

## THE LORD'S LAND.

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Jaffa.

Our party was to leave early Monday morning (May 11) for the Plain of Philistia. After some hesitation I decided to forego this trip and to accompany my wife to Jaffa. The ride from Jerusalem to Jaffa has been called one of the most dreary in Palestine, but to me it proved very enjoyable. The first hour we were traversing a rocky plateau, and for several hours descended rapidly, though winding up and down over the hills. To our right lay a deep valley with a village on either side; one on the hillside at the right was pointed out as the site of that Emmaus to which two of the disciples were going when "Jesus himself drew near, and went with them." (Luke xxiv. 13-35) We wound along through the wady and through olive groves, and came to Kirjath-jearim, now Kuryet el 'Enab, on our left, built upon the hill-side, and having a substantial look. To this town, the supposed site of Kirjath-jearim, the ark was brought after the Philistines had sent it as far as to Beth-shemesh, and where it rested twenty years until David took it to Jerusalem. (1 Sam. vi, vii; 2 Sam. vi.)

Signs of busy life rapidly increase as we near Jaffa. Good houses are seen, and for a mile or more we wound through narrow lanes which are bordered by groves of oranges, lemons, and citrons, protected by high walls. It was already evening, though clear and bright, when we arrived in Jaffa. The ride of thirty-six miles in one day did not prove excessively fatiguing, though rest was very welcome.

Our approach to Jaffa through the orange groves was pleasing, but not so imposing as that from the water, when the whole town can be seen rising upon a hill-side, its white walls and domed roofs giving a different impression from that which one afterwards receives when threading with care, and sometimes real difficulty, the narrow irregular dirty streets.

There is a tradition which makes Jaffa the oldest city in the world, and authentic history gives it a great antiquity. Its name has not been lost or changed, as have the names of most ancient cities. It seemed strange to remember, when on the spot, that this was really the port from which Jonah took ship for Tarshish, when he would have fled from the presence of the Lord. (Jonah i. 3.)

The ancient Joppa became the seaport for Jerusalem under David's prosperous reign, and to it came the floats of fir and cedar from Tyre and Sidon for the building of the first and second temples. (2 Chron. ii. 16; Ezra iii. 7.) It was here that Peter raised Tabitha from the dead, after which he tarried many days with one Simon, a tanner, and while he prayed on the housetop he saw the vision recorded in Acts x. 9-16. The traditional house of Simon is still shown.

Our company turned again toward Jerusalem. Taking the road over the Plain of Sharon, we lunched at Beit Dejan (Beth-dagon of the Philistines), and thence rode on to Ludd,

the Lod of the Old Testament and Lydda of the New. At Lydda Peter healed Eneas, who had been bedridden for eight years (Acts ix. 32-39), and was still there when Dorcas died, and the disciples sent for him to join them at Joppa.

On the next morning we were in the saddle by half-past six o'clock. We passed over an old Roman road, which for some miles could be plainly discerned, and where in some places steps were hewn into the rock, and in one place the elevation across a wady still remains. Along this very road marched the Roman soldiers who escorted St. Paul from Jerusalem to Caesarea Philippi, after he was rescued from the fury of the Jews. The ascent to Upper Beth-horon (Beit ur el Foka) is very steep and difficult. There is a noble view from the summit of the hill upon which it is perched. Some of the walls of the village have large stones with bevelled edges built in with more modern work. At this point Joshua's victory over the five kings of the Amorites became a rout, and they fled "along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon," and down the valley of Ajalon, which stretches south-west to the plain. Near here on a rock Joshua stood when he commanded the sun to stand still on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon. The whole aspect of the country made very graphic the Bible account, as we studied the details of this remarkable battle and pursuit, related in the tenth chapter of Joshua.

In approaching Jerusalem from this direction some of the most remarkable tombs of the vicinity are passed, though they would not be noticed unless attention was called to them, or one was seeking them. The Tomb of the Judges is one of the most remarkable of them all. The *façade* of the vestibule is cut in the rock, neatly finished with moulding, and the architrave surmounted by a pediment curiously carved. There is one large room, about which are *loculi*, and in the walls arched recesses, deep enough for the reception of sarcophagi. Out of this room doors open into small rooms, and from one corner a flight of steps descends into an arched vestibule leading into vaults, with *loculi* and niches. Why this place is called the Tomb of the Judges is not known, though various reasons are given.

Some of us took our horses after breakfast the next day and rode over to the hill of Evil Counsel, approaching it from the south over the Plains of Rephaim. On the top are some old massive stone buildings. This hill takes its name from being the supposed site of the country house of Caiaphas, the high-priest, in which the council was held when Caiaphas declared it was expedient that Christ should die for the nation. (John xi. 50, 51.) Directly on the north-east of the hill, in the steep sides overhanging the valley, is Aceldama, or the Potter's Field. Aceldama is an enormous cavern, partly natural and partly artificial, about fifty feet deep. There are three or four shafts leading into it from the top. In the side of the same hill are several other caves, which were used for sepulture. Indeed, the whole face of the mountain seems to have been a vast burial-place.

On leaving the mount we struck at its foot the Jericho road on the north and east. We wished, if possible, to identify the spot where Jesus, in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, stopped to weep over the doomed city, and accordingly we rode for a short distance toward Bethany, and then, opening at Luke xix. 36-44, read the whole account. We then retraced our steps, and soon after we had rounded the south-western shoulder of Olivet, and began the descent toward Gethsemane, the city came full in view—the eastern wall, the Mosque of Omar, the Tower of Antonia, lying in the foreground. This, then, we concluded, must have been about the spot where Jesus uttered his memorable lamentation, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." Thence we rode once again by Gethsemane, across the Kedron, by St. Stephen's Gate, around the north wall, till we reached our camp near the Jaffa Gate. We now began to feel the climate of Jerusalem very debilitating. The city may be regarded as healthy until the sirocco begins to blow, about the first of May. This wind is entirely destitute of ozone; to which cause is attributed the peculiarly distressing effect it has upon strangers.

May 25, Monday. We broke camp at half-past seven a.m., and after a few more inside glimpses of the city, mounted our horses and took the Nablous road for the tour of Central and Northern Palestine. The road lay through a barren track, with an occasional strip of green stretching among the naked, white limestone ledges. In a little while we reached a conical hill near the village of Shafat, which is the traditional site of