

and its summit constituted the height of land in that direction. The spot on which the altar stood commanded an extensive prospect of the country all round,—as far as Jerusalem on the south and the valley of the Jordan on the east,—more than fifteen miles distant. A station so situated formed a highly favourable position for watching their numerous herds. This mountain is chiefly celebrated on account of being the spot where Abraham and his kinsman Lot stood when they divided the land between them, and finally parted from one another, as related in the 13th chapter of Genesis. I shall present an account of this transaction from a recent, excellent work on Palestine by the eminent and learned Professor of Newton College, H. H. Hackett. And I do this chiefly with the view of recommending it; because it contains more available matter on Palestine than many other works three times its size. "It was my privilege on that evening," says the pious traveller, "to bow the knee and invoke the protection of God where Jacob had old lodged as a wayfarer." He spread his carpet for the night on the smooth, grassy surface of the old dilapidated reservoir, in the wady encompassing the hill of Bethel. "While the men were putting up the tent and preparing for the evening meal I went to an eminence within sight, on the east, to examine the ruins of a fortress and a church which are found there. From this height I had a distinct view of the Jordan over the tops of the intervening hills. As I stood surveying this scene I must have been near the spot where Abraham and Lot parted from each other," after making choice of their future residence. They had both become rich—"very rich in cattle, in silver, and gold." And fertile and fruitful as the land was in that precise locality, it became insufficient to support their increasing flocks and herds. Besides, strife had arisen between their respective herdsmen that gave uneasiness. Under these circumstances Abraham proposes a separation, and makes a generous and most magnanimous offer to his kinsman. Lot casts his eyes from that elevated position on the verdant and luxuriant plains of the Jordan and makes choice of that region as his future abode, Abraham remaining where he was. On this Professor Hackett observes, "That all the parts of the narrative rigidly adjust themselves to the external situation of the parties. The eye," he says, "rests at this moment upon exactly such a scene as Lot is represented as beholding when he selected the plain of the Jordan as the place of his residence. There is the river gleaming over the hill-tops; there are the broad meadows visible on either bank, and the waving line of verdure marking the course of the stream."

We come next in the course of events to Jacob's second visit to Bethel. It was in some important respects very similar to the first. He was now indeed surrounded by a large family and enriched by the bountiful hand of a kind Providence with great wealth. He was no longer a lonely and solitary wanderer: he had "become two bands." But he was again in great trouble, and in some respects fleeing, a second time, for his life. By the violence of his sons, in their treacherous outrage on the Shechemites, he had incurred the resentment of the natives and was in danger of being cut off with all that belonged to him. But God again graciously interposed in this trying and perilous emergency, and proved again a "very present help in trouble." He spread the arms of His merciful protection over his head and shielded him from the wrath of the people. "They journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them and they did not pursue after them."

"And God said unto Jacob, arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest."