

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

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The Holy Land.

BY HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD.

Are they still there—those solemn shapes,
Those mountains swimming in the
light,

The rainbow pulsing in the cloud,
The torrent tumbling from the height ?

Ah, many a twilight when I heard
My mother lingeringly repeat
Their legends, in my childish mind
I put the shoes from off my feet.

Over the plain of Mamre then
In lonely awe I softly went,
At night I spelled the stars, at noon
Sat in the doorway of the tent.

Through cloven pass, down flying lines,
In fire and cloud, in storm and stress,
I wandered with the tribes across
The desert of the wilderness.

I saw the tabernacle now,
Its blue and scarlet curtains blow ;
And came in Zif, the blossom month,
Upon the palms of Jericho.

I trembled at the answering call
From Ebal and from Gerizim ;
Far in the temple stood beneath
Vast silent golden cherubim.

The high priest's bells and pomegranates
Made me a sweet and happy din.
And from the porch I heard the blast
Of trumpets blow the new moon in.

How fair the mountains where the maids
Went mourning four days in the year,
While haply from the further slopes
White bulls of Bashan bellowed clear !

The fire fell low, I felt the thrill
Of viewless messengers, the room
Grew dark, and Hermon's dome of snow
Broke forth and glistened in the gloom.

Gathered the dews, the trickling brooks
Ran down, and swollen with many
streams,
By purpling peaks, by valley fords,
The Jordan rolled across my dreams.

He came, the Shepherd of the sheep,
Who knew all sorrow that there is,
And up and down the land I went,
My little hand held fast in his.

And out of shores of far delight,
Bringing great dream, great memory,
I saw the stars come trembling down
Into the Sea of Galilee.

Gray were the leaves of Olivet,
And wet Gethsemane's dark sod,
And love and tears went all his way,
Or were he man or were he God !

And still for me, in other light,
In finer air, by morn or even,
A place of dream, the Holy Land
Hangs midway between earth and
heaven.

Good men in this world are in the
midst of danger. All trees are set in
the wind ; but the tallest endure the
greatest violence of the tempest.—Jeremy
Taylor.