

Nazareth.

The hills which form the northern limit of the plain of Jezreel run almost due east and west from the Jordan valley to the Mediterranean, and their southern slopes were in the district assigned to the tribe of Zebulun. Almost in the centre of this chain of hills there is a singular cleft in the limestone, forming the entrance to a little valley. As the traveller leaves the plain he will ride up a steep and narrow pathway, brodered with grass and flowers, through scenery which is neither colossal nor overwhelming, but infinitely beautiful and picturesque. Beneath him, on the right hand side, the vale will gradually widen, until it becomes about a quarter of a mile in breadth. The basin of the valley is divided by hedges of cactus into little fields and gardens, which about the fall of the spring rains wear an aspect of indescribable calm, and glow with a tint of the richest green. Beside the narrow pathway, at no great distance apart from each other, are two wells, and the women who draw water there are more beautiful, and the ruddy, bright-eyed shepherd-boys who sit or play by the well-sides, in their gay-coloured Oriental costume, are a happier, bolder, brighter-looking race than the traveller will have seen elsewhere. Gradually the valley opens into a little natural amphitheatre of hills, supposed by some to be the crater of an extinct volcano; and there, clinging to the hollows of a hill, which rises to the height of some five hundred feet above it, lie, "like a handful of pearls in a goblet of emerald," the flat roofs and narrow streets of a little Eastern town. There is a small church; the massive buildings of a convent; the tall minaret of a mosque; a clear, abundant fountain; houses built of white stone, and gardens scattered amongst them, umbrageous with figs and olives, and rich with the white and scarlet blossoms of orange and pomegranate. In spring, at least, everything about the place looks indescribably bright and soft; doves murmur in the trees; the hoopoe flits about in ceaseless activity; the bright blue roller-bird, and the commonest and loveliest bird of Palestine, flashes like a living sapphire over fields which are enamelled with enumerable flowers. And that little town is *En-Nazirah*, Nazareth, where the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, spent nearly thirty years of His mortal life. It was, in fact, His home, His native village for all but three or four years of His life on earth; the village which lent its then ignominious name to the scornful title written upon His cross; the village from which He did not disdain to draw His appellation when He spake in vision to the persecuting Saul. And along the narrow mountain-path which I have described, His feet must have often trod, for it is the only approach by which, in returning northwards from Jerusalem, He could have reached the home of His infancy, youth, and manhood.

Here the boy Jesus prepared Himself, amid a hallowed obscurity, for His mighty work on earth. His outward life was the life of all those

of His age, and station, and place of birth. He lived as lived the other children of peasant parents in that quiet town, and in great measure as they live now. He who has seen the children of Nazareth in their red craftsans, and bright tunics of silk or cloth, girded with a many-coloured sash, and sometimes covered with a loose outer jacket of white or blue—he who has watched their noisy and merry games, and heard their ringing laughter as they wander about the hills of their little native vale, or play in bands on the hill side beside their sweet and abundant fountain, may perhaps form some conception of how Jesus looked and played when He too was a child. And the traveller who has followed any of those children—as I have done—to their simple homes, and seen the scanty furniture, the plain but sweet and wholesome food, the uneventful, happy patriarchal life, may form a vivid conception of the manner in which Jesus lived. Nothing can be plainer than those houses, with the doves sunning themselves on the white roofs, and the vines wreathing about them. The mats, or carpets, are laid loose along the walls; shoes and sandals are taken off at the threshold; from the centre hangs a lamp which forms the only ornament of the room; in some rooms in the wall is placed the wooden chest, painted with bright colours, which contains the books or other possessions of the family; on a ledge that runs round the wall, within easy reach, are neatly rolled up the gay coloured quilts, which serve as beds, and on the same ledge are ranged the earthen vessels for daily use; near the door stand the large common water-jars of red clay with a few twigs and green leaves—often of aromatic shrubs—thrust into their orifices to keep the water cool. At meal-time a painted wooden stool is placed in the centre of the apartment, a large tray is put upon it, and in the middle of the tray stands the dish of rice and meat, or *libban*, or stewed fruits, from which all help themselves in common. Both before and after the meal the servant, or the youngest member of the family, pours water over the hands from a brazen ewer into the brazen bowl. So quiet, so simple, so humble, so uneventful was the outward life of the family of Nazareth.—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

Teacher's Meeting.

THAT "Model superintendent," H. P. Haven, believed that a successful Sunday-school was impossible without a teacher's meeting, and both in his county and his city experience, he brought his full corps of teachers together every week. They met not to study the lessons, but to compare the results each had reached in preparing the lesson, to consider the best methods of teaching the lesson, and also to increase their stock of information regarding the subject in hand, and enlarge their store of general biblical knowledge. Such a meeting for advancement in Bible studies should be regarded vital to the interest of every Sunday-school.—*Union Bible Teacher.*