

vigorous luxuriansness of the larger trees overtopping and nearly concealing the town. "Here a scene of luxuriant and almost unparalleled verdure bursts upon our view," says Dr Robinson. "The whole valley was filled with gardens of vegetables and orchards of all kinds of fruit, watered by several fountains, which burst forth in various parts and flow westwards in refreshing streams. It came upon us suddenly like a scene of fairy enchantment. We saw nothing to compare with it in all Palestine."

The mountains of Gerizim and Ebal rise in bold and majestic grandeur immediately from the valley in each side, to the height of 800 feet. Ebal is more steep, rugged and sterile, with large, naked rocks here and there protruding. The aspect of Gerizim is more soft and verdant; having a more northerly exposure, the midday sun does not wither up its verdure with its scorching rays: its own shade is its best protection. Its slopes are more gradual than those of Ebal. Its sides in many places are terraced and planted with fruit trees. A very ancient road, cut into regular broad steps in some parts of the mountain, leads to its summit; but its gentler slopes may be ascended on horseback, although not without some hazard. The summit of Gerizim, which spreads out into a vast tract of table land, has been, and is still, a place of great resort. Here stood in ancient times the Samaritan temple, although no trace of its existence is now to be found; and here still the Samaritans of the valley assemble four times in the year, to offer their sacrifices and perform their worship; and here too at some remote period stood a town of considerable extent, and a fortress of great strength, whose ruins overspread the southern summit of the mountain. The soil is good, and traces of recent cultivation appear.

Shechem stands more than a mile from the opening of the valley, on the water-shed. It is a place of great antiquity, but its name has undergone many revolutions. It was called Sechem, or Sychem, by the Greeks. This in the days of our Lord passed into Sychar,—a name of reproach, as some have supposed. Its classic name, Neopolis, it received from the Romans; and this in the Arabic form Nabulus, remains to the present day,—the representing the Arabic Aliff, and consequently long. The town itself is long and narrow, extending along the base of mount Gerizim, and partly resting on its declivity. The streets are narrow; the houses high and in general well built, all of stone, with domes on the roofs as at Jerusalem. The present population is about 8,000 or 10,000, chiefly Moslems,—there being only about 500 Armenian christians, 130 Samaritans and some Jews. Recently a Protestant mission has been organized in the town under the fostering care of the devoted Bishop Gobat, along with a school of many Protestant children. They both share in the same cheering prosperity that attends all similar institutions in the East at the present day.

At the south-east corner of Gerizim, only a few rods from the mountain, Jacob's well is situated; and just half way between the mountains, fair in the opening of the valley, stands Joseph's tomb. Consequently the field which Jacob bought at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, lies in the same locality. This field must have been of some considerable extent, embracing not only the well and the tomb, but also a portion of the large plain of Mukhna. The twelve Patriarchs, there is reason to believe, were all buried there. Acts vii. 16.

HISTORICAL RECOLLECTIONS OF SHECHEM.

The inviting aspect of this lovely spot drew the Patriarchs to it at a very early period. Abraham at his first entrance into Canaan, "passed through the land unto the place of Sichem," or Shechem, as it ought to have been