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**TRAVELS IN THE HOLY LAND.  
AUGUST 1891. – EDITORIAL NOTES.**

Here we are at last in this land so sacred to the hearts of all who love God – the land of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Prophets, the Lord and the Apostles. And although our eyes are busy trying to notice all the points of interest, and our memories busy recalling the many things written concerning these places in the remote past, and our hearts full and tender as we recall the scenes of our Master's sufferings on our behalf, and our hopes vivid for the evidences of coming blessings upon the natural seed of Abraham, we do not forget the true spiritual Zion whose deliverance and glorification must first take place before fleshly Israel, and then all the families of the earth, shall be blessed.

We therefore invite all of the TOWER readers to go with us in mind over these hills and valleys, that together we may be refreshed and rejoiced in spirit.

We land at Jaffa or Joppa, the seaport for Jerusalem, to which the king of Tyre sent the cedars of Lebanon to king Solomon for the building of the Temple. It is probably much [R1381 : page 83] the same as when Jonah visited it, fleeing from his duty, to take ship for Tarshish; much the same, too, as when Peter lodged here at the house of one Simon, a tanner, upon whose roof he saw the vision directing him no longer to consider God-fearing Gentiles "unclean."

The houses are small and crowded, and as the town is built upon rising ground, the houses and streets are quite up and down. As in all oriental cities, the streets are very narrow – mere alleyways, we should say in America.

The conveyance which will carry us to Jerusalem is a rickety carriage drawn by three lean little horses – for the railroad, although progressing and already finished about one-third the distance, carries no passengers yet. Upon it, however, construction trains are running constantly.

While our conveyance is getting ready we will see the city, and get dusted from head to foot by taking a walk, and climb to the house of Simon, the tanner. Ah! there it is. Not the same house, of course, but one upon its site, and probably much of the same size and shape, for here architecture and the building art have made little progress – retrograding, more probably. It is a house of one large living-room with a smaller reception room. Outside is a large stone box recently found near the spot, and supposed to be the one used by Simon and his successors in the tanning business. There beside the box is a water-well: quite likely, the same at which Peter drank while residing here. Outside the house against the well a flight of stone steps leads to the roof – similar to the one where Peter prayed and saw the vision. – Acts 10 and 11.

Our conveyance is ready and we start for Jerusalem on a route full of interesting memories – over hills and valleys trodden often by the feet of the Great Teacher and his apostles. Not the same road exactly, but the same route; **[R1381 : page 84]** for the present excellent road is of recent construction, the old Roman road of our Lord's day being here and there visible, but now abandoned for the better one.

The tomb of Dorcas (Tabitha) is the first item of interest; it is a public fountain. This recalls the story of Dorcas, one of the saints of the early Church, a friend of the poor, whose awakening from the sleep of death is recorded in Acts 9:36-43. The tomb is in the outskirts of Jaffa, and leaving it we pass rapidly several fruit gardens hedged about by prickly-pear trees. At any other

time, no doubt, these would appear beautiful, but now they are dry and dusty, for this is the dry season here, and no rain has fallen for several months.

Outside of Jaffa we are in the "Plain of Sharon." It is at present very dry and barren looking, but our guide, a very well-informed and reliable man, tells us that it yields large crops, and that at any other season we would see it spangled with wild flowers of every hue. Our route lies across this plain for twenty miles, while it is nearly one hundred and fifty miles long. Under skilful management and with proper machinery this strip of land would yield immensely. Even at present it yields large quantities of grain for export, though the native farmers are taxed enormously for all they raise, besides paying heavy rentals for the use of the land and heavy interests for the money necessary to put in a crop. As much as 30, 40 and 50 per cent interest, for a six months loan, is charged by the wealthy who have money to loan. The Jews are seldom farmers here, but many of them, as everywhere, are money-lenders. In the eyes of a European or American, however, none of the people appear to be wealthy: all look to be poor.

Here on our left is a modern Arab village, built of small stones and slimed over with earth. The people of this and other similar villages are called "*fellah*" – they are the poor tax and interest burdened farmers. They are probably happy in their way, but others used to some of life's comforts would be miserable if thus situated. Ah! the thought comes forcibly, if such things pain our hearts and awaken our sympathy, what must it have been to our dear Master to witness the pain, poverty, degradation and general distress which sin brought into the world. No wonder "Jesus groaned in spirit," for, surrounded by such, he would not increase their troubles by explaining to them the extent of their degradation, while he could not yet, according to the Father's plan, apply the balm for all their woes (Restitution) – until he had

paid the *ransom-price* for all; and until his Church, his Bride, being selected, the due time should arrive for the healing of every wound. (Acts 3:19-21.) We also groaned in spirit as we saw their poor estate and the blind and maimed in the way, and prayed, "Thy Kingdom come!" and wished it were already time to pour out the great blessing upon the world, typified in the Sabbath-day healings performed by our Lord. We rejoiced, however, in the "*greater works*" in which even now we are permitted to have a share – feeding the poor with the spiritual bread, anointing the eyes of the spiritually blind and cleansing spiritually those afflicted with the leprosy of sin. We concluded that we must be content for the present, and wait the Lord's time for the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his beams. – Mal. 4:2.

There on our left is the traditional site of Hazar-Shual, where Samson caught the foxes and used them in burning the crops in this very Plain of Sharon, which at that time was held by the Philistines who had invaded and over-powered Israel. (Judges 15:4.) Samson's trick was not mere wantonness, but a warfare for the impoverishment of the captors and for the recovery of the land to his nation.

Although so dry and parched looking, there is something growing here even now. It looks like our American corn or maize, but the stalk is only half as thick and the grain is not in "ears," but in a bunch or head at the top of the stalk. It is called "Indian Corn," and our guide has plucked a sample for us. The grains are larger than wheat, and round.

Here we are at the Tower of Ramleh. While the horses rest we will climb to its top and have a good view of the surroundings. To the east is the hill-country or mountains; to the west is the Mediterranean sea; to the north is Mt. Carmel, where Elijah tested the prophets of Baal [**R1381 : page 85**] and proved that Jehovah alone is God (1 Kings 18:19); to the south is Gaza, the city whose

gates Samson carried away; and this side of it is Gath, the home of Goliath, and Lydda, where one of the early Christian Churches was founded and where the Apostle Peter performed a notable miracle. – Acts 9:32.

We have now reached the valley of Ajalon, and to the north-east is Mt. Gibeon. We recall this as the scene of the notable battle between Israel and the Amorites, in connection with which is the account of the standing still of the sun and the moon. Endeavoring to locate the battle, we are impressed with the fact that if the sun were standing over Mt. Gibeon there could be no use for moonlight in the valley of Ajalon, which in that event would be flooded with sunlight. The account given in Joshua does not purport to be recorded by an eye witness, but is rather a note and comment upon a record given in the "Book of Jasher," now lost. The facts which form the basis of the matter recorded would seem to us to be explainable in either one of two ways: –

(1) That Joshua addressed the Lord as the Sun, whose strength and help had so signally been revealed for the relief of Israel and for the destruction of their enemies. With this the words agree well: "Then spake Joshua *to the Lord*...and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon:" that is to say, O Lord, our Sun and strong Deliverer, continue thy mighty help for us in this battle at Mt. Gibeon, and let thy peaceful blessing [the Moon] be upon thy people in the valley of Ajalon; or

(2) That the sun was setting in the west and its last beams still lighted Mount Gibeon while the rising moon cast her beams directly through the valley of Ajalon. In this view the desire and request of Joshua would be not with reference to the sun itself, but with reference to the sun-*light*: he desired that utter darkness might not overtake them, in order that the victory be a complete and lasting one. If this be the proper view, then it was the sun-

*light* merely that continued, without the orb itself being visible. This would not have required a stoppage of the earth upon its axis, for clouds might have been so arranged as to prolong the sunset, as they sometimes do at the present time.

We are now more than midway between Jaffa and Jerusalem, in the valley of Wady-Ali, and before us is the site of Kirjath-jearim, where the Ark of the Covenant rested for twenty years in the house of Aminadab (1 Sam. 7:1,2), whence it was taken by King David to Jerusalem. (2 Sam. 6:3.) Away before us, to the left, is Mizpah, (not the place named Mizpah by Jacob when he covenanted with Laban his father-in-law, saying, "The Lord watch between thee and me when we are absent one from another" – that was on the other side of Jordan, but) the place where Saul, the first king of Israel, was chosen and anointed, near which also Samuel, the prophet, reared a monument to the Lord, called Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us." (1 Sam. 7:5-17; 10:17.) Yonder, not far off, is Gibeah, the birth-place of King Saul.

Since getting into the hill-country the land has seemed very desolate, stones being almost the only things in sight, except that here and there in the valleys we have caught glimpses of cultivated gardens and settlements. Undoubtedly it would look much less barren at any other season of the year; and there are evidences that the hill and mountain sides now lying waste, except here and there a few olive trees and grape vines, were once well terraced and no doubt yielded grapes and olives in profusion.

Here we pass near by Ain-Karim, which tradition marks as the birth-place of John the Baptist. Here in the hill-country of Judea Mary visited his mother, Elizabeth. – Luke 1:39.

Now we have reached the brook and valley of Elah, the reputed site of David's battle with Goliath, and while we are listening to "the voice (sound) of the grinding of the mill,"

manipulated by women by hand, as in olden time, Abdullah, our thoughtful guide, has selected for us as mementoes five smooth sling-stones from the brook-bed, such as the five which David took, the first of which smote and killed Goliath, the Philistines' champion.

Now we pass close to a town supposed to be [R1382 : page 86] the Emmaus to which our Lord walked with two disciples after his resurrection. – Luke 24:13.

It is late when we reach Jerusalem, so we secure lodging, etc., at the clean, airy and comfortable "Hotel Jerusalem," outside the Jaffa Gate, in what is sometimes termed "the *new* city of Jerusalem," because here are most of the new buildings. Indeed, the population outside the wall near the Jaffa Gate bids fair to be greater than that within at no distant day. And our attention is drawn to the fact that this portion is precisely that so accurately described by the prophets. – Zech. 14:10; Jer. 31:38-40.

(To be Continued.)

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