

**PALESTINE PILGRIMS' TEXT
SOCIETY. FELIX FABRI,
VOL. II (PART I), PP. 1-368**

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THE BOOK OF THE WANDERINGS OF BROTHER FELIX FABRI.

THE PLACE WHERE IT IS SAID THAT THE TREE GREW
FROM WHOSE WOOD THE CROSS WAS MADE.

WE now departed from the birthplace of St. John, and, leaving the valley by which we had come to that place, climbed up the high ground on the side towards Jerusalem, and came into a delightful and fertile valley wherein once stood the priestly city of Nob, where David ate the shewbread, and received the sword of Goliath, [6] as is written in 1 Sam. xxi, and Matt. xii. Saul the king destroyed this city, and put every man therein to death, even the sucking babes, and slew eighty-five priests thereof with the edge of the sword; for it was a city of priests, as we read in 1 Sam. xxii. This did he because they had given David the bread and the sword. From thence we came to a fair church, adjoining which is a small monastery, wherein dwell Georgian monks with their wives. When we entered into the church, we were led up to the high altar, which altar is said to stand on the very spot where grew the tree of the holy cross: wherefore also the church is consecrated in honour of the holy cross, and is called the Church of the Holy Cross. Beneath the altar is a pit, into which we bowed ourselves down, kissed the earth, and received plenary indulgences (††).

We received refreshment from this pit, for from it there breathes forth an odour, which tempted us to linger long over our kissing the place. They also brought to us an arm of St. Barbara, which we kissed. This is the sweet spot whence grew that sweet wood, worthy of divine honour, which, though they knew it not, the ancient idolaters prefigured by a type; for when they determined to make an image of God, they carefully decided that it must not be made of gold, silver, or stone, but of wood, as being the most fitting material. This we read in Eusebius, *De Evangel. Præparat.*, Book III., ch. iii.

After we had prayed, we sat down in the churchyard to rest for awhile, for we were still fasting, and the heat began to be great. Some of the pilgrims went into the hovels of those monks and asked if they had anything cooked. But we saw neither kitchens nor cooking-pots in those hovels, for the men are exceeding poor. Meanwhile there came a Saracen carrying a basket full of grapes, which we bought and ate together with the bread which we had brought with us in our srips, and we drew water from the monks' cistern. Near this place stand many olive-trees, and there is a little wood of olive and fig trees. They say that Solomon had a garden in this place also, and that sometimes he would drive hither from Jerusalem in his golden chariot to enjoy it. So when we had regained our breath, we mounted our asses and went up to the top of the hill, over a rough and rocky road, and when on the high parts of it we beheld the Holy City at a distance from us, and we passed by the house of Simeon, by roads leading between the dry stone walls of gardens. On our way, as we drew near to Jerusalem, we entered a village among these stone walls, which offered us a wide road; but for what cause I know not, a black and half-naked Saracen placed himself in the middle of the way, piled stones

into a heap, and, holding them up, threatened to cast them at the company of pilgrims should any one of them go along that road. At his shouts and threats the whole host halted for about half an hour, and our guides strove with him and shouted in answer to him ; but he took no notice whatever of them, and with the greatest fury boldly flung stones against all who offered to go forward. 'Oh,' thought I, 'if you were thus to stand in the road unarmed in our part of the world, and stop the way of one of the least of these nobles, how quickly would you have a sword or an arrow in your side !' But in these Eastern parts it is not so ; for the Easterns are men of a different kind to us, or, rather, our rules of life are not like theirs ; they have other passions, other ways of thinking, other ideas ; their bodies are of a different complexion ; they are influenced by other stars and a different climate. So it was that this poor, unarmed, naked man forced a whole host to retreat, and we went back a long way, turning our backs to Mount Zion, until we came to another road, whereat we turned round and went towards Jerusalem, having a valley between us and the Holy City. We circled round this valley and came into Jerusalem across the Fuller's Field, reaching Mount Zion in time for the service of Mass. Howbeit, the brethren had delayed their service on our account, that we might take part with them in divine service on this day. After service was over every man betook himself to his own place to dine.

A CHAPTER ABOUT THE GOING DOWN OF THE PILGRIMS
TO JORDAN.

After dinner, the pilgrims heard that the captains of the galleys had it in their minds to take the pilgrims back to sea in their galleys, as though the pilgrimage were now over. I straightway divined the secret, for it is the

practice of captains of galleys not to take one to the Jordan; so they always devise many difficulties and stumbling-blocks to turn away pilgrims from this pilgrimage to Jordan. When all the pilgrims were met together on Mount Sion, we addressed the captains, begging them not to refuse to lead us to the Jordan, especially because the contract which we had made with them expressly contained this, in article 'ten,' that they should be bound to lead us to the Jordan without raising any objections, as is shown on page 34 *a*. In answer to this the captains said that they were unable to deny that this agreement had been made at Venice, but that if they had known at Venice the dangers which threatened, they never would have agreed to that article. They then began to describe three dangers: (1) that they were certain that the Arabs were lying in wait for us on the road to the Jordan, and were ambushed in the wilderness of Jordan to attack us there. (2) They said that in these places there was no church, no place of prayer, no indulgences. (3) They said that on that road we should find neither water, nor bread, nor any place fit to rest in, and that it was a very hot time of year, and that labour during such great heat was dangerous and hazardous to men's lives. (4) They raised difficulties on the ground that they would thereby incur great additional expense, seeing that the captains are bound to pay daily wages to the guides and ass-drivers as long as we remain in the Holy Land; and these men demand especially high pay for their labour when they go with us to the Jordan. Howbeit, they did not openly put forward this fourth reason, but we suspected that they had invented the others because of this. The first, second, and fourth objections we cared little for, but the third objection is reasonable and true; for this pilgrimage is hard because of the want of necessaries and the greatness of the heat, and noble knights

who are weakly lose their health, and are brought back to Jerusalem sickly, and thence return sickly on board of the galleys; [b] so that when they put to sea they die, being unable to endure the tossing of the sea when weakened by these toils. This, indeed, is certainly true, that the pilgrimage to the Jordan kills many pilgrims, who do not, indeed, die near the Jordan, but return from it sickly, and perish on board of their galley, whereas they never would have perished had they remained in Jerusalem. I never should advise any pilgrim, whose life hath any value in his own eyes, to visit the Jordan, no matter how strong he may be, because in both my pilgrimages I have seen many nobles and strong men fall sick and perish.

In my first pilgrimage we passed one entire day in wrangling with the captain of our galley and our dragoon, because they would not lead us to the Jordan, and the pilgrims and the captain became so bitterly enraged one with another, that they ground their teeth, insulted one another with most evil words, and bandied to and fro reproaches and foul and outrageous imputations, to the great scandal of the Saracens who stood by listening to them. There were some Frenchmen, exceeding passionate men, who threatened to slay the captain, and to stir up the King of France to make war upon the Venetians. Wherefore the captain, yielding to their importunities, sent them away, and would not come with us, but let us go alone with the Saracens. Herein he acted most traitorously, not like our defender, but like our betrayer. Nevertheless, by the protection of God, we returned to Jerusalem without losing any of our number; albeit many were rendered sickly, the greater number of whom died at sea. Even so in my second pilgrimage they raised difficulties for the space of two hours, but when they saw that we were obstinate and unmoved by their dissuasion, they agreed, saying that they

would furnish us with food and drink, and were willing to set out on the morrow, if we were ready. Wherefore we deposited all our money in the cell of Brother John of Prussia, and made ready for our journey.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE PILGRIMS FROM JERUSALEM
ON THEIR WAY TO THE HOLY RIVER JORDAN.

Early in the morning, on the nineteenth day, before it was light, we rose and went over to the church of the blessed Virgin in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and there, as it was the Sabbath day,¹ we took part in the service of the blessed Virgin, and afterwards went up to Mount Sion for the convent service. In the afternoon, after dinner, we received our scrips in the courtyard of the church of Sion, and awaited our guides and our asses with their drivers. At last, after a tedious time of waiting, when the time of vespers was come, they came with their beasts to lead us to the Jordan. When they were come, the pilgrims ran to the beasts to provide for themselves. Now, there arose a quarrel between a knight and a priest about an ass, which each one said that he had got first. The knight struck the priest many blows with his fist, and had he had a sword, he would have wounded him. The knight drove him away from his ass, and incurred excommunication, from which, however, he was released by the Father Guardian [194 a] immediately before our departure. When all was finished, we went down from Mount Sion into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, crossed the brook, and climbed up the other side by the valley which parts the Mount of Olives from the Mount of Offence. On our way they pointed out to us an ancient house built of vaulted work, in ruins, which they said was the house of the traitor Judas. We viewed and scorned this house, as though it were the house of him that

¹ Saturday.

hath his shoe loosed, who was despised in Israel; for in Deut. xxv. it is appointed that if the brother of him that is dead without children will not raise up seed unto him, then let his brother's wife loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and thereupon his house was called the house of him that hath his shoe loosed. This law was fulfilled by the Apostles, seeing that every one of them undertook the unwonted office of raising up children in the Church, not unto themselves, but unto Christ, and to be called after His name. This did the Apostles after Christ; but Judas, because he would not raise up seed unto his brother, is deprived of all his goods; and the Church, which is the wife of Christ, spits in his face, casting him aside, and choosing Matthias in his room; wherefore he hath left behind him nothing save the house of him that hath his shoe loosed, ruinous and despised. Wherefore, blessed be the saying in Prov. xvii. : ' He that seeketh after avarice confoundeth his house.' With displeasure we passed by this accursed house, 'for it is a rebellious house' (Ezek. ii.).

THE PLACE WHERE THE LORD CURSED THE FIG-TREE
FOR THAT HE FOUND NO FRUIT THEREON.

Leaving the aforesaid house behind us in the valley, we went on between the dry stone walls of gardens and orchards, and at the bottom of the valley, where, if you go further on, you ascend, we came to a delightful orchard, wherein stood a multitude of fig-trees, and the boughs of the fig-trees hung over the stone walls into the road. This is the garden where Jesus saw the fig-tree from afar, when He was going along this road on His way from Bethany to Jerusalem, and was an hungered. He entered into the garden and came to the tree, seeking fruit; but as He found only leaves, He cursed the tree, and straightway it withered away, as we read in Matt. xxi. When His