

AN ANCIENT PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND.

IN the first volume of the Harleian Miscellany there is a reprint of a singular and rare little tract, published over 300 years ago, entitled 'A True and strange Discourse of the Travailes of two English Pilgrimes.' The copy which appears in the Miscellany is dated 1616, but the first edition was published in 1603. This early work on travel was apparently very popular, and went through many editions in the opening years of the seventeenth century. Nearly all the different issues were apparently identical in form and were printed in London by Nicholas Okes for Thomas Archer, 'and are to bee sold at his Shop in Popes-head Palace, neere to the Royall Exchange.' Our copy, from which the above address is quoted, is dated 1620 and is printed in black-letter, with certain place-names in small Roman type. The pagination is somewhat erratic, for pp. 30 and 31 are numbered 22 and 23. There are thirty-three numbered pages.

The author, Henry Timberlake, who states on the title-page that he writes 'on the behalfe of himselfe and his fellow Pilgrime,' tells us that it passes as a 'Generall Proverbe that Travellers may tell leasings by authority,' but he is in 'no way

daunted by that bug-beare thunderbolt,' and he assures us, somewhat complacently, on his crowded title-page, that his work is 'a Discourse of no lesse admiration, then well worth the regarding.' It appears later that his companion was 'Maister John Burrell, who was a gentleman of Middleborough.' This small quarto records a most adventurous journey 'from Grand Cayro towards the Holy Land.' The pilgrims started on the 9th March, 1601, with a mixed company of 'Turkes, Jewes, and Christians, and some 750 camels,' all bound for Damascus.

Several pages are devoted to a detailed account of their stay at Philbits (? Belbeis) for two days and one night, and of what the traveller calls the 'strange secret of hatching of Chickens.' It would seem that as many as 200,000 eggs were placed in a slow furnace or stove and hatched by artificial heat. The process occupied from seven to twelve days, according to the weather, and the country-people came to receive their chickens, when hatched, and paid the proprietor of the stove one-tenth of the live produce 'for his labour.'

Very shortly after starting, the caravan had an affray, which is quaintly called a 'bickering,' with the 'Arabes,' and besides having four men hurt they lost a 'Camell loden with Callicoes.' In crossing the desert they had to pay tribute to the wild tribes on many different occasions. At Ramoth in 'Geliad' they parted company with the caravan and made their way alone to Jerusalem, where the unlucky author, who would deny neither his country nor his religion, was cast into a dungeon. He was released

in a short time, in consequence of the intervention of a 'Moore,' who had been with him on his ship, and after paying the charges of the prison, he was taken to the 'Pater Guardian, who is the defender of all Christian Pigrimes'; (*sic*).

Timberlake and his companion stayed many days in the Holy City and were conducted to the various sacred places by 'seven Friers and a Troughman' (? dragoman). He narrates all he saw, and he seems to have accepted the legends and traditions in good faith. He appears to have been just as much impressed by the sight of 'the Pillar whereon the Cock stood when he crowed' (to Peter), as he was by the 'house of Vriah, and the Fountaine where Berseba washed her selfe at, when King David espied her out of his Turret.' For many of the sights there was a fixed charge, some of them apparently very exorbitant, for we read that at the Sepulchra Sancta each paid nine pieces of gold for admission. There is a curious mixture throughout of Old and New Testament history, for he speaks of 'an old ruined house, which they told me was Jacobs: which may the better appeare to be so, for in the field thereto adjoyning is the tomb of Rachel, Jacobs wife'; and he says elsewhere 'they shewed me the stone wherwith S. Steuen was stoned.'

There is nothing more remarkable in this work than the attempt made by the writer to convey to his fellow countrymen the due appreciation of the distances of the various places from one another. Thus he tells us 'The Citie of Nazareth is (distant) from Jerusalem as Norwich is from London';

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‘Bethphage is from Jerusalem as Mile-end is from London’; ‘Mount Syon is neere adioyning to Jerusalem, as Southwarke ioyneth to London.’

In the journey back to Cairo, accompanied only by the faithful Moor, the author, having failed to obtain a passage by sea from Joppa to Alexandria, was compelled to entrust himself to two ‘Wilde Arabians,’ and travelling overland, beset by many perils, he reached his ship ‘sore wounded and well beaten,’ and, says he, ‘so I ended my Pilgrimage.’

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