

# British American Presbyterian

Vol. 4—No. 37.]

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1875.

[Whole No. 192

## Contributors and Correspondents.

### DIARY OF THE EAST.

NABLIOUS (ANCIENT SYCHAR) - SAMARIY - etc.

For a couple of days I could not go out of the house at all, and began to find the time rather long. I finished all the work materials I had with me, and no more was to be had in Nablious. I could not even get either cotton or wool to knit with. I wrote up all my writing paper in home letters, wondering all the time when I would ever get them dispatched. No more writing paper was to be had in Nablious, but happily Mr. F. had a stock of it brought from Jerusalem. Mrs. F.'s afternoons were occupied with the girls of a little school, who came to her for instruction in knitting and sewing. Funny little things they looked, squatting on the floor, dressed in full trousers, tied round their waists over a cotton under garment, a little jacket overall, and a cotton pocket-handkerchief tied over their heads. They repeated a good deal of Scripture to me, which they had learned in the morning school, when a strange thing for a girl's school in Palestine—they are taught by a master. He, poor man, has only one arm, so is very slow of the employment.

The three days of rain culminated in a storm of thunder, lightning, hail, and snow.

When I looked out on the 10th, Ebal and Gerizim were quite white, but the sun was shining brightly, so Mr. F. mounted his donkey, and I my horse, and we set off to visit Jacob's Well. It is just at the junction of the glen that divides Ebal from Gerizim, with the more open valley or plain of Moreb, that runs north and south between the eastern end of these hills, and other hills that bound the Jordan valley on the west. The actual well lies hid under the ruins of a church which once stood over the sacred site. Nothing now appears but a few heaps of cut stones, which any one might pass without supposing them worthy of observation. Dismounting, and scrambling up one of these heaps, Mr. F. bade me look down a large rough hole. This is the top of a broken arch. Looking down through it, I saw nothing but a heap of the stones that had fallen from the crown of the arch, and filled up the mouth of the well. Mr. F. helped me to get down through the whole, that I might see where the actual mouth of the well is. He warned me, however, to be careful how I stepped on the stones that are sticking in it just as they have fallen from above, for it might quite well happen that they would give way, and a fall down the seventy foot deep well would be the consequence. Through clunks between the stones we sent a little pebble down, and heard it splash in water far below. This, then, was really the well by which our Lord sat, wearied with his journey, yet intent on doing his Father's will, and gathering in a poor sinner to his fold of safety and peace. It seemed strange that it should lie thus desolate and neglected, while dubious traditional sites are decorated and honored. Yet, of the two, I preferred the desolation, it seemed to me much less dis Honouring than the frippery ornament and superstitious observances of the Latin, Greek, and other idolatrous churches. Perhaps the state of Jacob's well is partly accounted for by the fact that it is at present in possession of the Greek church, while the church of which the ruins consist is believed to have been a Latin church of the times of the Crusaders. Were the Greek Church to attempt restoring it, very possibly the Latins might bring forward their ancient claims to the site. Thus the continual strife and jealousy of the two bodies is the cause of this most interesting spot being left in sad, but peaceful, desolation.

After seeing what was to be seen of the well, the next thing was to get out of the little sort of crypt into which we had descended. Getting down had been a good deal easier than getting up. The gap by which we dropped down being in the centre of the top of the arch there was no wall to climb up by, and I was not tall enough to get my hands up to the edge of the hole.

The only way was for Mr. F. to go up first, and reaching down his arm pull me up by main force till I could lay hold for myself. It was rather ticklish work. I almost pulled him down on the top of me, but happily he held on firmly, and at last I was again above ground.

The flowers which had been so lovely about the well on the day I reached Nablious, had now been sadly spoiled by the rain and snow, which still lay about in patches, though melting fast in the hot sun. I succeeded, however, in getting a few anemones to dry in remembrance of this most sacred spot.

as believed really to mark the site of Joseph's graves, and accordingly is venerated by Jew, Moslem, and Christian alike. A little to the north of it a small village on the eastern spur of Ebal is believed by some to be the ancient Sychar. It now bears the name of Ascar.

Whether this place, or Nablious, stand for Sychar, can make no difference, as regards the identity of Jacob's Well, which is undoubted, it being the only "deep well" there is. It lies at about the same distance from the two places, and both are well supplied with water nearer them, than in regard to each, the same question would arise why should the woman go so far to seek water, when she could get it so much nearer. That the inhabitants of Palestine will, and do still, go far to seek good water, I often had ocular demonstration, and the water of this well may have been cooler than what is to be had in either Nablious or Ascar. At Ascar the stream which was rushing out from a cave, actually had a cloud of steam rising from it, it was so much warmer than the atmosphere. At Nablious, oo, the water which we drank was far from cold, and in summer Mrs. F. said it actually got cooler after she had kept it in a shaded place in the house, than it was when brought in by the water-carriers, who, here, as at Alexandria, sell the precious fluid about the streets. Very likely here, as there, they carry water just by a repetition of Isaiah's call of old, "Ho! every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters." No doubt he borrowed his call from some street-crier familiar to all his hearers, and from which he only marked the strong contrast when he added, "come and buy without money and without price."

On the afternoon of the same day Mr. F. took me to the top of Mount Gerizim. It is possible to ride to the top of it, and I should have done so, had not the snow made the track very slippery on the steepest part, that I preferred walking part of the way to sitting on the struggling horse. It was strange after wading up through almost trees in full blossom in the little side glen by which we ascended, to come out on a half a foot of snow at the summit, through which the bright scarlet and delicate mauve of anemones and cyclamens peeped out. Near the top we passed the spot where the Samaritans hold their Passover service, at a date some weeks later than the Jewish passover. The whole body encamp on the hill and slay a lamb for each family, with various accompanying ceremonies. There is no building now standing on Gerizim except the remains of a small square tower, which has been turned into a Moslem Wely, with a little white dome which is seen from a long distance on all sides. We made our way to this through snow, drifted into deep masses in hollow places, among the extensive ruins of what was at one time a Christian church. It needed some care to avoid falling into several mouths of vaults or wells, which were nearly hidden by the snow. From the top of the Wely we had a splendid view, extending from Carmel and the hills of Galilee on the north, to those of Judaea on the south, Hermon showing its snowy top above the lower hills. Eastward the long range of Gilad was visible, westward the boundary line was the Mediterranean, on the margin of which I could dimly discern Jaffa with my glass. The hills to the east of the plain of Mukhu or Moreb, have a dip in them which marks the way by which travellers from the days of Abraham and Jacob still now ascend from the fords of Jordan on their way from Gilad to Samaria. A little village on the slope of a pleasant hill still bears the name of Salmu, and is probably that "Salem" a city of Shechem, near which Jacob pitched his tent on his return from Padanaram. We sat long enjoying the view, and watching a beautiful ucoupe flitting about, raising and depressing its handsome crest. It was the only living thing visible there besides ourselves, but we had seen the track of what Mr. F. believed was a wolf not far off. On descending from the roof of the Wely, Mr. F. took me a short distance southwards on the undulating summit of Gerizim, to where a large level surface of natural rock, with a rough pit on one side, and some very old foundations of walls mark the holy place of the Samaritans. Traditions makes it to be the scene of the offering up of Isaac, of Jacob's vision at Bethel, and of the setting up of the ark. So holy do the Samaritans count it, that they remove their shoes on approaching it, and it is the place towards which they turn in prayer. There are so many ruins near this place that it would appear as if a village must at one time have existed here.

On the way down from Gerizim I was again obliged to dismount, not only from the road being slippery, but because my horse took to continual kicking, which, in going down a steep slippery road, was far from comfortable. I could not understand what had so changed my good quiet friend, but Mr. F. soon found out that Mustapha, the poor creature had been both neglected and half-starved during the four days in which I had not been able to use it. Apparently he had never once removed the thick saddle-cloth, or looked at its back, which must have got burst during the long hot ride from Rem-Allah. The consequence of this neglect was a sore which the saddle pressed on in going down hill, so no wonder the poor thing expressed its sense of ill usage by kicking. After this Mr. F. took my stead under his own care, but the damage done was not easily undone. This sort of neglect is most common in Palestine, and in consequence very few horses are without sores on their backs during the travelling season. March 20th, Mr. F. and I made an attempt to reach Samaria, but we were but a very short distance on our way when tremendous rain came down, obliging us first to take shelter in a mill, and then to turn back altogether. The mill

was driven by water power. There are abundant springs in different directions near Nablious, and at this time more than half the flat ground near the town was flooded from the long continued wet. The mill was very simple. We found a woman in it waiting for her flour. The grain which she had brought was thourah—a kind of millet which grows well in Palestine, and the flour from which is considered by the natives more nourishing than even wheat. The seed is sown at the end of the rains, and if they have been abundant enough to soak the ground thoroughly it thrives well, but it will not prosper if much rain falls on it after it has sprung up. On our way the day we passed a little flat of ground just outside the city wall, which Bishop Gobat had lately obtained with the hope of building a small church on it for Mr. F.'s native congregation. The arrangement for this purchase had cost months of trouble and annoyance. When I was at Nablious a wall was being built around it, which was considered the most certain way of establishing a legal claim to it. There were some circumstances connected with the matter which I thought curiously illustrative, both of the state of the country, and of a passage of Scripture which had formerly seemed strange to me. I had often wondered why, when Abraham's purchase of the cave and field of Machpelah is described, the trees in it are mentioned separately. I fancied that the purchase of a field would necessarily include that of the trees in it also. But in Palestine I found it was not so at all. After the little field at Nablious had been bought and paid for, and papers to that effect had been drawn up, a Moslem in Nablious, who hated the idea of a Christian church being built there, found out a man who had a sort of traditional notion that he had some claim on the property, and urged him on to bring it forward. This he did by proceeding to plough the field. Bishop Gobat being very desirous to avoid all offence, had all papers that could be found connected with the property examined, when it was found that the man's family was a collateral branch of that one which had sold the field, and that he had really some right—not to the land—but to the old Jezebel olive trees that were on it. Just about the same time the principal adversary died suddenly in the Turkish bath. This struck the Moslem bigots very much, and the man whose claim had been brought forward was quite willing to receive compensation for it. The making out titles-deeds must be a most troublesome affair in Palestine. All kinds of divided and subdivided shares belong to various branches of the owner's family, claims which vary likely and most usually lie dormant as long as the land or house descends in a regular line, but which are sure to be raked up, and become very troublesome if there is any sale of the property. After all seemed settled, and the wall round the field begun, one day Mr. F. was unpleasantly surprised by the wives of all the workmen arriving at his house screaming and raving, as our eastern women do scream and rave. The cause was not far to seek. All their husbands were in prison, and not only could earn no wages, but had to be fed by their friends. The government does not feed prisoners, they may starve if their friends do not feed them. Some old law requiring a permit for building had been received for the special purpose of tormenting the Christians, and again weeks were wasted in attending native courts writing to head quarters at Damascus, etc. The way in which the matter was ended was also rather interesting. A despatch from Bishop Gobat to the Governor of Damascus was dropped by the postman in the street at Nablious. Thus it was known that high authorities were being applied to. Nablious also boasts a telegraph station. By it Mr. F. telegraphed to Damascus. This, too, became known, and the underlings at Nablious began to fear they might get into trouble by going too far in their bigotry, and so all at once matters were arranged with the utmost ease. Perhaps the Governor of Nablious had been looking at a large building there which spoke warning to him. It is the largest and handsomest house in the town, a sort of palace, but going to ruin before it is fully built. Its history is this. A former Governor of Nablious had erected it by forced labor, for which he paid the workmen nothing, but before it was completed, some cabal at headquarters ended in his being turned out of office. So there the house stands in its unfinished state, a picture of how matters go on in that unhappy and misruled land.

(To Be Continued.)

### Dr. Fraser.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR—If you say I should have written again long before this, I quite agree with you I am ashamed that I have allowed so many months to slip past. I have good excuses in abundance, and might easily give them, but I refrain.

The summer is almost over now. The nights and mornings are beginning to be cooler, though the heat in the middle of the day and afternoon seems as great as ever. Mrs. Fraser and I have stood the summer well. The children have been much more affected by the long continued and extreme heat. We must, however, be sincerely thankful that hitherto we have been spared any serious illness. Indeed, no one in the whole community of foreigners has been seriously ill this summer.

But your readers will be more interested to hear about "the work" than about ourselves and the other foreigners in port. To

Mr. Mackay, it has been a summer of devoted labour, abundantly blessed. His plan of working necessitates his absence from us, often for weeks at a time, but we are comforted by knowing how much good he is blessed to do. Hitherto, as you perhaps knew, Mr. M. has been carrying on mission work in the country, and training native helpers at the same time. In this way, the young men go with him to a certain place where they wait remain for some days or weeks studying, and morning and evening preaching to as many of the people as can be got together to listen. In addition to this, Mr. Mackay still pursues the plan he has followed since his arrival, of giving medicines to the sick. An immense number are seen and relieved, very many permanently cured. Indeed, I am quite sure he does more medical mission work in the country than I do in the port, for there are a great many who will take medicine, if it is brought right to their doors, who would not undertake a journey of some miles to procure it. We use a great deal of medicine, but the Church at home must never begin to think that the money spent in buying medicines might be more profitably laid out in some other way. Every one that is relieved or cured is one with very many prejudices thereby removed, and one friendly to us personally, is one more ready to hear the Gospel than he was before, and unless they hear they cannot believe. Mr. Mackay himself lays much stress upon this department of his work that he never thinks of setting out for a long stay in the country without having his medicine chest well stocked. But I began this letter with the intention of telling you about the opening of a new chapel, and now I am at what ought to be the end of it without having told you.

For more than a year, several families at Kharso, one of the ports of the Island, about twenty miles north east of here, have been pressing Mr. Mackay to go and preach the Gospel in their town. Considering it useless to begin work where there are no agencies by which to carry it on, and wishing to try the sincerity of the people while helpers were being trained, he put them off from time to time, until at last, about two months ago, a formal request, with the signatures of the parties attached, came, and Mr. Mackay promised them to go. When after a few days he went to see what could be done, you may judge of his surprise and thankfulness to find that the people had bought a large Chinese house and fitted it up with seats and a platform, besides preparing a very comfortable room for Mr. Mackay himself. Thanks be to the Giver of all Good! The work there, then, has had a most promising opening. May the Lord bless and prosper it!

Last Sabbath Mrs. Fraser and the children went with me eight or nine miles up the river to the opening of another new chapel, at Tot-tiong pony. It is between two and three months since it was begun, and it is ready now that it is finished, a very fine chapel. It is built of brick, and roofed with tiles, will hold more than a hundred worshippers, has a large raised platform at the end of the audience hall, two comfortable rooms in the wings at each side, beside a place to cook food. (The plan of the house is Chinese in outline, and the rooms are necessary for the helper to reside in, or the missionary on his visits). The day was beautifully fine, though hot, and we had a most interesting time. The British Consul who is interested in our work, and very friendly, was there, also, Mr. and Mrs. Baudains of the Customs, so that the Chinese were able to see that there was more than one who cared for them. The room was crowded full of worshippers and members who had come from our other stations, and the large yard in front of the Chapel, over which was stretched a large awning, was full also. I never saw a more interested or attentive congregation, and I must say that I have heard young men in Canada who couldn't preach as well as the helpers, who were all there, but who couldn't all have an opportunity of speaking for fear of prolonging the series to too great a length. The singing, too, on account of so many worshippers from the different stations, was very good. The heartiness and the absence of discipline were remarkable. The order of service was short pointed addresses alternating with the singing of hymns. Za took Mark xii. 17, to show that Christianity doesn't encourage disloyalty, and that loyalty, good and necessary as it is, is not the whole duty of man. Tiong sui from Heb. xii. 2, exhorted and encouraged the people to more earnest Christian life. Aw from Rom. xii. 1, drew their minds away from the sacrifices to idols to the sacrifice which God demands and accepts. And Mr. Mackay followed with a stirring address from Isaiah xxxv. 7. In the afternoon, after a recess of a couple of hours, we again met more people than in the forenoon. Hay gave a most practical address on 2 Peter i. 10, 11, taken with what followed. Then Sang followed with a most telling exposition of John vii. 24. Ah Hoa from Matt. 18, pointed out what the Christian had to fall back on for strength and comfort. And Mr. McKay from Eph. vi. 12 called attention to the opposition Christians were sure to meet with, and how they might stand fast against all enemies. It was a day that will not soon be forgotten by those who were there. The Lord is certainly blessing, extending and establishing his work here. Pray for us that we may have grace to continue to the end!

Your very sincerely,  
J. B. FRASER.

Towans, Aug. 21, 1875.

P.S.—We are praying God to bless the union, the glad news of which has just reached us.

## Congregational Title Deeds.

Editor British American Presbyterian.

In stating to you my views of some things connected with the legal right to the Canada Presbyterian Church property, and requesting you if I was wrong to put me right in the Presbyterian, I little thought that I would have to enter the lists with a brow beating brawler.

As he has the meanness to write under an anonymous mask, and his answers only a tissue of assertions without proof, with such an admixture of silly criticism, scurrilous sarcasm and personal abuse, indicating the most malignant hatred, I rather felt inclined not to notice him at all, for in disputing with such a coward there is danger of sacrificing the decorum of character or the meekness of the Christian. I will even to notice his vituperations further than to say that it always indicates a bad cause when such means are required to support it.

For his side of the question he offers no substantial proof; he does indeed say that the sites of Churches and manse stand in names of trustees chosen annually by their respective congregations. But does this give these congregations a legal right to the property? Then, how comes it that before these trustees can in any way dispose of it, they must in all humility approach the Presbytery and ask liberty of them to sell what "Mr. Barrister" says is the trustees own property?

Or how comes it that in some of our larger towns, such as Galt, Guelph, and if I mistake not, at least one Church in Hamilton, where a number of our best business men are connected with the congregational management. How comes it, I say, that these men would not allow their Church property to be decided in that way? but have it done free from the control of the Presbytery. Possibly "Mr. Barrister" will suit give me the direct, by stating as formerly that all I have said here is only another tissue of falsehoods, but she should do this it will be difficult to prove on which side the truth lies.

Hoping that you will do me the favour to publish this as soon as convenient, will oblige, dear sir, yours respectfully,  
ERICOT C. ANDERSON.

### "I will Answer."

This promise is still on record and God still fulfils it, sometimes literally "whilst thou art calling." Witness the following. About a year ago a young minister settled in a new charge. His attention was soon painfully but eagerly attracted by a number of backsliders through intemperance in the congregation, some of whom had not approached the Lord's table, nor ever entered the Church for years. Occasion was taken at an early opportunity to call for special prayer and effort on their behalf, as not beyond the power of grace of Him for whom "nothing is too hard." Peter's deliverance, while the Church was still in prayer for him, (Acts xii.), was presented as the ground of faith in God, and hope for the deliverance of these poor prisoners of Satan. To the surprise of the minister himself, the last of the company had not left the manse, where the meeting was held, when one of the very persons prayed for knocked at the door—a very intelligent, respectable, tidy woman when sober, but for years subject to frequent fits of drunkenness. She came in a very deplorable condition to ask for prayer, sympathy, and help. The result was, as far as man can judge, a complete deliverance from this degrading vice. She with her husband, whose circumstances were very similar, signed the pledge which was being circulated in the congregation. After about nine months of sobriety she applied and has been restored to the full communion of the Church. It may be added that there is reason to hope that before long other similar cases of reformation will issue in similar restoration.

### ANOTHER CASE

might be mentioned, suited to encourage perseverance as well as expectation. That the answer is often delayed we need not wonder, when we so often "ask, and when the principle is variable is, according to your faith be it unto you."

In the course of special meetings in a town in this province a year and a-half ago, the following request, among others, was handed in and complied with. "Prayer is earnestly asked by a believing wife for her husband, who is very far from God." The slip now lies before me, with name and date added. Also another from the same person a few days after: "Prayer is earnestly requested again by a believing wife for her husband, that God may have mercy upon him, and deliver him from the power of Satan." It was a sad case of separation as the only means of escape from the violence and brutality of one who had the education and social position of a gentleman, but, through drink and degradation, the habits of a demon. It excited much sympathy, and prayer was offered earnestly and patiently for this, both literal and figurative, prodigal in a far country. And now the tidings come that he has been converted in Mr. Mooney's meetings in London, and that his poor wife's faith is rewarded with the unspeakable joy of rejoicing in him in an altered home. How do these facts, well known to the writer, say to us, "Have faith in God." Others, equally striking, might be added, but these perhaps for the present may suffice to encourage some who don't realize that "men ought always to pray and not to faint," "to come boldly to the throne of grace." They may also suggest to others the propriety of similar testimony to God's faithfulness, whereof "the righteous shall hear and be glad."  
W. M. B.  
Oct. 9th, 1875.