

There was once a house built over the mouth of the well. The building fell recently, and the rubbish gathered over the mouth, so that we could see nothing as to the inside. All we could do was to kneel down and drop a pebble through the openings between the stones, which told us very distinctly that there was water at the bottom of the well, and that the "well is deep."

Let us look around us as we sit, wearied with our journey, on the very spot in which Jesus sat, a few hours earlier in the day, on that occasion so memorable for Sychar, and so interesting to Christian readers, who never weary of the story of "Jesus and the woman of Samaria." We are at the north end of a level plain surrounded on all sides by high hills. The plain is not large, but it is rich in crops and rich in historical associations as the gathering place, in every age of their history, of the clans of Israel. Out of this valley to eastward, towards the Jordan, there is an opening. That is the road to Padan-aram, to Mesopotamia, by which Jacob came on his return from serving Laban when he bought this parcel of ground. Out of the valley to westward there is an opening towards the Great Sea. This opening to the westward is guarded by two sentinels venerable in years, great in bulk, lofty in front, and memorable in history. These sentinels are Ebal on the north side, and Gerizim on the south side. Jacob's well is right under Gerizim, the mount of blessing, and at the opening of this valley leading to the sea.

But what small building is that in an adjacent field, shining in a new coat of white-wash? That is the spot where the children of Israel deposited the bones of Joseph on obtaining possession of the promised land, (Joshua xxiv. 32), the resting place of the best son, the kindest brother, the wisest statesmen that we know of in history.

There were other bones besides his placed there on the same occasion. Stephen tells us in a sentence that has puzzled commentators, that "Joseph sent and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls; so Jacob went down into Egypt and died, he and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem." (Acts vii. 15, 16).

Of course the name of Abraham is a mistake in the above connection. It could not be a mistake on the part of Stephen, for he was too well informed in Jewish history, and under such influence of the Holy Spirit as to be above such a slip as to confound Jacob and Abraham on a point where the history is so clear. (Gen. xxxiii. 18, 19, 20). It could not be a mistake on the part of Luke, who was inspired. It must therefore have been a mistake on the part of one of the earliest scribes (for all the MSS have followed this one) and stands (as Calvin and Hackett suppose) for Jacob. The other difficulty lies in finding Stephen say that the patriarchs ("our fathers") were carried over into Sychem and laid in the same sepulchre with Joseph, whereas no mention is made of this fact. There is no mention of the fact, but the fact no doubt it was. We know that it was the custom in Egypt for the head of a family to dig out in the rocks a sepulchre for himself and kindred, large in proportion to his rank and wealth, and indeed, a sepulchre is shown in Egypt among the tombs of Beni-Hassan which is called the tomb of Joseph and his. If any of Joseph's brethren died before him, as no doubt was the case, he would bury them in his family vault, and his willingness to rest in Egypt himself till the Exodus is explained, probably by the fact that his vault was tenanted, and that he could rest there with his brethren till the