

“THE STRANGE FINDING OUT OF MOSES HIS TOMBE.”

[THIS curious narrative is to be found in a little book in the British Museum (794, b. 11; 39 pages, 5½ inches by 3½ inches). It was printed at London in 1657, and, by reason of its age and the quaintness of its style and contents, it is interesting enough to deserve reproduction. Most of the names will be intelligible; in Rabbi Salomon Ben Jack, for example, there will be no difficulty in recognising R. Solomon ben Jarchi, familiarly known as Rashi.]

A TRUE AND EXACT RELATION OF THE STRANGE FINDING OUT OF MOSES HIS TOMBE, IN A VALLEY NEERE UNTO MOUNT NEBO IN PALESTINA. WITH DIVERS REMARKABLE OCCURENCES THAT HAPPENED THEREUPON, AND THE SEVERALL JUDGEMENTS OF MANY LEARNED MEN CONCERNING THE SAME. COMMUNICATED BY A PERSON OF QUALITY RESIDING AT CONSTANTINOPLE TO A PERSON OF HONOUR HERE IN ENGLAND, AND BY HIM PERMITTED TO BE PUBLISHED, FOR THE SATISFACTION OF THE INGENIOUS.—LONDON, PRINTED BY F. G. FOR RICHARD LOWNDES, AT THE WHITE LION IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD. 1657.

THE STATIONER TO THE READER.

Some flying rumours relating to the subject matter of this insuing discourse may possibly have come to thy eares; for the thing was not done in a corner. But there hath not any perfect narration of it been published, so far as I can learn, in any language. Besides the quality of the persons from whom I have received it, the particular circumstances of places and persons adde very much credit to it, so that it would be absurd to doubt of the truth of it amongst a cloud of witnesses. Thou wilt find such smoothness of language joyned with such solidity of judgement in these few pages, that I am confident thou wilt not repent either of thy cost in buying, or thy paines in reading them.—FAREWELL.

A RELATION FROM CONSTANTINOPLE, HOW THE SEPULCHRE OF MOSES WAS LATELY FOUND OUT AT MOUNT NEBO, AND WHAT WAS DONE THEREUPON.

IN October, 1655, certain Maronite Christians keeping heards of Goats upon Mount Nebo, otherwise called the Mountain Abarim, they often observed divers of their Goats to stray from them, and not to return in

two or three dayes ; and when they did return, they would as often go astray again, and carry other Goats with them : they also observed that the haire of these straying Goats did yield a most odoriferous scent ; wherewith they were so highly taken, as they resolved diligently to search their goings out, thereby to learn the true cause thereof. Whereupon some of them on a day, following these erring goats, they brought them to a stupendious precipice, in the bottome whereof lay a most delicious valley, but of small circumference, which some of these Goatherds had seen before, but never could find any means of entrance therinto, so steep and unaccessible were the inclosing mountains. But at that instant, whether it were by any earthquake lately happening, very usuall in those countreys, or by the decay of the mountains themselves ; the rocks on each side had made such shootings into the opening of the valley, as not onely the Goats (one of the best climbing creatures), but even the Goatherds themselves, used to such difficult untrodden paths, found a descent into this almost bottomless valley. Here they refreshed themselves with the verdure of the grass, the sweetness of the springs, and with such course fare as they carried with them in their scrips. About noon, when the Sun ceased to be a comforter, they retired themselves under the shadow of a rock, thinking their Goats would have born them company ; and wondering what should become of them, towards evening they espied them coming one by one out of the cleft of a rock, which it seemed to them, had been also shaken by an earthquake : for on the top of it they saw huge massy trees overturned, which by their long growth had so fixed their roots in the clefts of the rock, as with their weighty fall, they tore up much of the foundation whereon they grew. Coming to this cave, and first putting in their heads, there issued forth the most odoriferous savour that could possibly be imagined, and putting in their staves to feel the bottom of it, they found it of no great depth, their staves likewise participating of the perfumes. Hereupon they adventured to enter, and first groping about with their hands and with their staves in this dark place, and after recovering their eyesight, by the light which entred at the passage which gave them admittance, they found the cave to be of a circular figure, and not about twelve foot the diameter. The floor, the sides, and the hollow roof seemed to be more than the work of nature, and yet nothing appeared therein to be the work of man. At their first coming in, hastily crossing over this dark place, they stumbled upon something which lay thwart the middle, and causing their fellowes to stand out of the light, they discovered a materiall which seemed to be a Tomb-stone, and that it lay upon an other which appeared to be hollow, thicker than the uppermost, but of the same figure every way, and curiously joyned or mortified one into the other, without any mortar or ciment. It was nine foot in length, and two foot from the ground, being three foot broad, and all plain, saving that at that part which seemed to be the head of it, they felt two knobs, which bunched out in the fashion of horns, and there were letters engraven thereupon, which for want of light, but chiefly of

learning, they could not read. Having satisfied themselves herewith sufficiently, they returned back to their fellows, who much longed for their coming, and acquainted them with the whole circumstance of their successes, wherewith they were infinitely pleased, especially with the most delicious scent of their apparell. And thinking it a business of more value than to be kept secret, they agreed that one of those who had been an eye-witness of the premisses, should acquaint therewith Mataxat, the Patriarch of the Maronites, whose residence is in a valley of Mount Libanus, called [Kanobeen Kadischa Mir-jam] or the Monastery of S. Mary, who being thoroughly informed of what had happened, and admiring the sweet scent which came from the poor mens garments, otherwise sordid and nasty, he conceived this to be the monument of some person more than humane, and therefore had a longing desire to have gone thither himself, but his great age and the difficulty of the way obstructing his resolution, he gave the charge thereof unto two Priests, who were his Chaplains, men in learning and understanding (especially one of them named Aben-useph, or father Joseph) sufficiently qualified. Who coming to the place by conduct of the Goat-herds, found every thing exactly true, as they had caused it to be related to the Patriarch. And moreover taking lights with them into the cave, they found those knobs which the Goat-herds spoke of, and which stood as it were upon the head of the Monument, to be the similitude of two horns, not much unlike those of a Bull. But that which satisfied their curiosity even to astonishment, was, that seriously viewing the Inscription, which was in the Hebrew character, and Hebrew language, they found it to be in effect [MOSES THE SERVANT OF GOD] with these joyfull tydings carrying with them the transcript of the Inscription, they returned to the Patriarch; who seeing this Inscription, and hearing the relation, was ravished therewith above measure. But the odoriferous scent which proceeded from their garments (which gave a sweeter savor than all the spices of India, or gums of Arabia could do) made these persons almost venerable in the opinion of men of all Religions, whereof there is store in the Turks dominions. Who hereupon with amazement, began to take notice of this miraculous Invention, far exceeding in their judgement that of the Holy Cross, and some of every sort of them, having first viewed the place, did earnestly endeavour how they might convert it most to their own profit.

And in the first place the Maronites, as the first inventers, petitioned Morat the Bashaw of Damascus, under whose jurisdiction it lies, that they might have the keeping of this holy place. But they being poor, although they had justice on their sides, yet being not able to bribe, the Christians, the Greek and Armenian Churches stept in and offered great present summes and yearly salaries to Morat Bashaw for the keeping of it; especially the latter exceeded, who ingaged, moreover, to build a monastery there, which they would fortifie as a Castle, to secure themselves and Pilgrims from the assaults of the wild Arabs, who do grievously infest all those quarters. The Friers Minors of the order of

S. Francis, who reside at Jerusalem, for the entertainment of the Western Pilgrims, offered very largely that they might have it, and that by means of the French Ambassadour residing at Constantinople. But the Jewes (who are very rich, and generally customers and treasurers to the Grand Signior in most of his dominions) struck in with the Muffy and Visier Bashaw, offering great summes of money for the possession of this Sepulchre, alledging that of right it belonged unto them, Moses being their Law-giver and countrey-man, whose laws the Christians did unworthily pervert, abstaining from marriage, being eaters of swines' flesh, and the most detestable Idolaters in the world. That it would adde much unto the Grand Signiors honour, and might be an addition unto his title, that he was Lord of the three famous Sepulchres of the three famous Prophets, viz., of the Prophet Mahomet at Medina, of Jesus Christ at Jerusalem, and lastly of Moses at Mount Nebo. That they did concur with the Musselmans, not onely holding Marriage honourable, but own plurality of Wives and Concubines to be necessary; that they did besides abstain from swines flesh, and were so far from worshipping of any Image, as they held it not lawfull to make any at all. These reasons of the Jewes, but chiefly their large bribes, did so prevaile, as in all probability they were likely to carry it. When suddainly and unlooked for the French Jesuits (who have their Colledge at Constantinople) interposed, first by taking off the Grecian and Armenian Christians, by telling them how displeasing this would be to Almighty God, who upon design had hid and buried the body of Moses in such a secret place, to the end that the Jewes should never find his Sepulchre, lest otherwise they might commit Idolatry thereto and worship it. That this Sepulchre being thus found out in this last and worst age of the world, wherein Idolatry rageth, in despite of God's Commandments, who hath more often and more bitterly expressed his detestation thereof than against any other sinne whatsoever, wherefore they meekly advised them to desist in their suite, offering to take off the Latine Church from persisting in their petitions for the Guardianship of the Sepulchre, as also the Maronites, beseeching them with teares that they would not resist the will of God, nor be the means of disclosing his secrets. Hereto they answered, that they thought themselves as fit to keep the Sepulchre as any other whatsoever; but if the other Christians would desist, and that the Jewes might be taken off, they would acquiesce. The credit of the Jesuits took off the Latine Church, and the Maronites being poor, and now in a sort members of the Roman or Latin Church, gave over their suit. The Jewes were easily denied their request, not onely because the Turks do detestably hate them, but moreover the Jesuits had cunningly intimated to the Visier Bashaw, how dangerous it might prove to that State to suffer the Jewes (who pretend right to the holy Land by inheritance, and look every day for a call to be restored to their ancient patrimony) to have any command therein: and the fortifying of that place against the insolencies of the Arabs, without which they could not live in safety, and the multitude of Jewes who would come to visite

the Sepulchre would very much incourage them to act something not convenient for the Othoman Empire to permit : but their best argument was good round bribes which they gave him. So, in conclusion, Morat Bashaw of Damasco had expresse order, brought him by a Chiaus from the Port of the Grand Signior, to see that the cave of the Sepulchre should be stopped up, and that none, upon pain of death, should approach within certain miles thereof. In pursuance of which order, Morat Bashaw commanded forthwith the Sanzjacks of Jerusalem and of Saphetta, being the nearest Sanzjackries which confine upon the place, to see it performed with diligence, who, in obedience to the Firman sent by the Grand Signior, did execute it accordingly.

HOW THE JESUITS PRACTICED TO STEAL AWAY THE BODY OF MOSES, AND TO CARRY IT INTO FRANCE, AND HOW THEY WERE PREVENTED.

If the Jesuits had been as great enemies to Idolatry, and as carefull to observe the will of God, as they pretended, it had been a greater miracle than the discovering of this Sepulchre : but their aim was quite contrary ; for no sooner was the nine days wonder over, and the businesse began to be lushed, but they began to put that in practice, which was from the beginning their determination ; which in effect was to steal away the body of Moses, and shipping it for France, to place it in their Colledge of le Fleche, whereby they propounded to themselves the gaining of infinite reputation in holiness, besides the accumulation of wealth by indulgences. To effect this (by the means of the French Ambassadour, now wholly Jesuited) letters were directed to the French Consuls residing at S. John de Acre, and at Rama in the Holy Land, whose chief trading there is for Cottons, and who being placed and displaced by the Ambassadour, were close and diligent in executing of his commands ; which letters were to this effect, That they should diligently inquire amongst the Emirs and Sheeks of the Arabs (who are petty Princes in those parts, and who in despite of the Grand Signior possesse most part of that countrey) if for a good reward in Dutch Dollers any of them would undertake to assist the Jesuits in conveying of the body either to Acre or to Joppa, and there to put it aboard a French vessel, which should attend them to that purpose, where they should deliver the body with one hand, and receive their moneys with the other. To this the Consuls answered, that upon making a triall hereof, they found the Arabs averse hereunto, not onely for fear of too much provoking the Turk against them, but because of the high esteem they have of Moses, whom they call in their language [Moosa Carym Alla] that is, Moses the righteous of God, yet the Consuls did assure them that there were another sort of people inhabiting those now wild parts ; the remainder of those Frenchmen brought in by Godfrey of Bulloigne, who are called Druses, and who have ever since defended themselves in the Mountains against the Turks and Saracens. But they have now lost their Christian Religion, and yet are not good Mahometans neither ; retaining the eating of Swines flesh,

which makes them odious to the Turks, who thereupon call them Rafties, that is, Infidels, yet they wear a white Turbant, and neither fearing God, nor obeying man, they conceived them fit for any detestable villany. To these they had imparted the businesse, and were assured to get a considerable number of them, for a good summe of Dollers, part to be paid in hand, the rest when they had finished their work. The Jesuits conceived their business as half done when they heard these tidings, And thereupon with divers French Gentlemen and Merchants, who desired to participate of the honour, they imbarqued at Constantinople in a French vessell bound for S. John de Acre, formerly called Ptolomais, pretending to visit the holy Sepulchre, and the renowned places for sanctity in and near Jerusalem. The wind favoured them so much, as they overshot their Port, and forced them to Joppa, much nearer their Rendezvous than Acre, it being not above forty Italian miles from Jerusalem. At Rama, now called Ramula, they were kindly received by the French Consul, who gave them great assurance of the Druses, and brought them on their way towards Jerusalem, where they were lodged in the Convent of Franciscans. They came thither about Mid-lent, as they designed, having time enough betwixt that and Palm sunday, to work the Father Guardian, and the other Friers to be assistant to their design, and to compact with the Druses both for their reward, and for the time and place of their meeting. For it is to be observed, that the Tuesday after Palm sunday, the Father Guardian with many of his Friers and all Pilgrims that will go, make a journey to wash themselves in Jordan, carrying Souldiers with them for their convoy; and this is once every year and no oftner, unless upon very extraordinary occasion. The business being broken to the Father Guardian, called Padre Gregorio, an Italian by Nation, as were most of the Convent, he did no wayes approve of the business alledging many reasons against it, but principally that their Convent at Jerusalem would thereby be dissolved, and all the Western Christians for ever debarred from worshipping or visiting the holy Sepulchre hereafter. Some thought it was partly out of envy, that the Jesuits should enjoy so great a treasure, who are an order that these Franciscans do not greatly reverence, Howsoever he agreed to hold his accustomed journey, and to keep secret their plot, the Jesuits assuring him, that the Druses should not touch a hair of his head, nor any of his Convent. Now the plot was thus laid, that the Jesuits under colour of carrying victualls and provisions for their journey to Jordan, in which they always lie out some nights, being to visit other places in their return, secretly carried a coffin, fine linnen, and other things, wherein to wrap the body, and good mules for themselves and companions in the plot to ride upon, which they meant should serve them in their flight to the sea-side, where the vessel which brought them being a Polacre of Marcelles attended their design, under colour of taking in Cottons. And lest Joppa should prove no safe port for their retreat, they ordered the Patron or Master of the Polacre, to take them in some few miles to the Northward thereof, at the Castle of Pilgrims, a desolate port at this time,

and therefore the fitter for their purpose. They had likewise ordered the Druses to meet them well armed and horsed near to Jerico, the most confining place to Jordan they knew of; which they so punctually performed, as the pilgrims were no sooner arrived on the bank of Jordan, and ready to ship themselves to enter the river, but these Druses fell upon them with great outeries in the Arabick tongue, the better to delude the Turkish Souldiers, who commonly are yearly assaulted by the wild Arabs, in that very place, and these Druses differing little from the Arabs in habit and feature, the Souldiers took them to be no other, never suspecting the plot, but looked onely to defend themselves, while in the mean time the Druses seised upon the Jesuits and their company, their mules, baggage, and whatsoever they had, not touching the Father Guardian, nor any of his Convent, two onely excepted, namely, Frier Cíprian and Frier Juniper, who being lay-brethren, Frenchmen, and of the plot, they took with them, leaving the Pilgrims half stripped of their clothes. And being advantaged by the benefit of the night which then approached, they forded Jordan (which is easy to do in most places without a miracle, being a River not navigable any where) and by midnight they arrived at the cave of the Sepulchre, being at the foot of Mount Nebo, the top whereof being called Pisgath, which is over against Jerico, from whence God shewed unto Moses all the Land of Promise.

(To be concluded.)

THE EVIL EYE.

By GHOSN EL-HOWIE, Ph. D., Shweir, Mount Lebanon.

A HEALTHY child, about seven years of age, suddenly fell ill and died. The cause of this, it was said, was the "eye." Long before Deut. xviii was written, a belief existed in this country that certain persons were naturally endowed with the unfortunate power of injuring or killing by the mere look of the eye. Sometimes the look takes effect at once, and leaves no room for remedy, but at other times an opportunity is left for treatment, with the possibility of averting fatal issues. A strong labourer the other day was carrying a heavy bag of sand, a woman saw him, and she "hit him with the eye." He was seized with excruciating pains in the back, but fortunately his friends had time to call in the services of the "charmer," the direct descendant of the professional referred to in Deut. xviii, 11. The treatment was successful, and in two weeks a cure was effected.