#### IN THE COUNTRY EAST OF RIVER JORDAN

INTERESTING NARRATIVE OF A TRIP IN PALESTINE.

Traveling Under Difficulties in a Portion of Territory Fraught with Great Historic Interest, But Now Little Visited by Any But Antiquarians and Archaeologists. Strange Scenes and Incidents.

Lahleh, Jan. 20th, 1899. My dear Friends: - This letter should ve gone to the United States in Noember but was unavoidably delayed. November 10. I returned from a twenty-five day trip which was to me most intersting of my life ven Jagh it involved not a little expr se, considerable danger and an enot ous expenditure of nerve and mus ... It was into the country east of the Jordan, rarely visited by any one but antiquarians and archaeolegigsts and now almost closed to these by reason of the suspiciou attitude of both the government and the people To name the regions is to call up visions of history. In very ancient times it was the land of Bashaw and Glicad, then the territories of Naphtall, Dan, Gad and Manasseh. In the time of Christ it was Percea, where were the cities of the Decapolis in which our Saviour preached and five of which we had the privilege of visiting. In modern times it is known as the Jaulan, the Haurau, Ajlun and the Belka. Our party was three, Mr. W. K. Eddy, of Sidon: Mr. G. C. Doolittle, of Abein, and myself. Our object was first of all a little recreation after the long hot summer, in which none of us had taken any rest; then to study some of the diseaser of this Turkish political system as seen in the extremities of the kingdom, a desire to see those remote regions out of a keen interest in Old and New Testament history, so that the trip accomplished was the fulfillment of a long cherished hope. It will not be possible to give the days and hours of our journey but an outline which will serve as a sidelight on what has been done in Syria and what yet remains to be done.

#### DANGEROUS NATIVES.

We went heavily armed because the whole region is a lawless one and a great part of the people given to pilfery and robbery. The modern inhabitants are the roaming Bedawin who live by flocks and plunder, and the very bigoted and suspicious Moslems who treat the few Christians among them like so many dogs. Since the troubles in Bulgaria (1876) colonies of Circassians are taking up the waste | part to kill him. places, and since the explusion of the Jews from Russia and other European countries; colonies of Jews are tempting to buy up land and found new homes in the ancient possessions of the tribes of Israel. Add to these the Druses against whom the government waged a recent relentless war, and the Turks themselves in the capacity of harpids and you have a sad and dangerous combination. Around Kuneitereh are twelve Circassian towns and their clean villages and hay ricks and creaking two-wheeled carts are a strange sight in this ancient land. The Jews, where they have u chance, do good work and make the desert blossom as the rose, but alas, they are persecuted and driven away by the wretched Moslems of these regions.' The latter are more suspicious than ever. They dwell in and around ruined cities which are plainly of Christian and Jewish origin; they have vague fears and reports of the Christians and Jews coming back to regain their ancient possessions, so that we were everywhere looked upon as Jows, or their champions, or as spies in the interest of some foreign government. Many a time on this trip as also in other trips elsewhere we heard that purpose expressed-"even though the foreigners may take the scaport towns we mean to hold the interior of the country for Moslems,"

The government also refuses all permission to strangers who would visit these pays. We tried through our consulate or permission but the answer from Damascus was a polite suggestion to secure an imperial Irade from Constantinople. So we decided to run the risk of being intercepted at some point and being sent back to Damascust. We broke no law in doing so for international treaties guarantee us safe and free bassage everywhere except into the Reolar and Mecca. Our plan was to make use of our friends in the local centers and to avoid all centers where we had none and feared molestation. Once they were on our track but by changing guides twice, by fording an almost impassible river and by sleeping in a

A Deadly Danger. Many a man who as the seeds of has the seeds of disease planted in his blood dreams away his time in security with a deadly danger coil-

its fangs into his very vitals Should a man think he has consumption," you ask, "just because his appe-tite is poor a! he is losing firsh and he has a fittle cough and a general feeling of weakness and incapacity?

No: that doesn't necessarily mean consumption, but it means that the system being steadily undermined; it is losing force and vitality; it is being tainted with bilious poisons that the liver hasn't power to throw off and any day that which is now only a probability may suddenly develop into a certainty.

"My wife had hemorrhage of the lungs. She had ten hemorrhages, and the people all around here said she would never be well again." said Mr. W. A. Sanders, of Hern, Mason Co., W. Vr., in a very instructive letter written to Dr. R. V. Pierce of Buffalo, N. Y. But she legan to take Dr. Pierce's Goldon Medical Discovery and she soon began to gain strength and flesh. After taking ten bottles she was entirely said. Should you think this will do you any good to publish, just use it, and if any one disputes the merits of this almost omnipotent medicine they may enclose self-addressed envelope with stamp, and I will answer the same as written in this letter."

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will send you good, professional advice, free of charge.

risks for fear of prejudicing other business that we have at Damascus and seeing that we had not a single mishap or encounter with officials we are heartily glad that we tried and very proud of our success.

#### PRECAUTIONS.

The preparations involved before

starting and all along the line of the road would interest you. We were twenty living creatures in, all-we three, a boy to help cook, four saddie horses, four mules, two donkeys four muleteers and two dogs. I count them all because in a region destitute of food and water the wants of every creature had to be considered. We carried tents, bedding, provisions, rubber clothing for rain, medicines, ammunition and even nails and horse-Bread was unobtainable for days and awful stuff when found. No milk at this season, no eggs and several times we had to carry charcoal to cook and food for animals for a three days' journey. Water at times was plentiful and again we nearly perished of thirst. Once our animals twenty-three hours without a drink and this in heat almost suffocating. At most places there are only foul wells whose waters looked more like that of a sewer than of a fountain. The imagery of the Bible grows on one constantly and so much was the real suffering involved and so great the occessity of planning all our movements with reference to springs and brooks that I shall never again drink of cool pure water without a conscious beartfelt thanksgiving for it. The dangers were those of fever,

game-partridges, wild pigeons and hares-to keep us fairly supplied with I had a 129-yard shot at a

#### SCENES ON THE WAY.

My own journey began at 2, and a quarter of an hour after leaving home Mt. Hernon came into sight and was hardly ever hidden from us during the whole trip. Leaving our own field at Meshghara, where once dwelt the Hivites, I was soon over the bills of Naphtali and into the country of Dan Fording two of the sources of the we pitched at Golan, in Jewish times untary sacrifice (John x, 18). a city of refuge, now a wretched Moslem town surrounded by mountain-like dungheaps, but abounding in ruins which are everywhere covered with Jewish and Christian emblems wrought in the almost imperishable black basset. The well from which the village drinks is a finely walled one but polluted beyond description. We paid 25 cents for two oil tins of water from a fountain one-half an hour away. That night there was a wedding, and they danced on the dungheaps by the light of the moon and filled all the air with such foul smelling dust that we wished We were far away. The Jews have two colonies near by but these wretched people have supplied the government with lying petitions and have succeeded in driving them from their homes and the Bedawin have rooted up the orchards of mulberry and fruit trees, undoing in wantonness the fruits of honest toil. The Rothchilds are promoters of this colony, and we hope that the Jews may ultimately recover their lands and return.

#### INTERESTING RUINS

Our next point was Abila, one of the Decapolis, an interesting ruin. Then Gadara-just southeast of and several hundred feet above the Sea of Galilee -ruins of a Roman city with a wealth of sarcophagi, tombs, a well-preserved theater and a street of columns nearly all of black basalt extending for nearly a mile. We spent a miserable night ere, unable to obtain anything beyond some very questionable water, The next day we descended to the Jarmuk and visited the hot springs of Gadara, once famous in the whole Roman world and second only to Baloe, Rivers of hot water gush up so hot that none of us could bathe in them. and strongly impregnated with suiphur. Then on to the Jordan and round Galiles to Tiberias, where we pent a Sabbath by that beautiful, beautiful lake. In the absence of the Scotch missionaries we held services in the hospital morning and afternoon. and enjoyed our Bibles by that lake

hely memory. Menday found us moving southward the river and dropping lower and lower into its frightfully hot reaches. Our destination was Palla, a recently identifled city of the Decapolls, a most beautiful spot, with heaps of ruisaand a fountain that waters miles and miles of the Jordan plane. The must striking feature of the vicinity is the scene of one of the most momentous events in the Christian centuries. At he time of Christ, Pella was a flourishing town. Refore Jerusalem was lestroyed the Christians fled to and ound a refuge in Pella. It thus beame mostly a Christian town and remained so until the close of the Byzantine times, and here was the grave the Byzantine power in the country cast of the Jordan. Here the Greeies gathered and made their last stand and here, according to Mostem historians, they left 30,000 sists upon the field which extinguished the By-

zantine power in Syria. RELIC OF THE CRUSADES. Then two hard days up out of the Jordan depression, via the country of

Tabesh Glicad, over the mountains of

tonely described valley we avoided a Sunday School Lesson for February 26.

### Christ at the Feast.

JOHN VII. 14, 28-37.

BY J. E. GILBERT, D. D., LL. D.,

Secretary of American Society of Religious Education.

had clapsed, the former being in April of the year 29, the latter in October. For the intervening events we must outline will do as a guide-John, vi. viii, 11-38; uke, ix, 27-42; Mark, iv, 22-29; Matt., xvii, 22-27; Mark, ix, 33-50; Matt., xviii, 12-35; Luke, ix, 51-56; John. vii, 2-13. In changing from book to will perceive more clearly the purpose of the writers and come thus with a which John alone furnishes the record. The disciples went up by themselves He engaged in teaching (v. 14).

KNOWLEDGE .- The words of Jesus provoked much discussion among the vil results of bad and foul water and Jews, who were divided in their estiheat or sunstrokes. There were days mate of Him (v. 25). But at length when I am sure I averaged two gal- some were disposed to reject His Meslons of water and still remained sianic claim because His origin was thirsty. At a ring on my saddle hung well known (v. 27), and that led to a water bottle which was filled at the opening thought in our lesson. He every opportunity and just as cer- takes up the item of knowledge and tainly emptied by the way. We were presents it forcibly to His hearers. He everywhere on the lookout for robbers, declares that they were in a measure keeping our baggage train in sight by ignorant of Him. They were acquaintday and mounting guard over tents ed with His Nazarene home and His and animals by night. Our own sad- Galilean associates and relatives (v. die horses were fitted nightly with 28), but they ought to know also that hobbles that locked on the forefeet. He came into the world not as a mere We never gave word to any one as to man, but as the sent of God (John v. our movements, not even to our own 43). On that point the testimony of muleteers, avoiding the danger of hav- John (John 1, 34), and of the Holy ing robbers precede us in order to "tle Spirit at the baptism (Matt., iii, 17). up the roads" for us. We traversed were sufficient. Their ignorance grew mapless, trackless regions and where out of the fact that they knew not we needed and secured guides they God and hence disregarded all proofs would journey only to the confines of of Divine things, a blindness which their own lands and then return. To continued throughout His ministry ask questions by the way was only to (John viil, 44). Over against their iginvite deception and be sent along the norance He sets His own knowledge of wrong road. Our three guns gave us God (v, 29), derived through personal protection and brought down enough communion prior to His earthly life (John xvii, 5),

RESTRAINT.-These words of Jesus gazelle with my Winchester and am were doubly offensive to his heavers. sure I struck him though not in a To charge them with ignorance of Dithey professed to know more than all others, was enough to arouse feelings of bitter resentment. To go beyond and declare His familiarity with matters about which thew knew nothing, theraby asserting His superiority, awakened the utmost batred and hostility. Hence these proud and bigoted people, feeling their importance and fearing the influence of such statements upon the masses, were ready Tordas, we passed through Caeserea to arrest Jesus and to bring Him be-Philippi and spent the Sanbata in an fore the authorities (v. 30). It was He came, a going, a voluntary act, not us took some service during the day, resulted in His crucifixion (Luke xix, wondering at the scores of craters part until His mission was accom-

> roads and through towns where still rise the ruined towers of Crusader churches. At one place we visited the castle of Rubud, one of the finest Ccusader ruins in existence. We climbed the highest ruined tower, were amaze1 at the depth of the most, the tier upon tier of vaulted rooms, the stupendous cubical contents of the struc-

ture and we honored the memory of those brave knights who fought so hard and so flercely to rescue the land from Moslem oppression and who held It for over 200 years. Then we lifted our eyes and feasted upon the marvellous panorama-all of Golan, Hermon, part of Lebanon, Hermon, Galllee, the Jordan, the Dead Sea, Ebal and Gerizim, the region of Jerusalem, Gilead and Moab-such a sight, such a vision was worth all our tollsome journey. JERASH.

Next day we reached Jerash, the goal of our hopes and plans, And it did not disappoint us. We shouted like school boys. A city of stupendous ruins, second only to Palmyra in size, and second only to Baalbec in beauty of architecture. It was a Greek colperibolos still standing almost intact is pure Ionic, while the street of columns is largely Corinthian. It is an example of a city left to decay without the vandal acts of human destroyers. Only storms and earthquakes and vegetation have worked at its ruin. It lies almost as it did when abandoned seven or eight hundred years ago. But what shall I say of its ruins?-the city wall enclosing miles of columned streets, theaters, temples, colonnades. bridges, baths, aqueducts, gates, trumphal arches and so forth, One of the theaters in fine preservation would seat 5.600. We camped in a small theater where once men fought with wild beasts and where many a Christian was given to the lions. We played about its sears, roamed through its underground corridors and exits. in the valley of the Jordan, fording slapt one night where once the Greek His return from Damascus and Plantand Roman populace promenuded between the acts of the dying gladiators southern gate is still the remains of a great Naumachia or water circus, where they produced mimic sea fights just as they are doing at Earl's court, criking feature of the vicinity is the in London, today. We sang hymns errace before the city, which was the and college songs in that deserted city. We hunted partridges all through the ruins of temples and theaters and welcome home!

round the city wall. Who can imagine New York a doerted ruln and some stranger sh ing partridges in the ruins of the Metropolitan Opera house and Madison Square garden? Yet New York if left uncared for would fall to rules and disappear in one-tenth the time that

### HAPPINESS VS. MISERY.

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CONTEXT.-From the feeding of the | POPULARITY.-It should be borne | PERPLEXITY.-This reference of five thousand, our last lesson, on the in mind that the opposition to Jesus Jesus to His departure awakened much northeast coast of the sea of Galilee. all through His ministry was from surprise among the Jews. His words we are transferred in our studies to the hierarchy. It was caused by His were so enigmatical that they fell into the temple at Jerusalem. Six months | bold utterances, showing their ignor- | a discussion among themselves as to had elapsed, the former being in April | ance, superstition and incompetency (their meaning (v. 36). "What manner read in all the gospels, each emitting emoluments of office (Matt., xxiii, 15), teach the Gentiles" (v. 35)? Evidently something supplied by another. This and sought adherents to strengthen this was said with contempt, as an themselves in their positions, and they 15-21: Matt., xiv, 27-36: John, vi, 22-71: hated all who exposed their hypocrisy teaching. As Maurice remarks, "He Mark, vii, 1-37: Matt, xv, 32-39; Mark, and questioned their authority. And had broken down the barriers between yet, then as now such leaders held the book to get the connected story one occurred that while the chief priests in heathen lands? Why might He not larity with the masses (v. 31). Many preparation for the lesson before us of believed in Him, and some even open-led by Jesus, His universalistic declarly pressed His claims to be the Mensiah. Moved by what they had seen to the feast of tabernacles (v. 10), and Jesus followed later. In the temple expected Messiah would do greater sition. Besides, the interest already

> JEALOUSY -But all this testimony the common people made matters ence, worse. The men whose business it was to conduct the institutes of religion, to teach and maintain the tragone by, who regarded themselves as the appointed guardians of the most sacred things, would naturally be jealous of any one who might come beintrusion most because they boasted most, and because any diminution of their power was hable to prepare for the ascendancy of some other sect, the Sadducees or the Essenes. Hence priests and officers (the temple po-

PREDICTION.-The designs of the haps through His power to discern the | jeopardy thoughts of men (John ii, 25), possibly through the report of some friend. Y't vine things, when on those subjects. He did not on that account retire from the city. On the contrary He con-Pharisaic batred a basis for fuller inbe with them only a little while, referring to His crucifixion which would calm assurance with which that ure would be to the Father from whom clared that after His departure those Savlour.

came unwillingly away.

#### THE RIVER OF JORDAN. A day later we were in the Ghor -the

once lined its banks and the slopes higher up. It is the most unique spot on the earth. That winding, dying stream hurrles downward to its grave through as varied scenes as one could imagine. When vegetation fades everytains the flocks find water and pasture here. So the hotter the season, the drier the summer, the greater the gathering of the Bedawin from all quarters. We were glad to get into it heat was not less than 108-110 in the shade on more than one day. Strange that in all the ancient world no one ever guessed that the Jordan and Galilee and the Dead Sea were all far below the level of the waters of the Mediterranean. Not till 1837, ony before the time of Christ and its | Lieutenant Lynch, of the United States navy, carried boats from Acre over, was this wonderful and curious fact discovered. What must have been their feelings when their instruments got down to sea level and then began a series of antics not even provided for in any instruments ever made be fore.

We spent our next Sabbath in Bei san-Both Shean, where they nailed Saul's body and that of his sons to the city wall. Where Cleopatra came from Egypt to meet Alexander Jannaeus, once the flourishing capital of the Decapelis, now a ruin but still the site for a flourishing and wealthy city. Then six long days' journey-Tiber as, Safed, Tyre, Sidon, Beirut on my way home. In Belrut I saw the German emperor at the very close of his wonderful journey to the Hely Land. bec, through the city to the sea, where bade good-bye to the scores of or defenceless Christians. Outside the Pashas who guarded his pilgrimage was one of the most beautiful sights eyer saw. I watched it with keen interest and enjoyment until he stepped into the little launch that carried him to the "Hohenzollern." which hore him away to the Vaterland. My last ride was over Lebanon-then T. E. Hoskins.

#### WHAT SWEARING COST. Curses and Oaths Used to Be a Costly Luxury.

From the Gentleman's Magazine

In 1623 it was enacted that any who cursed or swore should be fined 12 pence, or, on non-payment be set in he stocks for twelve hours; or, if under 12 years of age, should be whipped. In 1694 another act was passed fixing gradations of punishment, and directing that young offenders up to sixteen should be whipped, and this law was, up to 1823, read publicly in parish

(Luke, xl, 42). Like leaders of parties of saying is this?" they inquired. in our day they loved the honors and "Whither will He go? Will He go and inference of His former conduct and classes of Israelites-between Galileans populace by a siender tie. Many reasoned for themselves and at times not carry His designs further? Why dared to reject the ecclesiastics. So it might He not go to the dispersed tribes persecuted Jesus He gained in popu- preach to the heathen themselves? The bolder method of teaching adoptations. His partial non-observance of the law of the Sabbath, would lead felt among the heathen and more fully manifested later (John xii, 20-21), would give occasion for such an infer-

INVITATION .- These insolent questionings among the Jews deserved no ditions handed down for centuries attention and received none. There are times when one may best meet enemies with silent indifference. Jesus therefore turned entirely away from all who would criticise and oppose and tween them and those to whom they gave His attention exclusively to those ministered. The Pharisees, the who needed him. The last day of the straightest and most precise of all feast had come and the people would sects (Acts axvi, 5), would resent this soon disperse. At the time of the holy convocation (Lev., xxiii, 36). He cried out publicly inviting men to Himself. The figure of speech used was one common in sacred literature (Isa., ly, 1), and presumably familiar to the they took counsel with the chief people. The spiritual needs of men in oriential countries have ever been liklice), with the view of arresting Jesus ened to thirst (Rev., xxii, 19). Our (v. 32). Of course it would have been Lord endeavored by similar expression easy to frame some sort of charge as to impress the woman at Jacob's well a ground for arrest, inasmuch as the | (John, iv. 14), but she falled to under regulations governing the conduct of stand Him. It required a deal of marall on public occasions were so hu- velous courage for Jesus to stand in merous that one was constantly in the great assembly and offer Himself danger of transgressing (Matt., xv, 2), as able to satisfy the longings of human hearts, and to that at the close of a series of conflicts with the author-Pharisees were known to Jesus, per- lities in which His life had been in

CONCLUSION .- Two persons, domnated by opposing principles, cannot be brought into harmony at any point tinued His teaching, but He made the Every word will be misunderstood, and every act misjudged. Any attempt to formation. He declared that He would get together only results in greater separation. This explains the friction between Jesus and the Pharisees at the occur six months later (v. 32). The feast of tabernacles. The former came conscious of His Divinity, anticipating statement was made, indicating His His sacrifice, desiring to serve the unforeknowledge, is extremely interest- fortunate and to save the wicked. The ing. But He added, that His depart- latter came knowing only the postcaptivity regulations of the church which they were anxious to maintain out-station of the Sidon field. Each of the early outcropping of the spirit that merely a violent death. He also deas wide apart as the poles in their and on Monday began the real journey 47). And yet restraint was laid on who then heard Him and had not ac- ideals and purposes. An irrepressible beyond. An hour after breakfast we them. His hour to die had not yet cepted Him would seek and fail to find conflict was inevitable. That conflict entered the Tanian-Golan of Scrip- come (John vill, 20). The life of the Him (Hos., v, 6), that they would be glorified Jesus, by lifting Him above ture and wound our way among Beda-win flocks and tents and ancient ruins, was accomplished. He would not de-generally believed that Jesus referred of His character, and the disinterestedto the time of the calamity when Jeru- ness of His motives. Whether speakmarking volcanoes long extinct, catching distant glimpses of Galilee and the His work was done (John xvii, 4). Then man army, and when the people would be destroyed by the Roman army, and when the people would be likely land of Moab. The second night out He would lay down His life as a vol- reflect upon their sins and desire a hearts were hard, whose thoughts were ernel.

> Ajiun, through a country dotted with this city has defled the flight of years. times a year. In 1745 there was a new ruins, intersected by ruined Roman We were loth to leave the spot and statute by which a kind of swear-scale was established, whereupon a day laborer, a common soldier or sailor or seaman might utter one oath for a shilling; a person under the degree of a depression of the Jordan, with its gentleman for two shillings; a person frightful heat and files and mesquitor. of or above that degree for five shil-Six times we forded the Jordan, many lings, and the penalties were doubled times we bathed in its waters and in after one conviction, and thereafter those of Galilee. Everywhere we saw trebled. Nor were these enactments traces of the teeming population which altogether idle. Thus in 1861 one John Mason Scott, a mealman of Winslow, Bucks, "did profanely curse one profane curse" in given words "twenty several times repeated," and it cost him two and a half guineas; two sovofeigns for the curses at a florin apiece where else on the surrounding mount and twelve and six pence for the prosecutor, James King. Moreover, the conviction was held good by Justices Wightman and Blackburn.

Sir John Strange reports a case whence it appears that William Coland gladder still to get out, for the lier came before the justices and complained that James Sparling, a leather dresser, of the parish of St. James, Clerkenwell-a district not altogether free from the offense today-had profanely sworn fifty-four oaths, and profanely cursed one hundred and sixty urses, contra formam statuti, and the eather dresser was adjudged guilty and to pay twenty-one pounds eight shillings. We regret, however, to add that this decision was reversed, though only on the technical ground that the oaths and curses ought to have be set out, the lord chief justice, Sir John Pratt, Sir Littleton Powys, Sir Robert Eyre and Sir John Fortescue Aland being of opinion that it was not for a witness to determine what was an oath "to swear the law." as it was quaintly put-since "it is a matter of great dispute amongst the learned what are oaths and what curses,"

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