

LIMESTONE COLUMN DISCOVERED IN THE RUSSIAN BUILDINGS AT JERUSALEM TO THE WEST OF THE NEW CHURCH.

MR. TYRWHITT DRAKE reports (May, 1871) the discovery of a column in this place. It is 40ft. 5in. in length (including base, lin. in relief and 18in. broad); its diameter at base is 6ft. 3in. It lies in direction N.N.W. and S.S.E., in a reddish soil, with broken stone and a few fragments of pottery. It is at present only uncovered at its N.N.W. end, for about 6ft. in the centre, and sufficiently at the S.S.E. end to show how far it extends. The top is only 6 to 10 in. below the present surface of the soil.

Mr. Drake adds:—

“The column has only recently been discovered, and I have urged upon the Russian authorities the desirability of uncovering it, which could be done at a very trifling expense. The length of the column, if I remember right, agrees with that given by Josephus as the height of the columns of Herod’s temple.”

THE MOABITE STONE.

THE following statement by Herr H. Petermann, late Prussian Consul in Jerusalem, is translated from a communication in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* for 1870, Part IV. :—

“In the end of August, 1868, my friend, the Rev. Mr. Klein, one of the agents of the English Mission, returned to Jerusalem from a journey round the Dead Sea; and on the following day he reported to me, in the presence of three friends, on the subject of a stone which had been shown to him by the Bedouins in the neighbourhood of Dibon (the ancient Dibon), with the express assurance that he was the first European by whom it had been seen. According to the entry in his diary it was 3 spans broad, 5 spans long, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ thick; or accurately 70 centimètres broad, 1·13 metre long, and 35 centimètres thick; probably of basalt; and with a very distinct inscription of 33 lines, in excellent condition, except a few lines at the top, which were somewhat defaced. Mr. Klein, not being prepared for such a discovery, had no squeeze-paper with him; and as he had been obliged to proceed immediately on his journey, he had not been able to make a transcript of the inscription, but had copied only certain letters, which I immediately recognised as Phœnician. By the next post, on the 29th of August, I wrote on the subject to Berlin; and as I saw danger in delay, I begged to know by telegraph whether the Direction of the Royal Museum were inclined to pay 100 napoleons, if necessary, for acquiring the stone. On the

15th of September I received a telegram from Lepsius, empowering me to expend the sum named. To avoid the danger of any competition, I entreated both Mr. Klein and the three other persons to say nothing about the matter. One of them, however, informed me that he had already spoken to Dr. Barclay, the chief of the English Jewish Mission. Dr. Barclay had probably given the information to Capt. Warren, as there is reason to believe from the subsequent proceedings. These gentlemen, however, were discreet enough to make no use of the information, well knowing the extreme importance which I attached to the acquisition of the stone. It was not until after my departure, and when the Prussian Consulate took no further interest in the matter, that, possibly either through them or through Saba Cawâr, an Arab whom I had sent to the Bedouins, the matter came to the ears of M. Ganneau, Chancellor of the French Consulate.

As soon as I received the authorisation from Prussia I consulted Mr. Klein—who, during his lengthened journeys amongst the Arabs, has acquired a perfect knowledge of their language and much experience—as to the best method of obtaining possession of the stone. He wrote a letter to the Sheik Fendi Feiz, whose authority is acknowledged by the Bedouins of Diban, requesting him to assist him in the matter of the stone, hoping thereby to obtain it at the cheapest rate. The letter, and a quantity of felt which I purchased for packing the stone, was sent without delay by the hands of a teacher named Behnam, the able assistant of Mr. Klein, and well known to the Sheikh. I waited a long time for the answer; and when it arrived, it was by no means satisfactory. The first news I received, before the end of September, was that Fendi Feiz would consult upon the matter with the chiefs in whose territory the stone lay. Shortly afterwards, however, he left for Damascus, of course without having consulted any one. After his return, he informed us, to our great annoyance, that he could do nothing in the matter. I then, on the advice of Mr. Klein, made a second attempt; and, at my own cost, in March, 1869, despatched a second Arabic teacher, Saba Cawâr, who is also known to the Bedouins, direct to the spot. With a view of giving him a favourable interest in the affair, I gave him fifty-three napoleons, three of them for his expenses, with the undertaking that when the stone was delivered safe Jerusalem a further fifty should be his, without reference to the price he had actually paid. Unfortunately, however, he not only came back without the stone, but brought the information that it had been hidden by the Bedouins. He had indeed been allowed to see it; but the price now asked was not 100 but 1,000 napoleons, or rather 100,000 piasters, say from 6,000 to 7,000 thalers. Such a price was naturally out of the question; and I therefore wrote immediately, on the 19th of March, to Berlin that I now saw no means of acquiring the stone, but through the medium of the Turkish Government. In accordance with this, a despatch arrived in June from the Grand Vizier,—addressed, however,

to the Pasha of Jerusalem, whose jurisdiction does not extend beyond the Jordan,—directing him, in the event of there being no obstacle on his part, to permit me to obtain the stone at my own cost. The Pasha was at that time absent at a conference at Beyrout, and I despatched the letter after him, through the Consulate of the North German Union there. My letter, however, crossed the Pasha, and it was therefore necessary to wait for its return, by which several weeks were wasted. On the 23rd of June I sent the document to him; but received from him, as I expected, the answer that he could do nothing direct in the matter, because it belonged to the Pasha of Nablus, who again could only act on the permission of the Governor-General at Damascus. At the same time he sent me an open letter to the Wali of Damascus, requesting him to take the necessary steps. This letter, together with the despatch of the Vizier, I sent to our Consul in Beyrout, to be forwarded to the Governor-General. Before the answer returned to Jerusalem I had taken my departure, but not until I had strictly enjoined on the treasurer, Dr. Meyer, to do everything in his power to obtain possession of the stone, which indeed he did.

What follows is taken from the Report of the German Consulate at Jerusalem to the Chancellor of the Union, dated the 29th of April, 1870.

The Consulate now did all in its power to obtain at least a squeeze of the stone; but it was stated, both by Mr. Klein and by Saba Cawâr, that, in consequence of our recent attempts, the Bedouins had buried the stone, and treated it as being the shrine of an evil spirit, whose power would vanish with the taking of the squeeze. They were then waiting for the answer of the Wali of Damascus, but this had not arrived; and, as the Governor-General had left Damascus for some time, it was not to be expected yet.

In the middle of October Saba Cawâr made his appearance at the Consulate, and stated that there was a good prospect of bringing the stone to Jerusalem for the sum of 120 napoleons. In fact, the chief Sheikh of the Beni Hamedî had offered to let him have it on these conditions. Herr von Alten, our Consul-General, made no hesitation in adding the necessary sum out of his own pocket to the 100 napoleons guaranteed by the Berlin Museum; and he delivered 120 napoleons to Saba Cawâr with a stipulation that, if the stone were delivered at the Consulate within thirty days from the end of October, he should require no account of the manner in which the money had been spent, but that if not delivered by that time it must be returned. With these conditions Saba Cawâr gladly closed. He started again, executed a definite contract in his own name with the sheiks of the Beni Hamedî, in which they bound themselves to deliver the stone to him in exchange for the agreed sum as soon as he chose. But new obstacles occurred in the way of the transport to Jerusalem. Kaplan, the sheikh of the Adwans (probably from jealousy of the Beni Hamedî), refused to allow

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his territory to be passed through. Nor were M. Ganneau and the French Consulate inactive, but were all endeavouring to get the stone into their possession; and thus, whether it was that Saba Cawâr offered too little backsheesh to the sheik of the Adwans, or that the sheik was in the French interest, certain it is that Saba Cawâr had to inform Herr von Alten, through Mr. Klein, that unless the Wali of Damascus exerted his influence it would be impossible to acquire the stone. This was in the beginning of November, at the time of the great official visits to Jerusalem, during which it happened that the Governor-General of Syria stopped a day in the city. After several fruitless attempts to obtain an interview, Herr von Alten made a written appeal to him on the ground of the firman from Constantinople, and received in a few days a reply to the effect that he could do nothing for him in the matter, since the exhibition of the stone to strangers was a source of income to the Beni Hamedî, the loss of which might not improbably cause a new revolt. How completely the Governor-General was deceived upon this point is obvious when we recollect that Mr. Klein was the first stranger who heard of the existence of the monument, and that at a later time it had been concealed by the Bedouins, as a sacred stone, to keep it from the sight of the Franks, who indeed only very rarely visited that dangerous locality. In addition to this, Saba Cawâr had already legally acquired the stone through a contract voluntarily entered into by the Bedouins.

On the 13th of October Herr von Alten met the Wali at Jaffa. The result of the interview was that, at his own desire, the Wali examined the contract which Saba Cawâr had made with the Beni Hamedî, and proposed to do all in his power to carry it out. Upon this, Herr von Alten gave Dr. Meyer instructions to obtain the contract by means of an express messenger from Saba Cawâr (who was at that time on the other side of the Jordan), to send it to Damascus, and to procure from the Governor-General's Department a safe conduct for the stone, as the property of the Consulate, against the various difficulties which its transport might incur from the hostile Bedouins. All this was done; and on the 20th of October the contract was sent, through the Consulate at Beyrout, to the address of the Governor-General.

At the end of the thirty days Saba Cawâr returned, in the hope of obtaining the answer from Damascus, and of transporting the stone to Jerusalem, through the aid of the Pasha of Nablus. Very shortly after, news arrived that the Pasha had actually requested the Beni Hamedî to deliver up the monument, but that, from their hatred to the Turkish Governor, the Bedouins had broken it up, merely to prevent its getting into his possession. The truth of this rumour, which we first heard from Saba Cawâr, was soon corroborated. The Bedouins on the other side of the Jordan, who in the previous summer had been in conflict with the Wali, and had been beaten by him, could not repress their hatred, and had taken these means of evincing it. Such is the

account of the part taken by the Prussian Consulate in the acquisition of the stone.

With regard to M. Ganneau, it appears that, hearing from Salt of the existence of the stone, he sent an Arab to the Beni Hamed, who, in his attempt to obtain a squeeze of the stone, was so roughly dealt with that he was glad to make his escape with a few pieces of wet paper. M. Ganneau himself, after his many years' experience in Jerusalem, did not attempt the costly journey to the other side, because he was well aware of the risk run by any European on such a quest amongst the Bedouins. After the fracture of the stone, he and Capt. Warren obtained, through an Arab, a squeeze of the two chief portions, as well as of some of the smaller pieces, and from these he commenced his restoration of the inscription, which was afterwards forwarded to the Count de Vogüé.

The result of the above official statement is, that the stone was discovered by Mr. Klein, the German preacher; that that gentleman informed the German Consulate of the same, with the view to their obtaining it; that a contract for its purchase was concluded between the Consulate and the possessors, and that the delivery of the stone to the Consulate was ordered by the Turkish Government. The ordinary rules of discretion would seem to have demanded that nobody should have interfered in the transaction until it had been regularly brought to a conclusion, or broken off.

H. PETERMANN."

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN SYRIA.

THIS winter at Cairo, meeting with Yacoob esh Shellaby of Nablus, I asked him whether he had ever heard of the discovery of native gold in Syria. He said he had upon several occasions, and had seen specimens which had been found by countrymen *in the Jordan valley*. The nugget brought to me at Sebastiyeh referred to at p. 89, *Quarterly Statement*, 1st series, may probably have come from the same locality.

GREVILLE J. CHESTER.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND,

HELD AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION, 29TH JUNE, 1871.

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK IN THE CHAIR.

The CHAIRMAN: I will first call upon the Rev. F. W. Holland, one of the Honorary Secretaries, to read the Report:—

Mr. Holland then read the Report:

"The Report which the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund