; and doubtless he also supposed that, having defeated the northern tribes, the way to Samaria and Judæa would be open to him. But he evidently did not know the treacherous nature of the ground in the plain, especially on the banks of the streams that wind through it. The battle-field was before me, and I could follow every movement of the armies as described by the sacred historian. Sisera, with his chariots, and probably his cavalry, marched down the Jordan valley, along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and on southward to the opening of the valley of Jezreel at Bethshan; then up that valley to the foot of Tabor, hoping there to induce the followers of Barak to enter the plain. This line of march was easy, and by entering Esdraelon from the east he prevented the possibility of any junction between the northern and southern tribes.

When Sisera reached the banks of the Kishon, a short distance from the base of Tabor, he was in view of Barak, who had now full opportunity of preparing for attack. The storm-clouds appeared in the west, torrents of rain began to fall with customary suddenness and severity. The order was given by Deborah. "Up, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand. Is not the Lord gone out before thee?" She pointed, doubtless, to the raging storm—to the thunder, lightning, and hail now beating against the enemy; to the chariots and horses already labouring and plunging in the softened soil. These were evidences of Divine wrath against Sisera, and deliverance for Israel. So the troops of Barak rushed down the hill-side, swept with irresistible force against the entangled and helpless chariots, and the "multitude" that accompanied them. The triumphal song of Deborah gives a few graphic touches of the nature and results of the battle:—"The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo. They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. Then did the horsehoofs stamp by reason of their prancings, the prancings of their strong ones" (Judges v. 19). The narrative of Josephus is the best commentary upon this highly figurative song. He tells us that just when the battle began a violent tempest came on, with a great downfall of rain, and a hailstorm, which, driving full in the faces of the Canaanites, so blinded and benumbed them with cold that they could neither use their bows with effect nor even hold their swords. Then the sudden overflowing of the Kishon swept the Canaanites away as they attempted to escape westward. Sisera saw that his only hope of safety

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relics of work dating from before the time of Abraham down to the present day; and among them the skilled antiquary may distinguish specimens of Canaanite, Jewish, Greek, Roman, Crusading, Saracenic, and modern Christian masonry.

The view from Tabor is even more interesting and instructive than its ruins. Nearly the whole of Southern Galilee is spread out before and around us, and many of its towns and villages, renowned in Scripture history, are more distinctly seen than from the loftier peak of Safed. The most striking feature is the grand plain of Esdraelon. It is close below us, and the eye sweeps over its pastures and waving cornfields from the foot of the hill away to the ridge of Carmel. We can see how it was exposed on every side



PLAIN OF ESDRAELON.

to the inroads of enemies—of the Bene-Kedem from beyond Jordan, who crossed the river periodically, "like locusts for multitude;" of the Syrians from Damascus, and of the more distant eastern nations, who marched down the valley of the Jordan, or defiled along the narrow maritime plain of Phœnicia; of the Philistines and the Egyptians, who had free access by the plain of Sharon and the easy passes of Carmel at Megiddo. One can here see how wonderfully accurate and strangely prophetic was the patriarch's blessing on the tribe of Issachar, to which this magnificent plain was allotted—"Issachar is a strong ass couching down between the sheep-folds: and he saw a resting-place that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a

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THE VALLEY OF JEZREEL.

THE royal city of Jezreel gave its name to the grandest plain in Palestine. The Hebrew name was softened by the Greeks, and still survives in the familiar form Esdraelon. The natives do not know it, however, and call the plain *Merj Ibn Amer*, "The meadow of the son of Amer." Its position, as I have already shown, gives the key to its eventful and blood-stained history. It completely intersects the country, dividing the mountains of Naphtali from the hills of Samaria and the ridge of Carmel. Its main section is triangular in form, the base reaching from Tabor to Engannim, fifteen miles; the apex is at the sea, about twenty-five miles west. From the base three arms stretch out toward the Jordan—one between Tabor and Moreh, another between Moreh and Gilboa, the third between Gilboa and the mountain group of Samaria. The two former run down by easy gradients to the valley of the Jordan, which is at least a thousand feet lower than Esdraelon. The southern arm is shut in on the east by cross ridges, which connect Gilboa with the hills of Samaria.

DABERATH AND CHESULLOTH.

DESCENDING from Tabor I rode through the hamlet of Deburieh, situated in a nook of the hills. It is doubtless the site of the ancient *Daberath* (Joshua xix. 12), for there are ruins scattered around it, and rock-tombs in the adjoining cliffs. I passed on to the village of *Iksâl*, to inspect the site and remains of *Chesulloth*, a border town of Issachar, mentioned by Joshua, and also called, on account of its situation, *Chisloth-Tabor* (Joshua xix. 12, 18). The village stands on the top of a large rocky mound in the plain, but near the foot of the hills. It has no ancient ruins of any note, but there is a group of rock-tombs, evidently of remote antiquity, and in some respects very peculiar. They are of two kinds. Some are coffin-like cavities excavated in the surface of the soft rock, such as are common in the mountains of Naphtali and Lebanon, but rare in the lowlands. Each was made to contain a single body, and there is no regularity in their construction. They are turned in all directions; and the only evidence of care and design I noticed was that they are so placed in the rock as to allow the surface water to flow past them in little excavated channels.

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are necessary—on the borders of a plain which is exposed to the raids of nomad tribes. In one of the caves of Endor, which seems to be natural, and is larger than most of the others, there is a small spring of pure water, said to be unfailing; and it may have given the ancient village its name, *Endor*, "The Fountain of Dor." When I entered this gloomy grotto and looked round its dark, riven sides, it struck me that here the "witch of Endor" may have dwelt when she was visited by the infatuated and unfortunate Saul. But be this as it may, here is Endor, and here is a grotto fit abode for a witch, and fit scene for incantations and apparitions, such as a crafty woman might easily plan to deceive a weak and superstitious king. Saul came to Endor by night, worn out with fatigue by the long journey over plain and hill from Gilboa, worn out still more by mental anxiety and fear, so that he was not in a fit frame of mind to detect imposition. The whole incident is a mystery. Whether it was the result of fraud and collusion between the woman and Saul's own followers, or whether it was one of those remarkable displays of magical power which were not uncommon in early times, or whether it was a real miraculous interposition of God to warn and punish a rebellious and godless king, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, absolutely to determine. Reading the narrative at Endor, and frequently since my visit in retirement and with critical minuteness, I felt deeply impressed with the clearness and matter-of-fact statement of every detail. It has, I confess, all the appearance of reality. The night journey; the weariness and faintness of Saul; the alarm of the woman when she saw Samuel; her reproachful question, "Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul;" her description of Samuel; and above all, Samuel's condemnation of Saul's previous conduct, and his righteous sentence upon the guilty king—"The Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it.....to David. Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord.....therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day,"—I can scarcely think that these are the words of a charlatan. They seem to me to have upon them the impress of Divine truth and authority. And what follows is clearly prophetic, unless the sacred writer invented it after the event, and wrote it with the intention of deceiving his readers. Whatever may be the true interpretation of this most romantic narrative, one peruses it with much additional interest after a visit to Endor.

NAIN.

PROCEEDING westward from Endor, along the side of the ridge of Moreh, a pleasant ride of three-quarters of an hour brings us to *Nain*, which still retains its ancient name, and probably not a little of its ancient aspect. As we advance, the

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I could easily picture Jesus, with his train of disciples and the multitude that followed, meeting the procession, and saying, in accents at once tender and commanding, to the poor widow, "Weep not." Then "he came nigh and touched the bier: and the bearers stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. And fear took hold on them all; and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is arisen among us; and God hath visited his people" (Luke vii. 11–16). Reading the simple yet touching narrative on the spot, it assumed a lifelike vividness. The road, the tombs, the little village, and all the surrounding scenery were before me, as they were before the disciples, and the multitude that accompanied them, nearly two thousand years ago. One can easily understand how profoundly the wondrous miracle would move the people of Nain and those who witnessed it; and how true and natural are the words of Luke, "Fear took hold on all." Nain is an obscure village, but its name is known throughout Christendom, and will survive while history lasts.

SHUNEM.

WE pass on now to another little village, the scene of a miracle no less wonderful than that performed by our Lord at Nain; accompanied, too, by some most romantic incidents. The path to Shunem, to which we turn our steps, leads round the western slope of Moreh, and presents not a few pictures of striking scenery and stirring associations. Looking behind, as we reach the extremity of the ridge, Tabor is seen in its most attractive form—a great dome clothed with foliage rising up out of the meadow-like plain; while far away over its left shoulder is Hermon. It was probably some such view that suggested to the Psalmist the idea of connecting the two mountains in the passage I have quoted above. From this point also I saw the glittering ice-crown of Hermon reflecting the rays of the morning sun, which gave it something of the appearance of a polished shield or breastplate, reminding me of the names given to it by the primeval Amorites, *Shenir*, and by the Phœnicians, *Sirion*, both signifying "breastplate." Then its grand height, towering far over all other peaks as seen from every part of the country, gained for it still another name, *Sion*, "The Lofty." (See Deut. iv. 40; iii. 9.)

In front the brown hills of Samaria are now in sight, bounding the great plain on the south; then, as we advance, Gilboa comes into view, rising steeply, white, and bare from the green valley of Jezreel. A western spur is crowned with the hamlet and ruins that alone mark the site of the ancient royal city of Jezreel. A little further, and

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profuse in professions of friendship. There was nothing to be gained, however, by delay: there are no ruins and no traces of antiquity about the place; and I could not discover even a tradition of its ancient history, or of its connection with the great prophet of Israel.

Yet Shunem was called a city by Joshua when dividing the land among the tribes. It must therefore have been a place of note more than three thousand years ago. It was allotted, with the whole adjoining plain, to Issachar (Joshua xix. 18); and it has never since been forgotten. The most interesting episode in its history was brought vividly before my mind as I sat for an hour by its fountain, under the grateful shade of a fig-tree. A party of men and women were reaping barley in an adjoining field, and a number of little swarthy children were playing and basking in the bright sunshine among the sheaves and in the stubble, utterly regardless, apparently, of the scorching heat. Their heads were bare, and some of the little urchins were completely naked.

Taking out my Bible, I turned to the story of the Shunammite, which is told with so much simplicity and pathos in the Second Book of Kings (iv. 8–37). I read it every word with fresh interest and appreciation. It assumed here much of the vividness of a life-picture. To Shunem the prophet Elisha, in his periodical rounds through the northern kingdom, was wont to come. In the house of a leading man of the village he was wont to lodge, and the pious matron had a prophet's chamber prepared for his use, "on the wall," where he might pass in and out privately as he wished. But a day of sorrow came to the godly woman. Her only son—a son of promise, on whom her heart was centred, who had been given to cheer her childless home in answer to the prayer of Elisha—that cherished child "went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to his servant, Carry him in to his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out." The fatal sunstroke had killed her boy. She determined at once to go to the prophet. She had an ass saddled, and ordered a servant to accompany her, and charged him, "Slacken not the riding except I bid thee." The servant, doubtless, ran behind driving the ass, just as one usually sees now in the East when women go out to ride. Elisha was at his favourite retreat on Carmel. It was a long way off—twenty miles or more across the plain, on that projecting spur which one easily recognizes from Shunem. Elisha saw her approach, and sent Gehazi to meet her. She fell at the prophet's feet, in the customary Oriental manner, and told her tale of sorrow. Elisha proposed to send his servant to Shunem; but the bereaved mother said, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose and followed her." When they reached Shunem, the dead child was still in the "prophet's chamber." The end is well known. Elisha prayed to the Lord; and the

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"They destroyed the increase of the earth, and left no sustenance in Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass.....And Israel was brought very low because of Midian." I have more than once seen vast hordes of the Anazeh invade open districts on the eastern border of Syria, destroy the whole fruits of the field, and sweep off flocks and herds. The Ishmaelite is wild and lawless as of old; his hand is against every man.

Just after leaving Shunem I felt I had entered the place where the camp of the Midianites and their allies was pitched when attacked by Gideon. The ridge of Moreh was close behind me, and the valley lay before me, reaching away down in green fields and meadows to the base of Gilboa. Gideon, a Manassite, but residing at Ophrah, in the territory of Benjamin, was divinely instructed, as Barak had been before, to expel the invaders. He came northward through the defiles of the mountains, and with his handful of followers took up a position on the lower slopes of Gilboa, about three miles from Shunem. The details of the most romantic and successful adventure which followed are given at length in the Book of Judges. I rode down to the "Fountain" of Harod; so the word ought to be rendered, instead of "well." The water gushes from a wide cleft in the rocky side of Gilboa into a miniature lake, and sends a murmuring stream down the valley to the Jordan. The mountain rises over it in rugged cliffs. It would appear from the narrative that Gideon's followers first assembled on the hill; and then by divine command he "brought them down to the water," to test them in a manner that seems strange to us in this matter-of-fact age, but was in all respects characteristic of a highly imaginative and superstitious people, accustomed to be guided by divinely-inspired prophets.

I sat on a projecting crag, over the fountain, and read the romantic story (Judges vii.). Gideon led his band of followers down the steep hill, and "they pitched beside the fountain of Harod." Then by repeated trials the great majority of Gideon's troops were declared to be unfit for the hazardous enterprise. At length a brave little band of three hundred was selected and prepared for the night attack upon the camp of the Arabs. The daring visit of Gideon and his servant to the encampment, and the singular dream they heard one of the Midianites tell to his neighbour, are strange and most romantic; but they are, at the same time, just such as an Eastern people would deem not incredible. The dream was rightly interpreted by the Midianites as well as by Gideon. The man to whom it was narrated said at once, "This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash; into his hand God hath delivered Midian." And when Gideon heard it, "he worshipped;" and going back to his little band by the fountain, he said, "Arise, for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian." But even this divine intimation was not enough for the cautious Gideon. He planned a curious and most effective stratagem to terrify and utterly disorganize and confound the enemy. The instantaneous flash and glare of three

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upon Saul and upon his sons; and they slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, the sons of Saul. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers overtook him.....So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together." David, in his beautiful "Song of the Bow," has brought out the topography of the battle-field, the fatal result of the battle, and the mad closing act of Saul's life, with additional graphic power: "Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy hills .....Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you: for there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away, the shield of Saul.....How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain upon thy high places" (2 Sam. i. 19, 21, 25).

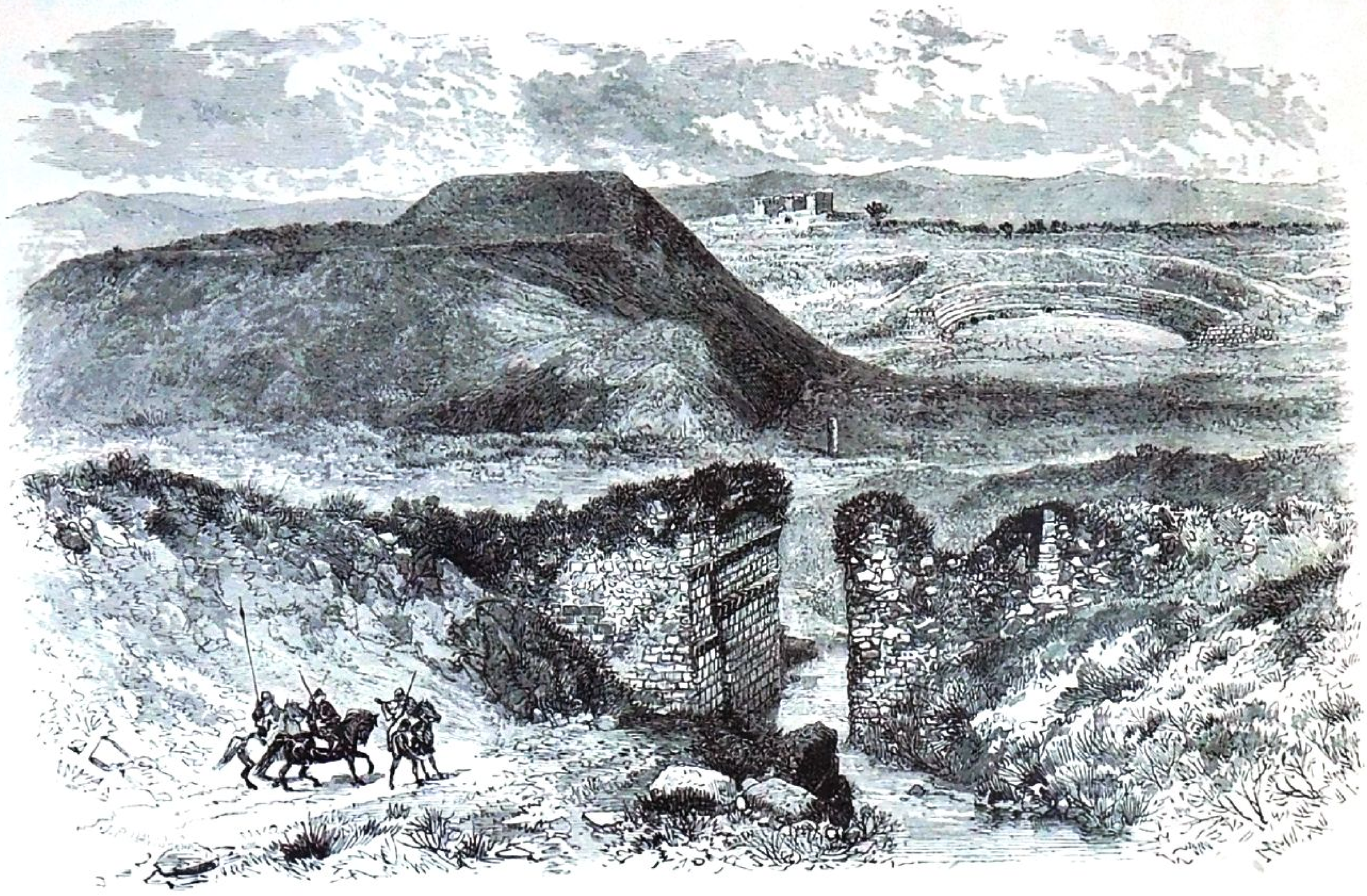
The stripping and mutilation of the slain, described with so much harrowing minuteness in the Bible narrative, may seem to some incredible. But it was characteristic of the age and the country; and such acts of savage barbarity are not unknown or uncommon even now in Eastern warfare. I have myself gone over a spot, not far distant from Gilboa, where a conflict had taken place between rival tribes a few days previously. The bodies of the slain were there, stripped, and some of them fearfully mutilated. All have read, too, of the terrible scenes that were enacted in the late Egyptian campaign, of the sad fate of poor Gordon, and of the murder of Professor Palmer and his companion by the Arabs of the southern desert. With such details fresh in our memory, we can peruse with all the more intense feelings of horror the fearful sequel to the battle of Gilboa. "And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour. And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth; and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan."

Looking down from a cliff on Gilboa, I saw the mound on which the ancient citadel of Beth-shan stood. I was able to distinguish the massive foundations of the old wall to which the bodies of Saul and his sons were fastened. Then looking away eastward, across the deep valley of the Jordan, I saw the clearly-marked site of another city noted in Bible history, and it brought up to my mind an act of touching devotion and heroism, which goes far to relieve the dark brutality of the tragedy of Gilboa. The place I saw is a round-topped hill, on the side of a deep, dark ravine, in the mountain ridge of Gilead. It is the site of Jabesh-Gilead. The whole history of that old city is most romantic; and to me it assumed fresh interest when I read it on Gilboa, with the sites of Beth-shan and Jabesh both in view. Its inhabitants, when closely besieged by Nahash, the cruel king of the Ammonites, and threatened with fearful punishment, had been delivered by Saul. They did not forget his brave act; and now they resolved, if they could not avenge his death, at least to rescue his body from further dishonour. Their heroic deed is thus narrated in the Book of Samuel: "And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of

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a bad reputation, like most of their brethren in the valley of the Jordan; but a considerable change took place when Ibrahim Pasha introduced a colony of Egyptians about half a century ago. I found the people of the village friendly, communicative, and industrious. They have now a Turkish governor, and a small body of police, nominally to protect them from Arab raids, but really to collect the taxes they are obliged to pay for the land they cultivate. Turkish policy is almost fatal to progress in agriculture. So long as the land is uncultivated no tax is demanded; but for every yoke of oxen a peasant employs in ploughing the ground he is obliged to pay a tax whether the soil is productive or not.

The ruins of Beth-shan are very extensive, covering an irregular area nearly three miles in circuit. They are intersected by deep ravines, through which perennial streams



BEISAN (BETH-SHAN)—EAST BRIDGE, CITADEL, AND THEATRE.

flow. When rain falls heavily the streams become foaming torrents. The site of the old city is singular. It is a natural terrace at the eastern end of the valley, where it drops down abruptly three hundred feet or more into the great valley of the Jordan. On the north, spurs of the range of Moreh stretch out to the ruins; on the south, but at the distance of a mile or more, rises the steeper and higher ridge of Gilboa. The stream from the Fountain of Harod flows through the ruins in a very deep ravine, and it is joined by another smaller stream and ravine from the south. Between the two, at the point of

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all—a hard black basalt. I have not seen a single stone door of limestone, although that is the prevailing rock in Palestine.

The modern village of Beisan is poor and very dirty. The houses are mostly of mud, and the general aspect is that of a village on the banks of the Nile. There is one large and rather imposing stone house, occupied by the Turkish governor, and probably built for him. It is distinguished by the high-sounding name *Serai*, "palace." On the occasion of my last visit to Beisan I was invited to remain in it during my short stay. So much was I impressed by the name "palace," and by an invitation from "the governor," that I entered and sat down *on the floor*; for there was neither chair nor carpet, nor mat, nor furniture of any description. Of course, after a very formal salute to "His Excellency," who squatted in a corner, and who very kindly ordered a sumptuous repast to be served up, I withdrew to my tent, though the thermometer stood at about 98° Fahr. The heat was more tolerable than the fleas and other creatures with which the palace swarmed. Not far from the Serai is a ruined mosque, apparently once a church.

In ancient times Beth-shan was one of the most important and splendid cities in Galilee; now it is a field of ruins, with a few rude huts among them inhabited by a few scores of poor people. It has a long and eventful history. It was a royal city and stronghold of Canaan before the exodus, and it was given by Joshua to Manasseh, though it properly fell within the borders of the tribe of Issachar. But it was naturally so strong that the Israelites were never able completely to conquer it; for we find that the Manassites thus complained of their limited territory: "The hill country is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are in Beth-shan and her towns, and they who are in the valley of Jezreel" (Joshua xvii. 16). And a little later we read that "Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shan and her towns" (Judges i. 27). When Israel became strong the inhabitants were made tributary, but were never expelled. The Philistines occupied the city at an early period, and it long continued to be their principal fortress in the north of Palestine. Standing on the top of the citadel, and closely examining the topography of the extensive panorama around me, I was able more fully to understand how the "valiant men of Jabesh" accomplished their daring feat of taking down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall. They were doubtless fastened to the most conspicuous part of the wall, probably near or over the principal gate. From the base of the citadel a deep ravine runs down to the Jordan valley. Up this it was comparatively easy for a little band of active mountaineers to ascend in the night, to scale the wall, to remove the bodies, and to carry them away beyond the Jordan, most probably without being seen.

When the rule of Canaanites, Phœnicians, and Jews terminated in Western Palestine, the Greeks took possession of this region, and *Beth-shan* became *Scythopolis* ("City of the Scythians"), doubtless because its principal colonists were Scythian soldiers of Alexander

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nestling at its foot. There is no natural beauty in Moreh; and one almost regrets its position when he stands on the site of Jezreel, for it shuts in the northern view, covering Tabor and Hermon. Turning eastward, the citadel of Beth-shan is seen in the distance; and away beyond it the mountain chain of Gilead runs along the eastern horizon like a colossal wall, so flat is its summit and so regular its outline as viewed from this spot.

Zerîn is the modern name of Jezreel, evidently a corruption of the ancient Hebrew. It is a poor hamlet of some twenty or thirty houses, constructed chiefly of rough rubble masonry and mud. The only sightly building is a square tower, now the residence of the village sheikh, and also used as a caravansary, where passing travellers are, according to the custom prevailing in the country, treated to a bare room and a frugal supper at the expense of the community.

The glory of Jezreel has long since departed. Some mounds of rubbish, a few large building stones half buried in the dust, and a solitary sarcophagus of white marble, are the only visible traces of the ancient royal city. In the soft rocks on and around the site are great numbers of excavated chambers, some circular, some square, some large, some small, made for the purpose of storing grain and of concealing it from roving bands of Arabs. All other traces of former greatness are gone; and though the plain round the base of Gilboa is fertile, the ground on which the ruins lie is rocky, bare, and hopelessly barren. One would almost imagine that Jezreel bears the marks of the curse of Heaven; and looking at it in its ruin, memory naturally recalls the crimes, terrible and cruel, of which it was the scene. In this respect perhaps it is almost without an equal among the old cities of Palestine. The story of its supremacy and power is very brief, but it is full of cruelty and blood.

Although among the oldest cities of Canaan, giving its name to one of the greatest and richest plains in the country, it was not until the reign of Ahab that Jezreel became a place of note. Ahab appears to have been the first to recognize its grand situation, both from a strategical and financial point of view. Its position is naturally strong, easily defended against attacks from all quarters. Then it commands the whole plain westward, which was exposed to invasion by the armies of Syria and Philistia; also the valley of Jezreel, up which the wild hordes of Arabia were wont to swarm from the fords of the Jordan. It commanded also the great road to Samaria, Jerusalem, and the entire hill country southward. It was in the centre of a district rich in corn, cattle, and all needful supplies for a luxurious and extravagant court. It had other advantages for Ahab. The plain was favourable for the troops of horse and chariots which he organized, following the example of the heathen princes with whom he chose to ally himself. Then, besides, access was easy and always open to the coast of Phœnicia, and to its capital Tyre, the home of his queen, the infamous Jezebel. Ahab therefore built a palace in Jezreel, and made the city the capital of the kingdom of Israel. This act and his subsequent career of crime

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executed by the very men who must have known his innocence. Jezebel now said to the weak and cowardly monarch: "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, which he refused to give thee for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead." It was a base act, and terrible was the retribution that came upon the perpetrators.

This introduces another act in the tragedy of which Jezreel was the stage. Elijah was sent to Ahab, and the divine command to the prophet was as follows: "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which dwelleth in Samaria:* behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to take possession of it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine" (1 Kings xxi. 18, 19). This was not all. More fearful still was the close of the divine judgment upon Ahab and his house. The prophet goes on: "Because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord, behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will utterly sweep thee away, and will cut off from Ahab every man child, and him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel.....And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the rampart of Jezreel. Him that dieth in the city of Ahab the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat."

The scene now changes to Carmel. From Jezreel we can trace the road over Esdraelon; and we can see the projecting spur of the mount on which the great prophet had his home and his altar. After Elijah's sacrifice, and the slaughter of the guilty priests of Baal on the bank of the Kishon, at the base of Carmel, Ahab entered his chariot and drove back along that road to Jezreel—"And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel" (1 Kings xviii. 46). The distance is about fifteen miles; but Elijah was an athletic mountaineer, accustomed to climb the heights and traverse the rugged uplands of his native Gilead; and, besides, as we are told, "the hand of the Lord was on" him. Other acts of the terrible tragedy follow in quick succession. Ahab and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, fought with the king of Syria at Ramoth-Gilead. They were defeated. Ahab was mortally wounded in his chariot. He was driven to Samaria* to die; and we read that "they washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood."

And this was not the last act. Joram, son of Ahab, being wounded in battle, was carried to Jezreel. The prophet Elisha anointed Jehu king, and gave him this command by divine authority: "Thou shalt smite the house of Ahab, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord at the hand of Jezebel" (2 Kings ix. 7). Ahaziah, king of Judah, hearing that Joram was lying wounded in Jezreel, "came down to see" him. Jehu thereupon resolved to come

* The kingdom, or territory, and not the city of Samaria, is here referred to. Jezreel was in the kingdom.

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of Ahab, was unable to make his way southward. He too was mortally wounded by Jehu, and fled over the plain westward to Megiddo, where he died. The fate of Jezebel was more terrible. It was, one would almost say, a fitting sequel to a life of debasing idolatry, grinding tyranny, and bloodshed. When Jehu returned from the pursuit of Ahaziah to Jezreel, "she painted her eyes, and dressed her head, and looked out of the window. And she said, as Jehu passed, Is it peace, thou Zimri, murderer of thy master? And he, looking up, said, Who is on my side? And there looked out two or three eunuchs. And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trod her under foot."

But when the excitement was over, and he had time to reflect on all that had been done, he said to his attendants: "See now to this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter." It was too late. The dogs in an Eastern city are swift in discovering and devouring their prey. "They went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. Wherefore they came and told him. And he said, This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall the dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel." Such was the miserable end of an unscrupulous and cruel woman. Such too was the end of the royal state of Jezreel. Stained with blood, it fell to rise no more. The ancient name can scarcely be recognized in the modern Arabic corruption, and all traces of grandeur and royalty have disappeared; yet one cannot help lingering on its dreary site while he reads one of the saddest and most revolting chapters in Israel's history. And to read the narrative on the spot is instructive, for it shows how accurate are the words of the sacred writers.

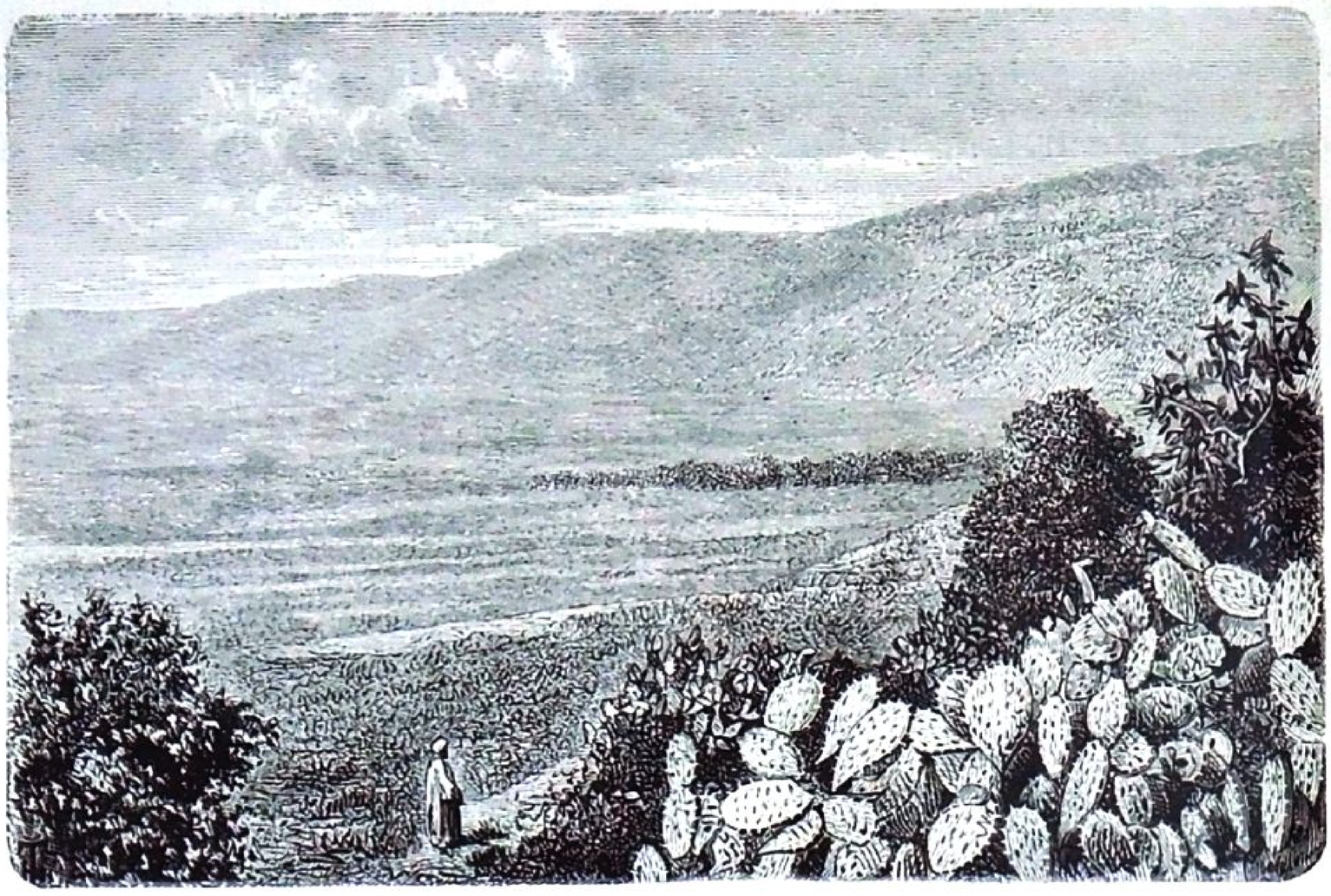
EN-GANNIM.

WHEN Ahaziah, king of Judah, attempted to escape from the impetuous Jehu, we are told that "he fled by the way of the *garden house*." This may mean, by the way of *En-Gannim*, "The Fountain of the Garden;" for En-Gannim is the first stage on the direct road to Jerusalem, the road he would naturally take. He was pursued, wounded, and probably compelled to turn westward toward Megiddo.

En-Gannim was an ancient city of Canaan, allotted to the tribe of Issachar, and assigned out of that tribe to the Levites (Joshua xix. 21; xxi. 29). It deserves the name, which it retains, in the Arab form *Jenîn*, to this day. It is situated in the mouth of a picturesque glen, which winds down into the south-eastern branch of the plain of

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of reviving industry and new enterprise were everywhere visible. Cultivation has within the last few years made rapid progress. Rich merchants of Beyrout and Constantinople have purchased a considerable portion of the plain, and it is said a still larger portion has somehow fallen directly into the hands of the Sultan. The peasants thus enjoy protection. Cultivation upon improved principles is vigorously pushed forward, and ample returns repay both industrious peasant and enterprising capitalist. The nomad Arabs have either been driven away beyond the Jordan, or they have been compelled to settle down in villages or in local camps, so that they may aid in tilling the fields and in the reaping and transport of the grain. It is a wondrous change for both the Arabs and the villagers. The former find it more profitable to work than to rob, while the latter feel no little pride in compelling their old masters and unscrupulous plunderers



PLAIN OF ESDRAELON, OR MEGIDDO.

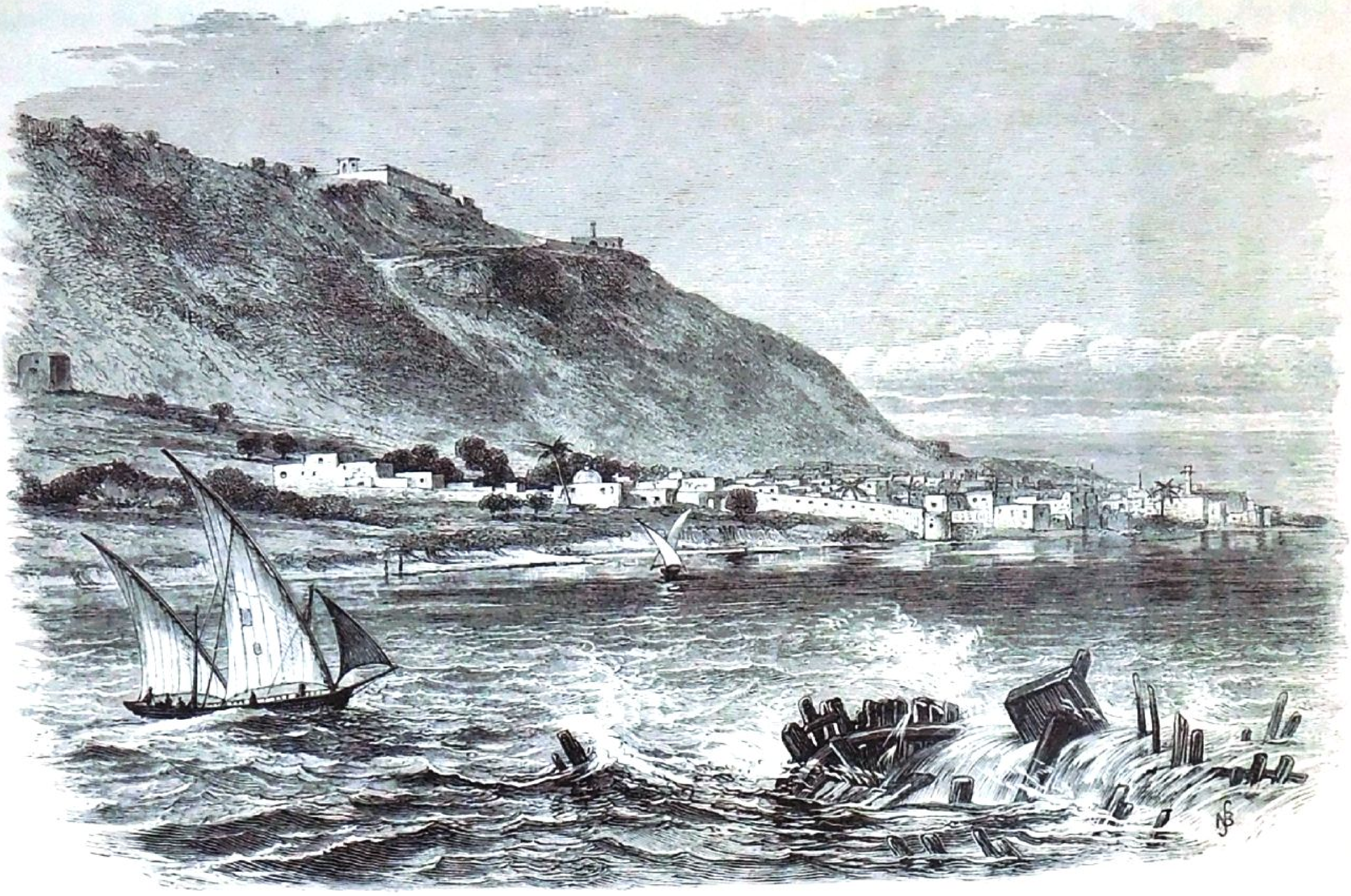
to assist at the ingathering of their harvests, and in the transport of their grain to the market of Haifa.

Settled government and just rule during even a very few years have made Esdraelon a source of great agricultural wealth, and its resources are only beginning to be developed. Much is still required. Roads, proper implements, machinery, waggons, a better class of horses, cattle, and sheep—all these are needed to make this magnificent plain what it might be and ought to be. A railway is projected, and could easily be made from the port of Haifa on the west away down into the splendid valley of Jezreel on the east; or, what would be better still, keeping Haifa as the starting-point, it could be carried with very little engineering difficulty round the eastern base of Tabor, along the table-land to the west of the Sea of Galilee, then over the upper Jordan near the

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into the bed, of the Kishon, which runs through the plain a mile or two north of Megiddo.

Though Taanûk is but a small hamlet, it has fruitful gardens and olive groves, and its people cultivate a considerable section of the surrounding plain. The sides of the hill and the flat ground at its base are all strewn with well-hewn stones and fragments of columns. There are also near it numerous wells and tombs cut in the rock—all showing that it was in former ages a large, rich, and flourishing city. After the time of Barak the name of Taanach is only mentioned once in the Bible; but that mention is suggestive. It was selected as the residence of one of the twelve officers whom Solomon appointed



PORT OF HAIFA AND MOUNT CARMEL.

as royal purveyors to provide "victuals for the king and his household" (1 Kings iv. 7), indicating that its territory was productive.

Megiddo.—The name of this ancient city has disappeared, but there are several incidental references to its position in the Bible, and we have, therefore, little difficulty in fixing its site with at least tolerable certainty. It was in the plain of Esdraelon, near the banks of the Kishon, and not far from Taanach. The two places, in fact, are usually mentioned together, so that we infer their close proximity (Joshua xii. 21, xvii. 11; 1 Kings iv. 12; 1 Chron. vii. 29), and we may also infer that they were the principal places in a wide district. Megiddo was one of those strongholds out of which the

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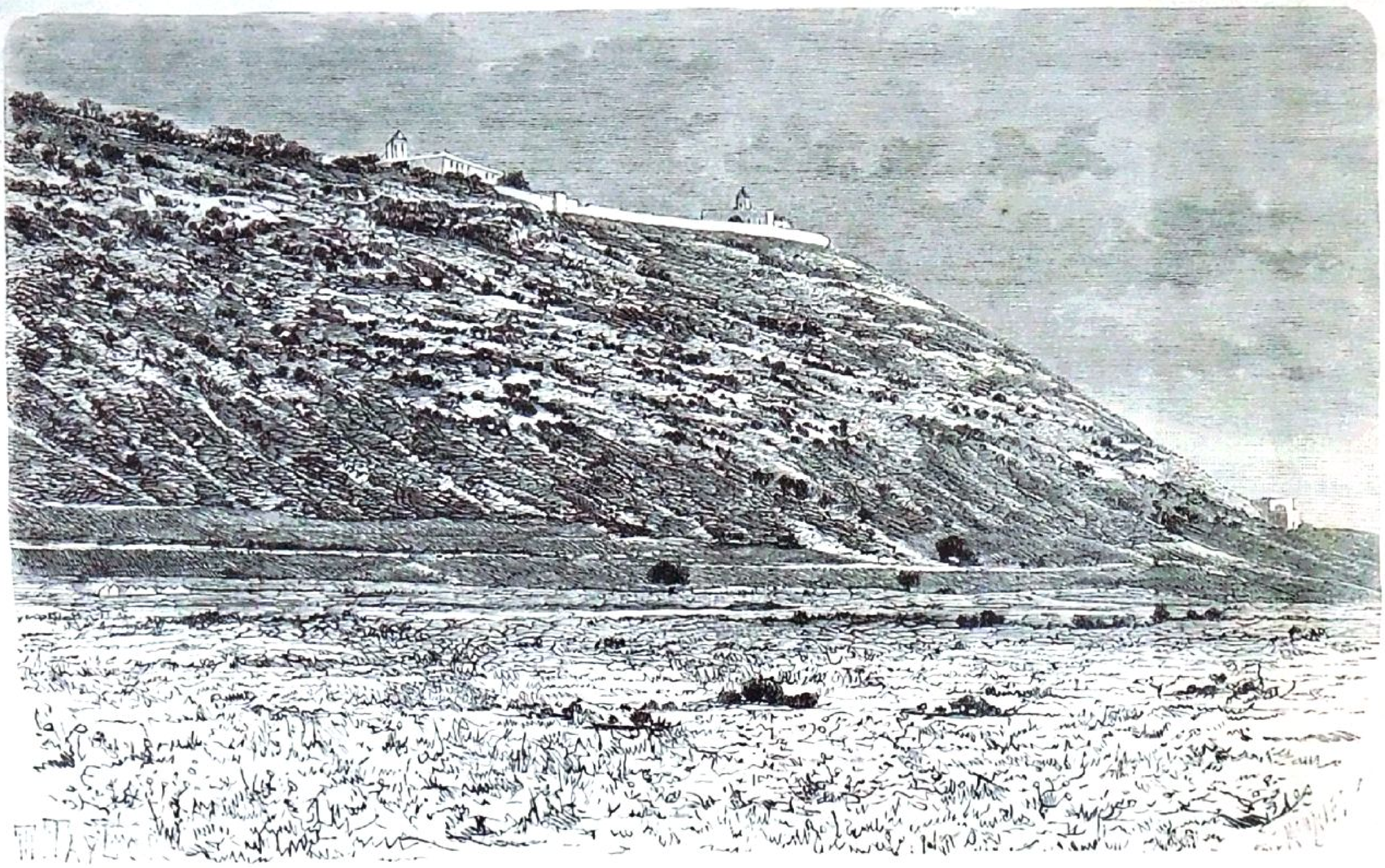
I read the touching narrative with fresh interest on the battlefield. The leading incidents are these:—Pharaoh-Necho set forth from Egypt on a warlike expedition against Carchemish, a city of Assyria on the Euphrates. His line of march was through Philistia, up the plain of Sharon, and onward into Esdraelon by the pass at Megiddo. Josiah, king of Judah, for some unknown reason, made a rash attempt to oppose his progress. The Egyptian monarch sent him a friendly warning to abstain from such a foolish project: "What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war; and God hath commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not" (2 Chron. xxxv. 21). The warning and advice was disregarded. Probably it was thought to be presumptuous. King Josiah may have been deluded by the idea that the Lord was with him rather than with the proud king of Egypt. Be this as it may, Josiah posted his army in the valley of Megiddo so as to attack the Egyptians on defiling from the pass. The position was well chosen; but, as we read, "the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Take me away; for I am sore wounded. So his servants took him out of the chariot, and put him into the second chariot that he had, and brought him to Jerusalem, and he died" (2 Chron. xxxv. 23, 24). The whole land mourned for the good king; and so general and bitter was the mourning that it became a proverb, to which the prophet Zechariah thus alludes in that sublime passage where he predicts the sufferings and death of the Messiah: "In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart" (Zech. xii. 11, 12).

The character and habits of the nomads who still frequent the hills round Esdraelon and the valley of the Jordan below it, and who did, until very recently, infest and dominate the whole plain itself, may be studied with advantage in this region. They retain unchanged the wild and fearless spirit of their forefathers. True children of Ishmael, "their hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against them;" and yet they realize to this day the other part of that strange prediction—they "dwell in the presence of all their brethren" (Gen. xvi. 12). Many and powerful nations have swept over Syria and Palestine, and left its proudest cities in ruins. Every tribe and nationality in the country has been subdued—some have been utterly exterminated; but the descendants of Ishmael have defied all foes—they have continued to "dwell in the presence" of all their brethren. On one occasion, a number of years ago, when riding over the plain, I found it all alive with the flocks of a powerful tribe from "beyond Jordan." They had crossed the river a few days before, and were there like the Midianites of old, having come "up with their cattle and their tents, as locusts for multitude; both they and their camels were without number" (Judges vi. 5). I met one of their minor sheikhs near Jezreel, and easily persuaded him, for a *bakhshish*, to ride with me to Carmel. He knew the country well, for

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JOKNEAM OF CARMEL.

AFTER examining the widespread but desolate ruins of the Biblical Megiddo, which in Roman times was called *Legio*, and is now called *El-Lejjûn*, I rode on westward along the south bank of the Kishon, and soon reached a *tell* which projects into the plain from the side of Carmel. On the top are the remains of a fortress of comparatively recent date, but which seems to stand on the site of a much older one. At the foot of the tell are ruins, including a very small chapel, probably of the age of the Crusades. The name



View of Mount Carmel and the Convent, from Haifa.

of the tell and ruins, *Kaimôn*, suggests its identity with the ancient *Jokneam*, taken with other cities in this region from the Canaanites by Joshua. We read in the account of the division of the land among the tribes that the southern border of Zebulun "reached to the river that is before Jokneam" (Joshua xix. 11). The Kishon is the river referred to, and it runs near Jokneam, on the north side. It is interesting to note how fully the topography here corresponds with an incidental description given in another passage of the Bible. One of Solomon's purveyors had assigned to him a district in "Taanach and

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the Kishon and the forest-clad heights of Galilee on the east, they were not exposed to the raids of the nomad tribes from "beyond Jordan," nor to the more formidable hosts of the Philistines, the Syrians, and Assyrians, who in the later ages of the Jewish monarchy came sweeping along in their war-chariots of iron. Being to a large extent isolated, and more or less identified with the Phœnicians, they appear to have had comparatively little intercourse with their brethren. It was even considered strange when a few of them went up with their neighbours of Manasseh and Zebulun to join in the celebration of Hezekiah's great passover feast. The account given by the sacred writer of the efforts made by the good king to have the whole nation, north and south, properly represented at that solemn festival, and of the response of the several tribes, affords a melancholy picture of the decline, not only of religion, but of patriotic feeling, in that age. We read that "Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the Lord, the God of Israel." The royal proclamation was made from "Beer-sheba even to Dan" (2 Chron. xxx. 5). The "posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. *Nevertheless divers of Asher* and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem" (2 Chron. xxx. 10, 11). This proves that the Asherites were not wholly demoralized. And even so late as the time of our Lord, we have a touching example of the faithful adherence of a daughter of Asher to the religion of her fathers, and of her earnest longing for the promised Messiah. Luke tells us how, when the child Jesus was brought by his parents to the temple, "there was one Anna, a prophetess.....of the tribe of Asher (she was of a great age.....and had been a widow even for fourscore and four years), which departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke ii. 36–38).

HAIFA.

IT is about eight miles from the narrow pass through which the Kishon enters the plain of Acre to Haifa. The old road keeps close to the foot of Carmel. There is a marsh on the right as one advances; but the views on the left up the narrow winding glens in the side of the range are very picturesque. Two or three villages cling to the steep slopes, and are surrounded by orchards and terraced vineyards. Green glades also are seen among the trees, spangled with flowers. Here, in fact, one begins to see the

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in view. They have obtained from the Government a considerable tract of land at the foot of Carmel, and they have now well-cultivated fields and vineyards, and most productive gardens. The colony numbers at present about three hundred, and they are, by their industry, energy, and skill, effecting great improvements in the mode of cultivation—indeed, in every department of useful labour. They have founded schools, made roads, introduced carts and waggons, and they have even established lines of coaches to Acre and Nazareth. They have effectually put down brigandage and robbery in the entire district, which is now beginning to assume the outward aspect and order of a German province. The colonists are earnest Christians, and they commend their religion to the native people, not so much perhaps by direct teaching and proselytizing as by truthfulness, sterling honesty, thrift, and industry. Their influence is good; and the Arabs of all sects and classes find it to be to their advantage to follow the example set them by a successful community.

Haifa itself has undergone a marvellous transformation in a short time. Its situation is in many respects the finest on the coast of Palestine. The air is pure and bracing, the town being sheltered from the hot south winds and open to the sea-breezes. It is also entirely free from malarious exhalations from the plains of Acre and Esdraelon, as the prevailing winds are from the west and south. The high promontory of Carmel runs far out into the Mediterranean, making the bay north of it a safe and commodious roadstead. The beach is composed of fine white sand, and sweeps round in a wide, graceful curve from the point of Carmel to the walls of Acre, a distance of ten miles. The anchorage is good, the depth of water being about three fathoms a quarter of a mile from the shore.

Haifa is now made up of two distinct towns or quarters—the old and the new. They are distinct in many respects—in origin, in age, in plan, and in nationality. The old town is rectangular in form, and defended on three sides by a wall, built, it is said, by the patriotic Arab chief Daher el-Omar about a century and a half ago; but the foundations are evidently much more ancient, and may be of the age of the Crusades. The fourth side of the town is open to the sea. On a projecting rock above the town are the remains of a castle, built at the same time as the walls. It was the residence of the governor, and intended to keep the people in subjection, because, it is said, they were noted for their turbulence. A street runs through the middle of the town from the east gate to the west. It is well paved, and unusually clean, as indeed are most of the streets and lanes opening off it. The houses are built of white stone from the quarries of Carmel, and some of them are large and imposing in appearance. The town, in fact, has a prosperous look. The entire population is said to number over four thousand, and it is rapidly increasing.

The new town, or suburb, is half a mile distant westward along the beach. It is occupied exclusively by the German colonists, or *Temple Society*, as they call themselves.

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There are also relics of a remote age, and of no little antiquarian interest, in the fields around the town and along the foot of Carmel. Proceeding across the narrow plain west of the German suburb, I found, scattered over a wide area, fragments of granite and marble, broken columns and carefully-hewn stones, now nearly buried in the soil. But the principal object of attraction is a tomb, excavated in the solid rock, below the general surface of the ground. It bears some resemblance in plan to the "Tomb of the Kings" near Jerusalem, having a deeply-sunk court in front, and chambers opening off it, with numerous *loculi* for bodies. The age of the tomb is uncertain, but it is unquestionably Jewish, as over the doors of several sepulchral chambers the seven-branched candlestick is carved in the rock, and there are other marks of Jewish workmanship. No date has been discovered, and there are no inscriptions. It seems highly probable that there are other tombs of a similar kind on this site now concealed beneath rubbish heaps.

The old Greek city of *Sycamina* must have stood not far from Haifa, and perhaps on the spot where the ancient ruins now exist. We are informed that Ptolemy, son of Cleopatra, landed at Sycamina the army he had brought from Cyprus to besiege Acre; and it is a remarkable fact that a few years ago, while digging on this site to obtain dressed stones for building purposes, one of the workmen discovered a brass vase filled with gold coins of the age of the Ptolemies. May they not have formed part of Ptolemy's military chest?

CARMEL AND ITS CONVENT.

A STEEP path, partly of steps cut in the rock, leads up from Haifa to the convent, which stands on the western crest of the range where it begins to sink towards the sea. The site is most commanding, and the view from it wide and interesting. The entire plain of Acre lies below, with the bright city in the centre of its shore-line, and the "Ladder of Tyre," a bold spur of Lebanon, shutting it in on the north. The graceful wooded hills of Galilee, dotted with many a village and ruin, bound it on the east; and over them, on the far off horizon, rises the snowy crest of Hermon. The view eastward is confined by the loftier parts of Carmel; but on the south the eye ranges over the plain of Sharon, following the curves and indentations of its coast until lost in the hazy distance. We mark in succession the promontories on which stand the ruins of famous old cities—*Athlit*, and *Dora*, and *Cæsarea*, and even the dark orchards of far off *Joppa*. On the west extends the boundless circuit of "the Great Sea."

From the earliest age Carmel has been a holy mountain—the chosen home of priests

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Louis to Napoleon, the convent built upon the same spot of ground where the prophet set up his altar was open to travellers of every religion and country."

Such is the story of the convent. I have no wish to criticise it or to enter upon any controversial matter. The story is romantic, and is sufficiently clear for all ordinary purposes; though it would probably be beyond the power of historian or antiquary to furnish proof of the details. Its more modern history is authentic, and scarcely less interesting than the old tradition. When Napoleon besieged Acre, the convent was used as a hospital for French soldiers; and on the retreat of the French, it was plundered and left in ruins by the Turks. At last, to complete its sad history, it was blown up in 1821 by Abdullah Pasha. Five years afterward *Jean Battista*, a lay brother, got a firman from the Sultan to rebuild it. He prepared plans on a grand scale, and without a franc in his treasury began to build. To obtain requisite funds, he had to beg over the world, and he did so. After fourteen years of unceasing toil and travel, he saw his reward in the completion of one of the stateliest convents in the country. It cost more than half a million francs. An inscription on the floor of the church records the facts.

The monks of Carmel give a cordial welcome to all strangers from Christian lands, without regard to race or creed. I have enjoyed their hospitality; and when one has bivouacked on the hills and plains of Palestine, or spent weeks in tent life, as I have often done, the neat rooms, the clean beds, the quiet home-like retirement of this house are positive luxuries. During the hottest days of summer there is a cool refreshing breeze blowing through its corridors, and the air in its church is always invigorating. The garden, too, affords a pleasant retreat, where, under the shade of flourishing trees, one can look away far out over the deep blue Mediterranean, along the classic shores of Phœnicia, and across the broad plains of Esdraelon and Sharon, encompassed all the while by the "excellency of Carmel."

The convent, as I have said, occupies the crown of the mountain ridge. It is a spacious square building, erected for purposes of defence as well as for residence. The east apse is a strong bastion, and gives flank defence to the whole back of the building. The church is in the centre, and is octagonal, surmounted by a handsome cupola. There is a terraced garden in front, containing a pyramidal monument, erected to the memory of some French sailors. Several fragments of granite and marble columns may be seen lying about, and one or two are inserted in the modern walls; but these are the only vestiges of high antiquity now visible. The church has an interior rotunda, with a recess for the altar on the east. The altar is said to cover the cave where Elijah hid himself from Jezebel; and the grotto in which tradition says he ordinarily resided is close by. But of the latter we shall see more hereafter.

The sides of Carmel round the convent are filled with grottoes, the abodes of anchorites in former days. The most famous is near the northern base of the hill. It is

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ceaseth.....The land mourneth and languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed and withereth away: Sharon is like a desert; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their leaves" (Isa. xxxiii. 8, 9; Amos i. 2).

The trees are in places so densely packed together that I found it impossible to force my way through. In other places were wide open glades, richly carpeted with grass and spangled with flowers—poppies, holly-hocks, anemones, jasmine, convolvulus—and creepers of every form and hue. In fact, there is scarcely a flower one meets with in other parts of Palestine, east or west of the Jordan, that is not also found on Carmel. Fragrant shrubs also abound, so that while one's eye is filled, almost dazzled, with the glow and beauty of blooming parterres, he is refreshed and delighted with the "smell" of Carmel. May not this characteristic of perpetual verdure, brilliancy of colouring, and singular fragrance, combined with the remarkable prominence of the ridge, upon a generally low and bleak coast, have contributed to make the mountain celebrated, not in Syria alone, but over the whole Levant?

Sharon and Carmel have long been associated in the mind of the Bible student, as they have been enshrined in sacred poetry and history. It could not be otherwise. The poets of Israel, close observers of natural scenery, could not fail to see the connection of Carmel and Sharon. From every part of Sharon, east and west, down to the borders of Philistia, Carmel is one of the chief features in the landscape; and from every point along the ridge of Carmel, Sharon, with its gentle undulations and clumps of wood on the north, and its broad reaches of meadow and corn-field away beyond, is ever before one's eyes. Holy associations cluster round both plain and mountain, and the names, whenever mentioned, bring up to the mind's eye, as every new view of them presents itself to the eye of sense, plains powdered with the "rose of Sharon" and the "lily of the valley," and uplands waving with evergreen forests, and crowned with the "excellency of Carmel."

I was not disappointed when I rode across that plain and climbed those heights in spring-time. After the dreary desolation of the hills and wilderness of Judah, and the bare and rugged rocks of the mountains of Samaria, Sharon and Carmel seemed like a paradise, with their rich grass, luxuriant foliage, and brilliant flowers. The scenery of the plain is occasionally varied by clumps of old forest trees on rounded mounds, probably the sites of primeval high-places, and by thickets of canes and oleanders round a pool, or along the winding course of a sluggish stream, and by conical *tells* covered with the gray ruins of old cities. The southern slopes and glens of Carmel are wooded from bottom to top. The curse which has left most parts of Palestine naked and desolate has fallen lightly on the natural features of Sharon and Carmel. True, most of the great cities that in former ages stood on the sea-board are gone. The waves of the Mediterranean dash in sheets of foam over the massive foundations of the once famous harbours of Cæsarea and Dor and Athlit. The towns and villages also that of old studded plain and hillsides have

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seems to me to be in itself sufficient to establish its identity. But there are, as I shall show, other local features that serve, in my opinion, to dispel all reasonable doubt. We shall now visit it.

A stiff ride of about five hours from the convent brings us to the most interesting spot on Carmel—*El-Muhrakah*. The name may be rendered "Place of Sacrifice," though the word *Muhrakah* literally signifies "burning." The way to it is rugged, intricate, and in places difficult for horses. It leads along the very crest of the ridge, as far as the village of Esfiyeh, which is perched on one of the highest peaks, and commands a magnificent view. Its people are Druzes, and I found them friendly and intelligent. The men, like their brethren in Lebanon and Bashan, are a stalwart, hardy, brave, and industrious race. This is the most southerly of their communities, and it is small and isolated. The home of the Druzes is in Lebanon, where they exercise great influence and wield no little power. They have also a large colony in Hauran, their headquarters being among the mountains of Bashan. Wherever located they take a leading part: in peace, industrious and enterprising; in war, daring, and perhaps unscrupulous. The Druze women carefully avoid strangers, and are always closely veiled. Until about twenty years ago they wore that most remarkable head-dress, the *tantur*, or "horn." It is a hollow tube of silver, sometimes of gold, varying from twelve to eighteen inches in length, about two and a half inches in diameter where it rests on the head, but tapering gently upwards to a diameter of an inch and a half. It is curiously figured with rough *repoussé* work. It is placed erect on the top of the head, and is supported on a small cushion, and bound by straps and silver chains, which often reach down the back two feet or more, terminating in silver tassels and charms, which give a tinkling sound as the wearer walks. Over it is thrown a long white veil, which reaches to the feet, and can be so arranged as to cover the entire person. The women thus arrayed, as I have often seen them in their native mountains, looked like gigantic spectres. Only married women were entitled to wear the *tantur*, and Christians as well as Druzes adopted the singular ornament, which is now, however, entirely laid aside. The Druze maids and matrons of Esfiyeh are models of stately grace in carriage and costume. When one of them trips lightly along a forest glade, with water-pitcher poised on head or shoulder, an artist might exclaim in the words of Scott that

> "Ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
> A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace
> Of finer form."

The men, too, in their carefully-folded spotless white turbans and short embroidered jackets, with open slashed sleeves, look singularly imposing as they step along with bold and haughty tread.

I took a Druze guide from the village. He knew the whole mountain, and I found

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ridge, away out far eastward to the towers and battlements of Jezreel on the point of Gilboa. The people stood there on that open commanding area around and below, but in full view of, the altar; King Ahab and his courtiers, with the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal, closely packed on one side, and already glorying doubtless in their anticipated triumph over Elijah. On the opposite side, standing all alone in the presence of the enraged monarch and of the excited and fanatical crowd, undaunted in mien, because strong in his faith of the omnipotence of JEHOVAH God, Elijah challenged them to the trial of fire. There may already have been trembling hearts among Baal's priests, for the power of Elijah was not unknown; but in the presence of Ahab and his court the challenge could not be declined.

The events that followed are told with great dramatic effect. The priests of Baal took their bullock, and "dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice" in answer. "And they leaped upon the altar which was made." Then followed the most exciting part. Elijah mocked them in words of stinging irony—"Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." Then, ashamed and frantic with rage, they "cried aloud, and cut themselves with knives and lances, till the blood gushed out." But it was in vain. There was no response. The king and people looked on with disappointment, and doubtless with gradually increasing indignation.

At length, "when midday was past," and the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice had come, "Elijah said to all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near." Then "he repaired the altar of the Lord that was thrown down," taking twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of Israel; and he made a trench about it. He cut the bullock in pieces, and laid the pieces on the wood. He filled the trench with water, and poured water over the flesh and the wood and the altar, until "the water ran round about the altar." This was done to show the impossibility of deception, or of mere human interposition or agency, in what was about to take place. When all was thus prepared, and Ahab and his court and the priests of Baal, full of wonder, were intent upon his every word and act, he chose the exact time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, a time which even an apostate king and an erring people could not have forgotten, and he offered up, in a voice heard by the whole assembly, this solemn prayer: "O Lord, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Lord, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." The prayer ended, one can easily imagine the state of excitement among the assembly—king, people, and priests—as they awaited the result.

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it came to pass in a little while, that the heaven grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel." From beside where the altar stood I saw the line of the old road across the plain to the ruins of Jezreel. It is thus that on each noted spot one can peruse the Scripture story, and mark how fully its details correspond with the place.

The tradition of Elijah and his miraculous powers, preserved from generation to generation in the minds of the people, and transmitted to other lands, made Carmel famous even among the Greeks and Romans. It is spoken of by Jamblichus, in his Life of Pythagoras, as a mountain of pre-eminent sanctity, where this philosopher passed some time in solitary study and contemplation. We further read that the crew of an Egyptian vessel when passing saw Pythagoras walking down the mountain side,—walking calmly and leisurely, as if unimpeded by rock or precipice. They waited for him; he went on board, and sailed with them to Egypt. It was on Carmel the Emperor Vespasian consulted the oracle before proceeding to the siege of Jerusalem. Tacitus states that there was a god who bore the name of the mountain, and who was worshipped there, but that he had neither temple nor image, but only an altar. This altar was most probably on the site of that built by Elijah, and still known as *El-Muhrakah*.

There are other remains of ancient occupation, and even of taste and wealth, on Carmel, less interesting, it is true, than Elijah's altar, but still worthy of a passing notice. They have been brought to light chiefly by the efforts of the Palestine Exploration Society; also in part by the recent researches of Mr. Lawrence Oliphant. No less than twenty ruins of old towns and large villages have been discovered, showing that the mountain was at one time densely peopled; but most of the ruins possess little of interest either for the Biblical student or the searcher after the antique and the picturesque. There are massive foundations, and some elaborate carvings, and curious devices, and extensive rock excavations, but nothing else—no inscription, or date, or record of any kind to throw light on their origin or object. Many of the buildings and excavations are evidently of the Greek or Roman age; some are older; and some, but not many, are more recent. In fact it would appear that from the most remote period, down as late as the time of the Crusades, Carmel was occupied by a succession of enterprising and even wealthy inhabitants.

The most remarkable of the remains are those of a Jewish synagogue at a place called Semmaka. It is on a comparatively level platform on the top of the ridge. Here are very large hewn stones lying about: one, apparently the lintel of a door, is seven feet long, and has carved upon it in relief, but poorly executed, two lions facing each other, with a cup or chalice between them. The design and execution resemble others I have seen on synagogues in Upper Galilee. The lions, strangely enough, I found on old buildings in Moab and Bashan. The whole area here appears to have been surrounded

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Passing through this singular cutting, the remains of Athlit are before us. They cover a promontory having a sandy bay on each side. That on the south is sheltered by another point of land, nearly half a mile off, and thus forms a commodious harbour, or rather roadstead, for it is open to the west. The outer wall of the old town, along the eastern side, is about a quarter of a mile long, stretching from a strong tower, which juts into the sea on the north, to another tower inland on the south; it then turns at right angles toward the centre of the bay. Outside the wall is a deep fosse cut in the rock, thirty feet wide, but now nearly filled up with drift-sand. On each side of the fosse are singular passages and chambers cut in the rock, the object of which it is difficult to guess. The gate of the town is just opposite the excavated road.

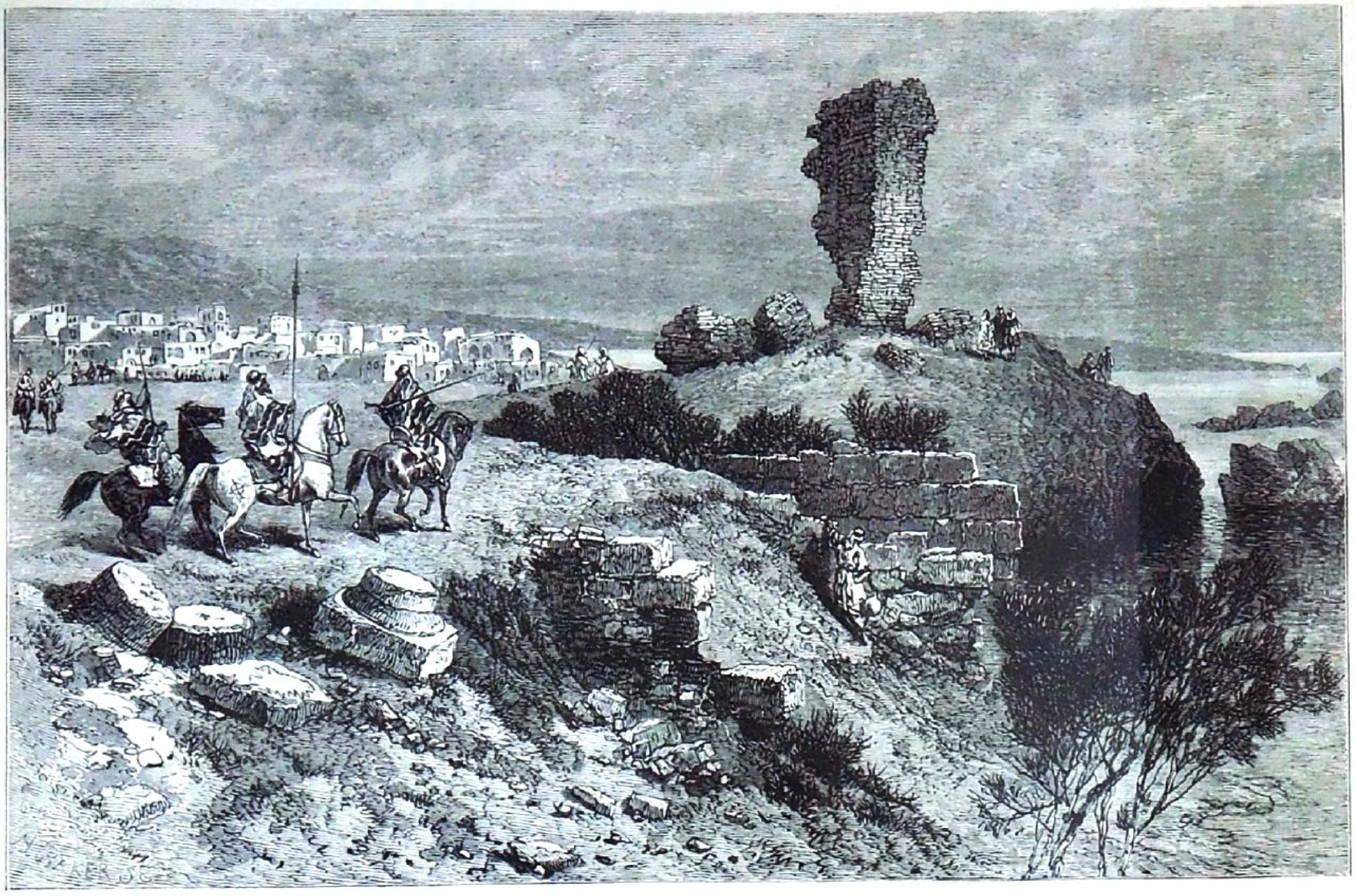


ATHLIT.

The citadel of Athlit, the most picturesque and by far the most interesting part of the old town, stands upon a projecting cliff, and is defended by a strong inner wall and deep moat, a hundred feet wide, and extending from bay to bay, a distance of two hundred yards. The entrance gate has a tower on each side. The masonry is very fine; and a fragment of one of the towers, still about eighty feet high, attracts attention from far and near, by sea and land. The quadrangle within the massive ramparts, on which the modern village stands, and on which the houses of the old town seem also to have stood, is supported entirely by huge piers, and vaults with groined roofs, like the crypts of a great cathedral. Some of the crypts are elaborately ornamented with carving, and are

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struggle against Joshua (Joshua xi. 1). Dor was allotted to the Manassites; but being strong, and a port of the Phœnicians, the Israelites were unable, probably unwilling, to drive out its inhabitants. David, however, made its people tributary during his prosperous reign; and stationed in the town one of the twelve purveyors of his kingdom, no doubt with the view of collecting supplies from the rich plain of Sharon. The situation of Dor, and the peculiar topography of the adjoining coast, appear to me to throw some light upon an unusual expression in the Book of Joshua. Close to the ruins, parallel to the coast, runs that low ridge of rocks, mentioned above in connection with Athlit, separating the sea-beach from the inland plain. This ridge, with its sea-border, was



Tantura (Dor).

perhaps meant by the Hebrew term *Naphath*, which is rendered both "coast" and "height" (Joshua xii. 23; 1 Kings iv. 11).

Dor was the most southerly of that line of seaports which the Phœnicians possessed along the coast of Syria and Palestine; and it is said to have been occupied by that enterprising people chiefly because its rocky shore abounded in the small shell-fish *Murex*, from which they extracted their celebrated purple dye. Dor was still a place of some importance during the early period of Roman rule in Palestine. It subsequently became an episcopal city, and was occupied by the Crusaders, who probably built the tower, a fragment of which still stands, and, as I have said, gives the ancient Dor its modern name, Tantura.

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triangular tongue of land, projecting from a low plain into the Mediterranean; and it is defended on the land side by a broad and deep moat stretching across the land from shore to shore, and capable of being filled from the sea.

Its fortifications are very strong, and were at one time deemed impregnable. Napoleon besieged the city in vain; but the English fleet, under Napier, silenced its



House in Acre.

guns, and captured it in a few hours. The ramparts have still a formidable look, and the appearance of the place internally has somewhat improved of late; but, as a rule, the Turks are not given either to improvement or to cleanliness. They build a mosque or a palace; they decorate it with tinsel ornaments, gilding, and carving; then they abandon it to the inevitable process of dilapidation and ruin.

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of Tripoli and Sidon; the Great Masters of the Hospital, the Temple, and the Teutonic orders; the republics of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa; the Pope's Legate; the kings of France and England—assumed an independent command. Seventeen tribunals exercised the power of life and death." While in this sad state of hopeless confusion and anarchy the city was suddenly attacked by the Sultan Khalil, at the head of a vast army. Its fall is thus described by Gibbon:—

"Whatever might be the vices of the Franks, their courage was rekindled by enthusiasm and despair; but they were torn by the discord of seventeen chiefs, and overwhelmed on all sides by the powers of the Sultan. After a siege of thirty-three days the double wall was forced by the Moslems; the principal tower yielded to their engines; the Mamelukes made a general assault; the city was stormed; and death or slavery was the lot of sixty thousand Christians. The convent, or rather fortress, of the Templars resisted three days longer; but the Great Master was pierced with an arrow, and of five hundred knights only ten were left alive—less happy than the victims of the sword, if they lived to suffer on a scaffold in the unjust and cruel proscription of the whole order. The King of Jerusalem, the Patriarch, and the Great Master of the Hospital, effected their retreat to the shore; but the sea was rough, the vessels were insufficient, and great numbers of the fugitives were drowned before they could reach the isle of Cyprus. By the command of the Sultan the churches and fortifications of the Latin cities were demolished; a motive of avarice or fear still opened the Holy Sepulchre to some devout and defenceless pilgrims, and a mournful and solitary silence prevailed along the coast which had so long resounded to the world's debate."

Thus terminated the Crusades, perhaps the most painful exhibition of mingled chivalry, fanaticism, and folly the world has witnessed. Millions perished for an insane idea. The best blood of Europe was shed recklessly and uselessly upon the land consecrated by the holy life of Jesus. The matchless courage of Christian soldiers was displayed on many a field against the infidel; but a spirit as unholy, as reckless, even as cruel as ever the infidel exhibited not unfrequently divided the ranks, and all but annihilated the armies of the Christians themselves.

After the defeat and flight of the Crusaders, five centuries of obscurity passed over Acre. Its fortifications lay in ruins, its streets were deserted, its houses were without inhabitant. About the middle of last century an enterprising local chief, Daher el-Omar, saw the advantages of its position, and resolved to restore it. He succeeded to no inconsiderable extent. He repaired the ramparts, rebuilt the ruined houses, converted old churches into mosques, and gathered within its walls a new population. Acre was not the only place that felt the hand of this reformer. Many of the old towns and castles of Galilee rose from their ruins under his vigorous rule. With mingled justice and firmness he governed the province; and by encouraging industry and protecting life and

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wrong. It was no uncommon thing with him, when talking familiarly with a number of apparently choice friends and favourites, to take one of them by the ear, with a smile, as if in jest, and cut the ear off with his dagger. His Jew banker, a member of the great family of Stambouli of Constantinople and Damascus, was a handsome man. He entered the palace one day, and Jezzâr complimented him on his good looks; and then calling a servant, ordered him to put out one of the banker's eyes. Some time afterwards Jezzâr observed that the Jew had so arranged his turban as to hide the lost eye; he then, without a moment's hesitation, had his nose cut off. The poor Jew finally lost his head on refusing to satisfy some outrageous demand for money. The descendants of Stambouli are still among the leading bankers in Damascus; and when residing in that city I have more than once heard from them terrible tales of their sufferings under the rule of Jezzâr.

But the most fearful act of the monster's life was the wholesale murder of the women of his harem—his wives and female slaves. The sad tale, as I heard it, is in substance as follows:—One year after his return from the great annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Prophet at Mecca, he saw by chance, in passing the palace-gate, a Christian soldier give a bouquet to a black female slave; and that same evening he observed the bouquet in the cap of one of the most beautiful of the Circassian slaves in his harem. "Who gave you the flower?" he asked in a friendly tone. "I plucked it in the garden," she replied. "Nay; I know better," said Jezzâr. "Just tell me who is your favourite, and I shall see what I can do to get you a husband." The poor girl was deceived, and told her tale of love, and how she had occasionally met her admirer during the pasha's absence. It so happened that her sweetheart was captain of Jezzâr's Mamlûks. It is no unusual thing for Eastern despots to give their slaves in marriage to favourites. The girl knew this, and hoped for the best. But the tyrant's suspicions were roused. He believed, or professed to believe, in the unfaithfulness of his entire harem, and he resolved upon a terrible revenge. The day following he went into the private garden attached to the palace, and sent for the girl. She approached full of hope and joy; but a single glance at her master showed her that her fate was sealed. Seizing her by the hair, he threw her on the ground, and raising a small *balta* or "battle-axe," which he always carried, he threatened her with instant death if she did not at once confess her crime and declare her accomplices. In vain she protested her innocence and appealed for mercy. Throwing aside the battle-axe, he drew his scimitar, and with a single blow severed her head from her body. Then followed a fearful scene of carnage. One after another of the Circassian slave-girls was brought out by the black eunuchs, and beheaded with the pasha's own hand. At length he grew weary with the terrible work and excitement. But the vengeance of the monster was not satiated. He summoned the fiercest and most unscrupulous of his soldiers, and the massacre of the members of his harem continued. The number who perished is

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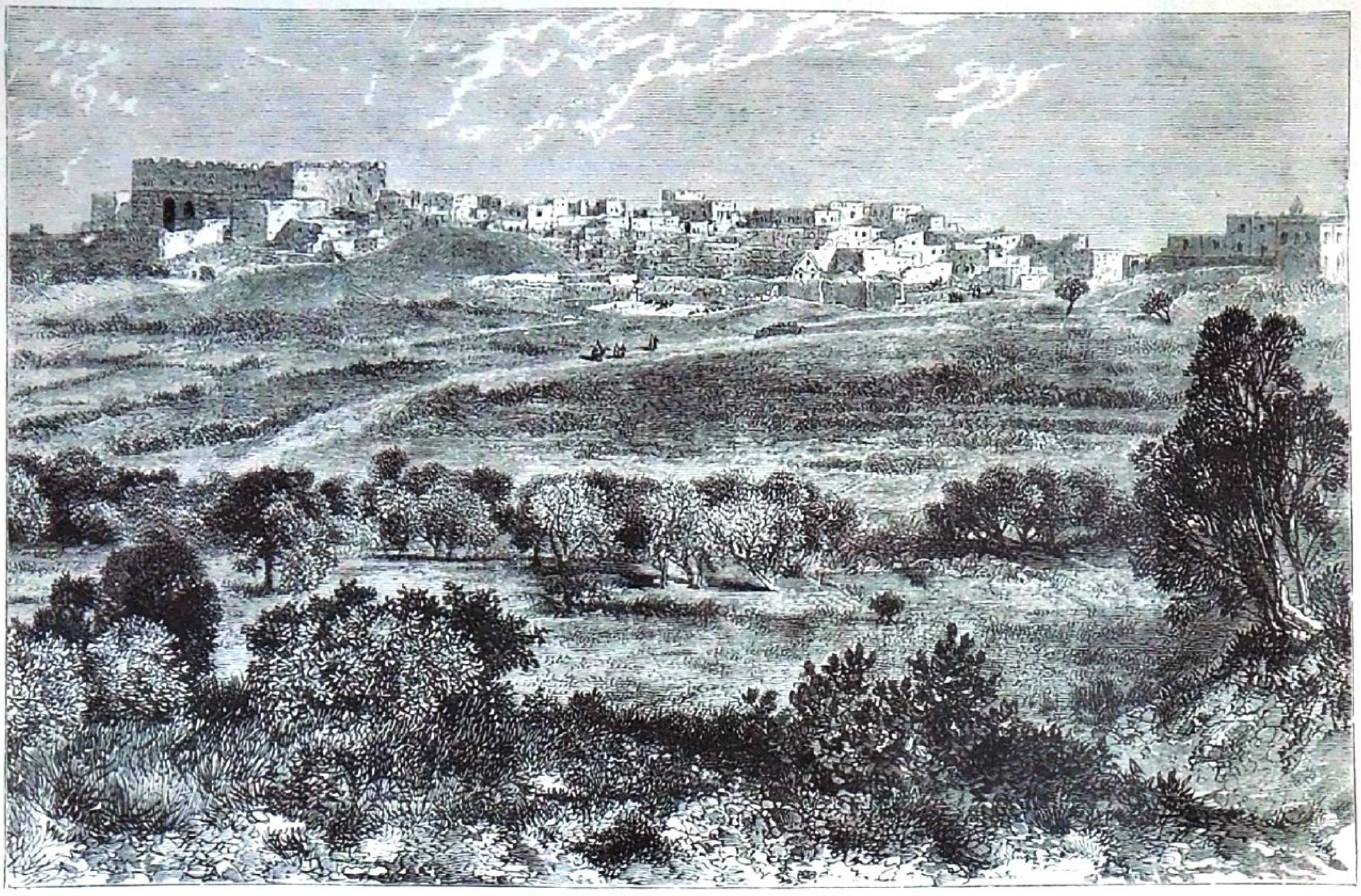
One sees some highly picturesque costumes in the bazaars, but especially in the houses of the grandees, when he happens to be successful in gaining admission. Access is easy to Christian and Jewish houses of all ranks, but not to Mohammedans, who are much more exclusive. At the fountains, too, when Arab maids assemble, as they did in days long gone by, one occasionally meets with a face and dress that would captivate any artist. Their bearing, and manners, and pitchers, and mode of carrying, are just such as might have been seen at the fountains of Palestine or Phœnicia in the days of Solomon or Hiram. I found at Acre that the Moslem women are not so closely veiled or so careful to conceal their features as they are, or pretend to be, in Damascus. They are not unwilling occasionally to exhibit the richness of their dress and ornaments, as they listen to professional musicians, or witness the performance of professional dancers, in the courts of their houses. These, in fact, are favourite amusements, encouraged more and more each year. The people are inclined to adopt the customs of Alexandria and Smyrna and other great cities of the Levant.

The plain of Acre is, as I have already said, among the richest in Palestine. Its soil is fertile and abundantly watered by numerous fountains and streams from the surrounding hills. At the present time a large part of it is carefully tilled. The facilities afforded by lines of steamers for the export of grain and oil and fruit have given a powerful stimulus to agriculture and industry of every kind. The city has but one gate, and from a large mound a little outside it the best general view is obtained of the town, the adjoining plain, and indeed of the whole country from Carmel to the Ladder of Tyre, and from the Mediterranean to the hills of Galilee. It is a grand panorama, and most interesting besides. From the top of this mound the Crusading princes first saw the ramparts of the city they so much coveted, and which they soon captured. From it the Moslem hosts, under Saladin, directed their operations at a later period against the Crusaders. And from it Napoleon surveyed the fortress, and on it planted his cannon in his vain attempt to gain possession. Thus is history illustrated as one stands on that mound before the gate of Acre.

And there are other objects in view of still greater interest to the student of Biblical history. We are in the centre of the territory allotted to the tribe of Asher. We see how true was the patriarchal blessing—"Asher, his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties" (Gen. xlix. 20); he shall "dip his foot in oil" (Deut. xxxiii. 24). The fertile plain is around us; the olive groves are before us; the "haven of the sea," in which the tribe "sat still" when Barak battled for his country, is there stretching away far to the north and south (Judges v. 17); and beside us is one of those strong cities of Phœnicia which the Asherites did not attempt or care to subdue.

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except in one or two places in Anti-Lebanon. Deep cuttings are made on each side of the chambers; and on these the bodies were laid, side by side, with a thin partition of the natural rock between them—the feet pointing outwards to the main chamber. In other cases, the two bodies are laid longitudinally on an excavated recess, or shelf, two or three feet above the floor. Some of the tombs have chaste façades hewn in the natural rock, such as those so often met with round Jerusalem; and the doors and architraves are occasionally ornamented with vine leaves and bunches of grapes, admirably carved in high relief. At several of the tombs the vines are figured as growing out of large vases on each side of the door, and running up until they meet overhead. Among the leaves



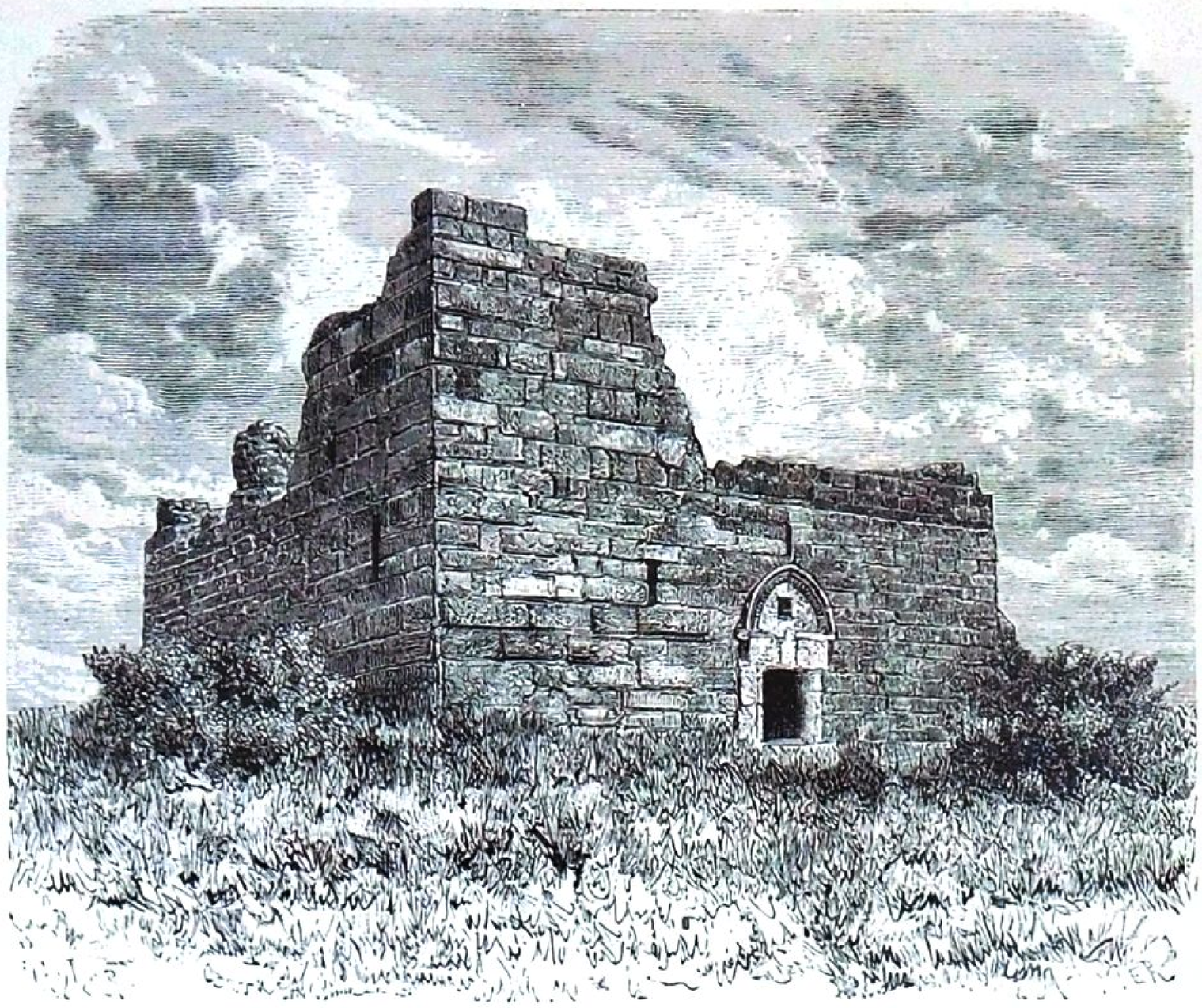
VILLAGE AND CASTLE OF SHEFA OMAR.

and branches little birds are figured, some as if singing. The general effect is good. I have seen a similar design on the door of a Roman temple at Kenath, in the mountains of Bashan. On each side of one door are short inscriptions in Greek characters, but now so much obliterated as to be illegible. In the vestibule, within the outer entrance to one of the tombs, are figures of lions and birds rudely cut in relief, but with some boldness of design. In the interior there are vine-wreaths in relief on the walls, and Latin crosses within ornamented circles. The tombs which are thus adorned are manifestly, I think, of later date than most of the others. Perhaps older tombs may have been taken possession of and decorated. Some of the ornaments are of Christian origin, and apparently Byzan-

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jambs are old monoliths, so also is the lintel, though there is a pointed arch above it. The local tradition is that the castle was built by Daher el-Omar; but if so, it is strange there is no Arabic inscription recording the fact. It seems to me that the main part of the building now standing is of the Crusading age, and that it was only repaired, perhaps reconstructed, by the great Arab chief.

The village is built on the south side of the hill below the castle. There are in and around it many relics of ancient taste and grandeur—granite and marble pillars, massive hewn stones, and portions of richly-sculptured pediments and cornices. But the principal ruin is a church in the upper part of the village. Some of the interior arches and the



Ruins of the Castle at Seffurieh (Sepphoris).

groined roof of the apse remain, and are evidently of a date not later than the twelfth century. It was a large, substantial, and tasteful structure. The tradition attached to it, if authentic, would make it one of the most interesting buildings in Galilee. It is said to stand on the site of the house in which Joachim and Anna, the parents of the Virgin Mary, lived, and in which she was born. Antoninus Martyr, at the close of the sixth century, tells us that a cathedral church was erected in this city on the spot where the Virgin received the salutation of the angel. Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that a church was founded in Sepphoris before the time of Constantine; but whether on the site of Joachim's house or not we have no trustworthy evidence to show. The church is mentioned by Sir John Mandeville, who visited the country early in the fourteenth

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Saladin remained with his army at the fountain for a time. But the importance of the place then terminated. It has never since regained prominence or power. It is now, and apparently has been for centuries, a poor village.

CANA OF GALILEE.

THE site of this village, where Jesus performed his first miracle, is disputed. It has not been, and perhaps it never may be, satisfactorily determined. From the Castle of Sepphoris a wide view is obtained, extending over a circuit of hills, clothed with dwarf oaks and thorns, and here and there with olives and large forest trees. In the midst of these hills is the fertile plain of Battauf, most probably the *Asochis* so often mentioned by Josephus in his history of the war with the Romans. Away beyond the plain, northward, on the side of a rough wooded ridge, we can just see the ruins of the old village of *Kana*, one of the claimants for the honour of representing *Cana of Galilee*. Whether the real Cana or not, the mere name is enough to attract attention and make it worthy of a visit.

It is only five miles from Seffûrieh, and the road leads across a section of the plain of Asochis, then up a rocky slope. It has two names, both of which I heard from peasants near the place—*Khurbet Kana*, "Ruined Cana;" and *Kana el-Jelîl*, "Cana of Galilee." Either name answers to the well-known place mentioned in the Gospels; the latter is identical with it. The village is now, at least was, when I visited it some years ago, deserted. The ruins lie on the side of a shallow glen, just where it opens into the plain of Battauf. There are no traces of antiquity. I did not even see any tombs in the rocks or in the sides of the glen; only the remains of twenty or thirty comparatively modern houses, of the ordinary kind one everywhere sees in mountain villages. It is a noteworthy fact, however, that from the earliest historic record, down to the sixteenth century, this village was regarded as the Cana of the Gospels. A writer of the sixth century, who visited it, speaks of seeing two "water-pots;" another, St. Willibald, in the eighth century, found a large church in which were six water-pots. Sæwulf, in the eleventh century, describes the exact situation of this village; but says nothing then remained except a monastery. In the sixteenth century doubt began to be cast on the identity; and a village was found much closer to Nazareth, whose name, *Kenna*, was supposed to be sufficiently like Cana to answer the purpose of identification. It had another important advantage for ecclesiastical objects—it was more easy of access from the churches and monastic establishments of Nazareth, which were at that time greatly enlarged. Be

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The town, or village, is built on the steep slope of the hill that shuts in the vale on the north; and its square, flat-roofed houses ascend like huge steps of stairs from the cactus-hedged gardens below to where gray cliffs and ledges of naked rock prevent further extension. The houses are not in a compact body, nor is there any regularity in the rough streets and narrow lanes. A garden, or a miniature vineyard, or a projecting crag, not unfrequently comes between house and house; while the newer and larger buildings are scattered at random along the hillside. Some distance eastward a little glen breaks down from the hill. At its mouth stands an old Greek church, and in front of it, covered by a simple but picturesque arch, is the *Fountain of the Virgin*—Nazareth's only fountain.

In the evening the fountain is usually surrounded by maids and matrons waiting to draw water, for the supply is not abundant. We can admire their quaint costumes, their silver and gold bracelets, their long plaited hair, the wonderful profusion of their ornaments, which they seem to take pride in exhibiting, their flowing veils, the antique pattern of their pitchers. Not unfrequently, too, a passing muleteer waits his turn to water his thirsty animals that stand patiently by his side; or an old village servitor comes with his asses to convey water to school or convent.

Of late Nazareth has lost much of its Oriental aspect, and therefore, to a considerable extent, of its Biblical interest. The heavy medieval walls of the Latin convent, the Gothic pinnacles of the new Protestant church, and the tasteless buildings of the German and English missionary establishments, are altogether out of harmony with the simple plan and rugged masonry which characterize all the mountain villages of Palestine, and which were doubtless the same in New Testament times as they are at present. Nazareth has thus in some respects largely lost its Biblical character. True, the upland vale, the fountain, the "hill whereon the city was built," the surrounding scenery, are all there as of yore. There is but little change, too, in the dress and manners, and even in the language, of the people; but the architecture is totally changed. The introduction of mongrel European styles of building is not a success, either in taste or comfort.

The hill on the declivity of which Nazareth is built overtops all its fellows, and commands a magnificent view. This is of intense interest in connection with the early life of Jesus. Nowhere in Galilee, or indeed in all Northern Palestine, is there a more extensive or instructive prospect. From the houses, with the exception of one or two on the higher ground, the view is shut in by the encircling ridge. But on going to the top of the hill, and taking our stand beside the old tomb, we seem to be in a new world. The feeling of loneliness and seclusion vanishes. On the west the eye wanders over the hills of Galilee, and the plain of Acre, to the distant shore of the Mediterranean, and the bluff promontory of Carmel. On the south lies the plain of Esdraelon in its full extent, with the ranges of Carmel, and Samaria, and Gilboa, and Moreh, around its border. The rounded top of Tabor is there on the east, and away far beyond it run the purple-tinted

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Greek fire and daring, inherited the turbulent spirit and loose morals of their ancestors. In these respects they certainly did not improve the character of the Jews; but they did something for the benefit of the country and of the world—they introduced that noble language which proved such a grand instrument in the early development of Christian doctrine, and in the subsequent spread of Christianity over the world. There was still another factor in the formation of the character of the Nazarenes. Among the mountains northward dwelt some of the old Canaanitish tribes whom the Israelites drove from the lowlands, and who, in the days of our Lord, still practised their unholy and degrading rites. With them the shepherds of Nazareth, while tending their flocks, could scarcely avoid associating, and the mere fact of their doing so made them peculiarly obnoxious to the people of Jerusalem. All these things doubtless tended to degrade the Nazarenes in the estimation of their countrymen in Judæa, and to give rise to a contemptuous expression, which would appear to have become at length proverbial, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

Such was Nazareth in the days of our Lord's childhood. A wondrous change has, at least in the estimation of many, come over it since. Its name and fame have spread over the civilized world. Whatever may be said or thought now of its early history, or the character of its inhabitants in ancient or in modern times, it is emphatically THE HOLY PLACE OF GALILEE. Its whole celebrity, indeed its whole modern history, may be said to cluster round one event—THE ANNUNCIATION. Magnificent structures have been reared up in various parts of the world in commemoration of that event; tens of thousands of pilgrimages have been made in honour of it; yet, to the thoughtful, devout Christian, Nazareth as the home of the Saviour's boyhood, the scene of his development from childhood to manhood, of his domestic relations, of his private life, of his early prayers, of his first labours, possesses a far greater charm, a far deeper interest, than even the wondrous miracle of the Annunciation could have given it. In these respects it surpasses Bethlehem. Every spot around it was trodden by Jesus; every scene around it was familiar to him; the fountain, the gardens, the fields, the hillsides—in boyhood and in riper years he knew them and visited them all.

Nazareth is a place where one can meditate on the sublime mystery of the Incarnation—where he can almost realize it; following in imagination the footsteps of the Son of God; trying to conjure up the thoughts that may have passed through his mind as he looked on the scenes, near and far, which we here look on. One of my first excursions, and one of the most instructive, was to the top of the hill above the town, where that magnificent view I have already attempted to describe is gained. No doubt our Lord was often there; and his human mind, deeply imbued with the knowledge of his own revealed Word, would fully grasp the grand historic associations which the view suggests—the struggles of the Israelites for faith and freedom; their triumphs and their crushing

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Just as we enter the door we observe a flight of marble steps leading down to the shrine of the building, and, as it is supposed, of Nazareth. Descending, we reach a vestibule, ten feet wide, and from it a low arched opening admits to the Grotto of the Annunciation. Here is a marble altar, and beneath it a marble slab, in the centre of which a cross marks the spot where Mary stood at the time of the Annunciation. On our left, as we face the altar, a fragment of a granite column is seen suspended from the roof of the vestibule, and below it is a piece of a marble column projecting from the floor. Tradition states that the column was formerly entire and supported the roof, but was hacked through by the infidels in a vain attempt to pull down the house; and it now remains a standing miracle. Beyond the broken column a curtain covers another column, from behind which the angel is said to have come with his Divine message. The vestibule and adjoining altars are richly decorated with marble, and silver lamps, and carved crosses. Beside the altar to the right, a door opens into the back part of the cave, which has been left in its natural state, rough and irregular; from it a rude staircase hewn in the rock leads up to the "Virgin Mary's Kitchen," also apparently a natural cave.

Such is "The Holy Grotto," shown to all pilgrims and travellers by the good Latin monks of Nazareth. Whether they themselves have full belief in the wonderful stories they tell, it is not for me to say, nor do I care to inquire. But the most wonderful part of a wonderful history remains to be told. Most people have heard of Loretto, the Nazareth of Italy, and its *Santa Casa*. The "Holy House," in which, it is said, the Virgin actually lived, and in which she received the angel's salutation, is not in Nazareth, but in Loretto. Originally, so says tradition, the house stood over the grotto; but when evil days came, and the infidel occupied Nazareth, it was carried by angels, first to Fiume in Dalmatia, then to the hill of Loretto, where it now stands, probably the most frequented shrine in Christendom. The strange story began to be circulated in the fifteenth century, and it was finally authenticated by a Papal Bull in the year 1518. The probable origin of the legend is thus stated by the late Dean Stanley:—"Nazareth was taken by Sultan Khalil in 1291, when he stormed the last refuge of the Crusaders in the neighbouring city of Acre. From that time, not Nazareth only, but the whole of Palestine, was closed to the devotions of Europe. The Crusaders were expelled from Asia, and in Europe the spirit of the Crusades was extinct. But the natural longing to see the scenes of the events of the sacred history—the superstitious craving to win for prayer the favour of consecrated localities—did not expire with the Crusades. Can we wonder that, under such circumstances, there should have arisen the feeling, the desire, the belief that, if Mohammed could not go to the mountain, the mountain must come to Mohammed? The House of Loretto is the petrifaction, so to speak, of the last sigh of the Crusades."

It may be so; but if so, I would only add that the legend is a fitting sequel to

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work, with Jesus assisting. It was presented to the chapel some years ago by a noble lady of Florence, whose name and arms are on it. In the town I saw one or two carpenters' workshops, which, in the simplicity of their fittings and the primitive character of their tools, might be regarded as fair representatives of a workshop of the first century.

I was next taken to a house in one of the narrow lanes, and ushered into a vaulted chamber in which is a large table-shaped section of natural rock, projecting about three feet from the floor. This, according to a tradition inscribed on the wall in Latin, Italian, and Arabic, is the table at which Jesus and his disciples usually sat and ate when in Nazareth. Hence the chamber is called "The Chapel of the Table of Christ."

My next visit was to the synagogue where Jesus was teaching when the Jews drove him out, and "led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong" (Luke iv. 29). The synagogue is the property of the Greeks; but most of the other "holy places" belong to the Latin Church.

One of the clumsiest traditions connected with Nazareth is that of "The Mount of Precipitation." It has been located about two miles from the town, on the brow of the ridge of rocks which overlooks the plain of Esdraelon. Such a position is, of course, opposed to the plain statement of the Gospel narrative. It was to the brow of the hill on which the city was built they led him. Nazareth, as I have stated, stands on the lower declivity of a steep hill—partly in ravines, partly on the sloping sides and rugged tops of intervening ridges. I have seen more than one cliff on the side of the hill, close to the houses, that would have served for the execution of the murderous purpose of the infatuated people.

During my last visit to Nazareth, while wandering through streets and lanes, among gardens, by the fountain, and over the neighbouring hills, I saw and talked with great numbers of the people. They are getting more and more accustomed to Western travellers, and to English and German residents, so that the women and girls, even Moslems, are not by any means so careful to conceal their faces, or their dresses and ornaments, as they were a quarter of a century ago; more especially is this the case when they happen to be attractive in person, or arrayed in holiday attire. On the hillsides and by the fountain one frequently sees females, whose stately mien, picturesque costume, and profusion of quaint ornaments—tiaras of coins, necklets, bracelets, anklets, and girdles of finely-wrought gold and silver—are such as would delight the eye of an artist. The colours, too, are rich and beautifully blended. There is probably no other town in Palestine at the present time where one has a better opportunity of studying all varieties of Eastern dress than Nazareth. The dress, whether of men or women, rarely changes in the East. Manners and customs are also stereotyped. The same is the case with household utensils, implements of husbandry, workmen's tools, and every kind of furniture. The yoke of oxen, the plough, the hoe, the goad, the shepherd's staff and scrip; the hammer, the saw, the

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cast aside the outer shoes, unloose the girdle, and rearrange the folds of the turban, are the sole preparations made by men for sleep. To undress would be deemed absurd. During the heat of summer the flat roof is the ordinary sleeping-place. In harvest and vintage seasons most of the families remove to the fields, and remain there night and day, as Boaz did with his reapers at Bethlehem. All these customs have come down from primeval ages, and are universal, not in Nazareth merely, but in every village and small town throughout the country.

Another custom is noteworthy. Harvest and vintage are seasons of joy and gladness to the people. When I heard the songs of maids and matrons, accompanied by cymbal or tambourine, and when I saw the exulting dance in the open field or on the threshing-floor, the village sheikh or opulent land-owner looking on with evident satisfaction, I understood, more fully than I had ever done before, the striking words of Isaiah when pronouncing a prophetic curse upon a sinful nation: "Gladness is taken away, and joy out of the fruitful fields; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither joyful noise.....I have made the vintage shout to cease." One can easily see with what thrilling force such a judgment would come upon the hearts of the people. So, too, when the same prophet describes an excess of joy and prosperity, he does it in these words: "They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest" (Isa. xvi. 10, ix. 3).

During my last visit to Nazareth I spent a few pleasant days in the new hospice of the Latin convent. I found it a most agreeable change from the tent, where one has often to put up with the persistent attentions—rather intrusions—of villagers, wandering Arabs, and gipsies, men, women, and children; and then at night with the howl of dogs and the wail of jackals. Here in the hospice there is peace and quietness. It reminded me of the convent of Mount Carmel, of which I have spoken above. The rooms, or cells, as one might rather call them, are clean and well ventilated. The furniture is scanty, it is true, but I enjoyed the place. The good monks were kind and courteous, and the fare substantial and wholesome. The charge was moderate—about twelve francs a day.

Such was my experience of Nazareth when last I visited it. I enjoyed the town even more than I had ever done before. More minute examination of the country, closer intercourse with the people, fuller study of manners and customs, contributed to make my visit not only pleasant but singularly profitable. It is true that very few of the great events in the life of Jesus occurred in Nazareth, though about thirty years of his life were passed there. We read that, on the return of Joseph and Mary from Egypt, they withdrew into Galilee, and dwelt in their own city Nazareth (Matt. ii. 22; Luke ii. 39). There, we are told, "the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." But the only record of his words, or acts, or wisdom during this period is that mentioned by Luke of his accompanying his parents to Jerusalem at the Passover feast, his remarkable interview with the doctors in the temple, his striking reply to his

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made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself" (Phil. ii. 7). This was a part, a necessary part, of his training for his grand mission. In childhood and boyhood, as fully as during his public ministry, he was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities.....in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15). He was in all respects a boy; and therefore he could, and can, feel and sympathize with boys.

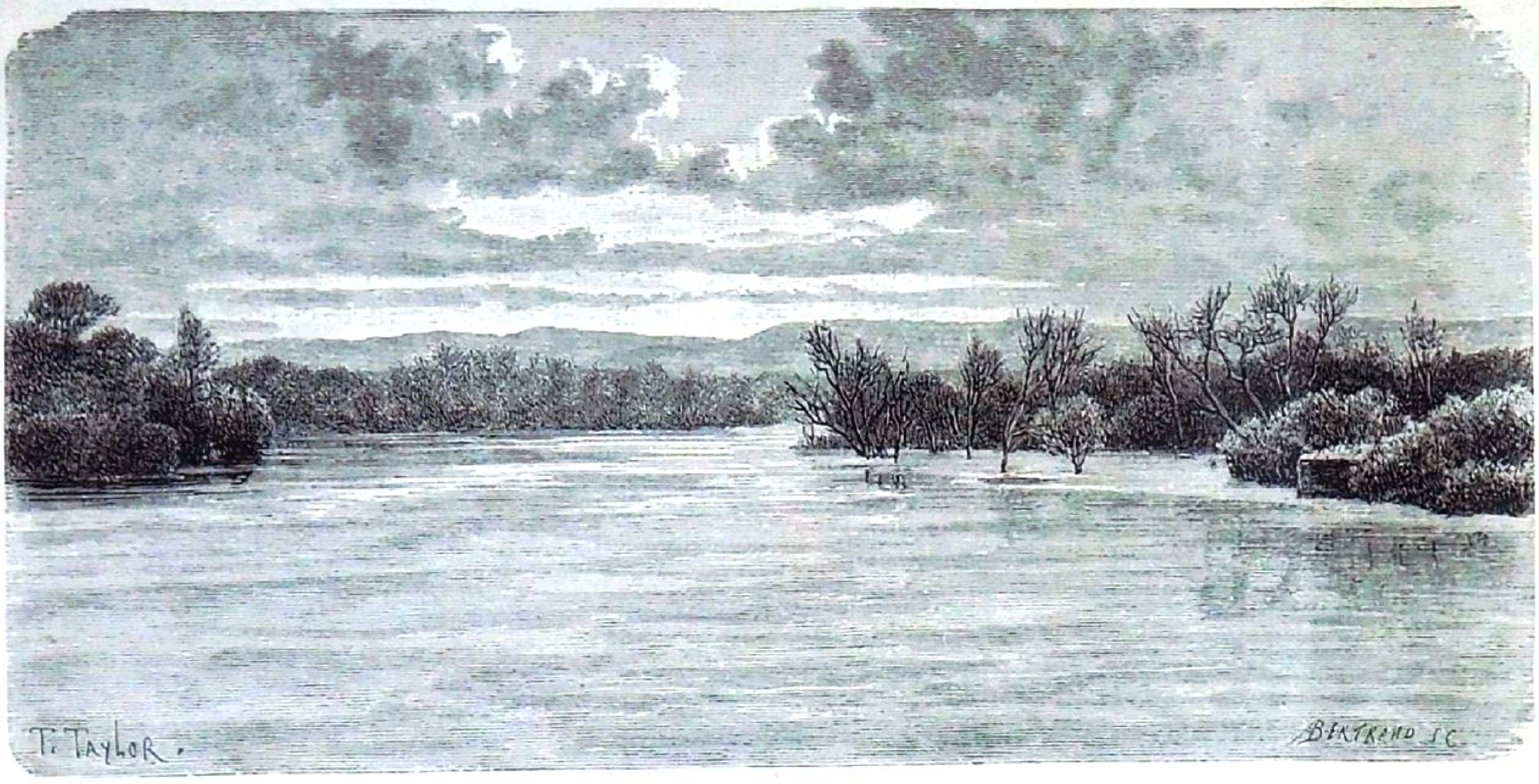
But there was something more than this in the boy Jesus; there was something better and nobler than increase of body and development of mind—not apparent, perhaps, to his associates in Nazareth, not observable by ordinary onlookers, yet sufficiently marked to arrest the attention of close observers of character, and never escaping that loving, anxious, wondering intentness with which his mother regarded him. It was seen that he was "becoming filled with wisdom," a wisdom far beyond his years; not a wisdom, however, which made him preternaturally conversant with the affairs of daily life, or which showed itself in prodigies of supernatural power. It neither made him a boy philosopher, nor a skilled mechanic, nor a miracle-worker. It was of a higher kind. It affected his moral nature chiefly, giving it an angelic purity, a loving and lovable disposition, a firm and enthusiastic devotedness to what is noble and true. It was divine rather than human; it touched the heart more than the intellect; it fostered those principles and powers which made the boy gentle, and genial, and Godlike; it shed a clear, benign, angelic radiance upon an irreproachable life. It did not raise him to a sphere above ordinary humanity, or make him coldly insensible to human weakness; but it so elevated his human instincts and feelings that he would have no part in those acts of folly and rudeness into which even the best boys are not unfrequently beguiled, while it made him turn away with horror from every form of impurity. All this is implied in the various statements of St. Paul, a study of which often throws a flood of light on the character of Jesus. In a single striking sentence the evangelist portrays his perfection of life, and conversation, and work, as they must have appeared to his most intimate and thoughtful associates, and above all to his mother: "The grace of God was upon him."

But, in addition to all this, wisdom of another and a different kind began early and gradually to develop, first in his own inner consciousness, and then to the circle who immediately surrounded him. Apart from and above the reasonable human soul, the divine nature appeared, communicating to and through his commanding intellect a knowledge of his grand mission and appointed work. How or at what time it began to affect him, and to mould his character and acts, we know not—it has not been revealed; but that it had affected him before he reached the age of twelve, and that it had exerted such a visible influence on his words and communications to his parents as ought to have attracted their notice, is clear from the answer he gave his mother when she tenderly reproved him in the temple: "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" or "about my Father's

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THE RIVER JORDAN.

THE *River Jordan* is closely connected with Galilee, both geographically and historically. The two chief sources of the river near Cæsarea-Philippi are in Galilee. Two of the three lakes formed by the river are in Galilee, and one of the two takes its name from the province. During about one-half of its course the Jordan flows through Galilee. In fact the Jordan as one united river begins at the upper lake—the *Huleh* of



THE JORDAN NEAR ITS ENTRANCE INTO THE DEAD SEA.

the modern Arabs, the *Ulatha* of Josephus, and the *Waters of Merom* of the Old Testament.

Physically the Jordan is the most remarkable river in the world. Its source in the Huleh is just on the level of the ocean, and all the valley below it through which the river flows is a chasm in the earth's crust, sinking deeper and deeper, until at its mouth, where it enters the Dead Sea, it has a depression of no less than thirteen hundred and twelve feet. And this unique depression of the Jordan valley has had an important influence not only on its climate and natural products, but, strange to say, upon the moral character of its inhabitants. The climate and products are tropical, and the inhabitants from the earliest ages have been physically enervated and morally depraved.

Yet the valley of the Jordan has been the scene of some of the most wonderful

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told, to be smeared with the yellow sulphurous deposit, which is considered a sovereign remedy for certain ailments to which they are subject.

About a mile below the confluence of the Jarmuk is the only passable bridge on the Jordan, *Jisr el-Mejâmia*, "The Bridge of Meetings." It is on the leading, and indeed the only practicable, road from Southern Galilee to the country beyond Jordan. (See above, p. 37.) As I have already said, I observed on both sides of the bridge, on the plain, and up the hills towards Gadara on the east, and Beth-shan on the west, traces of a Roman road with the ancient pavement here and there nearly entire. From Gadara it runs over the mountains to Abila in Gilead, and away far onward to Edra and Bozrah in Bashan. One cannot fail to see here, and in many another part of Palestine, how enterprising and successful the Romans were as colonists. This great highway, doubtless, existed before the time of the Roman occupation, and formed one of the main connecting links between the countries east and west of the Jordan.

DECAPOLIS.

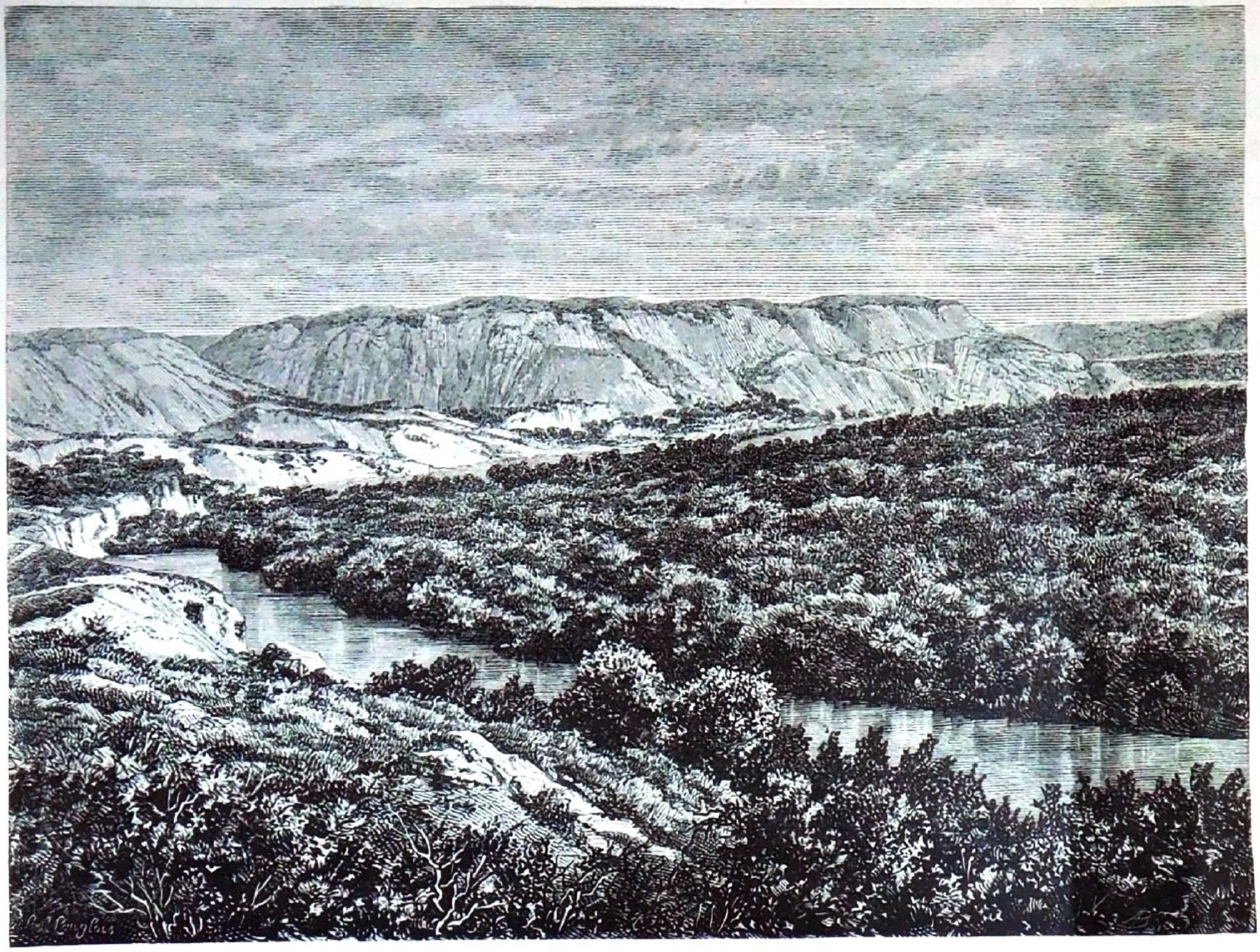
AMONG the districts visited by our Lord, and in which the fame of his words and deeds spread abroad, was *Decapolis*. In one of his journeys, Mark tells us, "he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis" (Mark vii. 31). And in another place the same evangelist tells us how, after the destruction of the herd of swine on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, the man out of whom the devils were cast "went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him" (Mark v. 20). Matthew also mentions the region, stating that when Jesus had taught and wrought miracles in Galilee, his fame went forth into all Syria, "and there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judæa and from beyond Jordan" (Matt. iv. 25).

Where was Decapolis? What was the origin of its singular name? Though the name was unknown in Old Testament times, and has long since disappeared, the region was well known in the days of our Lord. The origin of the name, which means "The Ten Cities," was this:—Soon after the Romans conquered Syria, ten cities were rebuilt and repeopled by them. They were endowed with special privileges, and the province attached to them received the Greek name *Decapolis*. Here, in the valley of the Jordan, we are within that province, for among the cities were Beth-shan, Gadara, Pella, Gerasa, and Abila. Beth-shan was apparently the only one of the ten west of the Jordan, and much

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were defeated, and tried to escape by the ford, the Gileadites seized the fords, and would permit none to pass save such as could say *Shibboleth*.

I was deeply impressed when travelling down the Jordan valley, and passing through the country on both sides, to note how wonderfully Scripture history is illustrated by the physical features of the land, and by the character, costume, occupations, and accent of the people. On the east I saw rich pastures and abundant waters; on the west, bare rocky hills and parched ravines. On the east the shepherds tend their flocks and herds; on the west, as a rule, the peasants till their fields and cultivate their terraced vine-



BANKS AND TERRACES OF THE JORDAN.

yards on the hillsides. On the east they wear the flowing robe with a leathern girdle about the loins, and on the head the bright kerchief (*kufiyeh*), bound round the brow by a fillet of camel's hair; on the west we see the bag trowsers, short jacket, voluminous girdle, and large turban. On the east a dog is called *tchelb*, with a strong aspirate; on the west it is *kelb*, without any aspirate,—and so with many other words in common use.

The unchanging nature of habits, occupations, modes of salutation, dress, and language in all parts of Palestine is most remarkable. Although I had been familiar for some years with the country and people west of the Jordan, when first I passed over the

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ford where Jacob crossed it to meet Esau, and when I looked on the wild troop of Arab guards that escorted me, and on their friends who kept their flocks on the hillsides around, I could almost realize that scene so beautifully pictured in the book of Genesis, where Esau with his wild followers met his brother Jacob.

Another interesting Bible picture often came up with wonderful vividness before my mind as I rode along the borders and saw the shepherds of Gilead. Elijah the Tishbite was one of the grandest and most romantic characters in Israel. He was born and brought up amid the mountains of Gilead, and he was in appearance, dress, and manner a good type of his countrymen then and even now. His shaggy hair; his rough camel-hair mantle girt by a leathern girdle about his naked body; his fleetness of foot, enabling him to outrun the chariot of Ahab from Carmel to Jezreel; his sudden appearances and disappearances, which baffled the watchfulness of both friends and foes—all these are characteristic of every prominent chief in Gilead to-day.

The ride along the banks of the Jordan, in the shade of tamarisks, oleanders, and willows, is delightful. One scarcely regrets the heat when the foliage is so fresh and dense. Then, too, the views eastward up the wooded hills and deep winding glens are picturesque; but such a ride is not without its drawbacks and dangers. Shade is not available at all points, and the ground is not unfrequently marshy, making wide detours over the burning plains necessary. The people with whom we must occasionally come in contact are wild, and not over scrupulous about the rights of property or the personal safety of travellers. In these respects they seem to inherit not a little of the habits and propensities of the Amalekites and the children of the east, who in early ages passed the fords of the Jordan and ravaged Israel. I have had experience alike of their friendship and their enmity; I have visited them in their tents, and have partaken of their hospitality; I have travelled under their guidance and protection for many days and nights together with entire safety: but I have also been captured by them, and I have suffered from the keen points of their spears and the bullets of their rifles. After such experience, sometimes pleasant, occasionally painful, I feel bound to say that I have never known them to break faith when once they gave a pledge; and I have never known them to miss a favourable opportunity for plunder. The hand of the Ishmaelite is still "against every man."

When going down the plain of the Jordan, I observed in the opening of the valley of Jezreel, a few miles from Beth-shan, some singular conical mounds, regular in form, and covered with *débris* of loose stones, broken pottery, and other traces of former occupation, similar to mounds I had seen on the plain of Damascus and in the valley of the Orontes. They seem to be the sites of primeval cities, the names and history of which have alike gone. Probably excavation might bring to light some important relics of antiquity. The soil around them is surpassingly rich, and the vegetation most luxuriant. On one occasion I rode for miles through forests of thistles higher than my head.

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demands blood. It is a relic of the primeval divine injunction: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Gen. ix. 6). Another point of interest I noted. It is said, "Gideon took the crescents that were on their camels' necks;" and when, like a true and generous chief, he refused to become king over Israel, he made the request that seems so strange to us: "I would desire that ye would give me every man the earrings of his spoil. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his spoil. And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold; besides the crescents, and the pendants, and the purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camels' necks" (Judges viii. 24, *seq.*). When I looked at the purple robes of the Arab sheikhs, the chains and crescents and pendants strung so profusely round the necks of camels and horses; when I looked on the ornaments worn by men and women—bracelets, anklets, necklaces, strings of charms and coins round neck and head and waist, ear-rings and nose-jewels—I realized more fully the minute accuracy of the descriptions of the sacred writer; and I saw then, as I had often done before, how the narratives in the early books of the Bible are illustrated by the manners and customs of the people of the country in the present day.

Looking across the river from Sukût, I saw dimly on the side of a mountain glen in Gilead a conical hill which has much historical if not directly Biblical interest. It is the site of *Pella*, one of the cities of Decapolis, to which the Christians of Jerusalem fled during the siege by the Romans. It subsequently became the seat of a bishop; but being much exposed to Arab raids it soon fell to ruin, and has been deserted for centuries. Foundations of old stone houses, heaps of rubbish, and granite columns cover the mound and the terrace plain beside it. One building, church or temple, is still in part standing. The name of the place is *Fahil*, which may be a corruption of Pella.

Looking still higher up the ridge of Gilead, and a little more southward, we see beside a deep ravine an isolated, round-topped hill. It is now called *Ed-Deir*, "The Convent;" but the name of the ravine beside it, *Yâbes*, suggests at once the old Bible city JABESH-*Gilead*. It is a conspicuous and important site, deserving a special visit. It is seven miles from Sukût as the crow flies, and the road, though in places steep where we cross the ravine of Yâbes, is not *very* difficult. The splendid views we get up and down the Jordan, and away across to Beth-shan in the valley of Jezreel, amply repay the time and toil.

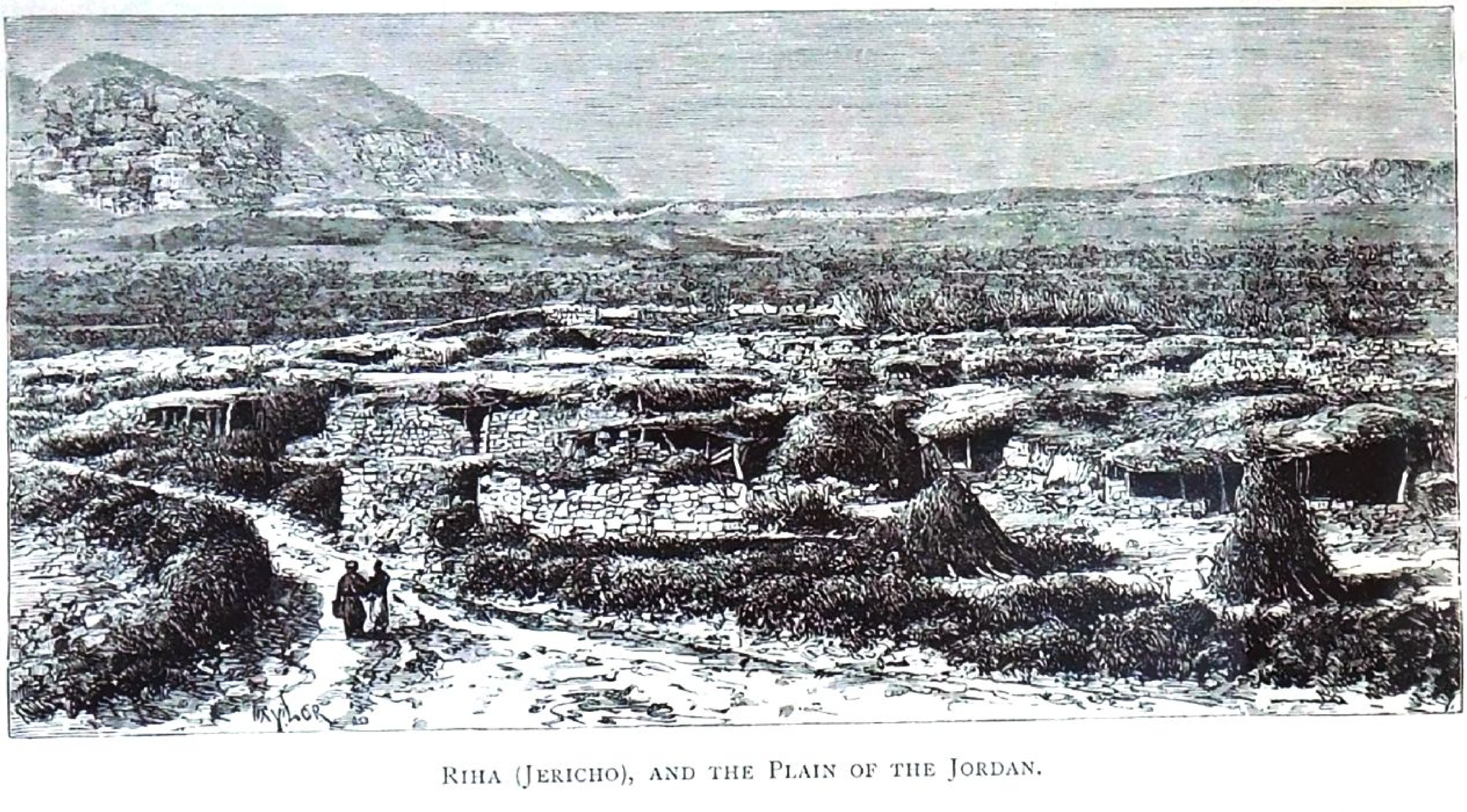
The conical *tell* on which the ruins of the old city lie, all prostrate now, is high up on the south bank of the ravine. There are confused heaps of rubbish, some foundations of heavy masonry, a number of broken columns, and rock-tombs in the neighbouring cliffs. But there are no traces of fortifications. The position is strong and commanding, but it

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round the base of Sartabeh, and flows due south, parallel to the Jordan, into which it falls about five miles further down. Between it and the Jordan lies an undulating plain about a mile wide.

FORD AND BRIDGE OF DAMIEH—ADAM.

JUST opposite Sartabeh is one of the most important fords of the Jordan. Beside it are the remains of an old bridge, and Roman roads concentrate here from Beth-shan on the north, Shechem on the west, and Jericho on the south. This has been from time immemorial the principal place of passage from the east to the west. On the top of the adjoining hill, Sartabeh, are the ruins of a strong and apparently ancient fortress, which was doubtless intended to guard the pass, and to serve also for a beacon station, both to give notice of invasion and to signal the appearance of the new moon. We are told in the



RIHA (JERICHO), AND THE PLAIN OF THE JORDAN.

Talmud that "signals of fire were made, on the appearance of the new moon, from the Mount of Olives to Sartabeh, from Sartabeh to Grufna, from Grufna to Hauran," etc. Sartabeh is the most conspicuous hill in the Jordan valley. A fire on it would be visible from Hermon to Jericho, and over a large section of Samaria and Judah. There is on the summit a large artificial hollow in the rock which shows the action of fire.

The features of the Jordan valley from this point southward to the plain of Jericho

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MIZPEH OF GILEAD.

ONE of my most interesting excursions east of the Jordan was commenced at the ford of Damieh. I crossed the river in a ferry-boat, for it was harvest time, and the waters flowed in a rapid current over the lower banks. I traversed the plain, and for some distance ascended the ridge of Gilead in the line of the Roman road. I was struck with the wonderful luxuriance of the grass in the plain, and over the whole mountain side.



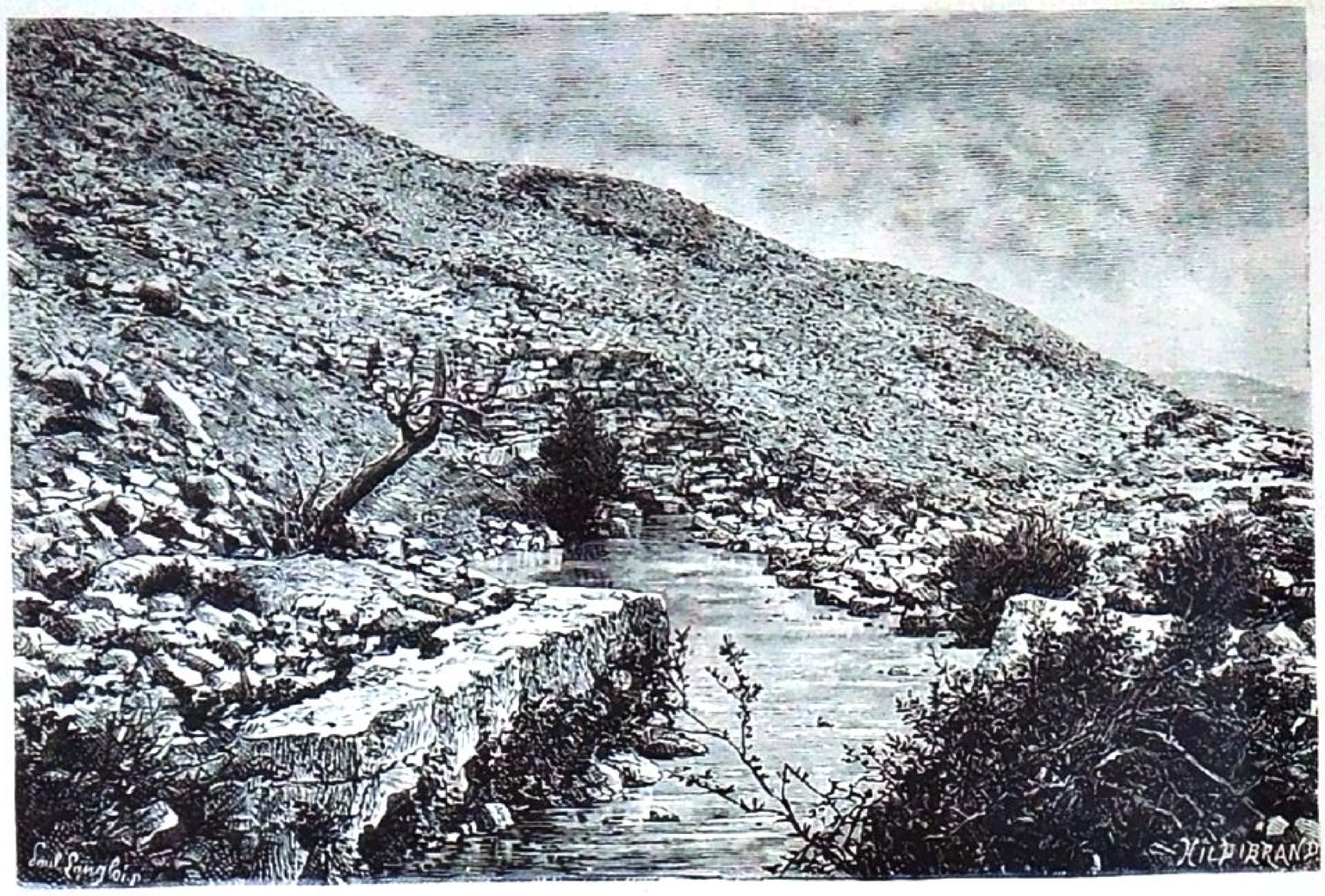
RUINS OF AQUEDUCT, PLAIN OF THE JORDAN, AND VIEW OF MOUNT QUARANTANA.

Yet the country was utterly deserted. Neither man nor beast was visible. The highways lie waste; the wayfaring man has ceased; the earth mourneth and languisheth. I climbed the ridge by a zigzag path, admiring, as I ascended, the multitudes of bright flowers on all the slopes and on the broad natural terraces. The finest parterre on an English lawn could scarcely surpass the glow and variety of colour. Whole fields of

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THE PLAIN OF THE VALLEY OF JERICHO.

ON one occasion I travelled from Jerusalem to the ford of Damieh by Jericho, and I had a good opportunity of seeing a large portion of the plain of the Jordan not often visited. I entered the plain by the narrow road that has been hewn out at some remote period along the side of a precipice on the bank of Wady el-Kelt—the *Brook Cherith* of Scripture. The whole road from Jerusalem is infested now, as it was in the



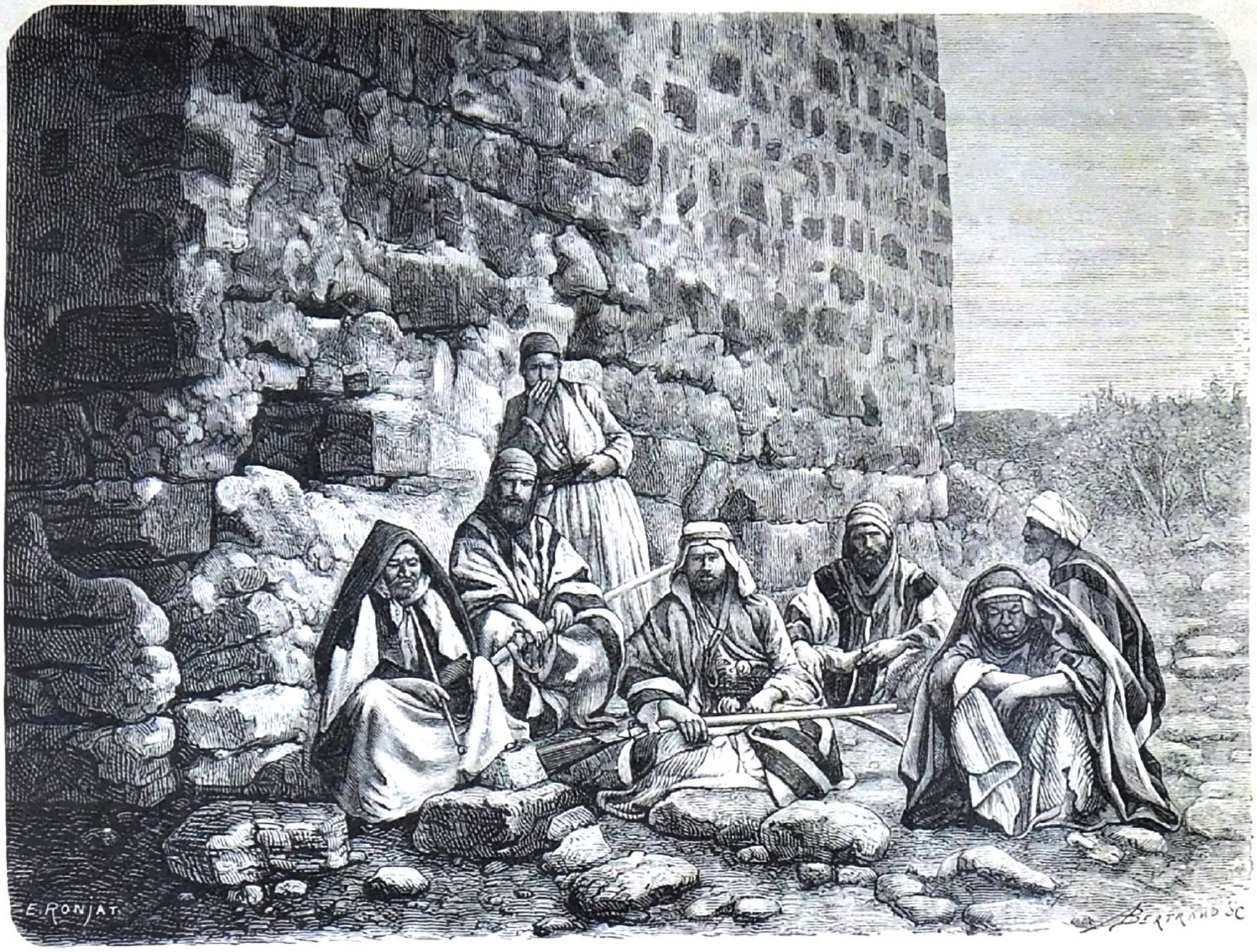
AIN ES-SULTAN, OR FOUNTAIN OF ELISHA.

days of our Lord, by bands of robbers; recognized, perhaps I should say patronized, by the Pasha of Jerusalem, since their chief is the official escort for all travellers from the Holy City to the Jordan. The view one gets from the brow of the ravine is very grand. Below the path, a thousand feet or more, is the torrent, forcing its way in sheets of foam between the rocks. On the opposite side rise the steep slopes of the mountain of Quarantana, all pierced with the dark openings of caves and grottoes, once the homes of anchorites. Before us, low down, is the valley of the Jordan, most of it white and bare, but with an expanse of verdure opening like a fan from the mouth of the ravine. In the midst of the verdure we can distinguish some enclosures and mounds that mark the site of the Jericho that Joshua captured. The ruins of the Jericho of the New Testament lie along the banks of the Cherith, close to the foot of the pass. The Jordan is not visible, but the

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The poor hamlet of *Rîha* is the only modern representative in name of the Biblical city of JERICHO. It possesses nothing of interest except the name. Its few inhabitants are not only poor, but they seem weak in physique, and they are profligate in character. The houses are rudely constructed of stone and mud, and covered with brush, clay, and gravel. Each house has a small open court, where men, women, children, goats, and dogs dwell in common. Near the village is a square tower which may possibly date back to the Crusades. At present it is the residence of the local governor. The palms for which Jericho was once celebrated, and which gave it the name "City of Palm Trees," have all gone except one, which stands, or stood, in solitary grandeur near the old tower, "the last tree of the forest."



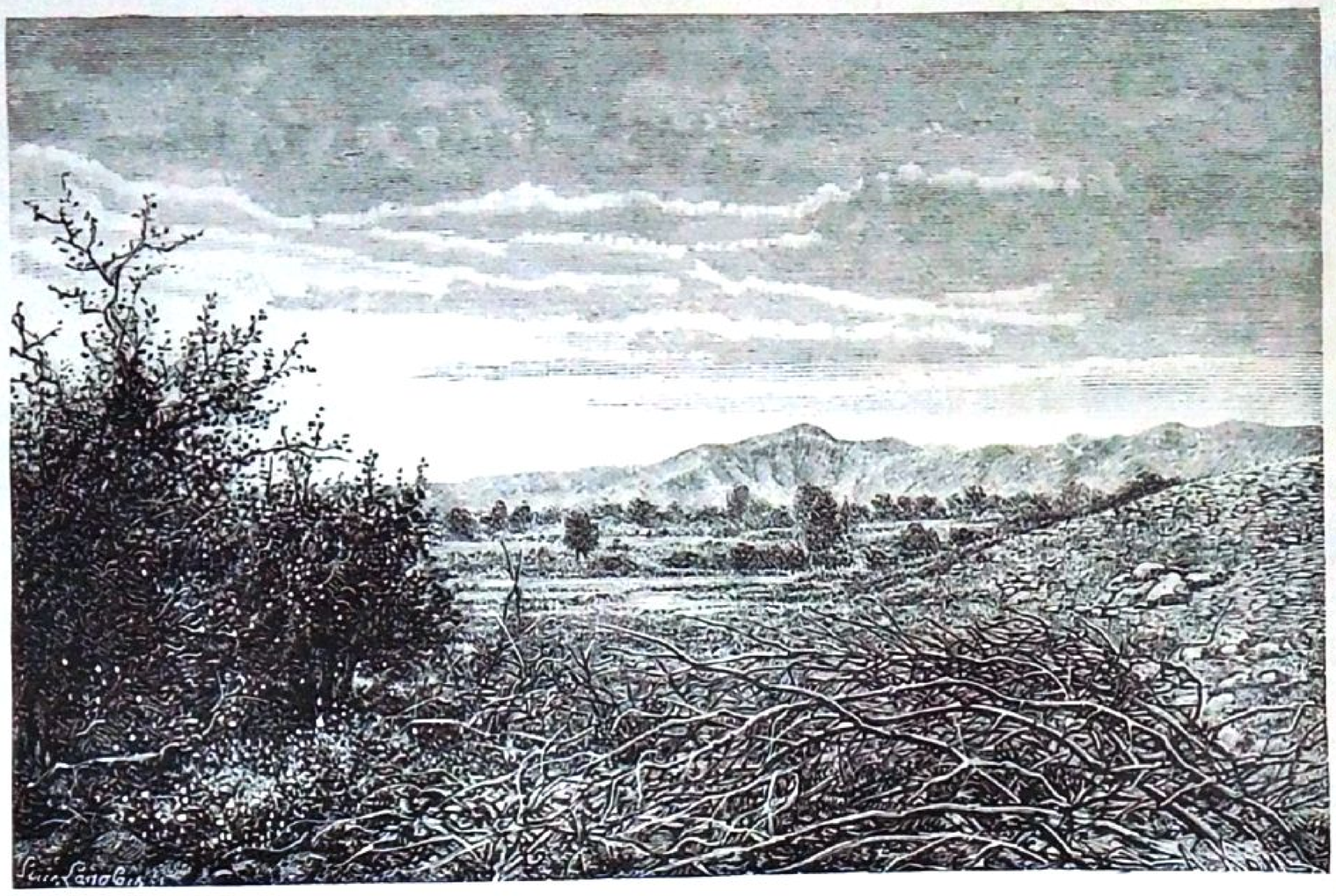
TOWER OF JERICHO.

When I came down from Jerusalem to Jericho, it was my intention to cross the Jordan direct to Moab, but it was "the time of harvest," and the river was impassable. I was therefore compelled to journey up the plain to the ford of Damieh. The ride was long, the day was scorching hot, and there was not even the shadow of a great rock in that weary land. The path lay for a time through well-tilled fields; then after passing several muddy ravines, cut deeply by mountain torrents in the soft strata, we left verdure

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comes from one of the numerous fountains near the hills, or it may be a branch drawn from "the brook Cherith."

Gilgal is a place of no little interest for the Bible student. In its camp the people observed, for the first time after leaving Egypt, the rite of circumcision; hence its name. The Lord said to Joshua, "This day have *I rolled away* the reproach of Egypt from off you." The root of the word *Gilgal* signifies "to roll away;" and now, after the lapse of more than three thousand years, the name clings to the spot still—a memorial of one of the greatest events in Bible history. The city was celebrated in after ages as an assize station of Samuel; as the place where Saul was proclaimed first king of Israel, and



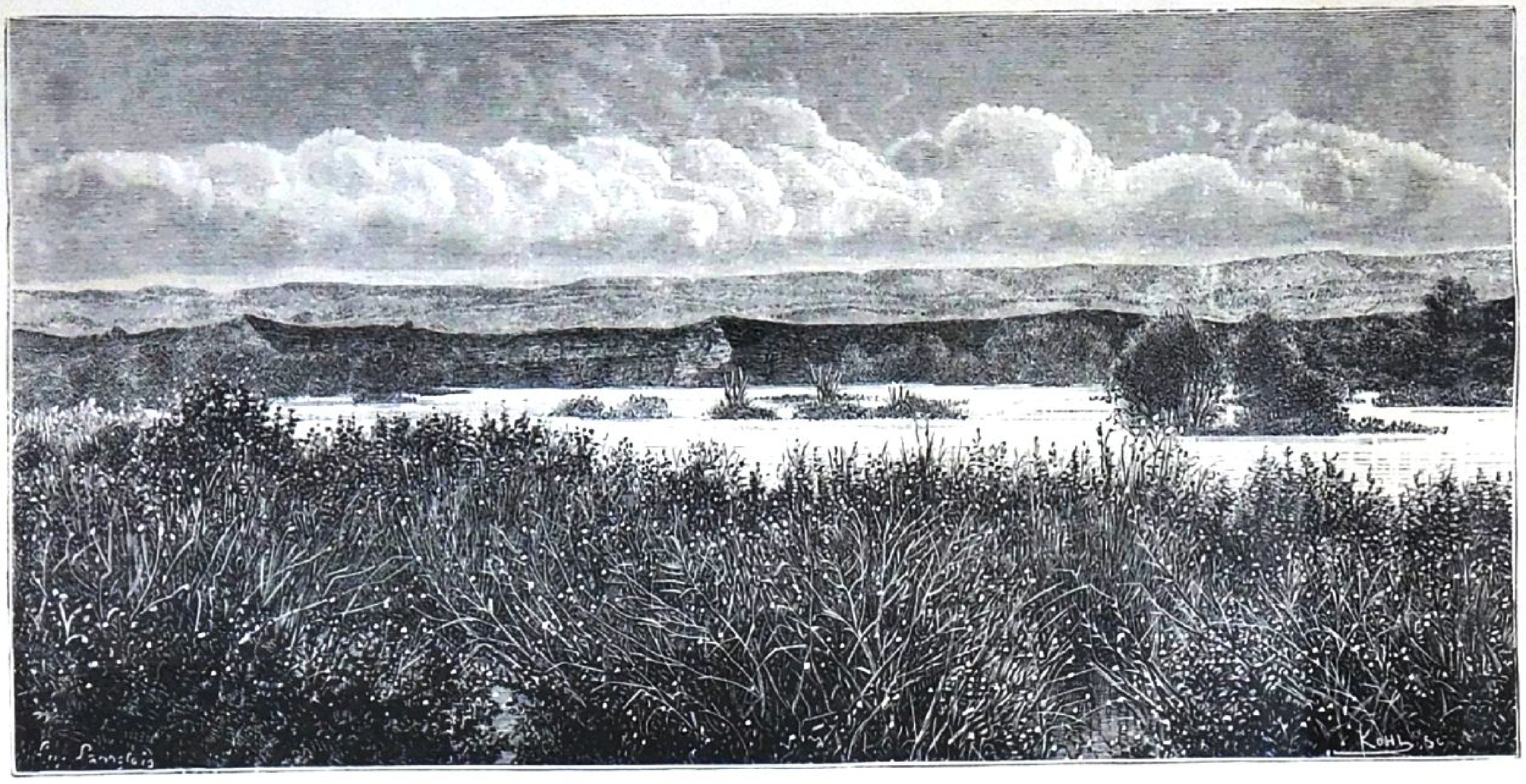
JILJULIEH (GILGAL).

where he committed that act of disobedience to God which cost him his kingdom (1 Sam. xi. 15, xiii. 13); here the tribe of Judah assembled to welcome David back from exile (2 Sam. xix. 15); and here Elisha performed several of his miracles—the healing of the poisoned pot, the cure of Naaman, and the punishment of his unfaithful servant Gehazi (2 Kings iv., v.). It is probable that the early sanctity of Gilgal served to make the adjoining city of Jericho a school of the prophets, after Gilgal itself had fallen to ruin.

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plain not far from the course of the Cherith. At the spot, which is called the ford of Hajleh, the Jordan makes a wide curve, having deep water and a rapid current on the eastern bank, and shallow water with a pebbly strand on the western. The bed of the river is wide, and in it are several little islands.

One of the most curious ceremonies observed by the Christians in Palestine is the bathing in the Jordan—the Latins here, the Greeks a little higher up. The rite is the same in both. On the Monday of Passion Week several thousands come down from Jerusalem, and encamp for the night on the site of Gilgal. Nearly every nationality in Europe has its representatives there, and the costumes are even more varied than the races. The Governor of Jerusalem, or his deputy, with an armed escort, accompanies them. The march over the plain is striking and picturesque; in some respects it is unique,—



BATHING-PLACE OF THE LATINS, ON THE JORDAN.

the gaily-caparisoned Turkish horse, the tall and stately camels with ornamented howdahs perched on the hump; the Arab sheikhs careering on their fleet steeds, poising and shaking their tufted spears; the troops of donkeys trotting patiently; and the long train of white-robed pilgrims pacing solemnly as if at a funeral. The sounds too are strange: the yells of the Bedawîn, the piercing chant of the women, the kettle-drums of the soldiers, the tom-toms of the camp-followers, all combine to fill the air with sounds that defy description.

On Tuesday morning, long before dawn, the motley crowd sets out with torches and lanterns for the Jordan. Old and young, men and women, go down together into the water. It is a part of their religion, therefore they go through it regardless of discomfort, sometimes even of decency. The bath or baptism over, they set out again on their journey to Jerusalem.

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BETH-HOGLA.

SOME two miles west of this ford, upon the desert plain, is a fountain surrounded by thickets of tamarisk, and a thorny shrub called *Spina Christi*, "Christ's Thorn." The water springs up in a circular basin of masonry of an old type; and not far distant is a ruin called the Castle of *Hajla*. It is evidently a monastery built by the Crusaders, but upon an older site. Within are no less than three chapels. The encircling wall is strong and defended by flanking towers. In one of the chapels are a few Greek inscriptions; but one only is important. It is to the following effect: "Holy Silvester, Pope of Rome." Silvester was Pope in A.D. 998, and this fixes approximately the date of the building.

But the name *Hogla* points to a far more remote period. Beth-Hogla was an ancient town of Canaan, and in the division of the land it is placed by Joshua on the border of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (xv. 6, xviii. 19). It is thus an important geographical landmark.

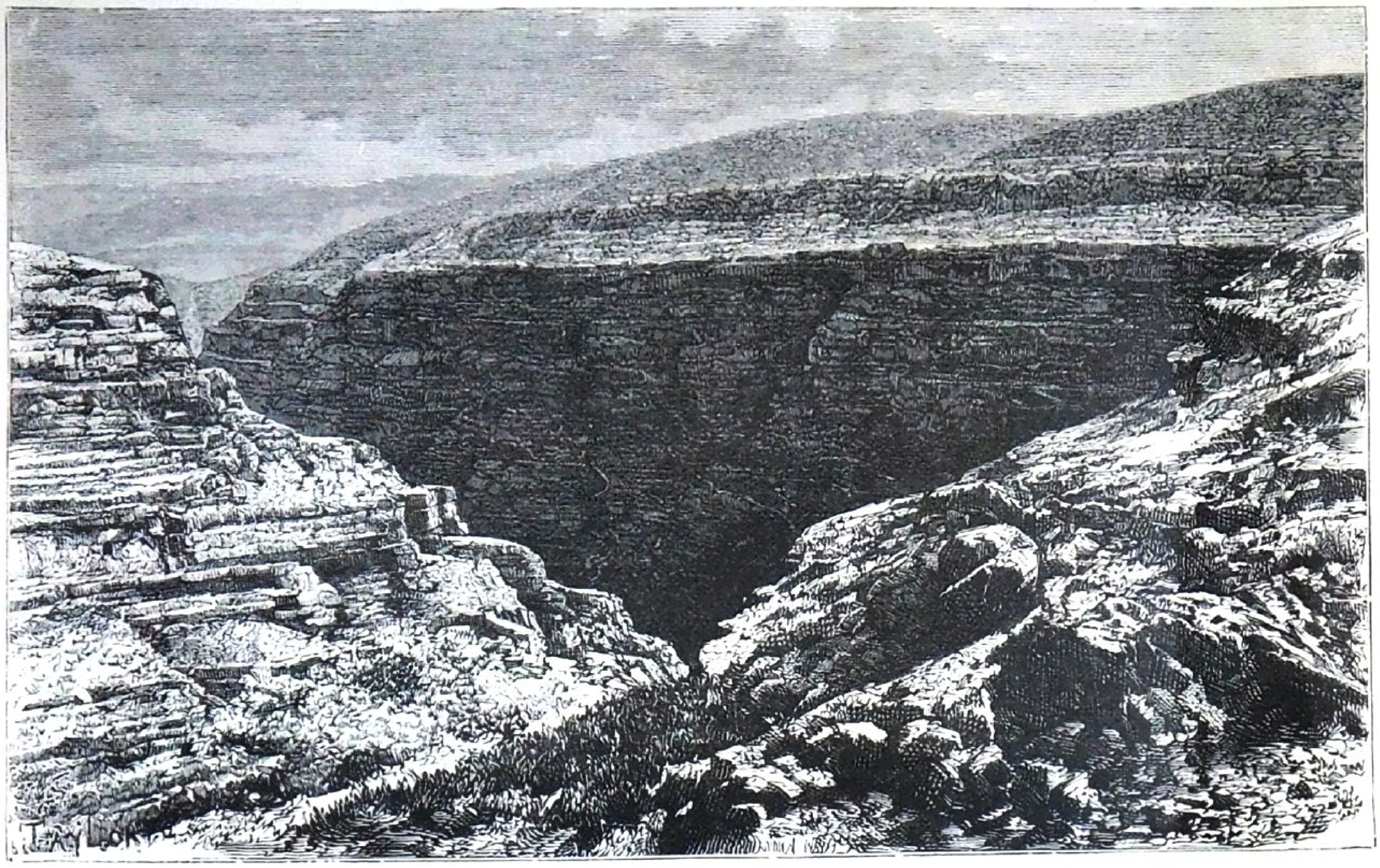
THE DEAD SEA.

FROM Beth-Hogla to the mouth of the Jordan is just three miles. As we go down, the plain becomes more and more barren. All vegetation ceases. The surface is deeply furrowed with water-courses, and is covered with a white nitrous crust, resembling hoar frost, through which the horses' feet sink with a crisp crackling sound. The aspect is dreary in the extreme, and a more perfect picture of utter desolation could scarcely be imagined. The river widens out considerably, the current becomes sluggish, and the bed slimy. There are still a few tamarisks on the banks, and one sees here the curious shrub *osher*, called apple of Sodom. On reaching the shore of the sea we find a broad margin of coarse gravel, strewn with pieces of dead timber, branches of trees, and other objects carried down by the Jordan and deposited along the beach. But there is no life, animal or vegetable, and everything that lies close to the water is covered with an incrustation of salt.

The *Dead Sea* is a mystery, physical and historical. It is well named *Dead*, for there is no life in it; and, as it seems, there can be none. The reason is, its water contains twenty-

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south-eastern shore, a distance of about five miles up the centre. The part of the sea north of the promontory is a basin of great depth; that to the south, on the other hand, is very shallow, only a few feet of water covering the slimy bottom. From the point of the promontory, which is called, doubtless from its peculiar shape, *El-Lisân* ("The Tongue"), there is a ford to the western shore; but it is dangerous, owing to the bitumen pits which abound in the whole southern section of the sea. Lying in a deep caldron-like valley, surrounded by naked white cliffs, and exposed during the long Syrian summer to the unclouded beams of the sun, nothing could be expected along its shores but sterility, and this of course is greatly increased by the saltness of the water, which is fatal to life.



WADY EN-NAR, WILDERNESS OF JUDÆA.

Strange to say, also, most of the little fountains along its shores are brackish. These things gave rise in olden times to strange stories of poisonous exhalations which made the shores fatal to all who attempted to settle on them, and even killed birds on the wing. But such tales are fabulous. True, the intense heat causes great evaporation, rendering the air heavy and dark, and filling some of the adjoining marshes with malaria. But otherwise the region is not specially unhealthy. Wherever there is a spring of sweet water, as at *Ain Feshkah* or Engedi, verdure is as fresh, shrubs as luxuriant, as in more genial climes. There, too, the Arab pitches his tent and feeds his flocks, and the birds sing sweetly. In fact, some of those favoured spots round the Dead Sea might serve as sanitariums for those afflicted with chest-disease.

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found in layers and broken fragments on the plains and in the ravines; bitumen is ejected in great masses from the bottom of the sea towards the south, and floats on the surface; earthquakes are frequent, and during their occurrence the ejection of bitumen is much more abundant. Now arises the important question: How were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed? The Biblical narrative is very clear; but one asks naturally—Are there any traces of the cities remaining? Are there any physical evidences of the great convulsion mentioned in the Pentateuch? Can we by modern research throw light upon the nature of the terrible catastrophe?

The name *Sodom*, which means "burning," would seem to indicate that marks of fire had passed over the plain at some pre-historic period; and in the Scripture account of the battle of the five eastern kings with the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, it is said the plain was full of bitumen pits, into which many fell; and bitumen, we know, is very inflammable. Immediately before the destruction of the cities Abraham was in his tent at Hebron. There he received the angels, and made his earnest appeal for sparing mercy. It was in vain. Early the following morning he went out to some commanding eminence, and "looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain,..... and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace" (Gen. xix. 28). We gather from this that the doomed cities were situated toward the southern end of the Dead Sea, for otherwise Abraham could not have seen them from any point within easy distance of Hebron.

The precise manner in which the Lord destroyed the cities is not stated; but it would seem that fire caught the inflammable bitumen around them, so as to consume them, and to make the whole plain like a furnace. May it not be that the houses were built of hard calcareous bitumen, which abounds in the valley; and that they were cemented, like the tower of Babel, with pure bitumen? Thus they would be in the highest degree inflammable. The fire was probably the result of volcanic action, thrown up from some crater, and then "rained down" upon the plain. Earthquakes usually accompany volcanic action, and when they occur now in the Jordan valley, masses of bitumen are thrown up from the bottom of the lake. Such masses ejected from the ground during the conflagration would add fuel to the flame, and create just such a scene as is described in the book of Genesis. It would be no unnatural effect of such causes, either so to upheave the bottom of the ancient lake as to make its water overflow the scorched vale of Sodom, or so to depress this section of the vale as that the water would cover it. I have stated that the section of the lake lying to the south of the promontory of Lisan is very shallow, and that bitumen often rises out of it. The opinion I have, therefore, been led to form is, that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah stood here, that they were totally consumed, and that the water of the Dead Sea now covers their sites.

This view is, I think, to some extent corroborated by the natural features of the

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about five miles long, and several hundred feet high. It is one vast mass of mineral salt. Great blocks have fallen from it, and lie on the slimy beach. The whole ground is impregnated with salt, and brackish streams are constantly flowing from the ridge into the sea.

ENGEDI.

ABOUT half-way along the western shore of the Dead Sea is the fountain of *Engedi*, so well known in connection with the adventurous life of King David. The name *Engedi*, both in Hebrew and Arabic, signifies "Fountain of the Kid;" and to this day the wild glens and rocks around it are a favourite haunt of the wild goat. The fountain is some six hundred feet above the sea, in a recess of the mountain side. The water is pure and sweet, but, strange to say, it has a temperature of 86° Fahr., showing that here



STREAM AND SITE OF ENGEDI, DEAD SEA.

also, far beneath the surface, is the smouldering fire which produced such terrible destruction in long bygone ages. The stream dashes madly over rock and crag, bordered here and there with luxuriant shrubs, among which I observed the mimosa, the lotus, and the strange *osher*. The oleander is also here, and lower down are dense cane-brakes.

At the foot of the mountain is a fertile plain, about half a mile square, sloping gently to the edge of the water, and shut in on the north by lofty white cliffs. The plain is cultivated, and, I was told, yields abundant harvests to its Arab owners. With such a soil

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to that wilderness in which David kept his father's sheep, and in which he afterwards found refuge from the persecutions of Saul. "It was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats" (1 Sam. xxiv. 1, 2). It is one of the most desolate regions in Palestine; and its ravines and caves and rugged uplands afford ample shelter for the fugitive and the outlaw.

Along the banks of the streamlet of Engedi the singular shrub called by the Arabs *osher* grows abundantly. The stem is stout, measuring sometimes nearly a foot in



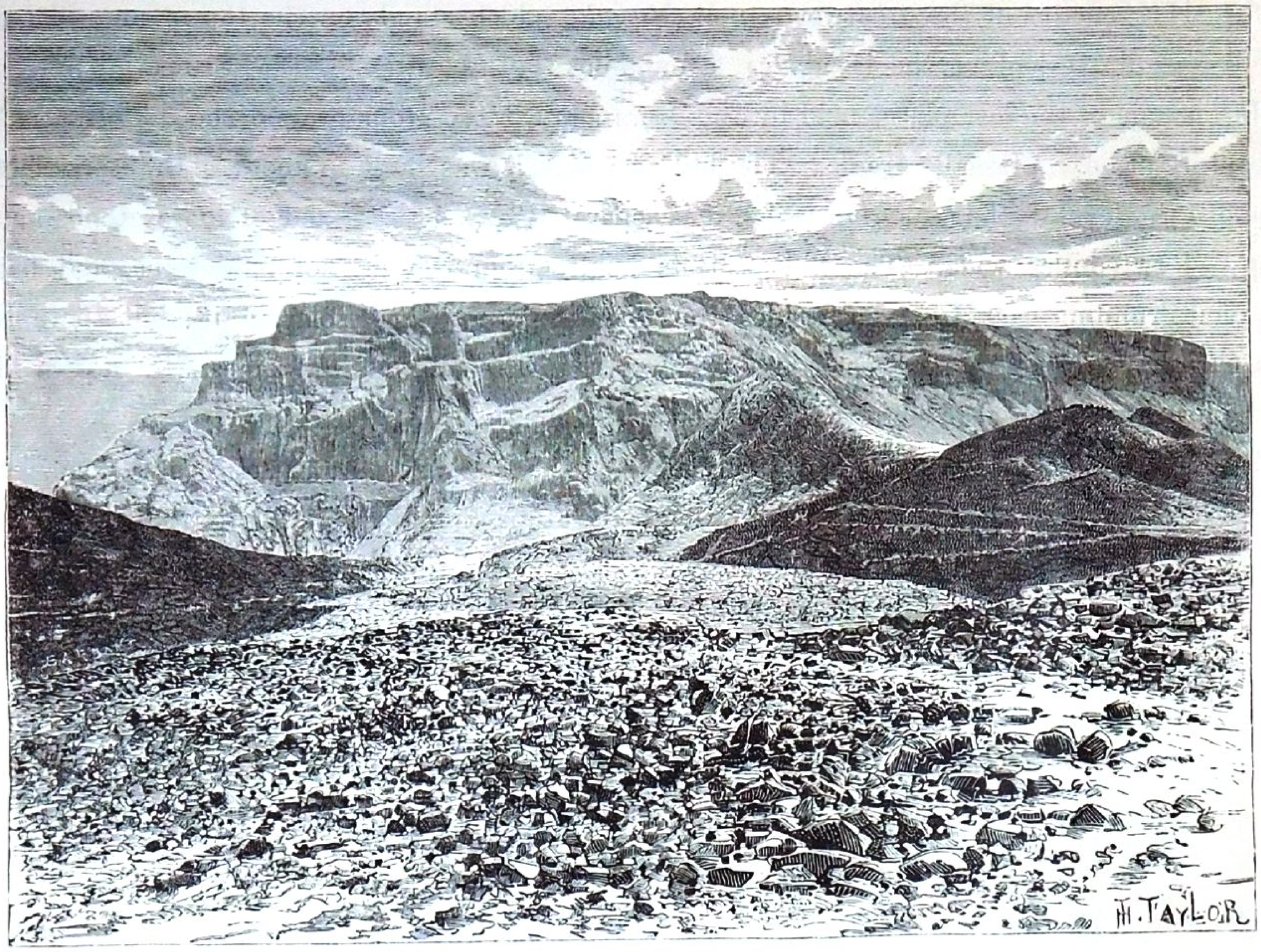
Stream of Ain Jidy, Dead Sea.

diameter, and the plant grows to a height of fifteen feet or more. It has a grayish bark and long oval leaves, which, when broken off, discharge a milky fluid. The fruit resembles an apple, and hangs in clusters of two or three. When ripe it is of a rich yellow colour, but on being pressed it explodes like a puff-ball. It is filled chiefly with air. In the centre a slender pod runs through it from the stem, and is joined by filaments of a silky substance to the rind. This is the so-called "apple of Sodom," of which Josephus narrates the wondrous legend, after describing the ruin of Sodom and the burning of the plain: "There are still to be seen ashes reproduced in fruits, which resemble eatable

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each side; the glens running up from them; the precipice in front; the purple-tinted peaks and cliffs; the Dead Sea unfolding itself from the mouth of the Jordan to the salt hills of Sodom; the mountain range of Moab rising in broken cliffs from the bosom of the sea, and running along the horizon far away to the right and left, like a colossal wall —these make up a picture of grandeur and beauty almost unequalled.

We are now prepared to hear the story of Masada as it is told by Josephus. It was founded by Jonathan Maccabæus, and enlarged and strengthened two centuries later by Herod the Great. Just before the siege of Jerusalem, the Sicarii—bands of Jewish free-

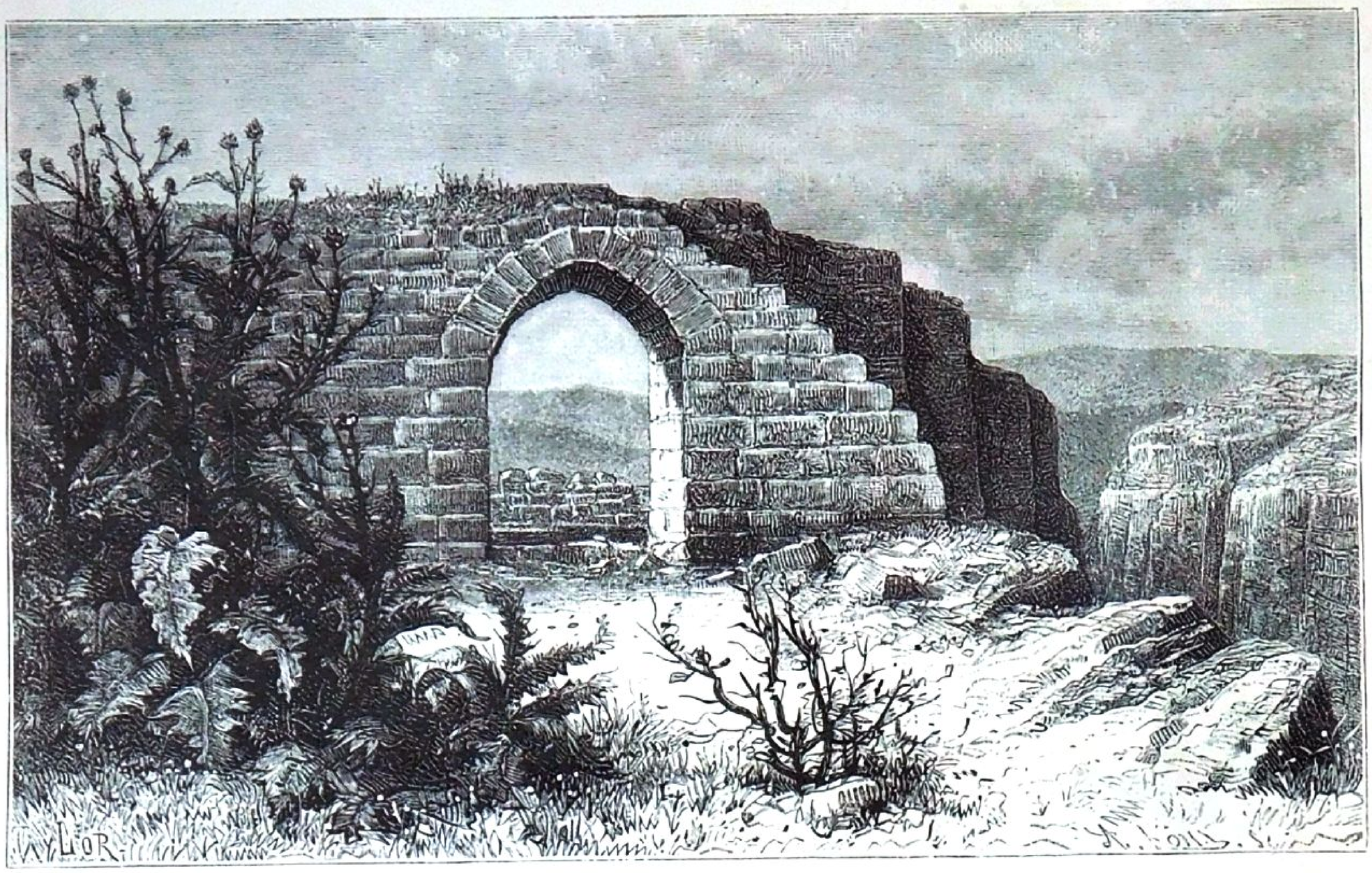


MASADA AND THE HILL LEUKE.
(*From the West.*)

booters who devoted their lives to the avenging of the wrongs of their brethren upon the Romans—took possession of the fortress. As evils accumulated on their country, and they suffered severely in their raids, they became reckless, and the separating line between friend and foe was not very distinctly drawn. The whole of Palestine was laid under contribution, and trembled at the very name Sicarii. After the destruction of the Holy City, Masada was invested by the Romans. It was commanded by Eleazar, a skilful and brave man. The attack was directed against the western side, and a huge mound constructed for the purpose of commanding the gate, and throwing arrows and blazing fagots

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These words, and others still more exciting which followed, drove the garrison to frenzy. They embraced their wives and children, and then stabbed them. This scene of carnage being ended, they heaped up all the treasures of the fortress in one pile and burned them. Ten of their number were chosen by lot to kill the rest. The victims calmly lay down, each beside his dead wife and children, and presented their breasts to the executioners. The remaining ten selected by lot one of their number to kill nine, and afterwards himself. The nine were slain; and we are told that he who now stood alone inspected the prostrate multitude to see that not one remained alive, then drove his sword through his body and fell dead beside his family.



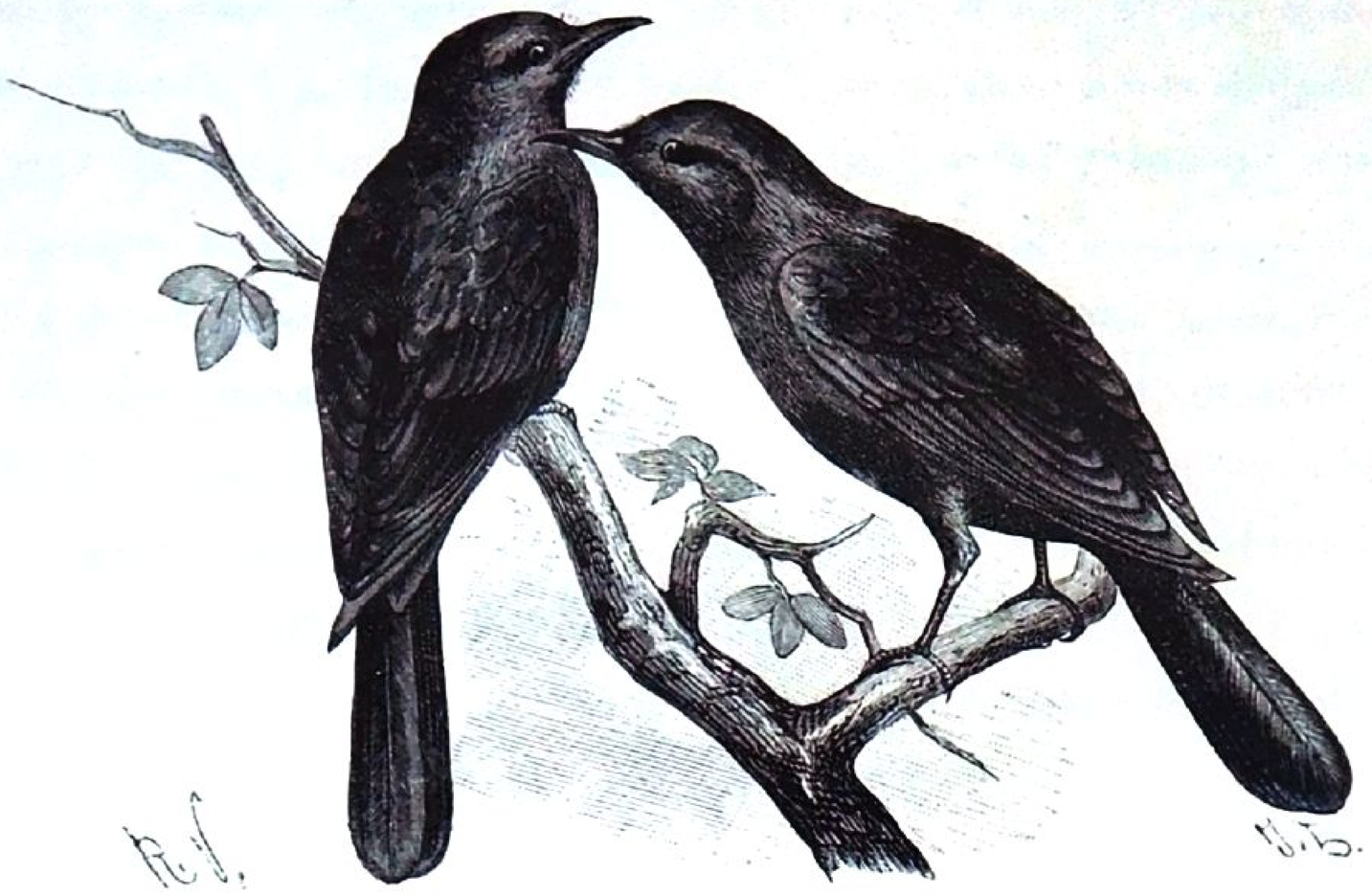
GATEWAY OF MASADA.

Even after the lapse of seventeen centuries one can scarce look on the scene of such a fearful tragedy without a thrill of horror. The garrison believed all would thus perish together, but there remained a few to tell the tale. An old woman, and another woman of superior rank, a relative of Eleazar, with five children, concealed themselves in the vaults, and thus escaped. When the Romans entered they saw the dead bodies, and raised a shout of triumph. Then the women and children came out of their hiding-place and told the tale. After this tragedy the name of Masada disappeared from history; and though some of its ruins show that it was for a time occupied by Christian monks, I can find no record of the fact.

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two stories high, with a heavily-grated door twenty feet from the ground, reached by a ladder which is carefully removed by the convent servants when any adventurous lady enters. Here Madame Pfeiffer spent a night in utter solitude, and I question whether, in all her wanderings over the world, she ever looked out on a scene of sterner desolation.

St. Saba, the founder of the convent, is said to have been born in the year 439. He was a man of extraordinary sanctity, and certainly no stronger proof could be given of the veneration in which he was held than the fact, if fact it be, that he attracted thousands of devoted followers to this dreary and desolate desert. The fame of his piety was only surpassed by that of his miracles. Among the most useful of them was the creation of a spring of pure water, which may still be seen in a cave in the bottom of the ravine. He died in 532 at the patriarchal age of ninety-four.



ORANGE-WINGED GRAKLES (AMYDRUS TRISTRAMII).

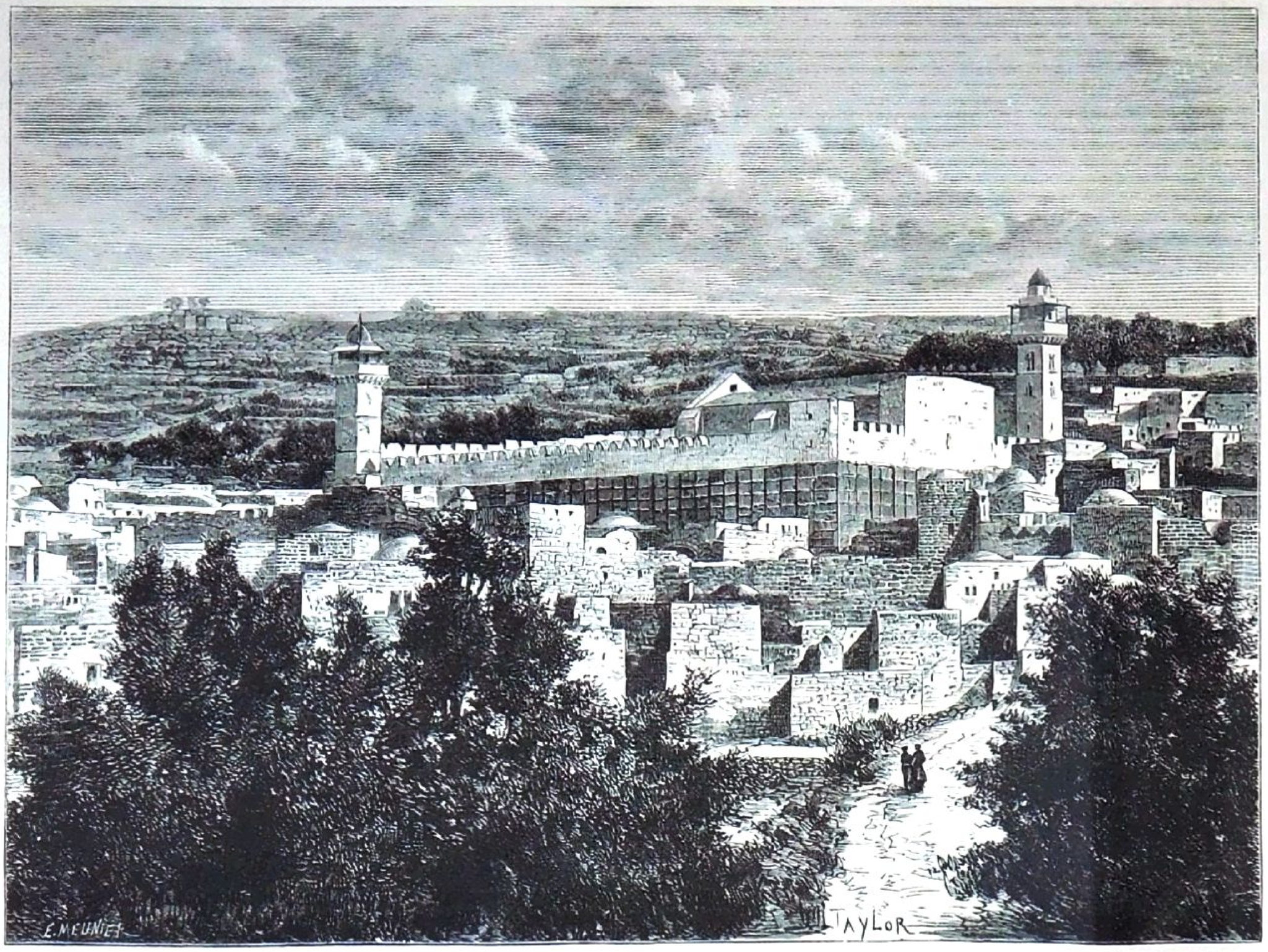
The subsequent history of the convent is, like that of many another in this land, stained with blood. It was repeatedly plundered and its inmates massacred. To this day the wild Arabs hover round it, restrained from deeds of violence partly by the strength of the walls and partly by superstitious fears of powerful *genii* who are supposed to be special guardians of the monks. It is said to be one of the richest convents in Palestine, and this is not a very safe reputation. It possesses some fine old plate, and in its library are a number of rare manuscripts.

There is a curious tradition attached to one of its rock grottoes—the shrine of the building, in fact. It is said to be the cell in which St. Saba first settled and spent most of his after life. It was originally a lion's den, and was in occupation of the lion when the saint visited it and resolved to found there a religious establishment. After inspecting the grotto, St. Saba was satisfied that it would serve for his own residence. He said

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father of Anak, progenitor of the Anakim (Joshua xxi. 11). It afterwards took for a time the name *Mamre*, doubtless from Abraham's friend Mamre the Amorite, who then ruled it.

The chief interest of Hebron consists in its having been the favourite home of Abraham. Here he received the angel of the Lord in his tent, and here Sarah died. The patriarch then bought from Ephron the Hittite the only portion of the Promised Land he could ever call his own—the cave and field of Machpelah. In the cave he buried Sarah; in the cave he was himself laid; there, too, were buried Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah, and after a long interval the embalmed body of Jacob. The cave is still here,



THE HARAM (MACHPELAH), HEBRON.

one of the most venerated spots in Palestine known to and honoured by Moslems, Jews, and Christians alike. The cave is covered with a massive quadrangular building of unknown age. It is one hundred and ninety-eight feet long, one hundred and twelve wide, and forty high. The walls are built of huge stones, varying from twelve to about twenty-five feet in length. The edges of the stones are grooved to a depth of nearly an inch, and finely chiselled, so that the wall has the appearance of panel-work. The exterior is further ornamented with pilasters, supporting a plain cornice. The entire structure is thus unique. Its style shows its Jewish origin.

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like to explore the interior and enter those sepulchral caves which have been guarded with such religious care for so many centuries. For the present that is impossible; it would rouse the fanatical spirit of the Moslems to madness. Even as it is they resent all attempts on the part of strangers to enter the court and mosque, and they state emphatically that the passage to the caves has long been walled up. It is not only possible, but highly probable, that some remains of the patriarchs, especially of the embalmed body of Jacob, still lie in the cave. Much older mummies have recently been exhumed from the cave of Deir el-Bahry in Egypt. The day may not be far distant when the mystery will be solved.

Hebron is one of the four holy cities of the Jews, and a little colony of devotees cluster here round the sepulchre of their great ancestor. They are not permitted to enter the Haram; but there is a hole in the exterior wall where the natural rock can be touched, and this they kiss, as they do the great stones of the "Wailing Place" in Jerusalem.

ABRAHAM'S OAK.

ONE other object attracts the notice of visitors to Hebron—*Abraham's Oak.* It is a venerable tree of great size and of great age, standing in the open valley about two miles from the city. It is alone—there is no other tree near it; and within the last few years it has been encircled by a wall and taken in charge by a special guardian, so as to preserve it from the hands and knives of pilgrims and others. Its trunk is short and gnarled, about twenty-four feet in girth; its branches are wide-spreading, but some of the largest have been broken off by winter winds, and sold at a high price to trinket-makers in Jerusalem. It may not be so old as tradition says, but it is the last representative of those oaks of Mamre under whose shade Abraham communed with his God and received angels as his guests. A good house where travellers can find fair accommodation has recently been built near the tree. All round the oak, in the valley, and on the carefully-terraced hill-sides, we see those vines and grapes of Eshcol which remind us of that incident recorded in the Pentateuch, when the spies were sent out by Moses to view the land: "And they came unto the valley of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it upon a staff between two. That place was called the valley of *Eshcol*, because of the *cluster* which the children of Israel cut down from thence" (Num. xiii. 23, 24).

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