

farmers' villages now, and remarkable for nothing unless it be a lemon-grove in the outskirts of Shunem. The hovels of Shunem are the worst that we have seen in the country. The Shunammite woman, who so kindly furnished Elisha with a prophet's chamber, must have been sorely cramped for room if she lived in a house no larger than the present average in the town. No one can enter without stooping, and any one entering would regret doing so for the rest of the day. Jezreel is larger, but attractive only for its history. Here was located Naboth's vineyard, and on these mountains of Gilboa, where the town stands, fell Saul and Jonathan. Here, too, the dogs picked Jezebel's bones. But Gilboa will be ever associated with David's lament: "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places; how are the mighty fallen!" His noble heart found good words for his greatest enemy.

Jezreel overlooks the beautiful plain which separates Samaria from Galilee.

Nazareth, April 17, 1877.

LETTER XXXIII.

NAZARETH AND THE MOUNTAINS.

WE entered Galilee through the great Plain of Esdraelon. Leaving Jenin early on the morning of April 17, we reached Nazareth about 2 P.M. the same day. A heavy fog shut out all but a limited vision for the first few hours of the day, and we expected to have but an imperfect view of the great rival of the Plain of Sharon. We could see well-cultivated fields on each side of our path, and we knew that far to our left rose Mount Carmel, and that near us the hills too dimly seen were the mountains of Gilboa; but it was not until the following day, from the summit of Mount Tabor, that we saw the full extent of this wonderful plain, with Carmel and Little Hermon as landmarks in the expanse. Not only was the plain interesting for its landscape, less beautiful in itself than relatively as compared with any other, at least in this part of Palestine, its surface carpeted with flowers or waving with bearded wheat, with here and there a winter lake not yet absorbed by the summer heat, shining like silver in the green fields, while over all drifted the shadows from the passing clouds, defying any painter's skill to transfer their varied tints to the canvas—all this was pleasing—but the more so when we remembered that we were on the great battle-field of the country. Here Barak had defeated Sisera, while Deborah, watching the battle

from Mount Tabor, promised the victory to Israel. Here Gideon led his strange warriors against the Midianites, and won an easy victory. Here all of Israel's enemies who had horses and chariots sought to engage them in battle, and this plain had often witnessed both the triumph and defeat of the chosen people.

The clouds of mist lifted during the day, and after passing Shunem, as we neared the hills about Nazareth, we saw the village of Nain, a few scattered houses on the slopes of Little Hermon. It retains the same name as when Jesus entered the village to see the widow's son borne out to his burial, and stopping the bier restored him to life and to his mother.

Not far from Nain we could see Endor, a larger place and somewhat lower down on the slopes of Little Hermon, one of the mountains of Gilboa that witnessed Saul's fatal defeat. He had not far to go to consult the witch of Endor and learn of his approaching death on the morrow. As we rode through the plain we were struck with the comparative absence of lentils, or pease, a sort of small pea, much used by the poor in making soup. It was probably the mess of pottage for which Esau sold his birth-right. It thrives remarkably on stony ground, and it accordingly abounds in all Judea. Its absence here indicated the greater fertility of the Plain of Esdraelon. Wheat, barley, and oats seemed to be the leading cereals. The few corn-stalks, remnants of a former crop, looked as if the corn might have been sown broadcast and grown mostly for fodder. We often saw women in the wheat-fields pulling up some sort of vegetable which grows among the wheat. This they bind in large bundles, which they carry on their heads to town. We passed several of these on our way up the hill south of Nazareth.

The view of Nazareth, while above the average

of the towns here, is less pleasing, on the whole, than that of Bethlehem as approached from the east. It has doubtless much improved of late years under the influence of Christian ideas, and now numbers some six thousand souls, over half of whom are Christians. Fine new stone buildings have gone up, including a Protestant church and an orphanage. A steam-mill, with its black smoke and loud breathing, reminding one of Christian lands, was the first and only thing of the sort that we saw in Palestine. Only here and at Jaffa and Jerusalem have we seen any kind of wagon.

The principal building at Nazareth is the Latin Church of the Annunciation, covering the traditional place where the angel appeared to Mary and announced the birth of Jesus. From this monastery, which lies down near the valley, the houses are all built up on the side of the hill that overlooks the town. This explains Luke's language describing the conduct of the people after Christ's sermon in the synagogue: They "thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill, whereon the city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." Strange to say, we passed the traditional Mount of Precipitation an hour before reaching Nazareth, while the narrative would lead us to look first in the town itself. Even should there have been no changes made by houses being built so as to conceal much of the exposed front of the hill, to say nothing of accumulated *débris* filling up the ground at its foot, there are several places there now from which a man might be thrown down and be instantly killed.

The view from the top of the hill on the side of which Nazareth is built is peculiarly fine. When Renan endeavored, after a visit here, to account for Christ's character and life by the influence of the natural scenery with which his childhood was famil-

iar, he must have had reference more to the view from the hill than anything else. There was nothing very inspiring in the town itself, which was so disreputable that there arose the proverb, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But on this hill-top, where Christ doubtless spent many days of his early life, the prospect was very elevating. It would seem strange, on Renan's theory, that no other great man or moral teacher had been developed by these opportunities of extended vision and quiet meditation. But the fact remains as stated, the view was peculiarly fine upon which our Lord's eyes rested in his boyhood and young manhood. Off to the west lay Mount Carmel, one end dipping into the Mediterranean, and the other, that on which Elijah offered his memorable sacrifice, rising yet higher, and overlooking all the Plain of Esdraelon; to the south lay all this plain, with the cities on Little Hermon in full view; to the east majestic Tabor looked benignly down upon the scene; while more to the north-east are the hills which barely hide the Lake of Galilee. The snows of Mount Hermon add beauty to the vision of the green fields on all the north forming one extensive plain, save that here and there rises a hill with its invariable city at the top which cannot be hid. From this hill-top Christ could see Cana, the place of his first miracle; Nain, where he wrought one of his greatest miracles; and Hermon and Tabor, on the summit of one of which he was transfigured.

We had little desire to see any thing else save the general situation of the town where our Lord spent all but three or four years of his life. We naturally looked for a carpenter's shop as we walked through the streets. Where the houses are so largely built of stone a carpenter is little needed save for making furniture. We found only one in our extended walk. Perhaps Joseph may have been the only one

of his day, and he would very properly be called "the carpenter of Nazareth." The one we found had but little in common with his famous predecessor, unless it was the stone shop, as his implements appeared to be of modern designs. Of course there is shown Joseph's carpenter shop, as well as the synagogue from which Christ was taken out by the infuriated people after his first sermon. Too many changes had taken place here for us to put confidence in these shows, and so we had no desire to see them.

We did, however, visit the Latin monastery, which professes to cover and preserve the place where Gabriel announced to Mary the great fact of the incarnation. The spot has evidently been regarded as sacred for many centuries. While the present structure does not date back earlier than 1730 A.D., it contains material of much older buildings. Excavations which were going on while we were there showed very ancient foundations to the south of the monastery and extending partly under its walls. In the very room where they profess the Annunciation took place are remains of old columns, one of considerable size broken off near the ceiling. This may have been done by the Turks in order to mar and destroy what the Christians deemed sacred. It is now pointed out as marking the spot where Mary stood, and another where Gabriel stood, and as being miraculously supported in its place. It was, perhaps, once a column in a large chapel, but the room where we found it is quite small. It is lighted by silver lamps, which hang about a marble slab in a sort of alcove bearing the inscription, "Here the Word became flesh." We groped our way into an unlighted room back of this, called the Chapel of Joseph, "where He became subject to them." Inasmuch as the monastery professes to cover the place where Mary's house stood, the credulous may be

satisfied by having various other parts of the house pointed out. As for the house itself, we are told that the angels bore it bodily to Loretto, in Italy, where it is annually visited by numerous pilgrims. The fact that the house shown in Italy could never have stood upon the peculiar foundation shown here never seems to trouble them in the least.

The Greeks also profess to preserve the site of the Annunciation, though by a less pretentious building. They claim that Gabriel appeared unto Mary while at the well. There seems to be only one spring or living well at Nazareth, and this was doubtless often visited by our Lord and his mother, and is a deeply interesting place on that account. Water flowing from this spring in the Greek convent is conveyed to a public reservoir, where, at two stone spouts, the women of the village come to fill their water-pots. It is called Mary's Well, and one can never visit it without seeing one or more women there getting water. Toward evening the number is very large. Filling their water-pots, large earthen vessels holding three or four gallons, they assist one another in lifting them to their place on a little cushion on the top of their head, and with them balanced at a uniform angle they move off to their homes. Over the well in the convent is hung a fine oil-painting, representing Mary at the well with Gabriel. The scene, save the angel's presence, may be witnessed only a few yards away. The women who come to draw water are usually maidens, who owe their graceful figures to the habit of carrying their water-pots on their heads. A marble slab covers the original well or spring. The Greek priest lowered a small silver bucket, which he soon drew up filled with the water for us to drink. To my mind this appeared the only locality about Nazareth that could with certainty be associated with the parents of our Lord. Here most probably Jesus himself often was. But

happily the Annunciation can be connected with no one spot. Doubtless the whole outline of Nazareth's surroundings was about the same in Christ's day as in ours, and no one can look upon the scenes so familiar to his eyes without profound emotion. I need not describe the cactus-hedges and flat roofs of the stone houses, and the houses themselves, usually of one story, and never large, all doubtless resembling those which might have been found here when Christ was subject to his parents.

Early on the morning of the 18th of April we rode around the hill which overlooks the town and its beautiful surroundings, to better fix the suggestive scenes in our minds. Our road, on leaving, lay past Mary's Well and over the eastern hill-boundary of Nazareth toward Mount Tabor. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so they are about Nazareth—on every side a hill. The town itself looked best when we were farthest away, and by the help of a soft light, to reduce the glare of its white walls and roofs. Within two hours after leaving we were ascending the slopes of Mount Tabor. The road lay over limestone hills, where, in some instances, the rain had slaked the lime, which crumbled under our horses' feet. All the slopes of Tabor are the best wooded of any sections that we have seen. The trees are mostly oak. The trunks are large, but the people cut off the branches for fire-wood, so that when they grow out again they give the tree a very stunted appearance. In this way, however, the people have a sort of perpetual forest, always diminishing and always multiplying. These limbs and branches answer very well for fuel in a country where so little is used.

We made half of the ascent of Mount Tabor on horseback, and could have made the whole, but having a long ride in prospect for the rest of the day, we left our horses in charge of our servant and

walked up to the summit. The zigzag road up the slopes gave us a foretaste of the fine view which awaited us from the roof of the Latin monastery on the top. The snow-crown of Hermon, Hattin—the traditional Mount of Beatitudes—the blue waters of Gennesaret, the Valley of the Jordan, with its deep gorge; the mountains of the Hauran, Little Hermon, with Nain and Endor on its slopes; the great Plain of Esdraelon, Mount Carmel, and almost the Mediterranean, together with the hills about Nazareth, helped to make up the rich panorama upon which, in the clear morning, we feasted our hungry eyes. It was a site fit for the occurrence of any event, however good, however sacred. The mountain itself stands apart from every other. It rises above all others in this part of Palestine. Its shape is beautiful, whether appearing as an immense dome from the east and west, or like a truncated cone from the north and south. It is not strange that for so many centuries it was the unquestioned site of the transfiguration of our Lord. Even now majestic, white-robed Hermon is the only rival in this great claim. It is hard to decide between them, either being a place so fitting for that event.

The summit of Tabor shows remains of very ancient buildings. It was once very strongly fortified, and parts of the old fort-walls still remain. Several fine churches once stood there, one each for Christ, Moses, and Elias, according to Peter's impulsive wish, built by the no less enthusiastic crusaders in the twelfth century. Remains have been found of an old church supposed to date back to the fourth or fifth century. The Latin monk who was our guide about the ruins pointed to materials in the old fort supposed to belong to Jewish houses. In fact, the chief objection urged against Mount Tabor as the scene of the transfiguration is that a town was built upon its summit at that time, and

hence there was not sufficient privacy there for that event. It does not follow necessarily from the narrative of Matthew, or Mark, or Luke, that the transfiguration took place on the *summit* of the mountain, and there would have been no lack of privacy on its slopes near the summit. Moreover, the vision was supernatural, as was also the voice, and it might have happened without the notice of the people more than as on another occasion, when a voice from heaven was heard and the people who stood near said that it thundered. The fact that Origen and Jerome both speak of Tabor as "the high mountain apart," and that it meets all the conditions, being in our Lord's line of travel, and readily reached in less than six days from Cesarea Philippi, where the last previous events are said to have occurred, may well make one hesitate to surrender Tabor to the no stronger claims of Hermon. From where they stood the three apostles might well compare our Lord's white and glistening raiment to the snows of Hermon, plainly visible in the distance. True, Hermon rises to over nine thousand feet, while Tabor is only a little over two thousand, but Tabor stands as prominent above its surroundings as does Hermon, and, moreover, stands apart. Then again, when our Lord descended from the mount a great company, including scribes and Pharisees, were waiting at the base, and he cured the demoniac child which the disciples could not relieve. This scene certainly appears much more natural in Galilee than at the foot of Hermon and about Cesarea Philippi, where we are not positive that Christ wrought a single miracle, or that the fame of his healing power was widely known or aroused much opposition.

As we came down from Mount Tabor we, too, found reminders of human sorrow, as did our Lord, whether at the foot of Tabor or Hermon. A poor

woman, whose face was swollen by weeping, and whose voice was feeble from long exertion, was seeking her lost donkey. It had strayed away while she slept by the road after a long journey by which she had become greatly wearied. If she failed to find it her husband would beat her most unmercifully, and now, after a protracted search, she despaired of finding it, and was returning home for a cruel beating. The wife here is the husband's slave. He has almost the power of life and death over her. He may divorce her from mere caprice, and leave her penniless, save with the few silver coins which she constantly wears as her dower. Well may women sit among the tombs and weep, as we saw them doing near our tents in Nazareth. Their life is nowhere sadder than in the land where Christ did so much to elevate them. It is no unusual thing to see a woman and a donkey together, both heavily laden with fire-wood, while the man walks along without a burden. Nor would it appear strange to see him ride while his wife walked, and perhaps carried a heavy load besides. Visiting a Turkish court of justice in Damascus to-day, we found all the complainants women, and usually wives. Happily there is some sort of appeal, but whether it avails much does not appear. — Certainly the large number who come demanding justice would indicate great need of it, or, what is worse, such loss of self-respect on the part of women that they bring their domestic matters, without any sense of impropriety, to the eye and ear of the public. Perhaps nowhere is the difference between Mohammedanism and Christianity more striking than in the social *status* of woman.

The Christian religion alone, of all the great religions of the world (all of which during this tour we have endeavored to study carefully in this respect), elevates woman by placing her on a social foot-

ing with man. Save in Christian families, or where Christian ideas have found a place, a man may travel anywhere in China or India without seeing the wife of any except a very poor man, and her only at her daily toil; while in this country and in Egypt all save very poor women go veiled, but little less secluded from the public eye than when shut up in the women's apartments at home. The wife must never speak to any one save her husband. In all of these countries the husband and wife never walk together, and are never seen together. The women all go in companies for pleasure, or labor, or like this one alone, weeping. If the redemption of the world means the salvation of woman and her elevation to her proper place as man's companion, then Christianity alone can claim to have done any thing toward it. Her wail is the one voice of the heathen world which longest resounds in the ear of the traveler. We had heard it in all the Orient, and now, coming down from Tabor, it appeared to make its appeal with peculiar pathos. No wonder that Jesus spoke so tenderly to the woman at the well, and to her that was a sinner! Hers has been the saddest part of the curse.

Our road soon left the wooded slopes of Tabor, and we were out upon the treeless plain which separates the mountain from the Sea of Galilee. We stopped for lunch under an almost solitary tree on the border of this plain. On each side of us were the ruins of two old Roman forts, now used as a gathering-place for the Bedouins of this part of the country, who meet here every Monday for the purchase of horses and stores. Their black tents, made of goats' hair, were pitched less than half a mile away, while some were watching their cattle on the plain. Many of the Bedouins on the west side of the Jordan are farmers, living in tents. Most of them, however, deal in horses, and travel every-

where to buy and sell, and sometimes to steal. They are regarded as a more lawless set than the villagers, although these latter suffer from kleptomania, and have to be watched.

We soon saw, on our road, the traditional Mount of Beatitudes. Just where Christ preached his Sermon on the Mount is not positively known. The slopes of Tabor would appear somewhat too steep, while the only hill of any size in the vicinity is this, called Hattin, from the name of a village near by. It does not rise to more than sixty feet above the plain, yet when seen from the gorge on the north it appears a respectable mountain. It also stands out very prominently from the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, and is visible almost as far as Mount Tabor is. The top of the hill is divided into two parts, or horns, so that it is sometimes called the "Horns of Hattin." The crusaders first suggested that this must be the mount on which Jesus preached his great sermon. It appears to be the only one meeting all the necessary conditions, and has accordingly been accepted as the probable scene of that event, although there is no very early tradition for it. It might well serve as a sort of pulpit where Christ could sit while "he opened his mouth and taught" the multitudes gathered from Galilee, from Decapolis, from Jerusalem, from Judea, and from beyond Jordan. From our side of approach it appeared a humble pulpit from which to utter words themselves the proofs of his divinity. But Christ never sought to derive much advantage from physical surroundings, so as to make his ministry at all dependent on them. His most memorable words were uttered to a single hearer at night: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

From Hattin the waters of the Sea of Galilee are

in sight, and a short ride brings us to the steep descent from the plain to the shore. Like the Jordan and the Dead Sea, the surface of the lake is below the level of the Mediterranean. The temperature is accordingly higher as we reach the shore, where our tents already await us, only a little south of the old walls of Tiberias. This Roman city, mentioned only once in the Scriptures, and, so far as we know, never visited at all by our Lord, was doubtless standing in his day. Its population was almost wholly Gentile then, few Jews consenting to live in a town built on the site of an old grave-yard. It is one of the most sacred cities of Judaism now, as it is believed that the Messiah will first appear on the Sea of Galilee, and here they await his appearing. I found worshipers in each of the three synagogues that I visited. Most of them wore phylacteries on their foreheads and arms. They appeared unlike any Jews that I ever saw before, and gave one a better idea of the original scribes and Pharisees. The whole town bears a desolate look. Its walls were partly thrown down some years ago by an earthquake. It stands almost alone on the shores of this historic lake. But another letter must describe the Sea of Galilee and its surroundings.

Damascus, April 23, 1877.