

self-taught, and among some locks that were shown to me as the work of the son, in imitation of English ones, with the name of Wilson upon them, there were several that would not have disgraced an European artist. When we talked of the perfection to which this manufactory was brought in England, and the improved methods used in the working of metals there, as far as I was myself imperfectly acquainted with them, the old man swore by his beard, that if I would take him to that country, only for a few months, that he might witness these wonders, as he called them, he would serve me in the capacity of servant, or soldier, or groom, or any thing in short that I might command, during the whole of the way.

We continued up until past midnight, with scarcely an interval of silence; and every thing that I saw of the venerable pilgrim-chief, during that time, impressed me with an idea of benevolence, meekness, and goodness of heart, superior to any thing that I had ever yet witnessed in Turk or Arab. To increase the obligation under which he had already laid us to his kindness, he insisted upon our being accompanied, from hence to Nablous, by one of his own horsemen, who would be answerable for our security, as the road, he said, was perfectly impassable without some protection of that kind. This was, therefore, ordered, and bidding this excellent old man adieu, as we intended to depart at sunrise, we all retired to repose.

17th. We were stirring with the dawn, but early as the hour was, we were not suffered to depart without our morning cup of coffee, and a supply of provision for the way.

Our route lay to the southward, in which direction we went for about an hour, in a narrow valley, with stony hills on both sides, when at eight o'clock we reached a large village, called Jabbaugh. This is seated on a hill, and surrounded by valleys filled with olive-trees. Several marks of superior industry began to appear in the cultivation of the soil; and the face of the country, though more rugged, was far more fertile than before.

After quitting this village, the road was very hilly; but instead of the parched brown of the plains below, we were gratified by the sight of young corn and verdant spots, even to the mountain top. Small villages were seen on eminences around us in every direction, and the whole scene bore an appearance of active industry. This striking difference between the state of the hill-country and the plain, is to be sought for, perhaps, rather in the character of the inhabitants of these separate districts, than in the influence of its respective governments, as imagined by some travellers.* The tyranny of Djezzar no longer remains to check the efforts of industry through his fine territory; but, on the contrary, Suliman, the present Pasha of Acre, bears universally a higher character for benevolence, equity, and liberal government, than any of those who have lately held the pashalic of Damascus in their hands.

The country known by the name of Samaria, joined to Galilee on the north, and to Judea on the south; and commencing at Ginea, Ginnan, or Gennin, at the termination of the great plain of Esdraelon, extended as far as the toparchy of Acrabatena, towards Jerusalem. The description given of the face of the country, its soil, and productions, as resembling that of Judea, is so far true, that both are composed of abrupt and rugged hills, and differ essentially from the plains of Galilee. But while in Judea the hills are mostly as bare as the imagination could paint them, and a few of the narrow valleys only are fertile; in Samaria, the very summits of the eminences are as well clothed as the sides of them. These, with the luxuriant valleys which they enclose, present scenes of unbroken verdure in almost every point of view, which are delightfully variegated by the picturesque forms of the hills and vales themselves, enriched by the occasional sight of wood and water, in clusters of olive and other trees, and rills and torrents running among them.

At nine o'clock, continuing still over hilly ground, we reached

* Dr. Clarke's Travels, vol. ii. c. 15. p. 503.

the village of Beit-Emireen *, which contains about forty dwellings. It is seated on a rising ground, on a chalky soil, and surrounded by valleys thickly wooded with olive-trees.

At ten we were nearly opposite to Subussta, having it on our right; and as it formed a convenient spot to refresh at, we turned out of the common path about a furlong to make our halt there. A circular ruin, appearing to be the eastern end of an old Christian church, made a picturesque appearance as it rose on the brow of the hill; and beyond it, towards the summit, several columns of some more ancient buildings, were still erect. In entering Subussta, we saw in the road an old stone sarcophagus, and not far from it a pent-roofed cover, both at the foot of the hill on which the present village stands. This village consists only of about thirty dwellings, all extremely humble, and the place is governed by its own sheikh, who is himself a husbandman. It is seated on a stony hill, but is surrounded by fruitful valleys and abundance of olive-trees, and occupies a commanding, as well as a pleasant situation.

The city of Samaria was the capital of the country included under that name, and stood pretty nearly in the centre of it. Its first foundation is ascribed to Omri, who, after the death of his rival, Tibni, was acknowledged by the people of Israel as their king, in the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah. "And he bought the hill Samaria, of Shemer, for two talents of silver †, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, *Samaria*." ‡

After an evil reign, Omri was himself buried there; and his son, Ahab, who succeeded him, set up an altar, with a house or temple which he had erected to Baal the god of the Sidonians, in the city of his father. § The name of the country, however, seems to have

* بيت اميرين the house of the two princes.

† Equal to 684*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* sterling

‡ 1 Kings, xvi. 24.

§ 1 Kings, xvi. 28—32.

been established before ; as in a preceding part of the same chronicles, the cities of Samaria, and all the houses of the high-places within them, are spoken of. Some, indeed, have thought this said of the city of Omri in anticipation, by a *prolepsis* ; but when the country retained always the name of Samaria, as well as this city standing on the hill of Shemer, it is easy to conceive the preceding passage as applying to the high places of idolatrous worship which existed previous to the building of the city, in the towns of Samaria generally.

It was during the reign of Ahab, the son of Omri, that this city was besieged by Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, who led with him all his host, and carried thirty and two kings with him from beyond Euphrates *, in his train. The insolence of his message, and the servility of the answer returned to it by Ahab, could scarcely be justified in either, even by the presence of such an overpowering force ; but the effects of such submission were, as they always are with tyrants, to heighten arrogance. Not content with being allowed to say, "Thy silver and thy gold is mine, thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine," he desired that the lowest of his servants should lay their hands on whatever was pleasant in their eyes. The infuriate and boasting vow which followed the refusal is quite in the spirit of eastern bombast : "And Ben-hadad sent unto him and said, the gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me." While the sarcastic defiance which such a proud message extorted, even from the wavering Ahab, is equally characteristic of the concise sententiousness that as often marked the sayings of the times. "And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." The result proved the difference between these contrasted moments, and showed that

* Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. 8. c. 14. s. 1.

a confidence of victory is not always followed by the attainment of it. *

The people having attributed the victory of the Israelites to their gods, as gods of the hills, advised their leader to draw them into the plain, and instead of the useless kings, to put as many captains in their place. He listened to their voice, and numbered again an army like the army he had lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot. It was at the return of the year that he went up a second time with this formidable host against Samaria, where, as it is emphatically said, "The children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids, while the Syrians *filled* the country." The battle was as fatal to their leader as before; a hundred thousand of his footmen were slain in one day; and of those that fled away to Aphek, a wall fell and destroyed twenty-seven thousand of them. †

The proud Ben-hadad, who had boasted that all Samaria would not afford sufficient earth to yield a handful to each of his followers, was reduced to sue for mercy, in sackcloth and ashes, and bound with ropes about his head as a captive; so that he must then have found the difference between the boast at girding on his harness, and that at putting it off. By this act of humiliation he obtained, however, not only pardon, but the honour of riding in the same chariot with the king himself.

A covenant of peace was concluded, in which Ben-hadad said unto Ahab, "The cities which my father took from thy father, I will restore, and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria." The learned are divided as to whether these were streets, or palaces, or market-places, which were thus to be permitted to the king of Samaria to build in Damascus; but all are agreed that it was a privilege which marked the subjection of Ben-hadad to Ahab. ‡

Like more modern treaties of eternal friendship and alliance;

* See 1 Kings throughout, and Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. viii. c. 14.

† 1 Kings, xx.

‡ Anc. Un. Hist. vol. ii. p. 306. 8vo.

this covenant of peace was soon broken, and in a terrible battle that was fought for the recovery of Ramoth Gilead from the Syrians, Ahab, though he had disguised himself to avoid death, was slain by an arrow from a bow drawn at a venture. His body was brought, however, to Samaria, to be laid in the sepulchre of Omri, his father, the founder of the city; and in a reference to the acts of his life, the *other* cities which he built, and the ivory house which he made, (probably in this his capital of Samaria itself,) are numbered among the works recorded of him in the books of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. *

The third time of this Ben-hadad, the Syrian king, opposing himself to Samaria, was on the occasion of Joram shutting himself up therein, and depending on the strength of its walls. "But Ben-hadad," says the Jewish historian, "supposed he should take the city, if not by his engines of war, yet that he should overcome the Samaritans by famine and the want of necessaries, and so he brought his army upon them, and besieged the city." † The result indeed was as had been anticipated; for the Scriptures say: "And there was a great famine in Samaria, and behold they besieged it until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung ‡ for five pieces of silver." The incident related afterwards, still heightens the picture of the distress to which this siege must have reduced them: "And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barn-floor, or out of the winepress? And the king said unto her, What alleth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I

* 1 Kings, xxii. 39.

† Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. ix. c. 4. s. 4.

‡ Josephus says, that this dove's dung was used as a substitute for salt. — Ant. Jud. l. 9. c. 4. s. 4.

said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him : and she hath hid her son." *

In the reign of Hoshea, one of the subsequent kings of Samaria, and when Ahaz was king of Judah, Shalmanézer, the Assyrian monarch to whom Hoshea was tributary, came up against Samaria to punish him for having sent messengers to the king of Egypt, and for having failed in making the yearly presents which he had formerly done. The Scriptures, in relating this event, briefly say, "Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and in Habor, by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." † It is added, "And the King of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria, instead of the children of Israel; and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof." Josephus confirms this account of the carrying away the ten tribes of Israel into captivity by Shalmanézer, and adds also, that "when he had removed these people out of this their land, he transplanted other nations out of Cuthah, a place so called, (for there is [still] a river of that name in Persia,) into Samaria, and into the country of the Israelites." ‡

The utter ruin of the power of Samaria in this captivity of her people, seems to be alluded to by the Prophet Hosea, when he says, "as for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water." § It is thought by some, that the city was then reduced to a heap of stones, and Micah is referred to as saying so; but though this was the threat made against it by the word which came to the Prophet in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Ezekiah,

* 2 Kings, vi. 26—29. Josephus also quotes Nicolaus of Damascus, who, in his History of Hadad, mentions this laying waste of Samaria. Ant. l. 7. c. 5. s. 2.

† 2 Kings, xvii. 5, 6.

‡ Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. ix. c. 14. s. 1.

§ Hosea, x. 7.

kings of Judah, or about the period of these sieges, its desolation is not mentioned as being made so complete as to "become as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard*," by *this* conquest of it, though it was by a much *later* one. The Scriptures expressly say, that, after the carrying away captive the children of Israel into Assyria, the men that were brought from the countries of the East before enumerated to supply their places, "possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof." † Josephus calls them all Cuthæans, "because," says he, "they were brought out of the country called Cutha, which is a country of Persia, and there is a river of the same name in it; and that is the name," he adds, "by which they have been called to this time, though he acknowledges in the same place, that they were composed of five different ‡ nations." He confirms, however, the fact of their supplying the place of the Israelites led away into captivity, and of their dwelling in Samaria, and following the idolatrous worship of their former gods, though Israelitish priests had been sent back from among the captives in Assyria to teach them the knowledge of the true God. §

In the time of Ezra, or subsequent to the return of the Israelites from their captivity, these foreigners were still dwelling there; these are they who are enumerated as the Dinaites, the Afharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, the Elamites, and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnapper brought over and set in the cities of Samaria. These are they who wrote the letter to Artaxerxes, the king of Persia, telling him, that the Jews whom he had set free from their captivity, had already gone up to Jerusalem, and were rebuilding the walls of this rebellious and bad city; they advised the king to search the book of records

* Micah, i. 6.

† 2 Kings, xvii. 24.

‡ See an able dissertation on the geographical positions of the towns to which these captives were carried, and the nations who replaced them, in Major Rennell's Illustrations of the geography of Herodotus.

§ Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. ix. c. 14. s. 3.; and 2 Kings, xvii. 24. to 31.

of his father, wherein he would find that this was a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they had moved sedition within the same of old time, for which cause the city was destroyed; and after telling the king Artaxerxes it was because they still had their maintenance from his palace, that they could not see him thus dishonoured, they assure him that if this city were to be rebuilt, and the walls thereof set up again, he would not only be deprived of the toll, tribute, and custom, which this country now brought to his revenue, but that he would by this means, soon have no portion on this side the river, or *west* of the Euphrates. The records were searched, the proofs of insurrection, rebellion, and sedition, were found, and the order of Artaxerxes put a stop to the building. *

Until this period, therefore, it was inhabited by this mixed race, and in the time of Amos, they are characterized as a luxurious people, by a figure that will be well understood by those who are conversant with the manners of the East. "Thus saith the Lord, As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria *in the corner of a bed*, and in Damascus *in a couch*; and I will smite the winter-house, with the summer-house, and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the Lord." † Nothing could be more indicative of wealth and luxurious manners than these splendid mansions, suited to the different seasons, and the manner of their reposing in them; and as such a state is too generally acquired by laying heavy burdens on those who find them grievous to be borne, they are most appropriately addressed in the opening of the next chapter. "Hear the word, ye *kine of Bashan* ‡, that

* Ezra, iv. 7—24.

† Amos, iii. 12. 15.

‡ One must have seen the luxuriant pastures among the hills and valleys of Gilead, on the other side of Jordan, to feel the full force of this expression, and to understand what is meant in other places by "the fat bulls of Bashan," who rioted at large in all the abundance which the most fertile lands could bestow.

are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring and let us drink."

When Alexander the Great was occupied in the siege of Tyre, it is said, that all the cities of that part of Syria called Palestine, were surrendered peaceably into his hands, excepting Gaza.* On quitting Syria for Egypt, the Macedonian king left Andromachus in the government of the country; but during his visit to the Temple of Jupiter Hammon in Libya, or, as others have it, after the taking of Tyre and Gaza, these Samaritans, from their constant enmity to the Jews and jealousy of the superior privileges granted to them by Alexander, put Andromachus to a cruel death.†

The news reaching Alexander in Egypt, of the Samaritans having burnt Andromachus alive, he hastened to avenge this barbarous act upon so perfidious a race.‡ These were, indeed, either all executed, or swept away, and such of them as escaped, established themselves in Shechem as their capital, while Alexander banished even those Samaritans who had served in his army ever since the siege of Tyre, as far as into the Thebais, or Upper Egypt, to guard that country.§

Samaria was now peopled by a new race, though still foreigners; and while the remains of the mixed nations that had supplied the place of the Israelites from the *east* were dispersed thus abroad, their successors were an almost equally mixed people from the *west*, composed of Macedonians, and others who served in the

* Arrian. Exped. Alex. l. ii. c. 25.

† Andromachum iis regionibus præposuit, quem Samaritani, perpetui Judæorum hostes, paulo post atrociter necaverunt. Freinsheimii Supp. in Quint. Curt. l. ii. c. 11.

‡ Oneravit hunc dolorem nuncius mortis Andromachi, quem præficeret Syriæ; vivum Samaritæ cremaverunt. Ad ejus interitum vindicandum, quanta maxima celeritate potuit, contendit, advenientique sunt traditi tanti sceleris auctores. Quint. Curt. l. iv. c. 8.

§ Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. xi. c. 8. s. 6.

army of Alexander, while part of the adjoining lands were given to the Jews. *

Hyrchanus, the first of the Jewish high priests who had ventured to shake off the Syrian yoke, was the next who came as an enemy against the city of Samaria †: this was not for religious differences with the Samaritans, properly so called; since they had been settled at Shechem from the time of their being driven out of their own city by the army of Alexander. The race who at present inhabited it, was the Syro-Macedonian, or a mixture of Syrians, Macedonians, and Greeks; and, as these had all been tutored in a warlike school, they had encompassed their town with a lofty double wall, a deep ditch, and other fortifications, which, added to the advantages of their natural situation, rendered it difficult to attack them with success. ‡ The Jewish historian admits that this was now a very strong city, but adds, that Hyrchanus, being greatly displeased with the Samaritans for the injuries they had done to the people of Marissa, a colony of the Jews and confederate with them, and this in compliance with the king of Syria, he made his attack against it, and besieged it with a great deal of pains.

The place being impregnable to the force of arms, there was no other way of reducing it but by cutting off all its supplies; so that the besiegers themselves drew an outer ditch round the city below, and built a double wall about it of four-score furlongs, or ten miles in circuit. In this manner they continued cooped up for a whole year, during which time they were reduced to the necessity of feeding on the most loathsome food, and at length to deliver up their city. "And when Hyrchanus had thus taken the city," says Josephus, "which was not done till after a year's siege, he

* Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. viii. p. 544.

† The first of the Ptolemies, surnamed Lagus, who was the friend and companion of Alexander, in his conquest of Asia, and who, after his death, became king of Egypt, Libya, and part of Arabia, is said to have laid waste Samaria, when he retired from Syria into Egypt at the approach of Antigonus in the Syrian War. Diodorus Siculus, l. xix. c. 6.

‡ Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. x. p. 342.

was not contented with doing that only, but he demolished it entirely, and brought *rivulets* to it to drown it, for he dug such hollows as might let the water run under it; nay, he took away the very marks that there had ever been such a city there. *

Not long after, Gabinius, who had succeeded Scaurus as president of Syria, settled such cities as had not been demolished, and rebuilt those that had been destroyed, "while a great number of men," says the historian, "readily ran to each of them, and became their inhabitants." † Samaria is numbered among these, and he is said to have called this, after its restoration, from his own name, Gabiniana. ‡

It did not rise to any thing like its former consequence, however, until the time of Herod, whose magnificent works in honour of Cæsar, Agrippa, and Antony, have already been often spoken of at large; "yet," says the historian, in describing the monuments which Herod had reared to the memory of these his friends and patrons, "he did not preserve their memory by particular buildings only, with their names given to them, but his generosity went as far as entire cities; for when he had built a most beautiful wall round a country in Samaria, twenty furlongs long §, and had brought six thousand inhabitants into it, and had allotted to it a most fruitful piece of land, and in the midst of this city thus built had erected a very large temple to Cæsar, and had laid round about it a portion of sacred land of three furlongs and a half, he called the city Sebaste, from Sebastus, or Augustus ||, and settled the affairs of the city after a most regular manner." ¶

The purpose of Herod's bringing many of the people here who had assisted him in the wars, and of his making them fellow-citizens

* Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. xiii. c. 10. s. 3. † Joseph. Jewish Wars, l. i. c. 8. s. 4.

‡ Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. x. p. 376.

§ This is confounded by the authors of the Universal History, with the wall of Shechem, which they make Josephus describe to be of this extent, though he evidently speaks only of Sebaste. — Anc. Un. Hist. vol. ii. b. 1. c. 7. p. 440.

|| *Sebaste*, in Greek, is literally *Augustus* in Latin.

¶ Joseph. Jewish Wars, b. i. c. 21. s. 2.

with the rest, was, says the same historian in another place, “ out of an ambitious desire of building a temple, and out of a desire to make the city more eminent than it had been before, principally because he contrived that it might at once be for his own security, and a monument of his magnificence. He also changed its name, and called it Sebaste. Moreover, he parted the adjoining country, which was excellent in its kind, among the inhabitants of Samaria, that they might be in a happy condition upon their first coming to inhabit. Besides all which, he encompassed the city with a wall of great strength, and made use of the *acclivity* of the place for making its fortifications stronger ; nor was the compass of the place made now so small as it had been before, but was such as rendered it not inferior to the most famous cities, for it was twenty furlongs in circumference. Now, within, and about the middle of it, he built a sacred place, of a furlong and half (in circuit), and adorned it with all sorts of decorations, and therein erected a temple, which was illustrious on account of both its largeness and beauty. And as to the several parts of the city, he adorned them with decorations of all sorts also ; and as to what was necessary to provide for his own security, he made the walls very strong for that purpose, and made it for the greater part a citadel ; and as to the elegance of its buildings, it was taken care of also, that he might leave monuments of the fineness of his taste and of his beneficence to future ages.” *

It is of this city of Herod that the remains are now to be traced ; and both the relative distance, local position, and unaltered name of Sebasta, leave no doubt as to the identity of its site.

Josephus calls it, in one place, “ a day’s journey distant from Jerusalem † ;” and, in another, “ a city not far from ‡ Cæsarea,” both of which are strictly true of Sebasta. Its position is marked as on a hill, the *acclivities* of which were made use of for fortifica-

* Jewish Antiquities, b. xv. c. 9. s. 5.

† Ant. Jud. l. xv. c. 8. s. 5.

‡ De Bello, l. i. c. 28. s. 6.

tions.* Its strength is implied in the denunciation of Amos. "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations to whom the house of Israel came."† And its local features are equally shown in the threat of Micah, "I will make Samaria as an heap of a field, and as planting of a vineyard, and I will pour down the stones thereof into the vales, and I will discover the foundations thereof."‡ Josephus, in describing the precautions which Ahab had taken to shut up every thing in the strongest cities he had, mentions that he abode in Samaria itself, as the most inaccessible of them; "for," says he, "the walls about it were very strong, and it appeared to be not easily to be taken in other respects."§ Pliny also calls it "Sebasta upon the mountains," and reckons it among the chief cities of Palestine. || The manner of investing it and walling it round in all the sieges it underwent, proves it also to have been an *isolated* hill, all of which characteristics still unequivocally remain.

That the country about it was fruitful and productive, has already been shown; and that it abounded with water, may be inferred from the account of Hyrcanus bringing *rivulets* to drown it, and causing waters to run under it. Among the medals struck in this city, with the figure of the goddess Astarte, (who was the Venus of the Assyrians, and was so honoured as a divinity, as to have a famous temple at Hieropolis, served by three hundred priests always employed in sacrificing to her.) This blessing of abundance of water, is seemingly implied by the goddess being represented as treading a river under foot. And indeed this, as well as all the other localities already detailed, being permanently imprinted on the place by the hand of Nature, remain unaltered.

It may be thought by some, to have been quite unnecessary to collect them so much at large as they are here shown; but, it has

* Antiq. Jud. l. xv. c. 9. s. 5.

§ Ant. Jud. l. viii. c. 14. s. 1.

† Amos, vi. 1.

‡ Micah, i. 6.

|| Pliny, Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 13.

been thought well to bring them into one point of view for the sake of elucidating the nature of the present remains of Sebasta; more particularly as the latest, the most learned, and, perhaps, deservedly, the most popular modern traveller in these regions, has unaccountably fixed on Sanhoor as the probable site of Sebasta, though, in his way from Nazareth to Nablous, or from Tiberias to the same place, he must have passed in sight of the hill on which its ruins stand; and could scarcely fail, one would think, to have often heard of it from his guides under its present name of Subusta, as it is one of the most well-known places, both to Mohammedans and Christians, on all this road. *

It will be better, perhaps, to describe the remains in the order of their importance, than in the succession in which they are seen on approaching it from the east; since, in that direction, the most modern of them is the most conspicuous. The first impression that the view of the place makes is, that the *form* of the hill of Shemer, as it now shows itself, is such as would naturally suggest an idea of its fitness for a fortress, or a post of defence, to whoever might be settled on it. In looking round for the ditch and the wall, with which Hyrcanus is said to have surrounded it when he invested it during the year's siege, there are many places that might have been found, perhaps, on more mature examination of them, to mark the traces of it; but as we had not leisure to connect them, we could not fix on any as unequivocal vestiges of these works. The same might be said of the inner walls and fortifica-

* Dr. Clarke's Travels in the Holy Land. Sanhoor is called by him Santorri, and he says of it, "We should have considered this as the site of the ancient Samaria, were it not for the express mention made by Maundrell, and by others, of the town of Sebaste, still preserving a name belonging to that city." Quaresmius also mentions the city of Sebaste, sive Samaria, as occurring in the route from Sichar to Jemni or Jennin; although performing this journey, we found no other place intervening, except Santorri; and it is situated upon a hill, according to the descriptions given of the ancient Samaria, which D'Anville places midway between Ginæa and Napolose and Sicham, vol. ii. c. 15. p. 503.

tions, though there were many detached pieces of walls standing on the edge of rocky prominences that might have been fragments of such works, but in these we could not discover any regular form. Indeed, from the very circumstances of these fortifications being often made, as Josephus says, of the acclivity of the hill itself, nothing would be more speedily demolished than masonry constructed on them, and nothing more difficult to identify than the acclivities on which such buildings stood. In this respect, namely, the facility of its destruction when once begun, arising chiefly from the steepness of its site, it resembled the fortress of Gamala on the other side of Jordan, with which Pliny has coupled it, probably from such similarity of position, when he enumerates, among the chief cities of Palestine, "Sebasta upon the mountain, and Gamala, which yet stands higher than it." *

Nearly on the summit of the hill, but rather on the western side, so as not to be seen on passing by from the road below, are the remains of a large street, lined by an avenue of columns on each side, probably the principal one of the city, and leading, apparently, to the place of the city-gate. There are eighty-three of these columns now erect, and some others fallen, but all of them are without capitals. The people of the country have a tradition that they are a part of Herod's palace; and the probability is, that they are at least a portion of the avenue to the temple which he built. It may be, indeed, the "Sacred place of a furlong and a half long," which Josephus says "he built about the *middle* of the city, and adorned with all sorts of decorations, and therein erected a temple, which was illustrious on account of both its largeness and beauty." The area which these pillars cover, is better calculated for building on than any other part of the hill, and though the fallen fragments of masonry scattered about leave nothing definite to be traced of a plan, without more time than

* Plin. Nat. Hist. l. v. c. 13.

we could spare to the task, yet sufficient still remains to prove that there were once other buildings there besides the one marked out by these columns. If these only remain erect while the other parts of the work have fallen to decay, this is chiefly from the firmness of their hold as *pillars*, which are generally the last part of ancient edifices that fall, and which often retain their original place, when every trace beside has disappeared.

On the eastern side of the hill, and also near the summit, are the remains of another building, of which eight large and eight small columns are still standing, with many others fallen near them. These are also without capitals, and are of a smaller size, and of an inferior stone to the others, and they were probably of the Doric order originally, to judge by the appearance of their proportions and intercolumniation; for we had not time to measure them. The foundations of the building, to which they might have belonged, cannot now be traced, though there are blocks of stone and fallen pillars scattered about near it; but the appearance of the ground, which, it must be admitted, is always liable to have been affected by subsequent accident, induced a conjecture that these pillars formed avenues of approach to a theatre, now destroyed. I know of no positive mention of such an edifice at Sebasta; but it is known that Herod, in his embellishment of Cæsarea, constructed theatres, amphitheatres, and places for the public games of Rome and Greece*, and even appointed solemn games to be celebrated every fifth year, in honour of Cæsar, and built a theatre at Jerusalem, and an amphitheatre in the plain, both costly works, but contrary to the Jewish customs. † It will be at least admitted, therefore, that such edifices as those were thought by him to be appropriate ornaments of a great city, and that no respect for the religious prejudices of the country would prevent his adorning Sebasta with them, after they had been

* Wars of the Jews, b. i. c. 21. s. 8.

† Ant. of the Jews, b. xv. c. 8. s. 1.

erected at Jerusalem, more particularly as it is said, "And as to the several parts of the city, he adorned them with decorations of all sorts." *

In the walls of the humble dwellings now forming the modern village of Sebasta, portions of sculptured blocks of stone are perceived, and even fragments of granite pillars have been worked into the masonry, while other vestiges of former edifices are occasionally seen scattered widely about. †

The most conspicuous object of all the remains of Sebasta, as seen from the road below in approaching it, is, however, the ruins of the most modern structure erected in it, except the habitations of the poor villagers themselves, namely, a large cathedral church, attributed to the piety of St. Helena. Sebasta, or Samaria, as it is more generally called in the New Testament, was among the earliest of those cities whose inhabitants embraced Christianity through the preaching and miracles of Philip; and among the number of his converts was Simon the sorcerer, or Simon Magus, as he is called, who from practising sorcery and bewitching the people of Samaria, became a Christian, in order, as it would seem, to purchase from the apostles by money the power of communicating to others the gift of the Holy Ghost. ‡ St. Jerome says, that it is thought Obadiah was buried at Samaria; and tradition fixes the sepulchres both of Elisha and of John the Baptist on this spot. Some bishops of this city are found to have subscribed to the ancient councils of the church, and probably Christianity flourished in it till the conquest of Palestine by the Saracens; but whether it ever reverted again to the possession of the original race of the

* Ant. of the Jews, b. xv. c. 9. s. 5.

† Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Sebasta, and knew it to be the ancient Samaria, thought these vestiges to be the remains of the palace of Achab, king of Israel. He notices its situation on a high mountain, and speaks of it as a delicious spot, from its fountains and gardens, and the beauty of the surrounding country. See Bergeron's Collection.

‡ Acts of the Apostles, viii. 5—20.

Samaritans, whose chief residence had been established at the Shechem near their temple on Mount Gerizim, I am not aware. In the days of St. Helena, it was however honoured with a stately edifice, of the same kind as the many other cathedrals and religious buildings erected by this devout old lady over every part of the Holy Land, and whose remains are now very considerable. This pile was reared over the supposed prison in which St. John the Baptist was confined, and from whence his head was brought in a charger to gratify the revenge of an angry woman, living in reputed incest with her husband's brother, and to fulfil an oath made to her daughter, whose dancing pleased Herod and his captains, when probably heated with wine, at his birthday-supper.

This large church, whose remains still exist, stands east and west, and is about one hundred feet in length, by fifty in breadth. In the court at the west end are two apertures, leading down to a large subterranean reservoir for water, well stuccoed on the inside, and now nearly dry; though during the rains it often becomes filled to the brim. On the south side are high slender buttresses, and on a piece of building without this is a sloping pyramidal mole, constructed of exceedingly large stones. The northern wall is quite plain; the eastern front is semicircular, with three open and two closed windows, each contained in arches divided from each other by three Corinthian columns.

The interior of the eastern front has a pointed arch, and columns of no known order, though the capitals approach nearer to the Corinthian than to any other. The eight small arches which go round the tops of the windows within, are semicircular, and have each at their spring the capital of a column, but no shaft attached to it; the great arch of the recess is pointed, and the moulding that passes round it is fantastic in the extreme. Among other things seen there, are the representations of scaly armour, an owl,

an eagle, a human figure, and an angel, all occupying separate compartments, and all distinct from each other.

The exterior of the eastern front presents a still more singular mixture of style, as the pointed and the round arch are both used in the same range, and the ornaments of each are varied. In the lower cornice are human heads, perhaps in allusion to the severed head of the Baptist; and there are here as fantastic figures as on the inside, the whole presenting a strange assemblage of incongruous ornaments in the most wretched taste.

The masonry appears in some parts to have been exceedingly solid, in others only moderately good; and in some places, weak and paltry; and at the west end, in a piece of building apparently added since the original construction of the church itself, are seen several blocks of sculptured stone, apparently taken from the ruins, and worked into the present masonry there.

On the inside of this ruined edifice, is a small mosque, erected over the supposed dungeon in which St. John was executed; and an Arab family, who claim the guardianship of this sanctuary, have pitched their dwelling on the south-west angle of the great church, where it has the appearance of a pigeon-house. On learning that I was a Moslem, we were all admitted into this mosque, which we entered with becoming reverence. They have collected here the white marble slabs, found amid the ruins of the church, to form a pavement; and in one part we noticed three large pieces with sculptured circles and bands on them, which were set up in the wall as tablets.

The mosque itself is a small oblong room, with steps ascending to an oratory, and its only furniture is a few simple lamps and some clean straw mats for prayer, the recess of the Caaba being in the southern wall. From the mosque, we descended by a narrow flight of steps to the subterranean chamber or dungeon of St. John, which had all the appearance of having been an ancient sepulchre. It was not more than ten feet square, and had niches as if for the

reception of corpses, in arched recesses on each side. There was here, too, one of those remarkable stone doors, which seem to have been exclusively appropriated to tombs, resembling exactly in form and size those described in the Roman sepulchres at Oom Kais. The panneling, the lower pivot, and the sill in the ledge for receiving the bolt, were all still perfect ; but the door was now unhung, and lay on its side against the wall.



CHAPTER XXIX.

SHECHEM, OR NEAPOLIS, MOUNT EBAL AND GERIZIM, AND THE WELLS
OF SAMARIA.

AFTER taking some bread and olive-oil, as a meal of hospitality with the Sheikh of Subusta, we quitted it about eleven o'clock, and from hence our road lay for half an hour over hills of siliceous stone, going constantly to the southward until we opened upon the long valley of Nablous, running nearly east and west.

We turned off to the eastward, leaving on our right the village of Beit Eiba, on the side of the hill; Beit Oozan, a smaller one, just above it; and on the summit of the range, an enclosed town with

walls and towers, called Aijeneid, all peopled by Mohammedans. The valley here is really beautiful, being covered with woods of olives, corn fields now green, reservoirs of water, gardens, aqueducts in different directions, both arched and plain, and all the marks of industry, opulence, and abundance.

We continued our way easterly through this valley, and at noon approached Nablous by the lower road, scarcely seeing it until we were near the gate. Just without it we passed through some grounds where several parties were spinning, winding off, and bleaching cotton thread; and soon afterwards we entered at the western gate. Passing through a narrow but crowded bazar, we halted at a public khan, and directed our first enquiries to know when the Damascus caravan would set out. What was my mortification to learn that it departed three days since, that there remained not the least hope of overtaking it, and that no other would go from hence for at least a month to come! I grew almost desperate at this information, and had I not been restrained, would have really set out immediately to follow it alone. A moment's consideration convinced me, however, that this would be rashness rather than enterprise, and that there was no remedy but in a patient search for some other occasion.

The horseman sent with me by Hadjee Ahmed Gerar, insisted that, as the caravan was gone, and we were perfect strangers here, he could not leave me until some arrangements should be made for our future proceeding; but recommended that I should return with him to Sanhoor, whither he would conduct me in safety. This was therefore assented to, as the only alternative remaining; but as there was yet ample time to return before sunset, we halted for an hour to repose our horses, to cast our eyes around on the leading features of the place, and to make, in the mean time, a visit to the well of Samaria, to the eastward of the town.

The name of Sichein, which is one of the most ancient of those by which this place is known, appears, like that of Samaria, to

have been applied to a district of country at first. On Abram's coming from Haran into the land of Canaan, he is said to have "passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh."* It is said also, in the history of Jacob's journeyings, that "he came to Shalem†, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-Aram, and pitched his tent before the city."‡ The name too was evidently derived from that of the son of Hamor the Hurite, the prince of the country, whose name was Shechem. § Josephus, however, calls Shechem "a city of the Canaanites," and the inhabitants of it, Shechemites. || From these children of Hamor, the patriarch bought a parcel of a field here, where he had spread his tent, for an hundred pieces of money; and erected an altar, probably with a view to make it his permanent abode. ¶ And, indeed, this parcel of ground was held so sacred among his descendants, that the bones of Joseph, who died in Egypt, were brought up from thence to be buried here, and it became the inheritance of his children. **

It was after this apparent settlement among them, that Dinah, his daughter, went into the city, during the celebration of a festival among the Shechemites, to see the finery of the women of that country ††, or, as the Scriptures express it, "She went out to see the daughters of the land." ‡‡ This young Mesopotamian girl was, however, so much more beautiful or fascinating than those she had gone out to behold, that when Shechem, the son of Hamor, the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with

* Genesis, xii. 5.

† Some critics have thought that as *Shalem* or *Salem* signifies peace, safety, &c. in Hebrew, the original of this passage should be rendered thus: "And he came in peace and safety to the city of Shechem," (Anc. Un. Hist. vol iii. p. 289. 8vo.) which would therefore be meant only of the city of Shechem, so called from the prince of that name, who is expressly said to have been more honourable than all the house of his father. Genesis, xxxiv. 19.

‡ Gen. xxxiii. 18.

§ Ibid. xxxiv. 2.

|| Ant. Jud. l. i. c. xxi. s. 1.

¶ Gen. xxxiii. 19, 20.

** Joshua, xxiv. 33.

†† Ant. Jud. l. i. c. 21. s. 1.

‡‡ Gen. xxxiv. 1.

her, and defiled her. * Nor was it seemingly the momentary gratification of sensual passion which allured him, for "his soul clave unto Dinah, and he loved the damsel, and spoke kindly unto † her." And when difficulties arose about his legal marriage with her, he replied; in all the vehemence of a young and ardent lover, "Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me; but give me the damsel to wife." ‡ The Scriptures say, that all the males of Shechem underwent circumcision to obviate the difficulties of an alliance with the family of Jacob; but Josephus omits the mention of this, though both authorities agree in the dreadful vengeance that was taken on them. This was no less than the slaughter of every male with the edge of the sword, by the two brothers of Dinah, Simeon and Levi, who could not, it seems, admit that the honour of their sister was redeemed by marriage, and who were as tenacious on the point of female purity as the Arabs of this same country continue to be to the present hour.

So great a destruction committed in a city by only two individuals, is differently accounted for by the different authorities already cited. Josephus, who mentions nothing of the circumcision of the males, says, "It being now the time of a festival, when the Shechemites were employed in ease and feasting, they fell upon the watch when they were asleep, and coming into the city, slew all the males, as also the king, and his son with them, but spared the women. And when they had done this without their father's consent, they brought away their sister." § The Scriptures say, that it was on the third day after the circumcision of all the males, and when they were yet sore from the wound, that this act of hardihood was undertaken. As in most of the cases of war and revenge in these early records, the mere slaughter of their enemies, however great and terrible it was, did not glut their vengeance, which was wreaked even on the helpless bodies of the dead, and

* Genesis, xxxiv. 2.

† Ibid. xxxiv. 3.

‡ Ibid. xxxiv. 12.

§ Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. 1. c. 22. s. 1.

on such of the unoffending wives and infants as remained among the living. "The sons of Jacob," says the inspired writer, after describing the slaughter itself, "came upon the *slain*, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister; they took their sheep, and their oxen; and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, and all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house." * The authors of the Universal History characterise this act of revenge as a treacherous and inhuman massacre of the inhabitants, on the part of Dinah's brothers; and say that Jacob reproved them for their barbarity; though they add, that the rest of the inhabitants of the country would, no doubt, have made them pay dearly for it, had not God interposed, and sent a panic-fear amongst them, insomuch that they even let them depart quietly, and carry off all the plunder they had got from the slaughtered Shechemites. †

The most remarkable feature of this place was its situation between the two mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, or the mountain of blessing and the mountain of cursing. These hills were fixed on by Moses for the purpose of setting on them the blessings and the curses which he proposed to the children of Israel, after they should have entered the land of Canaan; and though he could never have seen the hills himself, as he did not live to enter the promised land, yet probably, from the information of his spies, he speaks precisely of their local position, "Are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champaign, over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh." ‡

His successor, Joshua, having crossed the Jordan, and taken Jericho, went up, after first burning the city of Ai, and hanging its king on a tree, and built an altar unto the God of Israel, in Mount

* Genesis, xxxiv. 27—29.

† Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. iii. b. 1. c. 7. p. 289, 290. 8vo.

* Deut. xi. 30.

Ebal; placing the one half of the people here, and the other half on the opposite mountain of Gerizim, he read to them from this last all the words of the law, and pronounced the blessings and the cursings to all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, omitting not a word of all that Moses had commanded.* From this it would plainly appear, that these opposite hills were sufficiently near for the human voice to be distinctly heard from the summit of the one to the summit of the other. A more remarkable instance may be cited to prove, too, that though Josephus calls Gerizim "the *highest* of all the mountains that are in Samaria †," yet that the human voice could be heard from its summit even in the valley below. In the history of Abimelech, who, after the practice of all pretenders to power still in the same country, raised money with which he hired vain and light persons to follow him, and going into his father's house slew threescore and ten of his own brethren, on one block, and so waded through the blood of his very kinsmen to royalty, it is said, the youngest of his brothers, Jotham, escaped by flight, and when all the men of Shechem were gathered together in the plain ‡, where they made Abimelech king, he went up and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice to address to those who were below; one of the earliest and most ingenious fables in holy writ. § These facts, therefore, set the proximity of the mountains beyond doubt, and limit their altitudes to a moderate standard.

* Joshua, viii. 28—35.

Shechem, with her suburbs in Mount Ephraim, was one of the cities of refuge for the slayer. Joshua, xxi. 21.

† Ant. Jud. i. xi. c. 8, s. 2.

‡ This word, which in Hebrew is *Alon*, is by some translated "an oak;" and the present version of our Scriptures calls it "The plain of the pillar that was in Shechem." There was an altar or pillar set up here by Abram, (Gen. xii. 7.) and another by Jacob, (Gen. xxxiii. 20.) There was also a celebrated oak at the same place, under which Jacob buried all the strange gods and the profane ornaments of his household, (Gen. xxxv. 4.) so that it might have been either of these three that remained; or even the great stone which Joshua set up there long afterwards, under this very oak and altar, before his death. (Joshua, xxiv. 26.)

§ Judges, ix. 1—21.

As has been before described, in speaking of the destruction of Samaria, and the removal of the Samaritans from thence, these people made Shechem their chief abode, and Josephus mentions it as being their metropolis, and situate at Mount Gerizim, where they had a temple, at the period at which Alexander the Great made his visit to Jerusalem.* It is chiefly known, afterwards, as the seat of these people, who looked upon the adjoining mountain of *Gerizim*, on which Moses had ordered the *blessings* to be pronounced, to be the most holy of mountains; and though Joshua is said to have set up the altar in *Ebal*, they hold that Moses himself had buried certain sacred vessels in Gerizim, though he never came westward of the Jordan. As late as the wars of Antiochus, and Hyrcanus the high priest, in Syria, it still retained the name; for, in speaking of the acts of the latter, Josephus says, "He took Medaba and Samea, with the towns in their neighbourhood, as also Shechem and Gerizim, and besides these [he subdued] the nation of the Cutheans, who dwelt round about that temple, which was built in imitation of the temple at Jerusalem." †

In the time of Vespasian it was called Neapolis, or the new city, and it is reckoned among the colonies planted, or towns restored by him. ‡ Pliny, in enumerating the cities of Palestine, mentions Shechem under the name of Neapolis, which he says was anciently called Mamortha, or Maxbota. § And Josephus, in detailing the movements of Vespasian's army, in the Judean war, mentions his coming from Emmaus down through the country of Samaria, and hard by the city by others called Neapolis, [or Sechem,] but by the people of that country Mabortha, to Conea, where he pitched his camp. ||

It continued to be known afterwards chiefly by this its Greek name; and indeed this is the only one by which it is called in all

* Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. 11. c. 8. s. 6.

† Joseph. Wars of the Jews, b. 1. c. 2. s. 6.

‡ Anc. Un. Hist. vol. xv. p. 36.

§ Pliny, Nat. Hist. b. v. c. 13.

|| Joseph. Jewish Wars, b. iv. c. 8. s. 1.

the histories of the Crusades and Saracen wars, and which it still retains, under the Arabic form of Nablous. *

This town is seated between the two hills of Gerizim on the south, and Ebal on the north, and so fully occupies the valley between them, that the mountains may be said to press it in on each side, and leave no room to add any thing to its breadth. Its length is not, however, so limited, as there is an extension of the valley, to the east and west, which would admit of the buildings being continued in each of those directions. The town consists chiefly of two long streets, running nearly east and west through the centre of the valley described, and those again intersected by several smaller ones, mostly crossing them at right-angles. At the present time the town is populous and flourishing, and the grounds around it bear the marks of opulence and industry.

Within the town are six mosques, five baths, one Christian church of schismatic Greeks, an excellent covered bazar for fine goods, and an open one for provisions; besides numerous cotton-cloth manufactories, and shops of every description. One of the mosques is built within the precincts of a ruined church of St. Helena, the eastern front of which is still perfect. This presents a fine pointed arch, supported by Corinthian columns, and the upper part is highly ornamented, like some of the Saracen doors in Cairo. Within, are plain granite pillars, and the whole presents as singular a mixture of orders, and as grotesque a taste, as the ruin at Subussta.

The resident population of Nablous is thought to amount to ten thousand, though I should conceive it to be somewhat less. These are almost all Mohammedans; the few Greek Christians there scarcely amounting to fifty in number. The town is governed by

* The Arabs having no P in their alphabet, constantly supply its place by the letter B, as in Nablous, (نابلوس) for Neapolis; Attarabulus, (اتارابلاس) for Tripolis; with Butrus, Boolus, and Butrak, (بطريق, بولس, بطرس) for Peter, Paul, and Patriarch; as well as Bāsha (باشا), which the Turks and Persians who have the P in their alphabets, pronounce invariably Pashāw, (پاشا).

a Mutesellim, or Beg, as he is termed, subject to Damascus ; and he has, at present, about four hundred Amaout soldiers. The men dress partly in the Turkish and partly in the Arabian fashion ; but their general appearance approaches nearer to the former. The women wear the whole face covered with a coloured veil, as in the towns of the Yemen ; and the scarf thrown over their head and shoulders is of a yellowish white, with a deep red border ; the stuff being, seemingly, a silk manufacture, or, at least, a mixture of that with cotton.

Though Nablous is a place of considerable trade with Damascus, and with the towns on the sea-coast, yet there were no Jews here who remained as permanent residents. As for the Samaritans, though a remnant of them existed so late as the time of Maundrell's journey, or about a century ago, there were not, as I was informed, half a dozen families remaining, and these were so obscurely known, and remained in such privacy, that many who had passed all their days in this town, did not know of the existence of such a sect. To so low a state are the people reduced, who once held this city as their metropolis, and who established here the chief seat of their religious as well as of their temporal power !

Though the name of *Samaritans* might, with propriety, be applied to all the inhabitants of the country of Samaria, it is generally restricted to the sect, who before, and at the time of Christ's being on earth, were so obnoxious to the Jews on account of their difference of religion. The principal events in the history of these people have been already mentioned, in describing the changes which the city of Samaria or Sebasta had undergone. By the facts there stated, it will appear, that the origin of the Samaritans, properly so called, is to be assigned to that mixed multitude of people who were brought from Assyria to replace the tribes of Israel, that had been carried away captive by Shalmanezar ; and who, though called by the general name of Cuthéans *, were composed,

* They were called in Hebrew, Cuthim, from Cuthah, one of the provinces out of which they came. (Anc. Un. Hist. vol. x. p. 185.) And Josephus says, that they were

as we learn from the sacred records, of Dinaites, Apharsathchites, Tarpelites, Apharsites, Archevites, Babylonians, Susanchites, Dehavites, Elamites, and other nations. *

As the Israelites who were carried away retained their old religion in their captivity, so these foreigners who replaced them adhered to the worship of their own countries; for the Scriptures say, "Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had † made." And after enumerating these by name, and recapitulating the commands of God against such idolatry, the sacred writer adds, "Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner." ‡ This was after the Lord had sent lions among them, who devoured them, because they knew not the manner of the God of the land, and after one of the captive priests had been sent back all the way from Assyria to save them from these devouring § lions, by teaching them how to fear the Lord, and instructing them in manner of which they were ignorant. || The result was a singular mixture of the monotheism of the Jews with the polytheism of their ancestors, however incompatible these two might seem; for the Scriptures add, "So these nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children; as did their fathers, so do they unto this day. ¶"

After the return from the captivity of Babylon, when the children of Israel gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem, and restored their altars, and were about to rebuild their temple **, these Samaritans were still a distinct people,

called in the Hebrew tongue Cutheans, but in the Greek tongue Samaritans. (Ant. Jud. l. ix. c. 14. s. 3.)

* Ezra, iv. 9.

† 2 Kings, xvii. 29.

‡ 2 Kings, xvii. 40.

§ Josephus calls what is here interpreted lions, "a plague." (Ant. Jud. l. ix. c. 14. s. 3.)

|| 2 Kings, xxiv. 26 to 28.

¶ Ibid. xvii. 41.

** Ezra, iii. 1.

though it is thought from their own confession that they had abandoned their idolatry. Nevertheless, they are called "the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin," even when they solicited permission to build the temple with them; and though it might be true, as they asserted, that they had sought the God of the Israelites, and sacrificed unto him, since the days of Ešarhaddon*, the king of Assur, who had brought them up out of their own lands, yet it is evident that they had mixed idolatry with their worship. It was still chiefly on this account, therefore, that the Jews replied to them, "Ye have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God, but we ourselves will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia hath commanded us.† Again, when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, who appear to have been numbered among the Samaritans, derided the Jews' intentions to rebuild the wall of the city, Nehemiah replied to them, "The God of heaven, he will prosper us, therefore we his servants will arise and build; but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem."‡ This timid restorer of the city seems to have been often alarmed, or "put in fear," as he expresses it, by the sneers§ and letters||, and counsels¶, and reports**, of these wordy opponents; so much so, that the work was carried on with the building materials in one hand, and a weapon in the other ††, and no one, except for the purpose of religious ablutions, ever put off his clothes, even when they lay down to rest.‡‡ Unnecessary as such precautions seemed against so feeble an enemy as these Samaritans, it proves at least how obnoxious they were to the Jews, and how firmly determined these last were to exclude them from

* The same with Shalmaneser, as he is called by Josephus, Ant. Jud. l. xi. c. 4. s. 3.

† Ezra, iv. 3.

§ Ibid. iv. 2.

¶ Ibid. 9.

†† Ibid. iv. 1.

‡ Nehemiah, ii. 20.

|| Ibid. vi. 5.

** Ibid. vi. 13.

‡‡ Ibid. iv. 23.

all participation in their religious labour, or in their worship at Jerusalem.

Though the Samaritans continued thus distinct from the Jews, no mention is made of any temple among them common to all, either for the worship of the God of Israel, which they sometimes professed, or of their own idols, of which they were accused, until about the period of Alexander's questionable visit to Jerusalem. *

The circumstance which then gave rise to their setting up a temple of their own, and separating themselves still more decidedly than before from the Jews, was not unlike that of our Eighth Harry's quarrel with the Pope, which led to the separation of our reformed church from that of Rome, and both show how impatiently the yoke of forced marriages, or forced divorces, is likely to be borne, even when it is the holy hands of religion that would bind it fast. Manasseh, who was the brother of Jaddua the high priest, and a partner with him in that office, was married to the daughter of a foreigner; and the jealous Jews thinking such a precedent might encourage others who were desirous of marrying strange wives to follow it, ordered him to divorce his wife, or not to approach the altar; while the high-priest, joining with the people in their indignation against his brother, drove him away from the sanctuary. Manasseh, says the historian, then went to his father-in-law Sannballat, who, as we have seen, was one of the chief of the Samaritans, and told him that, although he loved his daughter Nicaso, he was not willing to be deprived of the sacerdotal dignity, which was the principal one of the nation, on her account. The father promised him, that if he would keep his daughter for his wife, he would not only preserve to him the honour he now held, but make him governor of all the places he himself now ruled, and build a temple for him like that at Jerusalem, and advance him to the power and dignity of a high priest, and all this with the appro-

* See the arguments against this story, as cited by the authors of the *Universal History*, vol. viii. b. 1. c. 2. p. 534. 8vo.

bation of Darius the king. Manasseh was satisfied with these splendid promises, and abandoned his former office, while many other of the priests and Levites, who were entangled in similar matches, followed his fortunes by coming over to Sanballat, who gave them money, land, and habitations, and divided estates among them, in order in every way, as the historian says, to gratify his son-in-law.*

Alexander the Great was about this time entering Syria, after his victories at the Granicus and Issus, and when he began the siege of Tyre, Sanballat renounced his allegiance to Darius, and led with him seven thousand of his own subjects to join the Macedonian army in the siege of that place. This was well received by Alexander, particularly after the Jews' refusal to grant him any aid; and when a convenient opportunity occurred for Sanballat to ask the Macedonian monarch to build a temple on Mount Gerizim, and constitute his son-in-law Manasseh the high priest of it, it was no sooner demanded than granted. The temple was therefore built, and the priest ordained. † On the return of Alexander from Jerusalem, which was almost immediately after this, the Samaritans were settled at Gerizim, and had the city of Shechem, which lies at its foot, for their metropolis. ‡

These people were, from the beginning, remarkable for their indifference to their particular religion, and their character formed a striking contrast to that of the Jews, whose obstinate adherence to the rites of their fathers was the chief cause of all the persecutions that they suffered. It is true, that this character of instability is given to them by an enemy; but the proofs of it are too numerous to render it doubtful. "When they see the Jews in prosperity," says the Jewish historian, they pretend, that they are changed and allied to them, and call them kinsmen, as though they were derived from Joseph, and had by that means an original

* Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. xi. c. 8. s. 2.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

alliance with them; but when they see them falling into a low condition, they say, they are no way related to them; and that the Jews have no right to expect any kindness or marks of kindred from them, but they declare that they are sojourners that come from other countries." * Even immediately after Alexander had granted them permission to build the temple on Mount Gerizim, they petitioned him to remit the tribute of the seventh year to them, because, like the Jews, they did not sow thereon; and when Alexander asked them, who they were that made such a petition, they admitted that they were Hebrews, in order to enforce their claim to exemption from tribute in this Sabbatic year †; yet called themselves Sidonians, living at Shechem, and not Jews, in order to avoid being included among these in other edicts. ‡

A still more remarkable instance of this subservience of their religion to their interest or convenience is recorded of them during the terrible persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, who converted the temple of Jerusalem into a temple of Jupiter Olympus, defiled its altars by the sacrifice of swine on them, and executed the most atrocious cruelties, even on the women and children of this unhappy nation. "When the Samaritans," says the historian, "saw the Jews under these sufferings, they no longer confessed that they were of their kindred, or that the temple on Mount Gerizim belonged to Almighty God. This

* Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. ix. c. 14. s. 3. A pretty accurate estimate may be formed of the character of this people, when it is known that all the vagabonds and outcasts of the Jews found refuge among them, and that they continued to the last to be as mixed a race as they were on their first coming from Assyria to replace the captives of Shalmanezar.

† The Jews were commanded not only to cease from all agricultural labours on this year, but to hold as forbidden the very reaping or gathering of that which grew wild, and of its own accord, (Levit. xxv. 1 to 7.) as well as to release all their purchased Hebrew slaves who might desire their freedom, (Exod. xxi. 2.) and to remit or release all debts owing from one Israelite to another (Deut. xv. 1.); so that the payment of tribute to a foreign power in such a year would have pressed hard on them indeed.

‡ Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. xi. c. 8. s. 6.

was according to their nature, as we have already shown, and they now said that they were a colony of Medes and Persians, and, indeed, they were a colony of theirs. So they sent ambassadors to Antiochus, and an epistle, whose contents were these:—To King Antiochus, the god Epiphanes, a memorial from the Sidonians who live at Shechem. Our forefathers, upon certain frequent plagues, and as following a certain ancient superstition, had a custom of observing that day which by the Jews is called Sabbath; and when they had erected a temple at the mountain called Gerizim, though without a name, they offered upon it the proper sacrifices. Now upon the just treatment of these wicked Jews, those that manage their affairs, supposing that we were of kin to them, and practised as they do, make us liable to the same accusations, although we be originally Sidonians, as is evident from the public records. We therefore beseech thee, our benefactor and saviour, to give order to Apollonius, the governor of this part of the country, and to Nicanor, the procurator of thy affairs, to give us no disturbance, nor to lay to our charge what the Jews are accused for, since we are aliens from their nation, and from their customs; but let our temple, which at present hath no name at all, be named ‘the Temple of Jupiter Hellenicus.’ If this were once done, we would be no longer disturbed, but should be more intent on our own occupations with quietness, and so bring in a greater revenue to thee.”* Their request was granted; and the temple, from being professedly reared to the God of Israel, was soon transformed into that of Jupiter Hellenicus, with the same facility as those of Venus and Adonis were subsequently dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and her Immaculate Son, in the same land.

When Hyrcanus, the Jewish high priest, had completely shaken off the Syrian yoke, as before spoken of, he turned his arms against these Samaritans, and taking the metropolis of Shechem

* Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. xii. c. 5. s. 5.

and their holy mountain of Gerizim, demolished this temple of the Hellenian Jupiter, although it had stood two hundred years, as well as all the edifices, altars, and other ornaments, that had been subsequently erected there by Jezebel, and put to death nearly the whole of the Samaritan priesthood.

As long as they continued thus divested of power, they were sufficiently harmless towards the Jews, but they seized with enthusiasm the first occasion of vengeance. It was on the eve of that very feast of the Passover, when Jesus, in his twelfth year, was found in the temple, astonishing the doctors with his early wisdom *, that a number of them having privately stolen into the temple, strewed the galleries and other places of resort with dead men's bones, so that the priests on the next morning, finding that sacred place polluted, were forced to put a stop to the solemnity. †

The conference of Christ with the woman of Samaria, at Shechem or Sychar ‡, not many years after this, when he was grown to manhood, proves how complete the separation and even hatred still was between the Jews and the Samaritans. When he sat on the brink of Jacob's well, there to rest himself, as he was wearied with his journey from Judea towards Galilee, and asked this woman, who was drawing water at the well, to give him drink, she said unto him, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, asketh drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria, for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans?" Yet the result of this conference was the conversion of the woman, from his telling her that she had already had five husbands, and was now living with one, who was not her husband, in adultery: and many of the Samaritans of that city also believed in him, for the saying of the woman, which testified, "He told me all that ever I did." § After the death of Christ,

* St. Luke, ii. 41—47.

† Anc. Un. Hist. v. x. p. 519.

‡ This was a name given to the city by the Jews, as a term of reproach, Sychar signifying *drunk* in Hebrew, according to the phrase of the prophet, who calls the rebellious Jews, the *shicore Ephraim*, the drunkards of Ephraim. Isaiah, xxviii. 1. 3. See Anc. Un. Hist. v. ii. p. 463., and the Onomasticum Sacrum, p. 292.

§ St. John, iv. 9—39.

two others of the Samaritans were converted by Philip, Peter, and John, about the time that Simon Magus was practising his sorceries among them, and to whom they attributed great power from God, because he had bewitched them with sorceries. *

During the Roman wars in Judea, under Vespasian and his son Titus, there were still left a sufficient number of the original Samaritans to form a distinct people. It was just after the taking of Jotapata by Vespasian, and of Japha by Titus and Trajan, all three afterwards emperors of Rome, that the Samaritans assembled themselves on Mount Gerizim, as a post of defence. Their numbers are stated to have been eleven thousand six hundred; and the Roman general sent against them Cerealis, the commander of the fifth legion, with six hundred horsemen and three hundred footmen. These did not deem it safe to go up upon the hill and give them battle, from the advantage which their enemies possessed in being on such commanding ground; but they encompassed all the lower part of the mountain with the army, and blockaded them there. It was in the middle of summer, and the Samaritans were destitute of water and other necessities, so that many died from hunger, thirst, and violent heat; and others again, preferring slavery to a death of this kind, deserted to the Romans, while those that still held out, were of course much broken by their sufferings. Cerealis then ascended the hill with his soldiers, and, offering the security of his right hand, invited the Samaritans to surrender; but with an infatuation seemingly unprecedented in their former history, they refused all overtures, and fought until every man among them was slain.

Though Jesus himself commenced the work among the Samaritans, by the conversion of the adulterous woman, and the Apostles had continued it by bringing over the followers of Simon Magus, and even that sorcerer himself, till he was cursed out of their society, for thinking that he could buy of them the power of

* Acts of the Apostles, viii. 9—11.

giving the Holy Ghost to add to his other sorceries ; yet, as we have seen in the case of their opposition to the Romans, the great body of the Samaritans still retained their former name, and all their former veneration for the holy mountain of Gerizim, on which they had made so obstinate a stand.

But neither the vengeance which Judas Maccabeus and Hyrcanus had taken of them for their heresies, and all the consequent opposition of the Jewish interest and power to which these religious differences led, nor this almost total annihilation of their race by the Romans as mere enemies of the state, were sufficient to fill up the measure of their sufferings. Five centuries after the Christian era, they had another enemy to sustain the attack of, and, as their numbers seem to have increased in the interval of comparative peace, their defence was more stubborn and of longer duration, though equally unavailable with their former ones. Unprincipled as their own conduct seems on many occasions to have been, this last persecution was not apparently called forth by any obnoxious acts, either of treachery or opposition to the reigning power which inflicted it, and the doctrines which Jesus had preached among them would, least of all, lead them to expect, that while the cross was held out to them in one hand, the scourge should be shaken over them with the other. But such was the spirit of the times, that the very scenes in which the most humane, benevolent, and charitable doctrines were promulgated by the humblest of men, were transformed into theatres of blood and vengeance, by the pride, the cruelty, and unforgiving bigotry of his pretended imitators and most devoted disciples.

The historian who relates this event, says, "The Samaritans were a motley race, an ambiguous sect, rejected as Jews by the pagans, by the Jews as schismatics, and by the Christians as idolaters. The abomination of the cross had already been planted on their holy mount of Gerizim, but the persecution of Justinian offered only the alternative of baptism or rebellion ; they chose the latter. Under the standard of a desperate leader,

they rose in arms, and retaliated their wrongs on the lives, the property, and the temples of a defenceless people. The Samaritans were finally subdued by the regular forces of the East: twenty thousand were slain, twenty thousand were sold by the Arabs to the infidels of Persia and India, and the remains of that unhappy nation atoned for the crime of treason by the sin of hypocrisy. It has been computed," adds the same historian, "that one hundred thousand subjects were extirpated in the Samaritan war, which converted the once fruitful province into a desolate wilderness. But," he continues, "in the creed of Justinian, the guilt of murder could not be applied to the slaughter of unbelievers, and he piously laboured to establish, with fire and sword, the unity of the Christian faith." *

Since that period, a remnant of them has, however, always been found rallied round what might be called the local standard of their religion, the Mountain of Gerizim. † In the year 1676, there was a correspondence between the chief priest of the Samaritans at Nablous, and the learned Scaliger, on the differences between the Hebrew and Samaritan pentateuch; and in the year 1697, Mr. Maundrell had a personal conference with the then residing dignitary; but I was assured by all those who knew of the

* Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. vi. c. 47. p. 276. 8vo.

† In the time of Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Neapolis or Sichem, and describes it with great accuracy as seated in a valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, there were in this city about a hundred Cutbæi, (of whom there were two hundred at Cesarea) who did not observe the law of Moses, and were then, as well as now, called Samaritans. Their priests were of the race of Aaron, and they were called Aaronites. They offered sacrifice on Mount Gerizim, on the Pascal and other feasts, on an altar constructed of stones brought from the Jordan by the children of Israel. They called themselves of the tribe of Ephraim, and had custody of the sepulchre of Joseph the son of Jacob, whose bones were brought up out of Egypt, and buried in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver. Aaron was also buried in a hill here that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in Mount Ephraim, the name of all this range of the mountains of Nablous. (Josh. 24. 32, 33.) Their omission of certain letters in writing the names of the patriarchs, and their substitution of others in their places, was assumed by Benjamin as sufficient proof of their not being of the true seed of Israel. He describes their customs, purifications, &c. at large. Bergeron's Collection.

existence of this people at Nablous, though these were very few, that their numbers were more reduced now than at any former period, and that, at most, there were not more than a dozen families composing their church; these, they said, never visited the summit of Mount Gerizim, but performed their religious rites in studied seclusion and obscurity, and were, if possible, more despised here than the Jews are in other Mohammedan cities.

These Jews, of whom there are none resident here *, accuse the Samaritans of believing the Godhead to be a corporeal being. Epiphanius, who numbers them in his catalogue of heretics, insists that they worshipped the traphim or idols, which Rachel had stolen from her father Laban, and which they dugged up from under the oak in Shechem, where Jacob had buried them. † And other Jews, again, give out that their religion consists in the adoration of a calf ‡; but, say the commentators, "Credat Judæus."

The account which they themselves give of their own origin, is that they are descended from Joseph by Ephraim; that their temple on Mount Gerizim was built by Joshua, after his taking possession of the promised land; and that they have preserved their genealogy, in uninterrupted succession, from Ruz, of the seed of Aaron, who was their first high-priest, down to the present time. Of the first captivity of the Israelites, they say that the kings of Jerusalem and Syria having revolted against Nebuchadnezzar, he came and took Jerusalem, and went from thence to the Shechemites, whom he ordered to leave that country in seven days, on pain of being massacred, which they did accordingly. The strangers whom he settled in Judea and Shechem in their stead, could not live there, because the fairest fruits of the land were

* As Nablous is a place of great trade, (and commerce seldom fails to draw these scattered sons of Israel together,) it is not improbable but that some religious prejudice may keep them from residing here; but, from not meeting with any Jews in the place, I could not ascertain this from any authority to be relied upon.

† Genesis, xxxv. 6.

‡ Maundrell's Journey, p. 80. 8vo.

tainted with a mortal poison, so that at last the Hebrews were sent back to their own pestilential land again. These are the *devouring lions* of the Scriptures, and the *plague* of Josephus, before mentioned; and the sending back a priest of Israel to restore the worship of the true God. On the return of the captives, say the Samaritans, a dispute arose, whether they should rebuild the temple of Jerusalem or that of Gerizim. Zerubbabel was for the former, and Sanballat for the latter, and each pleaded the sanction of the pentateuch; but as their copies even then differed, one of them fixing on Jerusalem as the site, and the other on Gerizim, each insisted that the copy of his antagonist was corrupted, and his own pure, as still continues to be mutually done by the doctors of the three great sects among whom the writings of Moses are divided. To end the dispute, these champions of truth bethought themselves of an expedient, and agreed that the copy which should withstand the fiery trial should be admitted to be the authentic one. Accordingly Zerubbabel flung his own into the fire; and, sacred as the materials were, they were instantly consumed. Sanballat followed the example, but the word of the Lord God of Israel, being imperishable, it came three times out of the flames untouched by fire.* Such a miracle was of course enough to confirm those who were convinced before in the propriety of their choice; yet it had no effect on those who were before of a contrary opinion. But when "the eyes are blinded that they shall not see, and the heart is hardened that it shall not believe, what power can open the one or soften the other?"

It is clear, from the many instances already cited, that the hatred of these two sects to each other was quite mutual. Even Jesus reproached them with worshipping they knew not what; and he is thought to have *excluded* them from salvation, when he told them that *this* was of the Jews.† The Jews, in their turn, when they wished to express their greatest abhorrence of Christ, replied

* Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. x. p. 228:

† St. John, iv. 22.

to his reproaches, "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" * His disciples themselves could not contain their indignation against them, when they refused to receive their Master, because his face was as though he would go up to Jerusalem, but angrily exclaimed, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?" † And though Jesus then rebuked them, by telling them that he was not come down to destroy men's lives, but to save them; yet when he sent his disciples forth to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he expressly commands them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." ‡

The summary of their opinions, as collected from the pentateuch, and from the correspondence of their chief priest with Scaliger, before adverted to, is given under the following heads:— They believe in one God, and in the laws of his servant Moses, which they profess to adhere more scrupulously to the observance of than the Jews do; they circumcise their male children invariably on the eighth day; they confine themselves to one wife, and never marry so near in kindred as is common among the Jews; they are rigid in the observance of certain ablutions; they keep the sabbath with all the rigour of a penance; they light no fires in the houses on that day, nor quit their dwellings but to visit the place of worship; the passover is with them the chief festival; but they observe the pentecost and feast of tabernacles with great attention, and regard the great fast of expiation most strictly; they never offer any sacrifice but on Mount Gerizim, and the head of their religion must reside at Shechem.

Their copy of the five books of Moses, on which they found these doctrines and observances, is thought by some to have been brought from Assyria into Samaria by the priest of Israel, whom Esarhaddon or Shalmaneser sent over to destroy the lions that

* St. John, viii. 48.

† St. Luke, ix. 54.

‡ St. Matthew, x. 5.

devoured the people because they knew not the God of the * land. Others again think that Manasses, the first high-priest of Gerizim, transcribed it from the copy of Ezra, on his return from the second captivity, or that of Babylon. The authors of the Universal History candidly confess, however, that when and how this manuscript came into the hands of the Samaritans, it is hard to guess, and that each system has its difficulties, which are not easily solved. †

Besides the old Hebfew copy, there was one used among them, in the vulgar tongue, which was a mixture of Assyrian, Babylonish, and Chaldee, besides a Greek version of it for the sake of those to whom that language was then common. The Samaritans themselves indeed say, that, at the time of the translation of the Jewish scriptures into Greek by the seventy elders, from which it derives its name, their own high-priest was also invited by Ptolemy to come to Alexandria at the head of a number of learned men, to make a translation of the Samaritan copy; and they add, that on a review of both these works, their own copy was preferred to that of the Jews, and placed in the library of the Egyptian king. ‡

The most learned critics are of opinion, that it was only the first five books of Moses which were translated into Greek, at the Alexandrian court, and that the remaining books of the Jewish Septuagint bear evident marks in their style and language of being done by different hands, and at a much later period, which strengthens the notion that both pentateuchs were translated at the same time. Among the early fathers, Origen and St. Jerome mention the Samaritan pentateuch as differing from that of the Jews; and as these theologians are said both of them to have understood *Hebrew*, it was probably the copy in that language which they had seen. But there are several other fathers of less learning, who, in their allusions to it, are thought to have mentioned the Greek copy, since they are conjectured to have been

* Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. x. p. 233. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. p. 244.

incapable of understanding either the original Hebrew, or the vulgar version of it.

The learned Scaliger was the first who set about enquiring after this work, by the correspondence already mentioned; and the munificence of Archbishop Usher soon procured several copies of it from Syria and Palestine, the most accurate of which has been printed in the Polyglot of Walton, where it may serve to gratify the curiosity of antiquaries; but, in the language of the Scriptures, "adds not a jot or a tittle to the law or the prophets."

In enquiring for the Bir-el-Yakoab, or Jacob's Well, we were told by every body that this was in the town, which not corresponding with the described place of the well, we were desirous of seeing, led to further explanation; and at length, by telling the story attached to it, we found it was known here only by the name of "Ber Samareea," or the well of Samaria.

Procuring a Christian boy to accompany us, we went out by the eastern gate, and passing through a continuation of the same valley in which Nablous stands, thickly covered with olive-trees, we reached the end of it in about a quarter of an hour, on foot, the pass opening into a round and more extensive vale, and the mountains east of the Jordan being in sight. On the right were some Mohammedan buildings on the sides and at the foot of Mount Gerizim, either mosques or tombs, now called Mahmoodeea, and said to stand over Joseph's sepulchre. On the left, at the foot of Mount Ebal, were several well-hewn grottoes in the rock; some with arched and others with square doors, most probably ancient sepulchres, without the old city of Sychem or Sychar. These grottoes were called here Khallat Rowgh-ban*, but we had no time to examine them.

* Rowghwan or Rowghban is a name given in Syria to monks, and more particularly to those who live in convents and other dwellings, remote from towns, and from society; and though Kallah means generally a castle, yet here it would imply only "the retreats of hermits," a purpose to which these caves were very probably at one time or other applied.

From hence, in another quarter of an hour, we reached the Well of Samaria. It stands at the commencement of the round vale, which is thought to have been the parcel of ground bought by Jacob for a hundred pieces of money, and which, like the narrow valley west of Nablous, is rich and fertile. Over this well stood anciently a large building, erected by St. Helena, of which there are now no other remains than some shafts of granite pillars; all the rest lying in one undistinguished heap of ruins. The mouth of the well itself had an arched or vaulted building over it, and the only passage down to it at this moment is by a small hole in the roof, scarcely large enough for a moderate-sized person to work himself down through.

We lighted a taper here, and taking off my large Turkish clothes, I did not then get down without bruising myself against the sides, nor was I at all rewarded for such an inconvenience by the sight below. Landing on a heap of dirt and rubbish, we saw a large flat oblong stone, which lay almost on its edge across the mouth of the well, and left barely space enough to see that there was an opening below. We could not ascertain its diameter, but by the time of a stone's descent, it was evident that it was of considerable depth, as well as that it was perfectly dry at this season; the fall of the stone giving forth a dead and hard sound.

Not far from the well of Samaria is the "Bir Yusef," over which is a modern building; and it is said to be, even at this day, frequented for water from Nablous. The well of Samaria might also have been so, therefore, from Sychar, although that city should not have extended farther east than the present town; and indeed it is no uncommon thing in Syria, as I myself have often witnessed, for water to be brought from a much greater distance. It is highly probable, therefore, that this is the identical well at which the interesting conference of Jesus with the woman of Samaria really happened.

I could find nothing of the old wall mentioned by Maundrell, and as the sepulchres of Khallat Rowgh-ban are much nearer the

town than the well, though they must have been without the city from the nature of the cliffs there, the wall did not probably extend more easterly than the site of the present town. Near the well of Samaria, and at the end of the narrow valley, or where it opens into the broader plain, are several round towers on the hills on each side, of an unknown date, probably watch-posts to guard this passage to the city.

One of the chief differences between the Jewish and the Samaritan pentateuch being the transposition of the names of Gerizim and Ebal, I had taken particular notice of these two mountains, or rather hills, both in going out and coming in. But it unfortunately happens, that neither relative positions nor local features are given of these in the sacred records, by which the point at issue might be decided. Josephus, however, is more explicit; for in his version of that command of Moses which has given rise to the dispute in question, he says, "Their leader ordered that, when they had got possession of the land of the Canaanites, and when they had destroyed the whole multitude of its inhabitants as they ought to do, they should erect an altar that should face the rising sun, not far from the city of Shechem, between the two mountains, that of Gerizim situate on the *right* hand, and that called Ebal on the *left*; which, with reference to the run-rising, fixes the former indisputably on the *south*, and the latter on the *north*.*

In the commands of Moses, delivered to the Israelites while yet on the other side of Jordan eastward, he expressly names Gerizim as the mountain from which the *blessings* are to be pronounced on the congregation, and Ebal as the one from which the *curses* are to be uttered †; yet, in a subsequent chapter, the same lawgiver is made to order that an altar of unhewn stones, over which no iron was to pass, should be raised to the Lord, and the great stones set up plastered with plaster, on which the law was to be written; and those reared on Mount *Ebal*, which had before

* Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. iv. c. 8. s. 44.

† Deut. xi. 29.

been made the mountain of *cursing*. * Joshua, his successor, is afterwards represented as setting up the altar on *Ebal*, and offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings to the Lord, and inscribing on the plastered stones, as directed, the law which Moses had left to the children of Israel. †

The Samaritans have, in these places, substituted *Gerizim* for *Ebal*, and they accuse the Jews of having maliciously altered *their* text, out of odium to the Samaritans, putting for *Gerizim*, *Ebal*, upon no other account but only because the Samaritans worshipped in the former mountain, which they would have, for that reason, not to be the true place appointed by God for his worship and sacrifice. Such was the account of the chief priest of these people to Mr. Maundrell, who questioned him on the subject. To confirm this, says the same traveller, he pleaded that *Ebal* was the mountain of *cursing*, as we have seen before, and in its own nature an *unpleasant* place; but, on the contrary, *Gerizim* was the mountain of *blessing* by God's own appointment, and also in itself *fertile* and *delightful*; from whence he inferred a probability that this latter must have been the true mountain appointed for these religious festivals, and not, as the Jews have corruptly written it, *Hebal*. ‡

Mr. Maundrell thought that there was some truth in the Samaritan priest's observations on the superiority of *Gerizim* to *Ebal*; for, says he, though neither of the mountains has much to boast of as to their pleasantness, yet, as one passes between them, *Gerizim* seems to discover a more fruitful aspect than *Ebal*. My own impression, from seeing both these hills from several points of view, was, that *Gerizim* was by far the more agreeable, and might be made the more productive of the two, not only from its principal side, or that hanging over Nablous, having a northern aspect, and being therefore less burnt up by the sun in summer, but from its slope of ascent being less abrupt than that of *Ebal*, and from

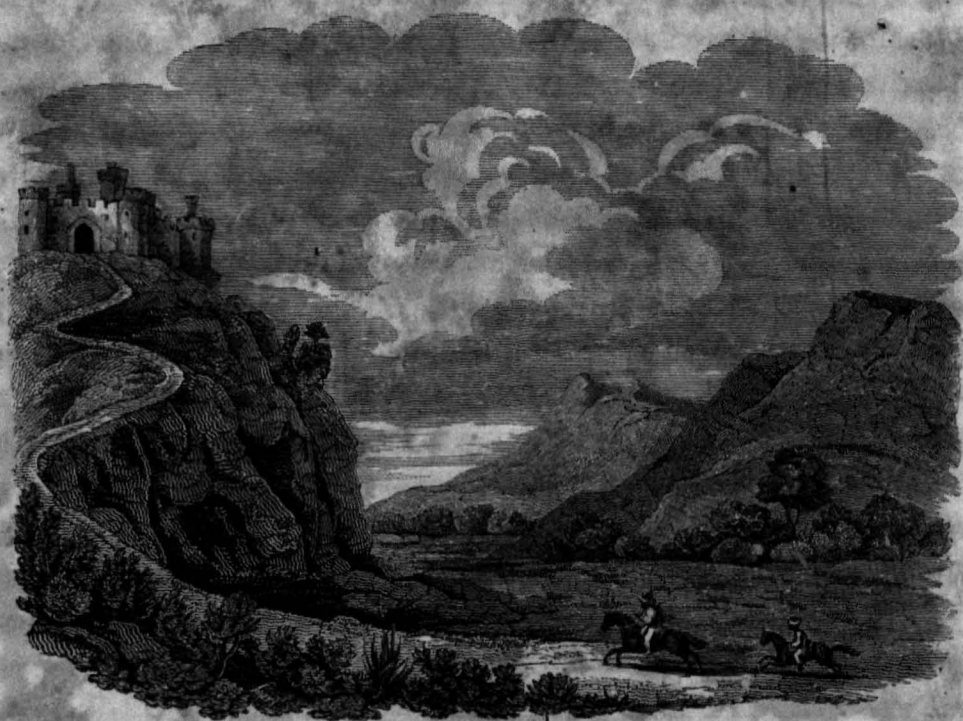
* Deut. xxvii. 1—4.

† Joshua, viii. 30—32.

‡ Maundrell's Journey, p. 81. 8vo.

the soil being therefore more liable to accumulate, and less subject to be washed down by the vernal and autumnal rains.* Their altitudes appeared to be nearly equal, and neither of them exceeded seven or eight hundred feet from the level of the valley, though much higher from the sea, as the whole country here is elevated. We had not an opportunity of ascending either of the hills ourselves; but from all the information I could collect regarding them, no one knew of any great stones or other vestiges of buildings remaining on them, though it must be confessed that we met with only two persons out of at least fifty whom we consulted, that had ever been on the summit of both these hills; and to these the subject, as well as the motive of our enquiry, was alike strange and unaccountable.

* When Benjamin of Tudela visited this spot, he says that Mount *Garizim* was full of fountains and gardens; while *Ghebal*, as he writes it, was arid and rocky. — Bergeron's Collection.



CHAPTER XXX.

RETURN FROM NABLOUS TO NAZARETH.

THE call to afternoon prayers was heard as we re entered Nablous, and as there was no time to be lost, we mounted and set out on our way back to Sanhoor. We now went out at a northern gate in the side of the town, and ascending a hill there, to go by a shorter road, we had a commanding view of the city, and of the valley in which it stands, from the heights above. Nothing could be more interesting than this sight; the lofty hills of Ebal and Gerizim approaching close to each other; the beautifully

fertile valley at their feet, covered with olive-woods, and corn-fields of the freshest green, and the white mass of flat-roofed dwellings and tall minarehs, which the busy town offered in contrast to the rest of the scene, formed altogether a new and charming picture.

When we lost sight of the town, the remainder of our way was over rude and barren hills, almost constantly ascending and descending; and as it was altogether an unpractised road, we neither saw a human habitation, nor a single living being, till we came out at the village of Jubbagh, near to Sanhoor. It was now already sunset; but spurring our horses across the rest of the way on plain ground, we arrived in time for supper, which had been retarded for us by our kind host, from the moment that advice had been given him of our being seen from the Castle-gate, galloping towards the fort with all speed across the valley.

Nothing could exceed the welcome with which we were received on our return; and there appeared to be as much sincerity as warmth in the gladness of the chief and of his dependants. We supped together on several excellent dishes, and when we had finished, all the rest partook in their turns, as is usual among them. Our conversation was as interesting as that of the preceding evening; and I only regretted, as I had done a thousand times before, the impossibility of remembering all the new and curious observations which occur in interviews and parties of this kind.

My disappointment in not finding the caravan, and the best route of proceeding to the northward, were also talked of; and Hadjee Ahmed pressed me, by the kindest invitation, to remain with him for the next month, until the Damascus caravan should again depart from Nablous, assuring me, at the same time, that nothing in his power should be wanting to make my stay agreeable. I told him how sensible I felt of so much generosity, and said, what I really thought at the moment, that I knew of no suitable return which it would ever be in my power to make for it; when he replied, that, besides the satisfaction of doing good, in entertaining

the stranger who is distant from his home, his country, and his friends, the curious facts which my knowledge of other people and of other lands had made me acquainted with, would always make my conversation interesting, and cause me to be as agreeable as I should be a welcome guest.

If I could have followed my own inclination, I would certainly have remained here for a few days at least; but I considered my duty to call me to fresh exertions, and determined therefore to return to Nazareth, to make new enquiries. When this determination was communicated to my host, he did all he could to combat it, and it was matter of so prolonged a dispute, that it was past midnight before our party broke up, when I retired to the excellent bed I had before slept in, and was attended by the hasnader or treasurer of the pilgrim chief in person.

As I could not with delicacy make any direct enquiries respecting Sanhoor, and as I had no opportunity of seeing it but from without, excepting only the small portion which we passed through in our way from the gate to the house, I knew little more of it than its outline features. It is a walled town, seated on a hill, the ascent of which is steep on all sides; and it commands the view of a fine broad valley or plain to the northward, and of a narrower one to the southward of it, both of which are cultivated. The walls of Sanhoor are strongly built, and are apparently of old Saracenic work. There are two gates of entrance, in opposite quarters of the town; but the whole circuit of the walls is less than half a mile. The houses within are thickly placed, and well built; the streets are narrow; the population is abundant for the size of the place, and the whole of the inhabitants are Mohammedans. Hadjee Ahmed Jerar, the chief, is tributary to Damascus, but is still an absolute lord within his own domain, as there are no military or other agents of the superior government ever stationed throughout his territory. His establishment is quite a feudal one, and he has several other towns and villages, besides extensive lands around them, attached to his service and

governed by his will. But notwithstanding that his power is absolute, his moderate use of it renders his government mild; and his dependants seemingly all rejoiced in the superiority of their privileges and their happiness. Every thing that I saw myself within the benign influence of this man's paternal government, wore an appearance of industry, security, abundance, health, and satisfaction; and furnished the most striking contrast that could be witnessed to the aspect of Turkish and Arabian settlements in general.

18th. As our way was thought to be only a short day's journey to Nazareth, we were not suffered to depart without taking an early meal, which Hadjee Ahmed had ordered to be prepared on the preceding evening, and of which he himself partook with us.

On setting out, he said he could hardly wish that I should be driven from Nazareth back to Sanhoor again, in search of a caravan for Damascus, as he hoped, for my sake, that I should find one direct from thence; but he made me promise, if ever I should again come into Syria or Palestine, either on my return from India, or at any subsequent period, that I would come and stay within his castle for a month at least.

Leaving Sanhoor at eight o'clock, we passed for half an hour over a small, but well-cultivated plain, to the northward of the town. From the northern edge of this we went for about an hour and a half over stony ground, when we reached Cabaat. This village, which we had before passed after it was dark, on our way hither from Jeneen, contains from fifty to eighty dwellings, and is altogether peopled by Mohammedans.

To go by what our guide thought a shorter route, we kept to the westward, leaving Jeneen on our right; and in about two hours more, over uneven and generally barren ground, we came to the village of Birreheen. This is seated on the brow of a hill, and contains from forty to fifty dwellings; and just opposite to it, on the west, distant about a mile, is another village of the same size, called Cufr-Cudt.

Below this, we turned to the north-east, through a narrow pass, in which a deep well was sunk down in the rock at the foot of an overhanging cliff. Pursuing our way from hence, we came out at noon upon the Great Plain of Esdraelon, having Jeneen in sight about two miles to the eastward of us.

Going nearly in a northern direction over the plain, we came at two o'clock to Makheably, passing close to its western edge, where we observed the scattered fragments of buildings, pottery, sarcophagi, and other proofs of former consequence.

The rest of our way back was precisely that by which we had come from Nazareth. In the course of it we observed, that what is called the Great Plain of Esdraelon, taking the hills we had quitted to be its southern boundary, and the range on which Nazareth stands to be its northern limit, is not strictly a plain, in the sense in which we generally understand the word, but consists of a series of elevations and depressions, some of which are very considerable. It is in contrast to the more rugged parts of the hill-country only that it can be called so, or from the circumstance of those ridges in it not interrupting the general surface of corn-land to which it is mostly appropriated, since all the elevated parts are cultivated even to their summits.

The Hermon of this place, as compared with Tabor, is a small range of hills standing nearly in the middle of the Great Plain, and isolated on all sides round. But this is not the principal Hermon of the Scriptures, as invoked in the writings of Solomon and David, as will be shown in its proper place, though this range here opposite to Tabor is always pointed out by the guardians of the holy places as the only mountain so called.

The length of the Great Plain of Esdraelon, within the limits prescribed to it on the east and west by geographers and travellers, is estimated at about eight hours' journey, or at least thirty miles. Its breadth from north to south, in the way we came over it, is about five hours' travel, or nearly twenty miles; as we entered it at noon, and reached the foot of the Mountain of the Precipitation

exactly at sunset, having halted only to water our horses at the wells of Fooli in the way. Nearly the whole extent of this land now lies waste, though its fine soil is everywhere capable of cultivation.

We reached the Convent of Nazareth at seven o'clock, and were received with surprise at the cause of our return from Nablous; but we found as hearty a welcome among the friars there as before.

THE END.