

thought that if a man went over it in a right frame of mind, he must come back with a deeper interest in it than he had before. (Hear, hear.) To those of them who were familiar with, and were constantly in the habit of reading the Word of God, such knowledge was invaluable; and as they believed that the Bible was the one great book of all others on the face of the earth, the more accurate their knowledge of the spot to which it related, the more value it would be to them. (Hear, hear.) A great deal had been done during the last few years in the investigations which have been made in the Holy Land. The researches that had been made illustrated several portions of Scripture, and upon that account alone he thought they should do all they could to forward this great work. (Hear, hear.) It was a work which would throw additional interest round the Word of God, and therefore they ought to support it. Another reason why it claimed their support was because they must have some regard to the future destiny of Palestine, and whatever might be the destiny of that country it would be a very great matter to have a good map of it while we had the opportunity of getting it. (Hear, hear.)

LIEUT. CONDER'S ADDRESS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I hope that the subject upon which I have the pleasure of addressing you this evening will prove of sufficient interest to atone for an unpractised speaker.

The sound of the words Ordnance Survey of Palestine is rather suggestive perhaps of a dry subject, and I am afraid it is so considered by the majority of the English public. I hope, however, that I shall succeed in showing you that our work has an interest not only for the scientific and professional public, or for critical students of the Bible, but generally for all those who have ever thought of or cared for the Holy Land and the Bible history.

The Palestine Exploration Fund originated in the discovery made by certain English scholars who were engaged on Smith's great Bible Dictionary that our information as to the Holy Land was more deficient and inaccurate than had been at all suspected.

It was found that the best published maps contradicted one another; that the chances of finding any place mentioned in the Bible on such a map were more than five to one against success; that scarce a point was to be found in Jerusalem concerning the correct position of which any two authorities would agree; that the only scientific and accurate explorer of the century was an American, whose work was not by any means exhaustive. Of the manners and customs of the natives, Christian, Mahometan, Jewish, Druse, or Samaritan, scarcely anything was known. Their dress, their traditions, their very nationalities, were alike unstudied. Thus the dictionary, which was intended to illustrate with accuracy the innumerable details of local colouring which occur on every page of Old or New Testament, was obliged to seek materials in standard works on Egypt or Persia, as nothing of trustworthy information existed concerning the Holy Land itself. Scarcely any photographs of Palestine scenery had

been taken, and the pictures which endeavoured to give a realistic rendering of Biblical events are few and far between.

But yet further. One of the most important and interesting comments which at this remote period of time we can make on the Biblical narratives is that which refers to the topography of the country. Take any one of the numerous episodes of the Old Testament, the history of Gideon, of Samson, or of David, for example, you find the most minute details of time and place continually occurring. Could such details be studied on the spot, and could it be shown that there is a wonderful truthfulness of detail in each and all, it is evident that we should thus obtain a testimony to the genuine and contemporary character of the history perhaps more valuable than any other criticism now practicable. To all who wish to see the opponents of the Sacred Record met on their own ground with arguments the force of which they must allow, such a work cannot fail to be of great interest. (Applause.)

I have often been asked what results have been gained by the operations of the Fund, since no great discovery has ever been reported from Palestine. I answer that in another two or three years, when the great work of the Society comes to be published, the public will be astonished at the amount of accurate and valuable information collected in so short a time, and under so many difficulties. (Applause.)

As regards Jerusalem, my predecessor, Captain Warren, R.E., has been the first to substitute facts for theory, and to lay a solid foundation of discovery upon which scholars can work in safety in restoring the ancient city, its Temple, its walls, its towers, and its palaces. A single shaft there has in some cases settled points concerning which volumes had previously been written on either side of the question. (Applause.)

But turning to the work which I myself have for the last four years conducted for the Fund in Palestine, and which they consider the most important they have undertaken.

As I have just pointed out, there was a field of exploration open to us beyond that of mere geographical discovery, and however good a map might be, it would be insufficient in such cases. Something to a larger scale and containing more minute details is necessary for the proper study of the subject, and thus it was determined that a survey to the English Ordnance scale should be run over the whole country from Dan to Beersheba. The work has been going on steadily for four years, in spite of various hindrances from weather, from sickness, and even the death of one valued member of the party, and now though a combination of unfortunate circumstances has compelled us to suspend the actual field work for this winter, we still hope that the summer of next year will see the completion of our work to the sources of the Jordan.

Our results are, as I have said, interesting to three classes—to scientific men, to Biblical students, and to the public interested in the Holy Land and the Bible history.

As regards the scientific aspect, Palestine is to the naturalist one of the most interesting countries in the world. The summit of Hermon is 9,000 feet above sea level; the Dead Sea, at the opposite end of the

Jordan Valley, is 1,300 feet below sea level. Thus, in the short distance of 150 miles, we have a range of fauna and flora extending from that of the arctic to that of the tropical regions. The mosses of Hermon are similar to those of Norwegian mountains, and in its desolate fastnesses now remain the last descendants of David's bear, often coming down to the mountain villages to feast on grapes in the luxuriant vineyards. In the valley of Jericho, on the other hand, the date-palm flourishes with proper cultivation, the mimosas are full of delicate sun-birds, which belong to African fauna, and in the jungle of Jordan the cheetah, or hunting leopard of India, is found.

Of this varied fauna and flora we have notes and specimens, collected in our spare moments, skins of hyenas, ibex, and gazelles (one a new species, I believe), and collections of birds of every kind, &c., &c.

Again, the geology of Palestine has more interest for students than that of almost any country. The Jordan valley, an immense fissure unparalleled in the world, has never been studied throughout its whole extent. The theories of its formation have been conflicting, and scarcely any reliable facts had been collected whence to draw a satisfactory conclusion. Captain Warren was the first explorer who ever passed along the whole length of the valley. Following him we have been the first Europeans who have ever lived in it. For three months of most variable weather we were camped in this wonderful country, moving slowly northwards, and only leaving it when the Bedouin themselves could no longer endure the heat of its climate. During that time we have collected a large amount of valuable information as to its topography, its climate, its fauna, and above all its geology. As regards the origin of its formation, how it happened that this great crevice was opened, and at what period of the earth's history, I think we shall now be able to give a satisfactory explanation. Some have supposed (following the present Mahometan tradition) that the Jordan originally ran to the Red Sea, and that the present lake was formed at the time of the destruction of Sodom and Ghomorrah, forgetting, apparently, that it was by fire, not by water, these cities of the plain were overwhelmed. Others have made the formation volcanic, and some even have supposed it to be the result of ice action during the glacial period. The plain result of the observations now recorded is a complete answer to these theories.

Dr. Tristram, the well-known naturalist and explorer, from observations made on either shore, first put forward the theory which our observations have fully confirmed. (Applause.) The valley was first formed by a depression of the strata at a period subsequent to our English chalk period. The area formed was filled by a chain of great lakes, probably reaching to the sea, and resembling the great lake system at the head of the Nile. The depression continued, and is, indeed, slowly continuing at the present day, and as the climate altered, the heat and consequent evaporation increased until the great lake system had shrunk to its historical proportions, and is only represented by the present basins—the waters of Merom, the Sea of Galilee, and the Dead Sea, which has

no outlet of any kind, but is simply dependent on the evaporation for the maintenance of its level.

This explanation cannot, I think, be disputed, being based on detailed observations throughout the entire length of the valley. Faults in the strata unknown before we discovered in more than one place. The general character and dip we marked throughout, and the old shore lines of the great lakes at various periods we traced in a tolerably complete manner throughout the valley.

Turning to the critical aspect of the Survey work, few, I think, but the students who have made the topography of the Bible a special study, can be aware how little we have previously known, and, on the other hand, how much there is still capable of recovery. The very interest which has been taken in Palestine from the third century of our era to the present day appears to be the very reason why all the topography has become so frightfully confused and falsified. In the fourth century we find St. Jerome, the great author of the Latin vulgate translation of the Bible, editing the work of Eusebius, the earliest attempt at a Bible dictionary; but whilst we envy the minute acquaintance with the country which he shows throughout, the wild guesses at the relations borne by the then existing sites to those of the Bible forbid our accepting his opinion on any such identifications as authoritative.

Later on, with the advent of the Crusaders, things grew worse. The knights themselves were not famous for their acquaintance with even the best known of Bible events, and the clergy, in fixing traditional sites not previously settled by the early Christians, seem to have been actuated by many motives other than the strict regard of truth. A very curious instance of the many errors into which they fell is the fact that they made a confusion between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean. Thus not only did they show near Acca the rock from which Simon Peter was said to have fished (a site which can still be identified), but yet further they gave the name of Capernaum to a neighbouring seaside town, which still retains the ruins of its Crusading fortifications.

This inaccuracy, due to the pious anxiety shown by men almost entirely ignorant of the country to localise all the Scriptural events, proves extremely puzzling to modern students. Almost every famous site has a shadow or double, the mediæval traditional site often at a considerable distance from it. One site often had to do duty for two or more Scriptural places. Thus, the fortress of Arsuf was supposed to be the site of Antipatris, of Asher, and of Ashdod, neither of which was a correct identification, as the nearest of the three places in question was five or six miles off, and the farthest more than forty.

The first explorer who endeavoured to deal with this complicated puzzle, a jumble of traditions of every age, Jew and Gentile, early and late, was the celebrated American traveller, Doctor Robinson, a man eminently fitted by his former studies and his great capacity to deal with the subject. The results of his travels form the groundwork of modern research, and showed how much could be done towards recovering the ancient topography. He found that the old nomenclature clings to

Palestine in an extraordinary manner, and that in the memory of the peasant population the true sites have been preserved, though undiscovered by the Frank invaders.

He started with a broad canon, very characteristic of his nationality, that no traditional information was of any authority. In this it appears to me he went too far. When properly distinguished as to date and origin, some of the traditions are of undoubted antiquity and value. Thus, whilst the site of the Holy Sepulchre was only discovered in the fourth century, and by a miracle, the Grotto at Bethlehem, on the other hand, is mentioned by Justin Martyr in the second century, and the tradition thus dates back to the same authority which gives the earliest testimony to the Gospels themselves. (Applause.)

The traditions, again, which group round the sacred rock in the Temple enclosure at Jerusalem, seem to have been taken by the Moslems from the Jews, and serve to point to its identity with the Stone of Foundation on which the Holy of Holies stood; an indication of the greatest value to any student wishing to restore the Temple of Herod.

This unqualified disregard of tradition raised at first great prejudice against Dr. Robinson's views, but they have come to be very generally accepted by students. It is in his steps that we have trod. With greater advantages, more time, and more money, we have been able to more than double the number of his discoveries; but the cases in which we have found him wrong are few and far between.

Within the course of our work we have recovered more than 100 lost sites, many of them of great importance. Among these we can reckon Bethabara, the site of our Lord's baptism, which we sought for over three months, collecting the names of over fifty Jordan fords, and only at the end of our survey of Jordan did we find the name still existing, some miles south of the Sea of Galilee; a position little expected, but which harmonises completely with the Scripture narrative. (Applause.)

A very interesting papyrus has lately been edited and published in England. It contains an account of the travels of an Egyptian officer of state who visited Palestine at the time when Israel was oppressed by Jabin, king of Hazor, just before the deliverance by Barak. By the aid of our discoveries, I have succeeded in disentangling the complicated topography of this narrative, not previously understood. I find that it agrees with the topography of the Books of Joshua and Judges, and that I can trace his journey in a chariot from Tyre to the Sea of Galilee, and thence to Joppa. According to my explanation, he kept in the plains throughout the whole journey until he arrived at Megiddo; he then endeavoured to go down one of the precipitous valleys into the plain of Sharon, and the story tells that here, as we should naturally expect, he entirely smashed his chariot.*

But yet further, our discoveries have not only added an immense number of ancient sites to those previously fixed, but we have been able, by the collection of nearly three out of every four places mentioned in the Bible, to prove that the long topographical lists of the Book of

* Lieut. Conder is engaged in a paper on this subject.

Joshua are neither fragmentary nor unsystematic. I have been able to show that the towns are enumerated in groups, each group a natural division of the land, and each division containing a Royal city as capital. Such a vindication of the character of these curious and hitherto little understood lists would, to my mind, be itself sufficient result to put before the public as the outcome of our labours. (Applause.)

Turning now to the third aspect of our work, that which interests the general public, who are not specially attracted by either the scientific or the critical part of the undertaking. To a great many our work is, I think, interesting because we are engaged in exploring the land of the Bible, and in noting the habits and customs of a people almost unchanged since the time occupied by the Biblical events.

A good illustration of the wish which is growing strong in England to clearly appreciate the Scripture narrative is to be found in the illustrated editions of the Bible lately published. The old conventionalisms of the great Italian painters, and the mediæval realisms of the Dutch masters, are alike seen to be false. One of the most imaginative of modern artists, M. Doré, has attempted to supply the want in sketches which aim at being Oriental. To any one familiar with the East, and who has studied the vivid episodes of Old Testament stories on the spot, these clever pictures are eminently unsatisfactory. They have none of the life and reality which might be thrown into really faithful pictures of the people and the scenes as we see them at the present day.

To give you even a general idea of all our discoveries would be impossible in the time I have at command. I will, therefore, take a single example—an episode in the Old Testament—on the localities of which we have thrown a remarkable amount of light, and from this you must judge of our results, with the assurance that there is no other episode which we have not studied with equal care, and in some cases with perhaps even more striking results.

The example I propose to take is that of the early history of David down to the death of Saul. The topography includes no less than twenty sites, of which three of the less important are still unknown, five were found by Robinson, and the remaining twelve we have discovered lately.

The scene in which David first comes prominently before us is that of the Valley of Elah or of the Terebinth, where was fought the famous duel with Goliath. So many of the sites connected with David's wanderings group round this valley that I may as well give a short description of its course. It rises close to Hebron, and runs as a narrow rocky ravine northward, being flanked by the ruined sites of many important towns, among which we notice Keilah—a city built on the top of a steep, terraced, treeless hill. A little beyond this point the valley widens considerably, and on its western side is another strong site with numerous caves; this, as I shall show presently, is the true site of Adullam. About a mile farther north, the broad valley sweeps round westward, and the old Roman road from Jerusalem comes in. Here, perched above

the left bank, stand the ruins of Socoh. Continuing westward we find, on the south side, a yet more strongly fortified natural site, which I believe to be Shaaraim. At length we reach the place where the valley debouches into the great plain of Philistia, and here, on a white and perpendicular cliff, stands the Philistine stronghold of Gath.

It will be clear, I hope, from this account that the valley of Elah was the great highway from the plains into the hill country. It separates the high mountainous tract held by the children of Israel from the lower hills, the country called Shephelah in the Bible. All along its course the most beautiful cornfields in Palestine, the richest soil, and evidence of the thickest former population exist. Huge terebinths still remain, showing the origin of its name, for the terebinth is not to be found in all parts of Palestine, and some of these appear to be of great antiquity. The scenery, with its foreground of cornland and its distant rocky hills, is throughout most picturesque, and there can scarce be found a part of Palestine more fertile or beautiful.

We see, therefore, the reason why this valley was so often the scene of conflict between the Jews and the Philistines, and how when unchecked these marauders were able to penetrate to such a remote village as Keilah by simply following the valley without crossing the intervening hills of the Shephelah. Holding Gath, they held the key of the valley, and the door to the best corn country in Judah.

It was in this valley, then, that Saul encamped over against the Philistine host, coming up, no doubt, in the harvest time to pillage, as their modern representatives the Bedouin still come up in spring. The exact site of the battle may also now, I think, be pointed out at the bend of the valley, just the point where the Jerusalem road, down which Saul must have come, crosses the valley. For it is stated to have been in Ephes Dammim, between Socoh and Azekah, and between the modern sites of Shuweikeh and El Azek, which are generally supposed to represent Socoh and Azekah, we have discovered Ephes Dammim. The name means Boundary of Blood, and was no doubt given because of the sanguinary conflicts there occurring. Here, then, below Socoh we still find a ruin with the name Beit Fased, or House of Bloodshed, no doubt as ancient a site as any of the rest. (Applause.)

But in further illustration of this episode; I found that much discussion had occurred as to two words used in the narrative, one meaning a broad flat valley, such as I have described, with low bushy hills and broad cornfields, the other a ravine or narrow channel. It was supposed that a gorge must exist somewhere, and this point explorers were required to clear up. On visiting the valley I could find no such gorge, but the true meaning at once became apparent on the spot. The *Emek* or broad valley has in the middle of it the *Gai*, or narrow channel. The water of the turbid winter torrents has dug a deep channel in the middle of the valley. The course is strewn with smooth white pebbles, and the steep banks are built up of them. This, therefore, it seems to me, is the channel which separated the two hosts, and here David found those

smooth pebbles of the brook which, according to the Jewish tradition, were gifted with voice and called out, "By us shalt thou overcome the giant."

This site of the battle also agrees perfectly with the subsequent events when the Philistines fled back to their own country to Shaaraim (Tell Zakeriyeh, as I have already pointed out) and Gath, the stronghold at the mouth of the valley.

I will pass over the episodes of David's life in Gibeah of Saul which are not of especial interest, merely noting that Gibeah and the well Sechu and one or two other sites, including Nob, the city of the Priests, have never been fixed before our survey in a satisfactory manner.

Flying first from Saul, and after that from Gath, David took up his abode at one of the most famous sites mentioned in Scripture—the Cave of Adullam. This site we have at length fixed and explored. It had long been unknown since the traditional site had come to be regarded as irreconcilable with the narrative. In 1872 the French explorer, M. Ganneau, discovered the existence of the name on the borders of the valley of Elah under the modified form of Aid el Mieh, and following up this discovery we verified the existence of the name and found the site to agree well with all requirements. Briefly stated, the argument in its favour is that the cave is stated in one passage of Josephus to have been close to the Royal city of Adullam, and the whereabouts of this city had long been known before the recovery of the name.

The question which I suppose would always be asked first is, What is the cave like? I fear many persons would be disappointed on visiting the spot. We imagine a great cavern such as we see in Salvator Rosa's picture of brigands, and such as really exist in Palestine. We find, instead, a row of small, low, smoky caves on a hill-side, some now used as stables for goats and cows, some inhabited by families of Arabs. But their insignificant proportions are just the best indications of the probability of the site. The great caves are far more picturesque, but they are unfitted for living in, and are never inhabited, nor probably ever were they.

They are damp, and dark, and cold, full of huge bats and creeping animals, and, as I personally know only too well, are very unpleasant places to be in. The small caves, on the other hand, are almost always in use. The light comes in in front, a fire in the centre keeps them warm, and a single lamp lights them.

A row of these small caves exists at Adullam, on the north and west of the city, separated from it by a narrow valley. On the top of the city hill are two or three other caves, also inhabited, and the whole number might accommodate 200 or 300 men, a greater number than David could at any time reckon in his band. The site is very strong and defensible, and its position in a district which is a sort of border land between the possessions of Judah and of the Philistines is most remarkable. David had two enemies to fear, Achish on the west, and Saul on the north-east, when, therefore, Adullam became unsafe, and he was obliged to

retreat farther, his natural course was south, placing Bethlehem, which must have been friendly to him, between Saul and himself.

We find that he retreated to Hareth, and that whilst there the Philistines, no longer restrained by his holding the strong position at Adullam, came up the valley of Elah, even as far as the village of Keilah, where they robbed the threshing-floors. David hearing, comes to the relief of Keilah. The question at once arises, Why should he have specially selected Keilah, whose inhabitants, as we see from their subsequent attempted treachery, were no special friends of his, when so many other towns were robbed without his offering assistance? The reason seems to be that Hareth was close to Keilah.

It is doubtful whether the wood of Hareth is a correct translation. Some versions give the city of Hareth. Whichever be correct, there is no doubt that a city of Hareth existed. No woods now exist, but it would be too much to say they never did, for pine woods existed in this very district and round Hebron as late as the times of the Crusades, though not a single tree can now be found. The site of David's hiding-place at Hareth we have, I think, been the first to discover in the strong ruined site of Kharas, which lies in the higher hills above Keilah, scarcely more than a mile from it, among inaccessible ravines, but easily reached from the valley of Elah, which forms the central theatre of his exploits up to this time. (Applause.)

Driven away yet farther south, David next appears at Ziph, a site found by Robinson in his first journey. Here we made a very curious discovery, which is, I am happy to think, to be incorporated in the new revised version of the Bible. (Applause.) His hiding-place we learn was the wood of Ziph. This wood has been sought in vain. Visiting the spot, I was unable to discover any traces of it, and yet more, it seemed to me, from the geological structure of the country, highly improbable that any such wood could have existed. For, leaving the high hill country to the north, we have here entered on an entirely different scene—one far wilder and more deserted a step occurs in the hills below Hebron and we descend to a district of rolling chalk downs, the country of the southern Hittites and the Horites, who dwelt in caves. This open country is specially fitted for such pasturage as goats and camels, and even Syrian sheep, can thrive upon. Here we find Nabal living a pastoral life, and to the present day the riches of the peasantry consist in the numerous and thriving flocks and herds. There is not a single spring in their district, and scarce a tree; the water sinks through the soft strata, and deep wells are required. How, then, could a forest be expected to exist in a country destitute of water?

The answer is, that no such forest existed, that the word *Chores* is the proper name of a place. As such it is understood by the Greek version of the passage and by Josephus. The discovery, therefore, of a ruined site near Ziph with the modern name *Khoreisa* seems to me of great value. It is a sort of suburb of the town of Ziph, and might very

well, I think, have been thus called the Choresb of Ziph, whence, translated, Wood of Ziph.* (Applause.)

We must now follow David into a yet more desolate scene. Leaving the pastoral country where he had levied a sort of black mail on the great proprietors, as guardian of their flocks against the wandering nomadic tribes of the true desert just to the south, we find him driven to the most desolate region in Palestine, and perhaps in the world.

The pastoral country of Ziph and Carmel looks down on the east to a glaring white desert; not a tree or shrub exists in it; the hills rise into fantastic cones and knife-like ridges, separated by deep, dark gullies. There is no water, not a building or a ruin in it. The very beasts of prey seem to shun it. The desert partridge and the ibex are almost its only inhabitants, and in this episode of the narrative *both* are noticed, for David was "hunted as a partridge on the mountains," and sought by Saul among the "rocks of the wild goats."

Few scenes can be finer than that at Engedi. The steep brown crags above, the clear thermal spring surrounded by a cane brake and by hugo nightshade plants (the apples of Sodom), and spiny mimosas, of which the crown of thorns was woven, with birds of the tropics, bulbuls, thrushes, and sun-birds, in the branches. Beneath lies the thick oily water of the Salt Sea, and, beyond, the towering crags upon which the great fortress of Kerak stands, like a mediæval citadel, on cliffs seemingly impregnable.

This Desert of Engedi, in which we passed two weeks, is, however, not habitable in summer. And this is probably the reason why we find David returning to the higher ground near Ziph.

We endeavoured, when surveying this part of the country, to find the cave in which David encountered Saul, on the road from Jerusalem to Engedi. But in this we cannot be said to have succeeded, not because no cave exists, but because there are so many that it is impossible to say which is the right one. The pastoral people send down their flocks from the plateau to the borders of the Engedi desert in spring. The descent to this desert is steep and sudden, the difference of level being some 2,000 feet. Along all this descent there are innumerable caves; at their mouths one sees the ragged shepherd boy sitting, and the whole flock is folded within. Such caves exist farther north, near Bethlehem, and in the Shepherds' Plain, where tradition makes the herald angels to have appeared. David himself must have been well acquainted as a boy with the district, when he led his "few poor sheep in the wilderness." It is supposed that many are old dwellings of the Horites, who were troglodytes and lived in caves, and though this fashion of living in caves extends throughout Palestine, and is constantly mentioned in the Bible, yet it is in the south country principally that the Horites lived, and that we find most caves inhabited and most mention of caves in the Old Testament.

I may remark that all these caves are of the class to which our newly discovered Cave of Adullam belongs, and not huge caverns such as

* The place was probably called Choresb Ziph to distinguish it from another Choresb (Khirbet Khoreisa) existing farther west.—C. R. C.

exist in other districts, but which are never inhabited at the present day.

We now come to the last scene of David's persecution, the last meeting with Saul before the fatal battle of Gilboa. This is the Hill of Hachilah, where David came upon Saul's camp at night and stole the cruse of water and the spear from his head. This site was unknown before we explored the district, and perhaps the incident which we have most fully illustrated is that here occurring.

David had ascended from the Dead Sea Desert and was again close to Ziph. The Hill of Hachilah is said to have overlooked the Jeshimon or Solitude, which is the desert in question. There can scarce be a doubt of its locality because there is only one hill east of Ziph overlooking the desert. The rest of the country consists of rolling downs at a lower level. On the summit of this hill we find a ruin called Yekin, and this name is only Hachil, or Hachilah slightly modified. You may object that it ends in an N and not in an L, but when I tell you that Ishmael is always called Ism'ain by the peasantry, the children of Israel the Ben Israin, and the towns of Jesreel, Zerin, and Bethel Beitin, you will see that the change of L into N is very common in well-known instances.

There was, however, a curious point in the narrative which required illustration. Saul lay "in the trench," with his men of war round him. Now had he encamped, as Josephus supposed, which seems to me very doubtful, as contrary to the customs of war among the modern Bedouin, it is not in the trench that he would have lain.

Again, a visit to the spot clears up, I think, the difficulty. The hill of Yekin is a bold promontory, standing just at the edge of the plateau. It looks over the whole desert, and the cliffs of Engedi, the waters of the Dead Sea, the heights of Moab, are in full view. Just beneath the crest of the hill is a hollow, with another knoll beyond. It is the head of a great valley, which soon becomes precipitous, running down into the desert. In this hollow is a spring and a cave.

This, I imagine, is what is meant by the trench. David is said to have crossed over to the other side, and we may imagine him standing on one or other of the hill-tops and looking down on the king and his sleeping party in the hollow.

Nothing could be more in accordance with Bedouin custom than the choice of such a place for a sleeping-place. The Bedouin understand thoroughly how to take advantage of every fold in the ground. I have been more than once surrounded by ten or twenty men without knowing of their vicinity. At the right moment when they emerge from a depression close at hand, they seem to spring as if by magic from the ground. To encamp on a hill-top or a point whence they might be easily seen would be contrary to all their ideas of prudence. Hence I have no doubt that it was in the hollow near to the only supply of water that Saul halted. The cruse of water and the spear are again little touches which seem to link the past to the present. The Syrians are a thirsty race, and at night they never sleep without a bottle with a spout at their heads. Again, the spear, a long bamboo with a knife-like blade at the end, and

the tuft of black ostrich feathers beneath, is invariably set up on end, the spike at the butt being driven into the ground when a resting-place has been chosen.

With the meeting at Hachilah David's persecution ceased. He retreats again into Philistine territory, and settles in the town of Ziklag. Here we must leave him. The town of Ziklag was quite unknown until this year. I cannot say anything much about it at present, but I discovered whilst we were at Gaza that there is a ruined place of importance called Zehleika, in the middle of the plain north of Beersheba. This is a district of some 200 square miles, which we could not enter because of the serious fighting between the Arabs going on round Zehleika and Beersheba. It is just where all the circumstances of the narrative would lead us to place Ziklag, and I hope that next year we may be able to go back and report another discovery connected with the history of David's wanderings. (Applause.)

In taking leave of this subject I would beg you to remember how much of this minute illustration of the narrative is due to that dry and uninteresting piece of work, the Ordnance Survey of Palestine.

The site of David's combat with Goliath was unknown. The Cave of Adullam had never been discovered or described. The Wood of Hareth had been sought in vain; the Choresh Ziph was not understood; and lastly, the scene of the last meeting, the Hill of Hachilah, was not identified.

Not only were these places not known, but the full force of all the little incidental details could not be brought out because the story had never been studied on the spot. The trench in the valley of Elah, for instance, the brook whence David obtained the stones. Again, the reason why David went to help the men of Keilah was inexplicable, and the trench in which Saul lay was not understood.

I have taken but one episode. It would be easy, if I had time, to show you how the history of Samson is illustrated in the same manner, and the stories of Saul and Jonathan, of Gideon, or of Joshua. Throughout the whole of the Old Testament narrative there is scarcely an episode on which we cannot claim to have thrown light in a similar manner.

Some, however, will have confined their interest to the Gospel narrative, and will be anxious to know what we have done towards illustrating its topography. (Applause.)

This, however, is just the part of the work which remains to be done. It is true that we have found CEnon, Bethabara, and Cana of Galilee, but the shores of the Sea of Galilee we have not yet visited.

Many of you will have heard of the interruption of our work, and the attack on my party in Upper Galilee. The whole country from Beersheba to Nazareth, more than four-fifths of our work, we had completed, without any serious difficulties. We had passed through the Hebron hills, the stronghold of fanaticism, with only one row, which was quickly settled. We had at last reached the high hills of Upper Galilee, and were looking forward to the speedy and successful termination of our labours. The insolence and fanaticism of the Mohametans in the

district surpasses, however, anything of which we have had experience before. My servants were insulted and stoned without any provocation on their part, and I myself was assaulted before I had spoken a word. The serious fray which ensued seemed at the time inevitably fatal to us; had we not succeeded in communicating with the Turkish Governor, who sent soldiers to our assistance, we should probably have been killed. Every member of the party was wounded, and we all suffered subsequently with bad fever. The legal proceedings, the gradual spread of cholera, our own condition, and the lateness of the season, made it advisable to suspend operations for the winter.

We hope, however, to take the field in spring, and should we be uninterrupted by new misfortunes, we may count on finishing all our work from Dan to Beersheba by next summer.

Among our future studies there is much which will, I think, surpass in interest what we have done before. The site of Capernaum is not yet fixed, and that of Bethsaida is unknown. Chorazin alone has been discovered. We have still hopes of doing something towards elucidating these interesting questions.

Again, in Galilee we have objects of interest which exist in no other part of Palestine. I mean the synagogues which are to be found in all parts. Some of these were first discovered by Major Wilson whilst working for the Fund. Their date was not known, but I have succeeded lately in finding the names of the builders, and the time at which they lived. It proves that some are earlier than the time of our Lord, and may be the very synagogues in which He taught. I have also obtained indications of the whereabouts of two synagogues which have never been seen by any European, and I believe others besides are yet to be found. These discoveries we hope to be able to follow out early next year. The question of the measurements of the synagogues is of great importance. We have here buildings of undoubted Jewish origin, some previous to the building of the Temple, others dating immediately after it. From their measurements we may hope to discover the length of the cubit, which is quite doubtful at present. I have very carefully measured the only synagogue we have yet visited, and I find that if we take the cubit at sixteen inches, the synagogue is exactly thirty cubits by forty, and its pillars ten cubits high. I find that the measurements taken by others of the other synagogues give the same results, and to any one wishing to restore the Temple at Jerusalem this investigation, with others we have made, is of the greatest importance. (Applause.)

My only object to-night has been to endeavour to create a greater interest in our work than is generally felt, to show what our real aim and object is, and that it has an interest not only for those who look to its scientific or its critical aspect, but for the English public in general. That we throw a light on the Bible which is not only new, but which is more practical and more conclusive as to the character of the sacred record than any amount of criticism from those who have not studied Palestine and its inhabitants on the spot.

If I have at all succeeded I may perhaps venture to hope that you will

follow our future proceedings with interest, and wish us a successful termination to our labours. (Applause.)

On the motion of the Rev. Canon CRANE, seconded by the Rev. W. F. BIRCH, the thanks of the meeting were accorded to Lieutenant Conder for his address; and a similar compliment having been paid to the Dean for presiding, the meeting separated.

THE AMERICAN EXPEDITION.

THE following letters from the Rev. Selah Merrill are reprinted from the *Athenæum* by the kind permission of the proprietors. It will be remembered that Captain Warren has anticipated much of their work at Theilthatha, Rukleh, and other places in the Lebanon.

November 5th, 1875.

The friends of Palestine Exploration in England may be interested in some account of our reconnoissance survey of the Hauran, which we have just completed. It will be impossible, however, in a single letter, to give more than an outline of our operations. We had with us twenty-three baggage animals and nine horses. Then we had eight muleteers, six servants, including two cooks and a table boy, and two assistants and interpreters from the college in Beirut. Besides the four gentlemen who comprised the exploring party proper, there were with us three others, two gentlemen from Beirut, one an excellent botanist, and the other an excellent marksman, and our photographer. No person unacquainted with the facts can realise the difficulties to be overcome in order to secure good photographs in the Syrian deserts, especially in the summer. All green things are burned up, the air is full of fine dust, the sun is intensely hot, and the sky, of course, is affected accordingly. Both instrument and chemicals are often injured or ruined. Ordinary rules and laws cannot be followed; and the skill and patience of the artist are constantly taxed to their utmost even to produce any work at all. Then the difficulty of obtaining pure water is another serious drawback. We often carried water eight and ten and even sixteen miles for our photographer to use. But notwithstanding the obstacles to be overcome, we have been remarkably successful. We have brought away as trophies from the desert considerably over one hundred photographs of temples, churches, theatres, towers, castles, and other ruins, which, for the most part, have never before been visited by a photographer. Our small plates are nine and a half by twelve inches, and our larger ones are twelve by sixteen inches. The collection, we hope, will prove to be one of great interest and value.

We left Abeih, whither hundreds from Beirut had fled to escape the cholera, on the 2nd of September, and passing over some of the Lebanon mountains, camped at Keir Nebrakh. The next day we passed over the last Lebanon range, and down into the valley of the Litany or Leontes, which we crossed, and camped at Jub Jenin. That day our photographer