

AROUND THE WORLD

Scenes Surrounding the Holy Places in Nazareth—Cave of the Prophets.

NAZARETH, PALESTINE, March, '03.

No one fails to visit the beautiful spring near the center of the city called the Fountain of the Virgin. In the evening it presents a picturesque appearance. History says: "Here the village maidens in their bright head-dresses, assemble, and bear away their well-filled pitchers on their heads. The christian dress is distinguished by the loose trousers of the women." There can be no reasonable doubt that she who was "blessed among women" would often come here, perhaps carrying the infant savior in just the same fashion as we may see mothers of Nazareth carrying their children today; and no doubt many a time our savior, as he came past here on his way home, would tarry to quench his thirst at this very stream whose waters the traveler may drink today as a cup of blessing."

Behind Nazareth is a high hill called the Dome of Neby Sain, from whose summit one of the best views of the country is obtained. It comprehends nearly half of Palestine. The view here is worth more than it costs in labor. "At a glance you seem to take in the whole land, and the first thought that strikes you is that this must have been a favorite resort of the savior, and if so, he must have had constantly spread out before him the great library of biblical story. On the north is Hermon; on the south the mountains round about Shechem; on the east the mountains of Gilead on the other side of Jordan; and on the west the great sea (Mediterranean): the beautiful Bay of Acre; the ridge running out into the sea—Mount Carmel, crowned with its convent. Southwards are the mountains of Samaria and the hills round Jenin, and below lies the magnificent plain of Esdraelon, and the river Kishon. Northward the view culminates in glory, as Hermon, like a great wall of white crystal, stands out against the blue sky, with the Galleean hills below it, and everywhere round that region is scenery varied and picturesque." Standing upon this eminence one is reminded that here Jeremiah must have stood when he wrote about Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who was to come and smite Egypt, saying: "As I live, saith the king, whose name is the Lord of Hosts, surely as Tabor is among the mountains and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come." Jer. 46:18.

From Nazareth to Tiberias the road most frequented is by Cana—the historic Cana of Galilee where Christ performed his first miracle at the marriage feast. Johns 2:1-11.

In the Greek church was shown jars said to have been used on the occasion of the miracle. They were found by excavators under the old church which was displaced to make room for a more modern structure. The jars shown in this church are no less than twice as large as I had expected to see when I was informed that the jars were on exhibition. The home of Nathaniel was pointed out, also the birthplace of Jonah at Gath. Following a number of young ladies who were on their way to a spring with large earthen jars for water, we were shown the spring or well from which the water is said to have been drawn which took part in the miraculous transformation. I have long since ceased to record the events which caused me to be surprised, non-plussed, amazed or half overwhelmed, but right here I shall state that this well, ten feet deep, without a pump or rope, was entered by a young lady who, with unwashed feet, stood in fourteen inches of water, her dress or skirt having been rolled about her waist. Another lady descended about half way where she took her station, supporting herself by anchoring a foot on each side of the well, thereby completing the highway by which the jars were lowered, and raised when filled to be carried away by the others who came in companies.

Enroute from Cana we passed the traditional Mount of Beatitudes where the Sermon on the Mount was preached, if this is the true site. Another tradition fixes this as the scene of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. (Matt. 14:15-21). Between Cana and Tiberias additional interest was added by the appearance of three hungry jackals by the roadside. They came from the hills, ran along before us for several rods, at times being no more than thirty yards from the carriage. A gentleman of no less than sixty-nine summers, who had crossed America for the golden west with the forty-niners, drew his revolver to fire at them but his young wife, fearing that

one might be wounded and turn upon us, forced her other half to desist from his purpose. As I was thinking of throwing a rock at them they, doubtless fearing David-like accuracy might be perpetrated upon them, skulked away toward their hiding place to the southward and the lady in our carriage who had been so excited quieted down to normal temperament.

In a few minutes the Lake of Galilee—that historic—that beautiful sheet of water spread out before us, a sight referred to as follows by the historian who viewed the scene from this point: "In the foreground are the steeply sloping banks leading down to the lake, which lies as a basin a thousand feet below. The lake, from Tiberias on the right, away to Capernaum on the left, is distinctly seen. Across the lake rise the irregular hills, sloping down more or less precipitously to the water's edge; they are bare and barren it is true, but they are rich and varied in tone and tint. Behind them are the mountains of Galilee, and away to the north Hermon rises. Thus the view consists of grassy slopes, a deep blue lake of considerable extent, with hills rising from it, and a snow-clad mountain. It is impossible, however, to separate from these details the spirit and inspiration of the scene; for yonder was the dwelling place of Christ. Upon those waters he trod, those waters listened to his voice, and obeyed; from one of those plateaus above the rugged hills the swine fell into the lake. Every place the eye rests upon is holy ground, for it is associated with some most sacred scenes in the life of the master; everywhere the gospel is written upon this divinely illuminated page of nature, and the very air seems full of the echo of his words. The descent to Tiberias is very steep, and the traveler will be struck with the change in temperature, reminding him of the descent into the Jordan. The views are interesting, especially as the old walled town of Tiberias makes a picturesque foreground to the scenery of the lake."

Tiberias has a population estimated at from 3000 to 4000 people and an additional population of multitudinous millions of fleas. The Arabs say that the king of fleas lives here. On awaking in the morning I asked my roommate whether he was favored with any company during the night. He replied: "I was disturbed during the night by a flea." He would have been equally accurate if he had said that he had noticed a sand on the seashore. In 1187 both Nazareth and Tiberias were taken by Saladin after the battle of Hattin. Tiberias was built by Herod and by him dedicated to the emperor Tiberias. A royal palace and amphitheatre were built together with walls and towers, many of the ruins remaining. The Jews can be easily distinguished by their fur caps and large black hats. It is recommended that Europeans and Americans keep out of the old city for various reasons. Such a recommendation would be just the medicine to cause almost any wide awake person to make his way in or die in the attempt. Consequently I, in company with an English gentleman, penetrated to the darkest, dirtiest, dingiest, most forsaken, and indescribable sections and returned to the outside world the same day with a store of memories well worth forgetting.

I took an excursion on the Sea of Galilee to the south of Tiberias, visiting the hot springs which pour forth a torrent of waters heated to the high temperature of no less than 140 degrees Fahrenheit, being recommended as a sure cure for rheumatism. Plunge your hand into that water as I did and you will withdraw the same as quickly. No one can visit this place and then entertain a doubt about Palestine being in close connection geologically with a very, very hot place. Too hot for comfort, thank you!

The Sea of Galilee is said to be alive with fish, and if those served at the hotel are fair samples, one must seek elsewhere than on this earth for their equals so far as I have observed. The shores are lined with fishing smacks. Little boys and girls in large numbers were scattered along the shore each with shiners, the reward of a moment's patience. Nets are used by men in possession of the larger boats and it seems that the quantity of fish annexed here by the Isaac Waltons ought soon to make this lake fishless—but not so.

E. C. HORN.

(Continued next week.)



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