

Sketches from Palestine.

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A DAY IN NAZARETH.

IT was with peculiar emotions that I arrived at Nazareth in company with my fellow-travellers on a beautiful Saturday evening about the middle of March. After devoting four successive days to sight-seeing amidst the thrilling scenes through which we passed since our departure from Jerusalem, I hailed with positive delight the prospect of having a whole Sabbath day for meditation and refreshment in Nazareth. I did wish to live at least one whole day in the place in which the Redeemer of the world lived for thirty years. I had already visited the Grotto at Bethlehem in which He, the Lord of glory, became the Infant of Days. With deepened impressions of the truth of Christianity, I had stood on Calvary's brow outside the gates of Jerusalem, where He laid down His life on the Cross for the redemption of the world. I had gone up from the Garden of Gethsemane to the summit of Olivet and gazed into the blue heavens through which He ascended to the throne of glory. And now I was anxious to see the scenery and society of the earthly Home in which He as the Model Man of the race grew up from infancy to manhood and lived a holy and beautiful life for the imitation of His followers to the end of time. Well, the access to Nazareth from the South—the direction from which most travellers approach it—is not easy. There are two pathways, each of about two miles in length, across the old Galilean hills that tower up abruptly between the Plains of Esdraelon and Nazareth. If any of my readers should ever travel in that direction I would say to them that the western pathway here is by far the better of the two. It is rough and rugged, and steep and stony, but it is passable. It is doubtless the path by which Jesus and Joseph and Mary, and nearly all pilgrims of all ages have travelled to and from Nazareth. The majority of our company went that way. But a few of us who had gone seven or eight miles out of the usual route to visit Nain and Endor took the Eastern path, as it was half a mile nearer these far-famed localities. We found the

path very precipitous, in some places even dangerous. Our Syrian ponies clung like cones to the rocky cliffs, and did their very best to carry us safely up the dizzy heights. But several times we had to dismount, and scramble like them on all fours, and, sometimes we had to cling to their manes for the help which they thus willingly afforded us. One young man, a slender student with more mind than muscle, became completely exhausted before reaching the summit of the mountain. But after resting for a few minutes in a rift of the rock he regained sufficient strength to continue the journey, and was as well as ever by the following morning. All the rest of us heartily enjoyed the perilous adventure. The only satisfaction however of travelling by this Eastern pathway is that it leads directly past the so-called *Mount of Precipitation* from which tradition says the infuriated Nazarenes wished to cast our Lord down headlong when he began to teach in their Synagogues. And here, certainly, the finger of tradition points in the wrong direction. The inspired historian describes the scene of the contemplated destruction of the Prophet of Nazareth as "the brow of the hill whereon the city was built," and *this* Mount of Precipitation overlooks the Plain of Esdraelon, and is quite two miles distant from the town of Nazareth. A more suitable place however for accomplishing the murderous purpose of the citizens of Nazareth could nowhere be found. Nothing short of a miracle could save the life of an individual hurled from the lofty heights of this so-called Mount of Precipitation. We arrived safely at Nazareth just as the sun was sinking behind the towering summit of Mount Carmel. And from our first glimpse of the calm peaceful Saturday evening to our last farewell gaze on the following bright and beautiful Monday morning we were favourably impressed with the place and the people. The modern Arabic name of the town is En-Nasireh. It is pleasantly situated on the South Western slope of one of fifteen rounded hills which rise up gracefully around a charming little basin-shaped valley a mile in length and half a mile in breadth. The romantic vale is very fertile, and has in it a number of small gardens enclosed with hedges of prickly pear, and many fig-trees, and a great variety of flowers.