

THE  
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“ THAT THE SOUL BE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE, IT IS NOT GOOD.”—PROV. XIX. 2.

LOCALITIES IN PALESTINE.

No. I.

SHECHEM—ITS SCENERY AND HISTORY.

THE city of Shechem is embedded in a deep valley of great beauty, formed by the celebrated mounts of Gerizim and Ebal, and is immensely rich in thrilling historical recollections. It occupies a central position in the country, and is much frequented; being about 30 miles north from Jerusalem, and 6 south from the site of ancient Samaria. The great northern road from Jerusalem to Galilee, passes right through the valley in which it is situated. The large and beautiful plains of Mukhna, first particularly noticed by Dr Robinson, stretches northward right athwart the mouth of this valley, and shooting right past both mountains on the east, and connecting itself with the vale of Shechem, forms its outer expansion, and so contains the field purchased and owned by the Patriarch Jacob in that quarter. In passing along the great plain of Mukhna, on the Jerusalem road, in a straight northerly direction, Gerizim is seen to cover Ebal entirely and to intercept its view,—thus clearly marking the relative position of both mountains.—And when the road reaches the entrance of the valley, it winds round the north-east corner of Gerizim, and turns abruptly to the north-west, pursuing this course for upwards of 3 miles, being the whole length of the valley formed by the extension of the mountains. After that it resumes its north course and proceeds in that direction to Samaria.

The vale of Shechem is only about 500 yards wide, but it is exceedingly rich and fertile, with a fine soil of deep black vegetable mould; while copious streams and fountains of water, issuing from the mountains, during most seasons of the year, beyond all other places in Palestine, contribute immensely to refresh and fertilize the soil—producing in the vale of Shechem, when other parts of the country are burnt and parched up, an almost perennial spring. When the traveller enters this charming vale, his eye rests on a carpet of the most lovely green. It presents the aspect of one entire garden of exquisite beauty, pervaded with orange and olive groves, and abounding in all kinds of fruit,—apricots, pomegranates, vines, figs and walnuts—the