

British American Presbyterian

Vol. 4—No. 34.]

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1875.

[Whole No. 190

Contributors and Correspondents.

DIARY IN THE EAST.

NABLOUS (ANCIENT SHICHEN)—SAMARIA—
EYO.

Having now seen all I expected to see of Southern Palestine, I began to turn my eyes northward. I had long before settled with the German missionary at Nablous that he should receive me into his house for a few days, that I might see the neighbourhood. But how to get there was the difficulty; nay, for some part of the spring, it was impossible from the unsettled weather, and the depth of the swamps. Between Nablous and Nazareth matters were even worse. How bad they were may be supposed when the post runner between Acre and Nablous lost several horses entirely. They were suffocated in the swamp, from which he escaped with difficulty.

The second week of March promised so well as regards weather that I determined to try to make out my visit to Nablous, proposing to stay a few days, and again return to head-quarters in Jerusalem, while my kind friends made me feel quite a home. They did not like my going and I did not care to have the expense of a dragoon, so it was settled that I was to hire the horse which I rode to the Jordan, and have the lad who went with me to Michmah as guide, while as escort I should have a school master from Bethlehem, who was going to Nablous on his own affairs. He could speak a little English, which would have been very useful but which I was delayed a day waiting for my horse to return from another journey, the schoolmaster fell in with some mukharios (mule drivers) who were going the same way, and set off without me. Having my bargain made and all arranged, I just set off alone with my Arab lad, determined to make the best of it. For the use of the horse and lad I was to pay 5s. English, per day, whether I rode the horse or not. That was to include all expenses of feeding the horse and the lad, and a donkey for him to ride besides, but when I came to mount my horse there was no donkey forthcoming. It was said to be sick, so, rather than delay, I set off with the lad on foot, carrying a bag of barley for the horse's food that night, as we could not be sure of getting any at the convent where I was to put up. All my luggage hung at my saddle bow, consisting of a small carpet bag, a water-proof cloak, binocular glass, and basket stocked with cold meat, bread, oranges, etc. It was rather an adventure starting off thus alone with my native guide for the twelve hours journey to Nablous. As my halting place, Ram Allah, is only three hours ride from Jerusalem I did not set off till the afternoon of March 18th. It was a splendid day, though the east wind (sirocco) even at this early season made the heat rather oppressive; there was no freshness in the air, and the distances were not so clear as with any other wind. My horse was such a good quiet fellow that I rode along very much at my ease, often with the reins just tucked under my knee, and my hands left free to hold my white umbrella, and my Murray's Guide Book. I found that guide most useful. It made me pretty independent of the information which an intelligent Dragoon might have given me, but which my guide could not have imparted, even had we understood each other's speech. Passing out by the Jaffa gate, and round to the north of Jerusalem, we crossed copons, and soon came on some remains of the Roman road to Damascus. This consists now of detached stones with holes between them of a regular pavement, and was in such bad condition from the wet winter that we took to the fields to avoid it. In about an hour we passed two very marked conical hills, at which I had frequently looked from the terraced roof in Jerusalem. The top of each is covered with ruins. One is supposed to be Nob, the city of priests. The other (Telobel) is identified as Gibeath of Saul. Between the two is a rocky glen, probably the scene of David's most touching interview with Jonathan, when they entered into covenant with each other, and Jonathan in his self denying tone showed himself so willing to give up his hopes of a kingdom to him whom the Lord had chosen to supersede him.

A little further on, down a side glen to the left, I had a very good view of Nablous on its lofty hill. Then, to the right, close to the track, a poor little village with some ancient remains interested, still bears the name of Er Ram, the Ramah between which and Bethel he had lived. Here too are the ruins of the large khans, which in former days were so numerous, and so useful to travellers, but not one of which now remains in a state to be used. Soon after we passed Ramah the solitude of the track was broken up by the presence of a mounted soldier. My guide eyed him rather anxiously as he came cantering up after a wet piece of ground where his

horse found a center rather hard work. The lad kept nearer me than usual, and his looks as he observed the soldier's advances made me rather doubt whether he would be good company. But I dare say my small baggage was not a tempting enough bait to make him run any risk by attacking me. Yet he hung near us as we went on through a narrow glen, riding on and then stopping till we came near several times, so that I was rather glad when two native priests joined company with Mastapha, as we overtook them on the road. They persuaded him that the convent at Jifna where they were going would be a better resting place than Ram Allah, where we had settled to stay the night. Mastapha managed to make me understand this by pointing and saying in Arabic, "Jifna to-day, Nablous to-morrow." But this I would not agree to. I had been told at Ram Allah I should find a priest who spoke French, and that might not be the case at Jifna. Then on consulting Murray I found that Jifna was quite off the road by Bethel, which I wished to take, so in a decided manner I said in Arabic, "Jifna, No, Ram Allah, Yes," and that settled the question. So when we came to the village of Bereh, crossing a bare slope, we parted with the priests, and turned off westward to Ram Allah. The heights there are very bare and dreary, perhaps they looked all the more so to me as I thought of how lately a priest travelling this road to Nablous died at Bereh from cold and exposure. Yet in all the glens and up the slopes vines grew luxuriantly where any care is taken of them. The view in approaching Ram Allah is very fine. The convent stands so high that it commands the plain of Sharon to Jaffa; and as north and south of it, from the flat roof I watched the sun go down into the Mediterranean, and found that the convent clock was regulated by its descent. Those who value luxury need not try putting up at the Ram Allah convent, but bare as the little cell was I was thankful for a clean bed. Though the day had been very hot the night was quite cold in this high position. Instead of one priest I found three, two were visitors, one from Jifna, who said I had done wisely in not going there, as their convent was hardly in a state to be fit for travellers. All three were Italians, who did not seem much at their ease in speaking French. We snuggled together, and they were very polite to me. We were waited on by a native man and boy, acolytes I suppose. There is a Church attached to the convent which is a Latin one. The Greeks have a Church in the village, and there are also a few Protestant schools at Ram Allah, but I did not visit it from its being past school hours before I reached the village.

I was up early on March 14th as I had a nine hours ride before me, and wanted to have time for two good rests in the course of the day. My breakfast was meagre, consisting of tea and bread, and butter, but no milk was to be had. Paying the priest a few francs for my accommodation, I started about 7 a.m., retracing my steps of the night before as far as Bereh. From there my guide led me northwards over a long ridge, and down in to a deep gully. I was always looking out for Bethel, wondering we did not reach it. At last after following a very rough path up to the top of the hill side, above the deepest and narrowest part of the long gully, we came in sight of a village most picturesquely situated on the top of a long slope, terraced and dotted with trees. This I fancied must be Bethel. To make sure I said in a tone of interrogation, "Beit'io?" For so Bethel is now called, when to my astonishment the answer was, "No, Ain Yabrud." Then I found Mastapha had taken advantage of my ignorance of the roads to lead me by a shorter one that did not go by Bethel at all. I could not regret it, for rough and troublesome as the path was, the country was exceedingly pretty, and I only determined that in going back to Jerusalem I should take care that he did not serve me so again, and in that way I could see two roads instead of one. The cultivation near Ain Yabrud was better than in almost any other place which I saw, and showed what might be made of this wonderful land under a good government, and with industrious inhabitants. The hills are so rocky that some of the plots of olives and vines were only a few yards in extent, but the soil was deep, and the growth luxuriant. But if the cultivation is good that is more than can be said of the road. Shortly after passing the village I had to pass along a narrow path between two terrace walls that supported the soil of the olive yards on each side that were on a much higher level than the path. The track was like nothing more or less than the bed of a torrent, with a small stream rushing down it. To make matters worse the wet had brought down large pieces of the retaining wall on each side, consisting of large blocks of lime stone. Over these sharp slippery stones, through the stream, my poor horse struggled on, slipping and recovering itself in a marvelous manner. My guide climbed up into the olive yard, and so avoided this bad piece of road, but I could not get my horse there, so had to do my best to hold him up. I felt very thankful when after about a quarter of a mile I got out from between the walls into a pretty glen, where the track down the side of the glen was smooth and gravelly. The sides of the glen rose steeply on each side, dotted with trees, and gay with cyclamens and anemones. At the bottom of the glen was a grove with fine trees, with bright turf under them, over which my horse went along quite cheerily. Soon the glen was joined by another wider one, which opened out toward the west. Just at the open space thus formed I met a large flock of sheep tramping on in true eastern fashion, not driven, but led by their shepherd. He was

a fine shaggy native, and as he came along in his flowing robes, passing in and out of the fleecy shades cast by the olive trees, he and his flock made not only a pleasing but a most instructive picture to my mind. As he led his flock on through these "green pastures, by the still waters," how he reminded me of that Good Shepherd who "whom He putteth forth His own sheep forth before them, and the sheep follow him." If they had the same rough road to go which I had found so fatiguing, he would be with them in it. He would not leave them to struggle on alone as my guide had done, his strong arm would be ready to bring help to any poor weak one of the flock, or to take to his bosom any tender lamb for which the road was too hard. The Good Shepherd never asks any of his flock to go through any danger or difficulty alone, or to tread any path that can compare in roughness with that rugged path which he himself trod when he came to seek his wandering lost ones, and to give his life for them. And the manner in which the sheep followed—how much it taught me. Some kept so near to the shepherd that they rubbed against his clothes. They seemed to love to be close to him. Theirs was the place of safety and comfort, like those happy Christians who keep so near to the Heavenly Shepherd, that they are even within hearing of the whisper of his love, and ready to be guided by his eye. For them care can hardly exist, it is so instantly cast on him who "careth for them," and temptations assail to vain those whose every step is taken in the shadow of Him who cannot err or lead astray. Others of the sheep there were who tempted by some fresh tuft of grass were apt to wander away among the rocks, out of sight of the shepherd, where many a danger might lurk, for wolves are not unknown, and jackals are very plentiful in these hills of Palestine. How like they were to those Christians who, attracted by the garish shows of a world that "lieth in the wicked one," wander away from the steps of the flock, and perhaps never to know how far they have strayed till they find themselves entangled in some thicket of danger and difficulty whence even the shepherd's hand can only release them at the expense of much pain, and rending of the flesh, leaving them perhaps to falter on in weakness, and with tottering steps all the rest of their course through life.

(To be Continued.)

The Guibord Case—Public and Personal Excommunication.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—The following passage forms part of M. Doutra's letter on Archbishop Lynch and the Guibord case, which lately appeared in the *Globe*:

"The only excommunication which was ever pronounced in Canada, according to the rules of ecclesiastical law, was that of a newly married couple, who had gone to a Protestant minister to be married. This was some six or eight years ago at Rimouski."

An account of this case may not be uninteresting to the readers of the *Presbyterian*. As I am the Protestant minister referred to, I am, of course, well acquainted with it.

At the time stated by M. Doutra, a French Canadian couple came to me to be married. I asked them why they had come to a Protestant minister for that purpose, instead of going to a priest of their own church. They said that they were third cousins, and, therefore, could not be married by a priest without a dispensation, which they were not rich enough to obtain, but their priest had told them that they could be lawfully married by a Protestant minister without a dispensation. I said that if it was right for them to be married to each other, their church should put no hindrance in their way, but if it was wrong, she should not help them for any amount. I added that dispensations are only a scheme to enrich their church. To this they professed to assent. An aunt of the woman, who accompanied them, confirmed what they said about their relationship. They had the consent of the intended mother-in-law in writing. I told them that I could marry them lawfully, only after due publication of banns, or by a license from the Lieut.-Governor. They then went away. About a month after they returned with a license. After putting myself to a good deal of trouble to consult a minister and a magistrate, I married them. A few weeks after, a priest called on me for a certificate of their marriage, which I gave him. He said that they could not be lawfully married, as they were uncle and niece. The woman was the daughter of the man's deceased wife's sister. Such was the fact. Had I known this before, I would not have married them. For one thing, as regards the marriage question, I belong to the "old school." But further, such a marriage is contrary to the law of the Province of Quebec, as well as of England. Time rolled on, and at length All Saints' Day—Nov. 1st—came. This is a high day in the *Roman* Church. Accordingly, the erring couple were then excommunicated in the Cathedral of Rimouski, in presence of a large congregation, by Vicar-General Ladèveque, who acted in place of his brother, the bishop, at the time at the Vatican council. By this sentence Louis Ottot and Caroline Lavoie were, for having contracted a marriage forbidden by the laws both of God and man, and for having had recourse to a heretic minister to assist them in such a wicked act, separated from the company of the faithful, and deprived of all their privileges during life, and of Christian burial after death. Any one who should knowingly harbour or openly acknowledge them, was to be dealt with in the same manner. Dur-

ing the reading of the sentence, the Vicar-General held a burning taper in his hand. At the close, he turned it downwards, and after the melted wax had put out the flame, let it fall on the floor. The whole affair was a very imposing one. No doubt a deeper horror than the vital froze of the more ignorant part of the congregation. A few days after, the couple appeared before the Vicar-General on bended knees, in the vestibule of the cathedral. One of the questioners then asked them was the following effect: "Do you acknowledge that the relationship between you is an impediment to marriage according to the Book of Leviticus?" Having made due satisfaction, they were restored to church fellowship, but separated from each other.

But, as I do not wish to take up too much of your paper, I shall pause here for the present, leaving the rest of my story for another letter. Yours, truly, F. FENWICK.

Congregational Union.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—We have lately had Synodical union, and we now are seeking to accomplish congregational union in many quarters in our beloved Presbyterian Church. The latter is the natural outgrowth of the former, and is necessary to realize a part at least, of the benefits that the former was intended to secure, but in its accomplishment there is great danger of acting harshly and unjustly by settled pastors. To this danger, your own able and judicious article in a late issue of the *PRESBYTERIAN*, and the timely letter of "Justitia" in last week's number, have very properly called attention.

Synodical union was very cautiously and carefully gone about. In particular, justice was very scrupulously guarded against, great care was taken that no one should suffer loss or injury. A similar spirit should regulate all the proceedings that may be taken to unite two or more contiguous congregations hitherto separated, and where union may obviously be extremely desired, and if, unhappily, a different spirit should in any quarter prevail, and anon, be consummated by the sacrifices of truth and justice—by allowing congregations to fling aside voluntarily assumed obligations, and to drive ministers from their manse, to seek homes elsewhere as they best may. The blessing of God could hardly be expected to fall upon such a union. It may be said that no congregation would, for a moment, dream of pursuing such a course, and that of ministers resigning their charges with a view to constitute union, the resignation must be purely voluntary, and yet thoroughly compulsory. We do not need to be told that a few families, even in a congregation, may make things so irksome to the pastor, to unions, to her and his families comfort, and what is worse, so hateful to his usefulness, that he may be compelled to leave the field. In my own locality we have two congregations, one with and the other without a pastor, whose union, though not I believe, necessary to their continued existence, is yet on all hands acknowledged to be very desirable. Of course, in the circumstances, union might be very easily accomplished. The pastor that is in the field is an able and accomplished man, and all that is needed is, that the vacant congregation make a bonfire of the passions and prejudice that long years of separation could hardly fail to generate, and unite with their brethren of the other congregation, who, in the exuberance of Christian charity, are waiting with open arms to receive them. But they are not, it would seem, willing to do so. They wish for union, it is said, with the other congregation, but not with its pastor. That is to say, they wish for disunion first, and union afterwards. To satisfy their prejudices, the minister must sacrifice a comfortable home and a pleasant pastorate. Were this all, no one here, I presume, would be disposed to find much fault with them. They have a right to determine for themselves whether they shall unite under the present pastorate or not. But that is not all. Some of them, two in particular, seem determined to force the minister of the other congregation from the field. Every opportunity is embraced of lowering and injuring him in the estimation of his own people. They said, again and again, that if he were a Christian, he would resign at once, and allow the union to be effected. A sapping and mining process is going on daily, and the poor minister, whose only fault is, that he happens to be the pastor of the other congregation, may, in time, find himself shorn of the good will of his own people, and be cruelly driven from a fairly successful pastorate and a comfortable home, with a large family on his hands, and in advancing years, to go in search of pastures new. Is such a state of things to be tolerated? I most sincerely hope the church will everywhere set its face as flint against such things. Most assuredly the union happily consummated at Montreal in June last, was not intended to work to the injury of any one, and if cases should arise in which to gain a higher good, it may be allowed to do so, the evil should be distributed. The whole church should bear its share of it, and on the principle that where one minister suffers the other should suffer with it, provided that the burden should fall upon the few as lightly as possible. Congregations are, I believe, in general, kind and considerate, but, unfortunately, they too often allow themselves to be led by a few, who, swayed by a variety of motives, too frequently follow crooked and divisive courses. Yours, truly, PAX.

The Resurrection.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

The world is in confusion does not occur in the Old Testament, but the idea is considered so prominent in Ezekiel xxxvii. 1-14, that the translators have entitled it the "Resurrection of dry bones." The first ten verses are a record of the prophet's vision, the next four furnish the meaning or interpretation, which is stated with the utmost plainness and simplicity, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, we are cut off," so to speak, dead and buried. "Therefore, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land, then shall ye know that I have spoken it and performed it, saith the Lord."

Here we have apparently the germ of the doctrine, a promise which was in due time fulfilled, of the resurrection or uprising of the body of the Jewish people from the graves of oppression and slavery in which they had so long been held, and their restoration to civil and religious liberty in their own land.

Some reference Bibles, and the concordances, give as parallel passages, John v. 21, 25, 28, 29, where our Lord gives expression to similar ideas, and almost in the same words, "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the Son of God, and they that hear him, shall live." "The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation"—a vision of Jesus similar to that of Ezekiel, but grander and more comprehensive. Ezekiel's was limited to the valley of dry bones—that of Jesus extended to the whole world. Ezekiel's words of prophecy were addressed to the captives of Babylon—Christ, to the captives of sin in all ages. In the one case, it was only the graves of the house of Israel that were to be opened, and to give up their dead—in the other, every grave of sin, ignorance, and oppression was to be opened, and the captives set free, to rise up either in newness of life, or to the righteous awards of him to whom the Father hath committed all judgment. The one commenced at the close of the seventy years that were determined as the period of the captivity, when it was said to the prisoners, "Go forth," and to them that were in darkness, "Show yourselves," and they went forth, not with haste, nor by flight, but with joy and in peace—the other at the close of the Jewish dispensation, called by sacred writers "the end of the world," "the end of all things." "The last time" when the proclamation went forth, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and the day spring dawned on the world, "to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death." But in neither case is there any reference to the resurrection or resurrection of bodies that had been literally dead. Ezekiel gives the interpretation of his own vision, "These bones are the whole house of Israel, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land." And Paul gives the interpretation of Christ's, using the very words of the 21st verse, with a frequency that leaves no doubt of their meaning, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." God who is rich in mercy, even when we were dead in sin hath quickened us together with Christ." "And you being dead in your sins, hath he quickened together with him." This is further evident from the words of Christ himself in the 25th verse, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God." No postponement of this grand event to the end of the world and the close of time, but an immediate uprising of a down-trodden world, "to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and to enter upon the exercise of the privileges and the enjoyment of the blessings of his everlasting kingdom. LAYMAN.

Sabbath Observance.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—Permit me through your columns, to request the attention of the Presbyteries of the Church, to the decision of the General Assembly in Montreal in June last, on the subject of the public observance of the Sabbath. As will be seen by referring to page twenty-one of the printed minutes of the first Assembly, "it was agreed to petition the Dominion Parliament to abolish unnecessary Sabbath labor on public works, and traffic on railways under Government control, and recommend Presbyteries to petition to the like effect." The proper officers of the Assembly either have attended to this matter, or will attend to it in good time, and it is very desirable that all the Presbyteries of the Church in the several Provinces unite with the Assembly in bringing their influence to bear upon Parliament in reference to a matter of such stupendous importance in every aspect in which it can be viewed. I trust that at their first meeting Presbyteries will attend to the Assembly's recommendation, and petition Parliaments as directed.

Yours, very truly,

W. T. McMULLEN,

One of the Joint-Conveners of the General Assembly's Committee on Sabbath Observance.