

In these three areas—two of 12 feet square and one of 24 feet in length—we have the space required to be covered in by the 48 feet of which the goat's-hair curtains consisted, the third area being defined by the position of the five pillars.

Other evidence, on the same behalf, was produced by Mr. Caldecott, who claims to have established that there were three cubits of the respective lengths of $\frac{9}{10}$, $\frac{12}{10}$, and $\frac{15}{10}$ of an English foot, the first of which was used exclusively for gold and silver work, the second for building purposes, and the third for measuring areas only.

THE SAMARITAN PASSOVER.

By the Rev. JOHN E. H. THOMSON, D.D.

ON Monday, May 2nd, 1898, a party of us—my wife and myself, accompanied by two young ladies—started from Nazareth for Nâblus to see the Samaritan Passover. I need not spend time detailing our journey across the plain of Esdraelon, our stay in the native *hôtel* in Jenin, or our visit to Sebaste. It is a road well known. I would, however, like to make a passing note on 'Ain Jalûd, Gideon's fountain, where we lunched on our first day. The name certainly means the well of Gilead; and as certainly Gilead, as we find it in later history, was across the Jordan. Might I venture to suggest that Gilboa originally was called Gilead, hence we find it said in Judges vii, 3, "Let him that is fearful or afraid depart out of Mount Gilead." גִּלְבּוֹא הַגִּלְעָד. The suggestion of Professor G. A. Smith that Gilead here may be a misreading for Gilboa does not seem probable, as the mountain to the south of Mount Moreh, out of which the well of Harod sprang, was well known later as Mount Gilboa; the tendency would rather have been to have changed Gilead into Gilboa than the reverse. 'Ain Jaluk, a variant found in the Jerusalem itinerary, is due to mishearing. Another note I would make on Fendakûmfyeh—a name generally understood to be equivalent to πέντε κόμαι. The modern Arabic equivalent of the Greek π is ب, as Boutros and Boulos. Is it possible that in some cases the ancient Greek softened π into an f as the modern Greek softens β into v? Another example of the same change is Fahil (Pella); but on the other hand we have Baneas from Panias.

We arrived about sunset on Tuesday evening at the Latin Convent Nâblus. We had been informed that on the evening of Thursday, May 5th, the Passover was to be killed, so we had expected to have a free day before the Passover to climb Mount Ebal. However, when we were dismounting we heard the porter muttering to himself, as if explaining

our presence, *Na'am Uyidhbachu el kharoof bukra* ("Yes, they kill the sheep to-morrow"). I thought he must have made a blunder, but I found he was right, and that our informant had been mistaken.

In the evening of the day of our arrival we called on Mr. Falscheer, and found quite a number of guests in his house, all intent on being present at the celebration of the next evening. Arrangements were then made as to procedure on the following day, and we were put under the guidance of the *shamas* or deacon of the church, who was also teacher of the school. The portion of Nâblus inhabited by the Samaritans is toward the north-west of the city, and seemed very confined. We cannot say that we entered the Synagogue—we were not allowed to go beyond the threshold; it was a small dark, richly-carpeted apartment. Formerly the Samaritans had several Synagogues in Nâblus; now all but this one have been wrested from them by the Moslems, and transformed, most of them, into mosques. We were shown the different rolls, including the famous one attributed to Abishua, the great-grandson of Aaron.

We understood that, by the time we arrived at Nâblus, all the Samaritans had already migrated to the top of Mount Gerizim. Mr. Mills and Dr. Petermann say that this migration begins on the morning preceding the Passover. Whether on that morning or earlier, the whole Samaritan community, except those ceremonially unclean or in the very article of death, had gone or had been carried to the top of the Sacred Mountain. Dean Stanley, in his "Sermons in the East," and Mr. Mills, in his "Modern Samaritans," mention that the Samaritans, after having been deprived of it for 40 years, regained the right of celebrating the Passover on Mount Gerizim through the influence of Mr. Finn, then English Consul at Jerusalem. During the interval they had held the feast in their houses—as do the Jews—though I understand that they sacrificed the lambs throughout the whole period, which the Jews have not done since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

About three o'clock on Wednesday afternoon we mounted our horses at the convent gate and joined the party from Mr. Falscheer's on the western outskirts of Nâblus. Keeping to the outskirts, we passed close beside the now deserted Samaritan quarter. We then turned more to the north till we came to a large fountain that seems to supply the northern part of Nâblus. We were directed to a bridle-path much like several that I have seen in the Scottish Highlands made by cattle, only the rough limestone boulders over which the horses stumbled were larger and more irregular than one ever sees intruding on a bridle path in Scotland. At the beginning, on each side, were green orchards of oranges, pomegranates, figs, &c., but we had not gone far till we had orchards only on the left hand, and then we got above them altogether. After a ride of about an hour and a half, we came to the top of the hill and looked down on the Samaritan encampment, perhaps a score of yards below the level on which we stood and about a quarter of a mile away. It occupied a slight depression on the hill-top; rising to the east of this was a slight elevation, which formed the brow of

the mountain towards the plain of Mikhnah. Away beyond were the mountains of Gilead with Jebel Osh'a for centre; to the south of this were the mountains of Moab, to the north the Jaulan, and eastward from it, dimly seen, was the famous Jebel ed Druz. To the south of this depression were mounds that suggested ruins, and at the edge of the mountain the *wely* of a departed Moslem Sheikh—Sheikh Ghanem—a square building surmounted by a dome. To the west stretched the sea, and northward lay, across the narrow plain of Shechem, Mount Ebal. In the centre of the slight depression stood the twenty-nine tents which formed the Samaritan encampment. At a little distance to the south-east stood a solitary tent, the purpose of which we learned afterwards. The twenty-nine tents were arranged in two curved lines facing each other. Dr. A. R. McEwan, in an article on the Samaritan Passover which appeared in "Good Words," January, 1894, speaks of "the tabernacle" in the encampment. I saw nothing of the kind, and none of the authorities I have consulted refer to it. He may have meant by this term the high priest's tent, but he speaks as if part of the service was held in it. All I can say is it was not so on the occasion of my visit. Strange as it may seem, this encampment, small though it was, made one think of the scene in the desert with the innumerable tents of the house of Israel. The tents in the wilderness would certainly not be like those before us, which seemed much like those used by ordinary tourists. Everything, I may remark, looked bright and clean. Not impossibly the Samaritans may have the habit, like the Jews, of renewing garments and household utensils at Passover.

The day on which we were on the top of Mount Gerizim was the Moslem feast of the Greater Bairam. As a result of this there were on the top of the mountain a great many Moslems in a high state of festive excitement, and giving us rather more attention than was quite agreeable. I have an idea that it is possible that some of the ceremonies of the Passover were omitted or modified in consequence of there being so many excited Moslems on the mountain. Another result was the presence of a large contingent of Turkish police, who had been hired by the Samaritans to protect them. We in turn, by giving them for *baksheesh* two medjeedies—about seven shillings—were taken under their protection. I can say that the police, on their part, carried out their share of the bargain, cracking the crowns of their co-religionists with great apparent gusto. The strokes must have been somewhat serious, as the men were strong and the cudgels formidable.

I went to visit the foundations of the ancient temple, but found all careful investigation impossible in consequence of the presence of these Moslems. When I attempted to make a rough sketch, they crowded round me so as to eclipse everything. However, we walked round the tomb of Sheikh Ghanem, and had a most enchanting view. While I complain of the crowd, I cannot honestly say that it was worse than a Scotch mob would have been in similar circumstances. When looking down on the plain two objects naturally drew our attention most, the

green mound of 'Askar, which almost certainly marks the site of Sychar ; and, nearer the mountain, the tomb of Joseph, and Jacob's well. We felt ourselves indubitably on sacred ground ; this mountain on which we were standing was that seen by our Lord when He said, "Neither on this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem shall men worship." In the narrow valley of Nâblus Joshua had called together the elders of Israel to meet him. In that valley, too, had the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes been rent from Rehoboam. In ordinary circumstances we should have been shown the stones which Joshua took out of the Jordan, the steps of Adam out of Paradise, and the place where Abraham offered up Isaac, all which Samaritan tradition places on the top of Mount Gerizim, but the presence of the excited crowd of Moslems rendered this impossible.

While we were engaged in scrambling about the Sheikh's tomb, we observed smoke rising from a little elevation to the north-east of the tents, and turned our steps towards it. When we reached the place we found a small number of Samaritans attending two fires. One was in a shallow trench, and on it were placed two copper cauldrons full of water. Not far from this fire we saw smoke welling out from a deep pit. The pit was a yard or so wide at the top, and seemed lined with masonry. A quantity of brushwood had been thrown into it and set on fire ; this fire was replenished with fuel continually during the services. The purpose of the fire was not obvious at the moment. Dr. McEwan, in the article to which I have referred, mentions the presence of women and children at this point in the proceedings. I did not see any. Petermann, indeed, says they were expected to remain in their tents during the celebration, and Mills confirms this. Otherwise their absence might be accounted for by the number of Moslem youths gathered on the mountain.

Away to the south of this were assembled a larger number of the Samaritans. I did not count them, but to my eye there seemed between twenty and thirty. Petermann says there were twelve men besides the high priest, and that these represented the tribes of Israel. Mills says "some of the elders." When Dean Stanley was present the numbers were indefinitely large, he distinguishes "fifteen of the elder men besides six youths" from "the majority" of the worshippers. From these variations it is evident that there is nothing symbolic in the number.

These men stood in a semicircle, in the centre of which was the fragment of an ancient column.¹ Beside this stood the high priest robed in green ; the rest, with the exception of one man in a striped garment, were dressed in white.² The high priest recited in a chant the appro-

¹ Petermann says they stood in two rows, and the high priest stood at the head of one of the rows.

² No importance is to be attached to the dress. When Dean Stanley saw the ceremony most of the worshippers wore their ordinary dress. Only about fifteen of the elder men, amongst whom was Amram, the high priest, were clothed in long white robes. Dr. McEwan mentions that the high priest was clothed in a grey white satin robe with a white hood of soft texture over his head.

priate prayers and passages from the Torah, while the rest followed him from books. Sometimes they stood, sometimes knelt, and at the occurrence of certain words—I think the sacred names—they drew their hands over their faces and stroked their beards. The sight was very impressive,—this semicircle of stately, white-robed men chanting in Hebrew the tale of the deliverance from Egypt. Occasionally the high priest turned his back upon his fellow worshippers. Generally he was looking towards them, turning his face from one end of the semicircle to the other. One could not help noticing how different in appearance the Samaritans are from the Jews. The Jews are as a rule undersized, and many have mean features; these were all above the average height, several much so, and all had noble faces. I observed that the two worshippers at the horn of the crescent at which I was standing were not joining in the chanting of the prayers. One was a young man, the other a mere lad. I was told that they were the sons of the late second high priest who had died about two months before, and their feelings were too much for them. This one touch of feeling, common to all humanity, bridged the gulf between them, with their ancient service, and us, spectators from the modern world of the West. I cannot tell whether it is part of their regular service or not, but at one point, when the Moslems were specially troublesome, the high priest turned round towards them and began to recite in Arabic a prayer for long life and prosperity to the Sultan, to which the Moslems responded with vehement amens.

As this chanting was to last some time the deacon who had accompanied us and acted as our guide suggested that we should now draw off and take our supper. It was necessary that we should put a considerable distance between us and the camp lest some fragment of our leavened bread should render their camp unclean. We squatted down on the rising ground we had crossed in coming up, and from it we had a complete view of the camp, the chanting group of Samaritans, and that smaller number attending the fires; we also had in full view the Moslems as they surged hither and thither. Thus sure that nothing of importance could occur without our knowledge, we ate our hard-boiled eggs and sardines with an even mind. While going to the place where we had agreed to take our supper we saw, in passing, a small group of lambs huddled together. These, as we learned afterwards, were the Passover lambs.

When we had finished our supper, we returned to the Samaritans. Almost immediately on our arrival they moved in a body to a spot near the smoking pit and the fire with the cauldrons. The lambs, seven in number, were brought forward, and were laid hold of each by two men. I would note here points of difference. Petermann says one man held each lamb between his feet; further, he says the lambs were *five* in number. Dean Stanley and Mills speak of *six* lambs. Dr. McEwan and myself saw *seven*. It may be the Samaritan population has increased, and so more lambs are needed. The whole company formed a small circle, with the

lambs towards the inside. The high priest began again his recitative, joined by numbers of those standing in the circle. At last, when the sun was setting, and the high priest came to recite the words :—"And the whole assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel shall kill it in the evening," at once all the lambs were thrown on their sides by the young men who were holding them ; then a man in a striped robe passed rapidly from lamb to lamb, cutting the throat of each with two deft strokes. In less than a minute, with scarcely a struggle, all the lambs lay dead.¹ Then the men came forward to kiss the hand of the high priest ; the older men he kissed on the cheek.

At this point the pressure of the Moslem crowd became excessive, and their excitement rose. It needed all the exertions of the Turkish police to keep them from bursting through the ring of celebrants and, by touching the lambs, desecrating the sacrifice. The Samaritans, probably moved by this risk of desecration, seemed to resent our curiosity in a way that was in marked contrast to their ordinary courtesy. One of them said to Miss Vartan, who was forced by the press quite close upon him :—"You Christians believe that your Messiah has fulfilled all that this means ; why do you press so curiously to see what we do ?"

About this time there was a cry from the tents, and one or two men left the circle and went to the camp. As the great mass of the Moslems followed, I began to be afraid that something serious had occurred. We were informed it was a woman who was supposed to be dying, and the cry was for someone to remove her to the tent outside, lest the camp should be defiled by the presence of a dead body. I learned that it was Moslems who carried her thither. I may remark that when any Samaritan dies, the friends leave the body, and the funeral rites are all performed by Moslems. After this the Moslems who had left did not return ; the lambs were killed, and that was the only important matter in their eyes.

¹ Dr. McEwan says : "One of the turbaned men ran to the top of a neighbouring knoll, from which the Mediterranean could be seen, and watched the setting sun. . . . Then suddenly the man on the knoll raised his arm, and in a moment seven knives flashed in the air," &c. I saw nothing of this. The fact that it was the Greater Bairam might cause some changes in procedure. Dr. McEwan also mentions a youth with a white turban running with a bowl of the blood and a bunch of hyssop to the tents, and striking the blood in the doors of the tents. Not only was this not done when we saw the celebration, but Petermann says he asked the high priest why they did not do so, and he was answered that this striking with the blood the lintels and doorposts belonged only to the first celebration—an answer which the Jews also would have returned. Petermann, Dean Stanley, and Mills say that the young men dipped their fingers in the blood and put it on the nose, forehead, and ears of boys. This was not done when I was present. I learn, however, through Miss Vartan, from a lady who saw it some years before, that she observed this done to *one* boy. The presence of the Moslems might induce the abandonment of this rite on the occasion when I saw the observance.

Round each of the newly-killed lambs was gathered a group of Samaritans. We now learned the use of the water that had been kept boiling in the *tangeries* or cauldrons. A young man from each of the seven groups kept continually bringing boiling water in little tin vessels and pouring it on the lambs. The others, some on their knees, some bending over, plucked off with their hands the wool from the skin till it was left bare as the palm of the hand, and white as parchment. The work was done with deft skilfulness, but also with every appearance of haste. It was a strange spectacle, these men, the last remnants of a disappearing nation and a vanishing creed, busy upon the due fulfilment of rites instituted more than thirty centuries ago. Behind them was the Western sky, golden with the rapidly disappearing light of the setting sun. Meantime, with the deepening darkness, was flushing ever more prominently on the faces of the celebrants the lurid light from the fire beneath the cauldrons.

I had at an earlier period observed lying on the ground long poles pointed at the end, some 7 or 8 feet in length, each having a thin crossbar near one end. After the wool was stripped from the lambs the poles were brought and a lamb was affixed by its hind legs to each. The feet were quickly removed, the right foreleg and shoulder cut off for the high priest. The lambs were then rapidly disembowelled, the liver was taken out separately and, as a final act, was stuck into the cavity of the body of the lamb. While this went on the high priest maintained his droning chant. As each group finished they twisted the lamb in some way round this pole or spit (Mills speaks of the pole being thrust through the lamb; this might be omitted on account of the presence of the Moslem mob). After this the lambs were laid one upon another in a small heap on a hurdle.

I heard a voice behind, and turning I saw the man who had slain the lambs standing by the hole out of which we had seen the smoke issuing so copiously before sunset. The fire had now gone down, but from the red embers there rose a glow that lighted up the man's face and figure. The lambs were now brought forward on the hurdle, and the priest continued his recitative beside the heap of carcasses. At a pause the man at the hole shouted *wahed* ("one"), and in answer a pole with a lamb on it was brought and by the man thrust pointed end downwards into the glowing embers. The top of the post came, I observed, to within 3 or 4 inches of the top. The man then shouted *t'nain* ("two"), and another lamb was brought and thrust by him into the pit. This went on until the whole seven were placed in the hole; they seemed pretty well to fill it. I did not observe the wood of the spit or pole, but the Jews declare that pomegranate is the only suitable wood (*Pesachim*, 74A). The lambs were not allowed to rest on the side of the pit lest they should be in the slightest degree broiled—a similar caution is to be read in *Pesachim*. The lambs having been duly stuck in, the hurdle was brought and put on the mouth of the pit. On this was placed first grass or herbage of some

¹ This, according to the Talmudic tract, *Pesachim*, 74A, was the way it was done among the Jews.

sort, then over this mud. The men round about knelt down and patted the mud close. Wherever a puff of smoke appeared, there a handful was put till not a sign of smoke or steam remained to show what was beneath.

It was now about nine o'clock, but with the bright light of the Syrian moon it was anything but dark. There was still the ruddy glow of the fire—yet kept up—on which the cauldrons had been boiled. Meantime some men spread on the ground, near the short pillar where the chanting had been, what seemed a huge sail. After this a portion of the men, under the guidance of the second high priest, recommenced the chanting. We learned that the lambs would be left three hours or so in the pit, so it was suggested that we might now pay a visit to the high priest in his tent.

His tent did not differ in any obvious way from the tents of the other Samaritans. Within it was neat and apparently clean and comfortable, not unlike Cook's tents. The furniture consisted of two couches or *divans*, two or three stools, and several fine carpets. Behind the tent pole the high priest sat on a thick carpet supported by cushions. He was a tall, fine-looking man, between 30 and 40, with high, narrow forehead, and long, glossy, black beard. Our whole party were easily accommodated with seats. Of course there were the usual evidences of Eastern ceremonious hospitality—cigarettes, sweetmeats, and black coffee. As I did not wish to trust my limited Arabic, I got the deacon to act as my interpreter while I entered into conversation with the high priest.

As an act of special courtesy the high priest brought out the famous manuscript alleged, as we have said above, to be written by the great-grandson of Aaron. I had seen it some 14 months before in the semi-darkness of the Samaritan Synagogue; now, by the bright light of the lamp, I was much better able to examine it. The material is parchment, and looks very old, but, not being a connoisseur in parchment, that afforded no guide to me. The characters were pretty much faded. They were of the ordinary Samaritan, so far as I could see in my brief look at it. If, when the manuscript was written, these characters were in use, it would be difficult to date it later than the end of the second century of our era. It is a transition form between the angular character we find on the Moabite stone and in the inscription in Sinjirli and the square character of our ordinary Hebrew manuscripts. This square character begins to appear in Egypt, if I mistake not, as early as 100 B.C., although on the other hand the angular character appears in the Palmyrene inscriptions as late as the middle or end of the third century. I am not aware that the angular was ever used for writing. The Kebr Bir'im inscription, dated 300 A.D., is certainly in square character, and the Samaritan is an earlier stage of development. The MS. is in a wonderful case of embossed silver, which a correspondent of the *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* decides to be 300 years old. I was unable to decipher anything but individual letters in the old manuscript. They offered for sale copies of the Torah in the Samaritan character, but the price asked was too much for my limited purse. I could easily read these

copies, as the letters were distinct and the ink black. It was with a mild aspect of wonder that the high priest heard me read a verse or two.

I thought the most profitable way to occupy the time was to ask questions of the high priest. I asked after the fate of the Samaritan community that was still surviving in Gaza when Sylvestre de Sacy corresponded with the Samaritans of Nâblus. I should say that at the mention of this *savant* the high priest and the two young men who were with him looked specially interested. I was informed that the community in Gaza had ceased to exist there some 60 years ago. The existence of the communities of Samaritans in Cæsarea and Ashkelon, mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela, he was unaware of. Now, at all events, these 160 Samaritans resident in Nâblus are all that remain of the Samaritan race and creed.

I asked about the Alexandrian community of Samaritans, to the existence of which Josephus refers. He had never heard of it. This led me to ask if they had any traditions of the Samaritan Greek version which Josephus alleges the Samaritans made as an offset to the Septuagint. He knew nothing of this rivalry, but said that when Ptolemy sent to Palestine for 70 translators, they in Jerusalem sent 65 and they in Samaria sent five. When they arrived in Egypt they were placed each in a cell by himself. After they had completed their work of translating the Torah, it was found in regard to the five Samaritans, that while they differed in words, the sense they expressed was the same. He did not say what had been the result in regard to the 65 Jewish translators. He added the astounding information that they had still the five versions made by their representatives. I told him that he could almost get any price he chose to ask for any one of these. He said that Petermann and Merx had seen them and made copies of portions of them. I tried to let him know that if what he said had been true, within a fortnight after either of these learned men had reached Germany every scholar in Europe and America would have been aware of their discovery. I might have added that within six months it would afford occasion for questions in examination papers. He would not be moved. When I told Mr. Falscheer of this the following morning, he promised to gather all the Samaritans together on my return to Nâblus, which I then hoped to do in six months, and we could examine all their manuscripts and see if there were any Greek ones among them. Circumstances prevented me fulfilling my intention, so those alleged Greek versions remain undeciphered.

Just when we had reached this point in our conversation the second high priest entered and informed the high priest that the time was come when the Passover should be eaten. It was not anything like three hours since the lambs had been put in the oven, but all Easterns have vague ideas as to the passage of time. I presume the time would really be gauged by the repetition of certain prayers. We rose and went out, followed by the two high priests. We ranged ourselves a little way from the pit which had served as an oven, yet near enough to see

everything in the clear moonlight. At once, on the arrival of the high priests, the Samaritans fell on the little mound that marked the mouth of the pit, and in a short time had scraped away the earth till the steam began to rise here and there in faint curls of vapour through the grass on the top of the hurdle. When, however, the hurdle itself was raised quite a cloud of steam rose from the pit. Seven new baskets were then brought forward, resembling in shape and material those in which carpenters carry their tools. Then, one by one, the lambs on their spits were brought out. In the moonlight they looked too small and black to be lambs. After being lifted out they were detached from their poles or spits and put into the baskets. An untoward accident happened in regard to one of the last lambs brought up—it fell back into the pit. After some competition as to who should have the honour, a man descended into the glowing pit and brought up a portion of the lamb, and then, after a few minutes' rest and breathing, went down again for the rest. One could see by his exhaustion what a hazardous operation it was. The great heat, the deadly fumes, made it necessary that the descent and ascent should occupy but a few seconds. Some 20 years ago, when Dr. Vartan saw the Samaritan Passover, the same thing occurred.

When all the baskets were filled, they were carried to the huge sheet of which I spoke, and were placed at different points on it. Then with loins girt and staves in their hands, the Samaritans began to eat the Passover, some standing, some sitting on their heels, and some in an intermediate posture. They had unleavened bread and bitter herbs, which they ate with the lambs, but I did not notice when these adjuncts were brought. I observed some women and little children—girls, I think, not more than half a dozen in all—come and sit down on a small bank made up of stones and earth that seemed to form the boundary of the sacred area where the sheet was spread. To them some of the lamb was taken. To the rest of the women and children in the tents the fragments were conveyed in the baskets after the men had eaten. While they were eating they seemed to me to be repeating something, but this did not prevent them talking with outsiders. The Doctor of the Municipality, a Syrian Christian, shouted to them that they would make themselves ill by gorging so. They answered with a laugh, but went on busily eating. When one considers their number, they could not gorge much if every one of the 160 should get a little of the seven lambs. They handed us part of their Passover bread and of their bitter herbs. Their unleavened bread is not like that used by the Jews in this country, which is really biscuit. It is more like what is used by the Galilean Jews, only thinner; it seemed to me as thin as parchment. The bitter herbs appeared to me to be like our bog myrtle, but I was told it was hyssop. I put what I received in my pocket with a view to examining it in the morning; when the morning came I found only some broken fragments of leaves—utterly unrecognisable.

I went to ask for the woman who had been carried away to the outside tent to die; she was still living. Some of her friends, seeing

that she was not to die immediately, brought her a piece of the liver of the Passover lamb. They have strange stories of the curative effect of partaking of the Passover. Sometimes a man or woman, apparently not likely to live a day, has been taken up to the sacred mountain and has partaken of the sacred feast, and thereafter revived so as to be able to descend the hill again, and live at all events a few weeks longer. The fact that they always have this additional tent proves they do not put much trust in these legends. As for the woman, though she had a good deal of fever and was delirious, she became a little better, and had not died by the time we left Nâblus.

When we returned to the worshippers, we found them collecting everything that had been left of the lambs; the smallest particle of hair or piece of skin was all carefully picked up, and, along with the portion consecrated to the high priest, burnt in the fire on which we had seen the cauldrons boiling before sunset.

Before going down hill we paid another visit to the high priest, and renewed our conversation. I asked about his ideas of the Messiah; I found these were very vague. The Samaritans expect someone to come, but what he is to be, or what he will do, they are not sure. Mr. Falscheer afterwards told me that he found that they invented theories of their Messiah for his benefit and that of other questioners. I inquired of the high priest what was his interpretation of Gen. xlix, 10,

פִּיבֹנָה שִׁילוֹהּ. He said it should be, "till Thou come to Shiloh," פִּיבֹנָה, a reading that certainly is not in my copy of the Samaritan

Pentateuch. The idea seemed to be when Judah came with Rehoboam to Shiloh then the sceptre departed. The father and predecessors of the present high priest interpreted this passage to Mr. Mills in a different way. Shiloh, he said, meant Solomon, whose innovations caused the sceptre over Israel to depart from Judah. The end of the verse he applied to Solomon's foreign alliances. In connection with this I would refer to Merx's discovery of a Samaritan poem on the מְתָרֵב, as the Messiah is called. The name is supposed to mean "the returner." He is to restore the temple on Mount Gerizim, discover the holy vessels, bring back the Jews to the true faith, conquer seven nations, and after having lived 110 years to die full of honour. Many of the phrases suggest our Lord's conversation with the woman of Sychar. Robinson ("Researches," vol. ii, p. 278) says that the Samaritan youth who showed him about the holy places called the Messiah *Mahdi*.

As it was now considerably past midnight we had to think of returning to Nâblus. In gratitude for his kindness we each contributed a medjeedie to the high priest, and with many salaams took our departure. The moonlight, as always in Syria when it is near full moon, was piercingly clear, so we had small difficulty in riding down the rocky pathway to Nâblus.