

drawn between murder and manslaughter marks quite an advance. The cities of refuge should not, however, be used to illustrate the mercy and forbearance of a Divine Being, as seems to be the intention of the International Committee on Sunday School Lessons. Mystically, the weight of the passage seems to lie in the amnesty granted to offenders on the death of the high priest. The adjustments of Karma at death in regard to what the Roman Church calls venial sin is suggested. Our modern idea of transportation or banishment for criminals is a practical and practicable system based on the principle of the cities of refuge.

### JORDAN CEASED TO FLOW.

In the last quarterly statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund of London there is an article by Lieut. Col. C. M. Watson of the Royal Engineers, to whom the Orientalist, M. Clermont-Ganneau, had sent extracts from the writings of an Arab historian of the fourteenth century, giving an account of a stoppage in the flow of the waters of the River Jordan, and bearing a similar likeness to the miraculous arrest of the river at the time of the passage of the Israelites.

The historian to whom M. Ganneau refers is Nowairi, who relates that in the year of the Hegira, 664, corresponding to A. D. 1266, the Sultan Beybars caused a bridge to be built across the Jordan to facilitate the strategic movements of his army. Nowairi says:

"In the month of Jumad the First, in the year 664, the Sultan issued orders for the building of a bridge over the River Jordan. It was a river which flows through the low-lying valley of Syria, which is called the Sharieh. The bridge is in the neighborhood of Damieh, between it and Kurawa, and there happened in connection with it a wonderful thing, the like of which was never heard of. The Sultan charged the Emir Jamal ed Deen, ibn Nahar, with the erection of the bridge and commanded it to be made with five arches. Officials were assembled for the purpose, and among them the Emir Bedr ed Din Mohammed, ibn Rahal, the Governor of Nablus. They obtained supplies, collected workmen, and erected the

bridge as commanded by the Sultan. When it was completed and the people dispersed, part of the piers gave way. The Sultan was greatly vexed and blamed the builders, and sent them back to repair the damage. They found the task very difficult, owing to the rise of the waters and the strength of the current.

"But in the night preceding the dawn of the 17th of the month, Rabi the First, of the year 666, (Dec. 8, 1267,) the water of the river ceased to flow, so that none remained in its bed. The people hurried and kindled numerous fires and seized the opportunity offered by the occurrence. They remedied the defects in the piers and strengthened them, and effected repairs which would otherwise have been impossible. Then they dispatched mounted men to ascertain the nature of the event that had occurred. The riders urged their horses and found that a lofty mound (kabar) which overlooked the river on the west had fallen into it and damned it up."

In a district east of Beisan, and from fifteen to twenty miles south of the Sea of Galilee, the river passes through what might be described as a gorge between steep banks of marl, sometimes nearly perpendicular. These marl banks are frequently undermined by the water and fall in, making it dangerous to approach the river in times of flood.

Col. Watson says that, having regard to the geological formation, it is easy to understand what happened in the time of Beybars, as related by the Arab historian. The kabar, or hill of marl, undermined by the action of the river, had fallen into it and completely obstructed the passage of the waters for a certain time. The point east of Beisan, and about twenty-five miles above the Damieh, is just the place where such an accident would be most likely to occur.

The narrative in the book of Joshua states that the damming of the Jordan in the case of the Israelites took place at a point above the city, called Adam. This, it may be, was the same as Damieh. The Arabs frequently suppress the initial vowel in the ancient names of Hebrew places, which will explain the change in the spelling of the name. — *New York Times*, 28th July.