FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

SKETCHES OF EASTERN TRAVEL.

NO. VI.

Bethel—Shechem—An Oriental Storm—Ascent of Mount Gerizim—Ruins of Samaria—Mount Hermon.

[Communicated for the Phila. Evening Bulletin.]

BETHEL, ALMOST EVENING, March 31, 1870.—I begin another letter at once, intending to dot down a little every day, or as often as possible, though there will be a good deal of waiting for mailing till we reach Damascus, three weeks hence. We have made our first day's journey of our Northern trip, and are tamped to-night at a very interesting spot. Our journey today has been through the portion allotted to the tribe of Benjamin. Bethel is a miserable little village, on the brow of a hill, built from the ruins of former dwellings. The name originally, doubtless, was applied to the locality. There was probably no village here when Jacob, on his way to Padan-aram, slept in the open field with the stones for a pillow and had his wonderful vision of the ladder set up to heaven, and received that sweet promise from the God of Abraham, "I will be with thee in all the ways that thou goest, will bring thee to thy father's house in peace, and will not leave thee, nor forsake thee, till I have done all that I have spoken to thee of." On arriving at our tent I took my Bible, and sitting under the shelter of a rock in the open field, read the 28th chapter of Gen., which tells the interesting story of Bethel was also the place where Jeroboam set up one of his calves, and where the prophet came to reprove him for his idolatry, as told in 1 Kings, 13th chapter. It was to this place also that Elisha came on from Jericho, after Elijah's translation, and the forty-two mocking children were destroyed by two she-bears from the woods, as stated in 2 Kings, 2d chapter, 23-25. The woods have disappeared, and so have the bears, but not the children.

NABLOUS, SHECHEM, Tuesday Evening, March 29.—We took an early start this morning, having a long day's ride before us. Our journey lay through the portion allotted to the tribe of Ephraim. It is the richest land we have seen since leaving the fertile plains around Jaffa. The fertile valleys and hills, terraced to their very summits, show that the blessing pronounced by the dying patriarch to the preferred descendants of his favorite son Joseph, still lingers here, for "the chief thing of the ancient mountains," vines, olives, corn, still flourish luxuriantly amid "the lasting hills." Jacob knew what he was doing, when 'guiding his right hand willingly" he laid it on the head of the youngest son, as he said "in the midst of fruitfulness, saying, God make thee as Ephraim." We have had a most unexpected experience of weather to-day. Started after starting it began to rain, and continued at intervals all day. The rain came down in furious bursts at times as though it would take us off our horses. It was varied by occasional blasts of fierce, pelting hail, or heavy snowflakes, and white vail over the landscape in a few seconds. We had our water-proof appliances on, and did not mind it much, and managed to keep pretty dry. It was amusing when the blasts of hail came to see how instantly the horses would wheel round, and turn their tails to it, and stand still till it was past. The day was enlivened by occasional bursts of sunshine, which soon, however, gave way to returning clouds. So after an early breakfast we were most thankful to get under way again. We took a thankful leave of "the good Samaritans," who had showed so little kindness (?) to the company of strangers whom the storm had driven to seek shelter under their hospitable roof. We have had a delightful ride to-day. The atmosphere has been balmy and pleasant, though there has been no sunshine. The air, and all we rode along through the fresh green fields, I thought of Solomon's beautiful words as applicable to our circumstances, when he says, "Lo, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone." I trust this may prove to be really the case. "The flowers appear on the earth, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land." Our ride today has been through a charming country, with a rich profusion of beautiful flowers on every hand, blending their varied colors together; red, white, blue, orange and purple, mor-t refreshingly. About the middle of the morning we came to ruins of the old city of Samaria, and stopped an hour or so to examine them. The situation is the most picturesque of any city in Palestine. It was built all over a circular hill, which rises gently to the height of 300 feet, and has a broad plateau on the summit. Around the base of the hill is a broad, rich valley, and off beyond this is a grand amphitheatre of mountains, encircling "the hills of Samaria" with the most magnificent surroundings. The present village only contains some 50 or 60 miserable huts, and 200 or 400 inhabitants—a set of lazy, dirty Arabs. Among the ruins are the remains of the Church of St. John, which belonged to the Knight Templars in the days of the Crusades, and is one of the most picturesque ruins in Palestine. We rode over the hill tosee a number of fine old columns belonging to the ancient city. Many of these now stand in the midst of rich orchards and groves of olive and fig trees. In looking at these, I thought of Isaiah's graphic reference to Samaria when he speaks of it as: "The glorious beauty on the head of the fat valley, which shall be as a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer" (ch. 28: 4). In its palmy days the city must have appeared as perfect in beauty. These ruined columns must have been the pride of the city then. But now the street which they adorned is gone, and the ruins itself is gone, and the shafts stand lonely and bare. And as one stands on that hill and gazes on those ruined columns, half hidden from clustering vines and green corn, and on the piles of hewn stones in the terraced fields, and the great heaps among the olive trees in the valley below, how deeply impressive it is to recall the fearful prediction of Micah, as you see with your own eyes how literness it has been verified, "I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard; and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof." March 1: 6. We left the afternoon we passed by the beautiful plains of Dothan, where Joseph came to seek his brethren, when he found they had removed from Shechem. He probably came by the same route as we have followed, as roads, or paths rather, are scarce in few in this country. His brethren would see him from afar as he came down the mountain, or across the plain, and they said: "Behold, this dreamer cometh!" &c. Then followed the casting into the pit, and the selling him to the Midianites.

We got our first view of Mount Hermon, in the distant north, all mantled with snow, this afternoon,—a beautiful sight.

Our camp is pitched near a little town called Jenceen. It has no special interest, but is the half-way stopping place between Shechem and Nazareth. It began to rain again after reaching our tents. This makes us anxious for to-morrow, when we are extremely desirous of a fine day, having a long and interesting ride before us.

H. N.

[For the Phila. Evening Bulletin.]

THE POETRY OF DAVID BATES.

BY D. W. LACY.

David Bates was not a poet by profession, but, amid the cares and labors of an active business life, gave expression to those thoughts and feelings which were moved to a fertile fancy and to deep poetic emotion. Poetry was the natural channel in which his sentiments gushed forth; and he wrote less, no doubt, for public commendation than to satisfy the desires of his own soul. Hence, there is an ease and *naturalness* in his style, which is one of the chief characteristics of his verse. There is nothing labored from the first to the last of his poems. Yet there is a clearness and classic elegance about them all which indicates the most critical exactness, and shows that each line and word was well considered and made to convey the exact meaning intended by the author. For this reason there can be no difficulty in determining the sense of his writings. In this respect they stand in enviable contrast to the works of many of our modern poets.

It is not pleasant to be compelled to search laboriously for an idea through masses of verbiage and involution interminable, and when at length it is tracked to its hiding-place, to find it not worth a tithe of the work expended in its search. With many, however, obscurity is a synonym of profundity; and if a writer expresses himself lucidly, he does so at the risk of being pronounced, if not shallow, at least superficial. With such critics David Bates will find no favor, but with those who admire depth, delicacy and tenderness of sentiment, expressed in pure and melliluous verse, he is and always will be a favorite author. To sustain this opinion it is but necessary to quote the favor which his poems have already received, and it is true, at the hands of competent critics, but from the warm native instincts of the *heart unbiased*. How many who have read the poems of David Bates have memorized and taught their children to repeat these beautiful stanzas:

"Speak gently—it is better far
To rule by love than fear."

Had the author never written another poem, his reputation as a true poet would still have been established. He did write others, and these, too, which, as poetry, are superior to the popular favorite. An instance of one of the "Apologies of the Ocean" which, in grandeur of conception and felicity of expression, is unsurpassed in the annals of literature.

In reading critically David Bates' poems, I am impressed with the fact that there is scarcely an indifferent one among them. Although of unequal merit, all are truly poetical. When from our best poets' works a large per centage might be struck out without impairing their reputation, we feel that either Mr. Bates wrote but few pieces of indifferent merit, or, the editor of his works had the good sense to submit them to the judgment of the public. After all, the public is the author of the most decide the worth of any productions, and in Mr. Bates' case the favorable verdict has already been fold-stamped.

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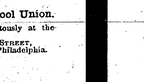

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8.25 A. M. Accommodation for Doylestown, stopping at all intermediate stations, connecting at Lansdale with Train 6, Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, and at Doylestown with Train 6, Bucks County Railroad.
2.45 P. M. Lehigh and Susquehanna Express, for Bethlehem, Allentown, Mauch Chunk, White Haven, Wilkesbarre, Pittston, Towanda, Waverly, Binghamton, Elmira, Corning, Hornellsville, Dunkirk, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls, Rochester, Hackettstown, and points on New Jersey Central Railroad, and Morris and Essex Railroad to New York, via Lehigh Valley Railroad.
4.30 P. M. Accommodation for Bethlehem, Easton, Washington, stopping at all stations.
7.25, 2.30 and 5.30 P. M. Accommodation to Abington.
7.45 A. M. Accommodation for Bethlehem, Allentown, Easton, Mauch Chunk, Hazleton, Mahanoy City, Shamokin, Sunbury, Williamsport, Lock Haven, Renovo, Elmira, Corning.
At 7.30 P. M. Accommodation for Bethlehem, Easton, Allentown, Mauch Chunk, White Haven, Wilkesbarre, Scranton, Binghamton, Elmira, Corning, Hornellsville, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls.
At 5.30 P. M. Bethlehem Accommodation for Bethlehem, Easton, Allentown, Mauch Chunk, Hazleton, Mahanoy City, Shamokin, Sunbury, Williamsport, Renovo, Lock Haven, Elmira, Corning, Hornellsville, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls.
At 11.30 P. M. Accommodation for Doylestown, stopping at all intermediate stations.
7.45 A. M. Accommodation for Bethlehem, connecting at Lansdale with Train 10, Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, and at Doylestown with Train 10, Bucks County and Mauch Chunk.
At 4.30 P. M. Accommodation for Lansdale, stopping at all intermediate stations.
At 11.30 P. M. Accommodation for Fort Washington, stopping at intermediate points.
Trains arrive in Philadelphia from Bethlehem at 8.55, 10.40 A. M., 2.15, 7.15 and 11.15 P. M. Leave Depot, Second street, below Lehigh Valley Railroad. Ticket offices in Depot, Continental Hotel, Girard House, Trenton Depot, Trenton, Willoughby, Willow Grove, Jenkintown, City Hall, Hatboro, Dublin, and Doylestown.
Fare to Doylestown, $1.25; Hatboro, $1.00; Willow Grove, 75; Jenkintown, 50; City Hall, 25 cents.
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