

## MR. TYRWHITT DRAKE'S REPORTS.\*

## I.

CAMP EL JIB, *March 20th*, 1870.

On the 4th and 5th inst. we moved our camp from Beit Nuba, where we had stayed for nearly five weeks, to the site of the ancient Gibeon. The present village is situated on the northern and smaller top of the double hill which, shaped like a figure 8, lies in a kind of basin north of Nebi Samwil. This basin is a tract of fertile ground, producing pears, grapes, figs, almonds, &c., in addition to the usual ground crops and olives, formed by an eccentric watershed, which, beginning at the head of Wady Selaian, in the first instance flows due east, then turning southwards round Bir Nabala, passes Lifta and 'Ain Karim, and eventually reaches the Mediterranean near Yabneh. The heads of this wady to the north of El Jib are called Wady Askar and Wady Hammúd, which latter comes down from the north-east of Bayt Unia, divided by a low watershed from an upper valley; a rise in the bed of which forms a barrage. Above this a pool covering some six to eight acres to a depth of 2ft. is formed during the winter. It is termed El Balúa, "the sink."

Nebi Samwil lies a short distance to the south, on the culminating point of a high ridge running east and west, and is separated from El Jib by Wady el Kibliyeh. The view from this place, which is usually identified with Mizpeh, is extensive. It includes Mount Gerizim and the promontory of Carmel to the north; Jaffa, Ramleh, and a wide stretch of the maritime plain to the west; Jebel Furaydís (the so-called Frank mountain), the far distant mountains of Jebál, the town of Kerak, Jebel Shihán (the highest point in Moab), are seen to the south and south-east; the continuation of the Trans-ordanic plateau, with slightly undulating outline, stretches to the east and north-east. This reputed tomb of Samuel has naturally formed an important trigonometrical station, and is one of the few points known to me whence Jaffa and Jerusalem are both visible.

Beautiful scenery can hardly with truth be said to exist in this country, but some of the prettiest views in Palestine proper are to be seen by looking westwards from the edge of the central range. At one's feet are deep rugged valleys more or less clad with brushwood, and olive groves strongly contrasting with the white lines of upheaved limestone which gleam like the skeleton ribs of a dead cultivation. Beyond, softened by distance, lies the great maritime plain, here a vivid green, denoting a tract of young wheat, there a fallow of rich red soil bordered by a sombre mass of olive-trees, rendered still blacker by the shadow of a passing cloud, while a gleam of sunshine shows off the white houses of Lydd and Ramleh and the fine tower of the "White Mosque" against the setting of gloomy trees. Far beyond these a thread of golden sand divides the emerald of the plain from the turquoise of the sea. A rounded mass of white, in shape like an exaggerated molehill, glistens at the

\* The following letter ought to have been printed in the last *Quarterly*, but was delayed in the post.

north end of the sand dunes. This we recognise as Jaffa; beyond lies the sea, flecked here and there with a tiny white speck, the sail of some coasting trader. Nearer beneath us, in the "*Shephelah*" and lower slopes of the main range, nestle countless villages, few of whose names have yet blackened any map, for the land of the two tribes of Beni Hárith (the northern and the southern) is as yet a *terra incognita*, where the map-maker has not even ventured upon the normal wady resembling rather the veins in a laurel leaf than an intricate system of valleys draining an abrupt mountain slope. This district, lying north of Beit 'Ur el Foka (Upper Beth Horon) and extending nearly to Náblius, is cautiously marked "not examined." It seems thickly populated, and plentifully strewn with olive groves. The *sinowbar* (stone pine) is also found here.

A fine day at this time of year shows the country in its best cloak. A little later in the season every blade of grass will be withered up; the shrubs on the hills will be blackened and parched; the plain will be covered with an impenetrable veil of white mist known to the African traveller by the appropriate name of "smokes." Above head the sky will be that pitiless glare of changeless blue, never to be relieved by a single speck of cloud till the welcome rains of autumn begin to cool the scorched soil and burning rocks. These fine days of early spring are rare, however, and we must often look for cold pelting rains, mists, hail, and even snow—though the latter very rarely, and only on the central range. While I am writing these lines hail is falling, and dense fogs, accompanied by sharp showers, at intervals are hurried up by the violent equinoctial gale from the south-west, which threatens every moment to tear the frail cotton shelter from over my head and hurl it into the neighbouring valley. Stout guy ropes and piles of stones on the tent-pegs have as yet succeeded in baffling *Æolus*, though for three nights and days we have been obliged to be on the alert every instant to save our tents from wrack and ruin. Only a few days ago the weather was like a fine June day in England.

Such are the changes of temperature to be found in this country from Petra to Damascus. Just two years ago I was snowed up near the former place at an elevation of 4,500 feet, and three weeks later in Moab, being only 1,500 feet lower, I sighed for a lump of snow to put in my tea, the thermometer standing at 105° Fahr. in the shade. At Damascus (2,340 feet, in the *Salahiyeh* suburb) snow is rare, though sleet is not uncommon in winter. In summer the thermometer ranges up to 100° Fahr. in the shade, and there is at times a difference of as much as 30° between the dry and wet bulbs.

Exposed to these extremes, the fellahín suffer a good deal from rheumatism, coughs, and bronchitis. The men wear a sheepskin coat as a wrap on warm as well as on cold days, but the women make no change in their dress, which usually consists of nothing but a long blue chemise tied in round the waist, a bonnet of red cloth decorated with an edging or roll of silver coins bordering the forehead and extending to the ears, reminding one of the crescent-shaped female head-dress worn by some of the Egyptian priestesses; over this a veil or shawl of coarse white cotton is thrown and hangs down to the waist: it serves to cover the mouth, while the bosom is left exposed, eastern and western ideas of

decorum differing on some points. In certain districts, however, such as the eastern Anti-Libanus and Jebel ed-Druze Hauran, where the villages are not unfrequently snowed up for forty or fifty consecutive days in mid-winter, all the inhabitants must perforce use sheepskin coats, which are also worn by many Bedawin tribes. In the towns the richer classes have many imported luxuries, such as broadcloth coats lined with Russian fox or ermine. Many men, both Jews and Moslems, continue to wear these furs all the year round, both here and in Turkey.

It is well known that the population of this country must, even as late as the sixth and seventh century, have been very large. I was hardly prepared, however, for the number of ruins which I have come across. Many persons would doubtless smile in pity were I to show them a hill-top now occupied by a rude wall enclosing a few fig-trees and a rock-hewn cistern or well, and say, "Here is the site of a considerable town." Most of the ruins are at the present day invisible to the unpractised eye, but may be traced by the wells, tanks, and caves hewn in the rock—the latter still inhabited by a race of Troglodytes half agricultural, half pastoral—by fig-trees and an olive grove, or a few patriarchal trees split by ages into two or three distinct trunks,\* grey and gnarled relics of former prosperity. The eye will detect carefully-squared stones in the loosely-piled walls of the garden or sheep-fold, and inquiry will teach the traveller that everywhere beneath the soil, where vegetation assumes a deeper green, covering perhaps two or three acres, squared stones will be found thickly strewn. In another place a few heaps of stones, the universal wells, and a few foundations may be traced above ground. Unimportant as these ruins now seem, chance will occasionally throw a gleam of light on one, and analogy leads to a true value being put on others.

I had heard the name of Deir el Rohbán (Monastery of Monks) applied to some ruins said to exist between Latrún (which, by the way, is always called *Ratlán* by the natives) and Shaykh Músá Tell'ía, a saint-house—of which more anon—conspicuously perched on an isolated block of hill which forms an outwork of the *Shephelah*, and whose west edge is occupied by Tell el Jezar. On riding up to the ruin I could at first see only a few heaps of stone in the form of hollow squares, outlining the ancient houses, but nothing to denote a site of any importance. Presently I came upon a long sunken building, some 60 x 15 ft.; at one end of it I found a small door and part of the circular vaulting (with keystone) which formerly covered it all in. The masonry was good and the stones well hewn: the quarry from which they were cut is visible about a quarter of a mile to the south-east. A neatherd from Amwas, in the territory of which village this ruin is situated, told me that the rest of the vault had been demolished by the people of Ramleh for the sake of the ready-hewn stones, as they found it much easier to carry them that distance than to quarry them nearer at hand. This deportation of stones has spoilt many a ruin. The site of Khalasah in the Negeb, for instance, is left almost stoneless

\* I frequently observe that the bark gradually encircles these split trunks, which at last assume the appearance of two or three trees growing from one root. Thus the olive indulges in a second childhood.

by the pilfering of the Gaza folk. The shaykh of this village tells me that his father and others built their houses entirely of the stones which they brought from the ruins of El 'Amayziyeh, some two miles distant. In fact, wherever a ruin is handy, the fellahin prefer digging up the well-cut seasoned stones to the toil of cutting them afresh.

Turning from this vault I crossed a small ploughed field and suddenly found myself on the brink of a circular, well-shaped cistern of careful construction. It still measures 31ft. in depth, though the bottom is a good deal choked up with earth and the plaster which has fallen from the sides. The diameter across the present top is 25ft., but the opening must formerly have been much smaller. The diameter at bottom I should estimate at some forty feet. It is lined with stones, of which the faces are nearly uniform in size, with a broad draft and small rustic boss; sectionally the stones are alternately long and short, are backed by a bed of rubble and cement, and this again by rough masonry of undressed stone. One conduit, about 3ft. x 2ft., and two smaller channels, lead into this reservoir, which in places retains a lining of cobblestones covered with plaster. Hence it would appear that the stones were drafted not for ornament but for use.

Had it not been for this cistern and vault, there would have been no proof, without excavation, that this ruin was ever more than a village such as the fellahin now inhabit, and there is no legend or name to make us believe that it was other than an ordinary townlet of the period. These two works, however, clearly prove the existence of a large civilised and industrious population, of whom no other trace remains except a few fragments of glazed pottery, a ware now unknown in the country, and rarely found in ruins. The same fact is also proved by similar works scattered among other ruins, by the grape and olive presses, by store or dwelling caves, by wells, cisterns, graves, and quarries, all hewn out of the solid rock, and which are everywhere abundant, but especially in the *Shephelah*.

When we come to consider the labour that must have been expended on a single cistern 20 ft. to 30 ft. deep, shaped like a church bell or inverted funnel, the opening being nearly  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ft. diameter, and the bottom 15 ft. to 25 ft., and cut out of the solid limestone, we can realise the industry of the people who have left countless examples of these works to be neglected and uncared for by the ignorant savages who now inhabit the land. It is no uncommon thing to find groups of 3 to 10, or even more, of these fine excavations. Some are near modern villages, in which case the lazy fellahin will every few years clean out the accumulation of filth and mud which has been swept into them by the surface drainage, for the passage of which I have seen channels cut through masses and heaps of garbage and manure thrown on the outskirts of the village, revolting alike to eye and nose. Others are found scattered over the country, and I have frequently observed isolated examples on hill tops, where they would be supplied by no more than half an acre to an acre of surface drainage.

As I have before mentioned, modern Troglodytes inhabit the old caves in common with their cows, sheep, and goats. The entrance is usually a smooth-dressed passage cut in the rock, about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft. to 4 ft. wide, open above, and descending either by an inclined plane, or shallow steps, to the doorway of the

cave, which is 4 ft. by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ft. The walls of the cave itself are seldom smoothed; in shape it is circular or oval, and rarely 6 ft. in height. The centre is occupied by the cattle, while the portion reserved by the human part of the community is marked off by a line of stones, and sometimes assumes the form of a *mastabah*, or slightly raised narrow daïs. The manure is carried out every morning and deposited in a heap just so near as not entirely to block up the gangway. The state of the cave after a heavy down-pour of rain, which contributes some six inches of water to the general Augean uncleanness, the slimy damp of the walls, the mosquitoes, the vermin, the reek of men and beasts, makes an ordinary English pig-stye a palace by comparison. And yet the indolent, able-bodied rascals, dignified by the title of reasonable beings, who own this byre are too *lazy* to build themselves huts, but prefer using the caves bequeathed them by the Hebrews and heathen of old, and lounge over the hills with their herds, or, rolled in their *abbas*, snooze in some sheltered nook without a thought or an aspiration beyond cramming their stomachs with crude wild herbs, or gathering a few piastres by hook or by crook, but, most important, with the least possible exertion to themselves. These men are often too indolent to turn an honest shilling by acting as guide for two or three hours, but will make their miserable women and children tramp ten, fifteen, or more miles in the day, to and from market to sell a bundle of dry stalks, called by courtesy firewood, a skin of milk, or a few eggs, worth in all sixpence or eightpence. The cave-dwellers I must, however, allow are sunk but little lower than their house-sheltered brethren. Their wants are few, and their means of supplying them equally scanty.

The goods and chattels of a modern Horite may easily be catalogued, say, some twenty or thirty sheep and goats, and four or five head of cattle, a half-starved dog, a couple of wives, and half-a-dozen children, a pair of donkeys, and a rusty gun, a few skins to hold milk, an earthen jar or two, a quern, (perhaps) a couple of tazzas of common pottery, rarely of tinned copper, to drink *leben* (soured milk) out of, a primitive plough and ox-goad, the woodwork being of home manufacture, and the iron share and spike, the handiwork of itinerant *Nawwar* (gipsies)\*, and these with a few bits of hair-cloth, which serve as wraps, bedding, or sacks for grain as occasion requires, complete the list. Wild herbs, especially mallows, *Khabbayzeh* (a general food for the poor in N. Africa, Syria, and Palestine), millet bread, and various preparations of milk form his chief diet, which is varied only by flesh when the rusty flint, or match-lock, succeeds in knocking over a partridge, or gazelle, crow, or hyæna, or when the throat of some sickly goat must be cut "to save its life." Beef is almost unknown in Palestine, and not at all appreciated, as none but diseased beasts, or those past work are slaughtered. A man once said to me, by way of showing that hyæna's flesh was fair, though not first-class food, "it's very like beef." In the villages, poultry, eggs, and pigeons were common, though

\* These people, who are found all over the civilised, or semi-civilised world, from S. America, to Siberia, still retain their original (one of the East Indian) dialect, and always follow the same trades; tinkering, dancing, weaving, baskets or chairs, horse-dealing, and chicken stealing, palmistry, and general knavery.

the former are rarely eaten; olives, *dibs* (grape-treacle), barley, or sometimes wheaten bread, are added to the above list.

I made mention of a saint-house—the tomb of Shaykh Mūsà Tellia—a few lines back, and will now give some details about these sacred spots. In European books and maps they are usually termed “Welys,” confounding the entombed with the tomb, the saint with the saint-house. They are of two kinds: 1. The actual tomb in, or more properly—for the Moslem religion objects to burial in a place of religion—adjacent to a small domed building which serves as a mosque, and which invariably has a *Mihrab* (prayer niche) turned towards Mecca. 2. A *Makham*, which I cannot translate better than chapel, either with or without a cenotaph. This is a dedicatory building to a prophet or saint, erected, more or less rudely,\* either in fulfilment of a vow, in obedience to a dream, or prompted by ostentatious piety.

Either class of building is considered equally holy, ploughs and other agricultural implements deposited in them are perfectly safe. In Moab I noticed that the graveyards on the open plains were heaped with ploughs which no raider or pilferer ever dared to remove. An oath upon a saint's tomb, especially if like Sidna Ishak (the patriarch Isaac) at Hebron, he be famous for a violent temper, is generally to be depended upon. I heard, however, of an instance at Kharaybeh in the Anti-Libanus, where a man perjured himself at a shaykh's tomb about some money matters. Soon afterwards one of his cows died, and he was so impressed with the belief that this misfortune was due to his falsehood, that he incontinently went and confessed to his debtor, and apologised to the saint (shaykh) whom he had insulted. In Morocco the natives believe that to shoot a bird which has taken refuge with a *sidi* (saint) is to incur the certainty of fever or other illness, and the probability of death. Many instances were quoted to me in proof of this belief. I usually considered the illness brought forward as due to malaria.

A tree growing, as one usually does, over a shaykh's tomb is like the Fijian “taboo.” It is never cut, and if a bough breaks off in the course of nature, it is not carried away for fuel, but carefully laid up near the tomb. In the same way any fragments of the building or tomb which decay and fall are not

\* That of Nebi Barok (Prophet Baruch) on the Anti-Libanus is merely a rude oval pen of stones without a roof, and ornamented with a few dedicatory camel sticks and switches. Shaykh Abu Zeitun, on the contrary, near Beit 'Ur el Foka, has a mosque, with chambers for pilgrims, well built and strewn with matting. The tomb of his mother (Umm el Shaykh, Bint Ahmad el Dujáni) on the same hill, is a larger building, but not so well kept up as her son's, to which *wakf* or glebe land is attached. It is not known who Shaykh Abu Zeitun was, nor what was his name in life. He is called the Father of the Olive, from the fact that long ago a man dreamt that he saw a light burning on the hill, and that a man of majestic appearance intimated his wish to have a mosque built there in his honour. Urged by this the dreamer went to the spot, saw a curious light, and to his great surprise found a fine olive-tree growing where none had been the day before. He was so impressed that he forthwith built a mosque in honour of Abu Zeitun, who enjoys at the present day a very high reputation through all the country side.

thrown away, but scrupulously preserved, generally in some out of the way niche or corner.

It is easy to trace in the reverence paid to these tombs, and the sacrifices of sheep, &c., offered at them, unsanctioned by the strict laws of Islam, traces of the old worship of demi-gods, heroes, and local powers, still retained in the Romish and Greek churches under the guise of adoration to saints, martyrs, *et hoc pecus omne*, traceable, too, through the belief of the peasants of Europe in fairies, elves, trolls, and gnomes. The custom of hanging rags, &c., on certain trees, may also be a lingering of one of the earliest material worships, that of trees.

One point to which I am specially directing my attention is the lie of the old Roman and other high roads. These are in many cases easily traceable and will eventually prove of great topographical value in elucidating sites noticed in old itineraries. I have already been able to trace several, which I shall treat of at greater length on a future occasion.

JERUSALEM, *March 2nd*, 1872.

Having finished our work in the neighbourhood of El Jib, we moved up here on the 23rd. Directly after Easter I intend to move down to Jaffa and survey that neighbourhood, which has not yet been done, as the expedition commenced operations at Ramleh. I hope to get this bit of work done before the Khammasin winds (siroccos) set in in May. The summer months I intend to pass on the main range, as the highest and coolest district to be found.

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## II.

P. E. F. CAMP, NABLUS, *July*, 1872.

Taking occasion of the non-commissioned officers having fifteen to twenty days' indoor work, for which the Rev. Mr. Elkey, Protestant clergyman here, kindly lent a room in his house, on the 21st ult., I started for Damascus, to take a few days' change of air after an attack of fever, and also to make arrangements for baggage mules better than those under the existing contract, the term of which is nearly expired.

I took the most direct route, viz., by Nazareth, Tiberias, and Kunayterah, accomplishing the whole distance in three and a half days (34 hours). This route has been so often described that I shall merely notice the great difference that has taken place in the country within the last few years, and which is chiefly owing to the suppression of Bedawi *ghazzawat* (raids). Less than eight years ago the Plain of Esdraelon (*Marj Ibn 'Amr*) was the favourite summer camping ground of various trans-Jordanic tribes, notably the Ruwalla, one of the great clans of the 'Anazeh tribe, as well as others of less importance. These sons of the desert not only prevented the cultivation to any great extent of this wide and fertile plain, but also exacted black mail from the unfortunate peasants, whose cattle and crops were, notwithstanding this,

frequently lifted or destroyed. On my first visit to the plain, in 1870, not more than one-sixth or one-fifth was under cultivation, and the same was the case in the following year. In both these seasons, however, there had been a sad deficiency of rain. On this last visit I was somewhat surprised to find nearly the whole plain covered with splendid crops, which I estimated to be distributed in the following proportions:—

Corn and barley .....	45·0
Millet .....	35·0
Simsim (sesame)	} .....
Cotton	
Castor-oil	
Fallow land .....	10·0
	100·0

The Nazareth people, owing to the abundant rainfall, were induced to sow a very large tract, and the result has been a most splendid harvest. Considerable difficulty is found in conveying such a quantity of grain and straw to the village, as it has to be carried on camels, mules, and donkeys, some four or five miles, half of which is over an execrable mountain path. This inconvenient arrangement is necessitated by the fact that all the crops must be thrashed on the village threshing-floor in order that the *'ashr* or tithe may be there taken from all at once.

Instead of the countless black "houses of hair," as the Arabs term their tents, which used to swarm here, I saw but two ragged specimens, so torn and tattered as scarcely to afford even shelter from the sun, and inhabited by two miserable families, whose sole possessions were a few goats. Certainly the glory of the Bedawi is departed, and were it not for the increased exactions of Government the condition of the fellahín would be much improved.

At Tiberias I made inquiries about the colony of Jew fellahín living at Bakín, some three or four hours distant from Safat. The account I had previously received at that place was confirmed. They consist of ten to twelve families, whose occupations and manner of life differ in nothing from that of their fellow-villagers, and they intermarry with the Jews of Safat and Tiberias. I am not aware that these men have ever been visited and described by any traveller, and it would be interesting to observe them following the pursuits of their ancestors in the land which once was theirs.

At the Jisr Benat Yakúb I found the Jordan a quick, brawling stream, some twenty-five yards wide, but in bulk scarcely one-quarter of what it is at its final exit into the Dead Sea. This is easily accounted for when we take into consideration the size and importance of its lower tributaries, the springs around the shore of Tiberias lake, the Nahr Yarmuk, which, flowing down Wady Mandhur, falls into the Jordan a little north of the Jisr el Mejamia, bringing down the whole

drainage of Jayd'úr, the Jaulan, and the Hauran (Ituræa, Gaulonitis, and Auranitis), together forming a stream but little inferior in size to the Jordan itself as it issues from the Sea of Galilee. The streams, too, from Wady el Arab, Wady Jalúd, and the numerous springs above Beisan (Scythopolis), all add to the main stream, though during part of the year nearly all their water is absorbed by irrigation.

Leaving the Jisr Benat Yakúb, some twenty minutes brought me to the summit of the Jaulan plateau, which consists of red soil thickly strewn with basaltic boulders. Small springs are numerous, and in their vicinity are considerable tracts of *dawah*, or millet, belonging to the Turcomans, who number some 600 tents in this district. At 2.20 I began to enter a woodland, sadly spoilt by the ravages of charcoal-burners, who destroy with fire many more trees than they are able to cut up with their primitive hatchets. The trees consist of evergreen oak (*Q. pseudococcifera*), *butm* (terebinth), and *z'a'arúr* (hawthorn). I then passed Tell el Khanzir, a volcanic mound with a crater opening northwards. Tell Abu Nedda (the Father of Dew), lying west of Kunayterah, seems formed entirely of mud; the plain surrounding it consists of yellowish volcanic clay overlaid by a thin stratum of hardened grey mud, which resolves itself into almost impalpable dust in the roads. I noticed that all the craters of these tells open in a northerly direction, as is the case with the Tulul el Safáh to the east of Damascus.

At Kunayterah I found an encampment of the Fádíl Arabs between the spring and the ruins, and betook myself to the tent of the shaykh. After a little while some of the Arabs managed to pick a quarrel with a Kurdish *zabtiyeh* (irregular horseman) who was with me, and nearly got up a row, but a little forcible language soon brought them to their senses, and two of the shaykhs came and kissed my hands with abject humility.

These Arabs have large herds of cattle, but very few goats or sheep; they own several mares, which, however, are not worthy of much notice.

The night was cold and the dew heavy. Next morning when I started, shortly before sunrise, dense clouds hung on the tells and Hermon, but were soon dissipated by the warmth; but for the first hour I felt that a great-coat would have been a luxury. From Kunayterah to Sa'sa a paved road is traceable, and in places is in almost perfect preservation. It is usually said to be Roman, but the extreme crookedness of the line militates against this idea. In places *détours* are necessary to avoid a morass, but this route is exceedingly, and, to all appearance, unnecessarily, devious in crossing the basalt field west of Sa'sa. At this village, situated on the 'Awaj, which Mr. Porter dogmatically informs us was the ancient Pharpar, is a large khan, which the same authority tells us was built by Sennan Pasha, who greatly distinguished himself in this line of architecture; but the stone over the principal gate has never been inscribed, and I was unable to find any date on the building. The khan

is very large—some 200 yards square—and is built of twenty courses of limestone upon three of basalt, the stones in all cases being drafted.

As I was leaving this place an Arab from Dor el Baydha, in Morocco, joined me, having just been stripped on the road I had come over. The robbers were two men, probably Druzes, who only left the poor fellow his cap, slippers, and a bit of cotton rag, taking from him his cloak and shirt and thirty-seven piasters, his sole possessions. This man had been to Mecca and Jerusalem, and was now on his way to Kerbela, near Baghdad, to visit the tombs of Hasan and Husayn, before returning to his own country.

Leaving Damascus on July 13th, I rode to Sunamayn. This name, "the two idols," is taken by Mr. Porter as being derived from two high and conspicuous towers, but unfortunately for the theory there are five towers, of almost equal height and prominence. The name, as was first suggested to me by my friend the Rev. W. Wright, of Damascus, is probably derived from a block of basalt lying near the city gate, on which two figures are sculptured in bas-relief, and though much battered and defaced are still quite recognisable.

The square towers in this part of the Hauran have all the appearance of being Saracenic work. They "batter" considerably, and are usually ornamented with two or three ornamental cornices at intervals, generally on a level with the floors of the different stories. These cornices, however, are not unfrequently made up of odds and ends, which shows that, whatever the date of their present construction, they are made up of the *débris* of other buildings. In one tower the window of the upper story is placed nearly half its breadth askew, and in another, at Taffas, near Mezayrib, a rude pointed arch is introduced, which further confirms their modern origin. In various parts of the town I noticed pieces of ornamentation, well executed but more florid—as, for example, a sort of honeysuckle pattern over a window—than what I had been accustomed to in the eastern Hauran.

On the road between Sunamayn and Damascus large caravans of the huge well-fed Hauran camel were constantly met with, bringing corn and barley to the capital. The return animals were usually unladen; some carried a box of apples or apricots, or a few wooden pitchforks, or other equally rude agricultural implements. These caravans number from twenty to sixty camels, and are accompanied by a man to every two or three beasts. A few flintlocks and rusty pistols are still necessary to ensure their safety, for though the great raids are now rare, small forays are of everyday occurrence in the Hauran. Only the day before I reached Sunamayn, a small party of Arabs ('Orban el Jebel) from the Druze mountain had ridden up to the village and carried off a camel and a horse. The next day, too, at 'Ain K'taybeh, I found an Arab with a sword-cut on his arm which he had received during the night from a band of plunderers whom he met on the road.

Soon after my arrival at Sunamayn, a party of Damascenes who had lent money to the villagers arrived to look after their interests. The

dress and appearance of these amateur travellers in the "Chól" amused me sufficiently. Silk robes and patent-leather boots, silver narghíles and worsted-work slippers, green-lined umbrellas and a folding iron chair-bedstead were the order of the day. Stretching their weary enervated limbs on hastily improvised divans, they managed to regain sufficient strength to attack with success the huge dish of *burghul* (crushed wheat) and mutton which the shaykh brought in for our dinner about 8 p.m.

On July 14th I left Sunamayn at 4.30 a.m. As the route from this place to Umm Keis (Gadara) seems but little known, I give my route and time, which, I must premise, is at the rate of about four miles an hour, as far as Mezayrib; thence to Umm Keis and Beisan little more than three, owing to my baggage-mule having suddenly become lame, and my being compelled to take any kedísh (pack-horse) that I could find at the different villages.

I hope our American cousins will not feel aggrieved at my having ridden through a corner of the country east of the Jordan, of which they will "be monarchs so soon as they begin to survey." I am, however, quite ready to put forward various claims, both direct and indirect, arising from the fact of their having delayed their expedition so long that, as yet, no cairns have been erected east of the Jordan to enable us to connect the two surveys.

	H. M.	
Sunamayn to Ignayyeh* (L.).....	50	Small village.
„ 'Ain Ktaybeh (L.)	50	Tell and ruins; small birket, from which a spring flows.
„ B'gayya (R.).....	25	? Bukayya. A spring rises here which passes on to the next, and by a canal to Dilleh, whence it seems to be carried off in a south-west direction, not as stated by Murray (p. 504, vol. ii. ed. 1868) to the south-east. A broad marsh extends to the east, full of flags and rushes.
„ Second ruin of same } name (R.) .....	} 10	
„ Dilleh (R.) .....	25	
„ Shaykh Meskin (R.)	1'35	Village.
„ Taffas (R.) .....	2'15	Village. D'aíl (vil.) about half mile to L. at 1.10.
„ Mezayrib .....	45	
Total .....	7'15	

This road is over a monotonous plateau beside the telegraph posts—the wires in many places being absent, owing to a prejudice conceived against them by the Arabs, which they show by cutting them—sup-

\* These places are spelt in Vandevelde, Kuneiyeh, Kuteibeh, Dilly, Eshmis-kin, Tufs, and Mezarih.

posed to connect the garrison at Mezayrib with the authorities at Damascus. In places a fragment of paved road appears, but seldom elsewhere than across some piece of ground which in winter would become a swamp.

At Mezayrib the Kalaa or Fort—the residence of the Mutasserif of the Hauran—a Saracenic building, is separated from the cavalry barracks, which though not yet completed are already falling to ruin, by a small stream. After supplying a mill, this water runs into a lakelet in the centre of which the village is built on a small tell of basaltic boulders. It is connected with the mainland by a rough narrow causeway, and in the old days must have been unassailable by Bedawi *ghazzawat*. Fish of considerable size are said to exist, but the fellahín are too ignorant and lazy to take them either by net or line.

During the summer months a cavalry camp of three or four troops is pitched here and serves to keep the Sirhan Arabs, the Benú Sakhr, and the Wulid 'Ali in some sort of check. I noticed some handsome mares here belonging to the two former tribes. Indeed they are considered to have the best mares in the desert, which is accounted for by their frequent proximity to Nejd. The fellahín told me that some ten years ago these Arabs used to exact blackmail from them regularly, and not content with this would come into the houses and carry off food, clothing, and household utensils, but that since the establishment of troops in the Hauran these objectionable practices have been put a stop to.

A sort of huckster's market is now established during the summer months at Mezayrib, in which all kinds of odds and ends and trumpery are sold to the Bedawin, often in exchange for *semn* (clarified butter).

The climate of this place is unhealthy and feverish and the water tepid. The far-famed fleas, too, of the Hauran keep up all their *prestige*, and effectually banish sleep from all but pachydermatous fellahín.

July 15.—		H. M.	
Mezayrib to valley.....		45	Here the limestone again appears on the surface ; flints in wady bed.
„ Wells in Wady Shel-láleh .....		2. 0	Immense herds of she-camels belonging to the Benú Sakhr watering here.
„ Maghaïr .....		1.15	
„ 'Arbid*.....		45	Ancient Arbela.
„ Kufr Jyyiz .....		1.30	Small village to right. Excavated tombs, quarries, and wine-presses scattered about.
„ Síma .....		15	Small village on road. Wells ten minutes further.
„ Hátib .....		1.20	Small village half mile east of road.
		<hr/>	
		7.50	

Putting my scanty baggage on a camel, as the mule was scarcely

\* Spelt by Vandevelde, Irbid.

capable of walking, I rode on ahead. Just above the wells in Wady Shelláleh is a ruined bridge or aqueduct (? from B'gayya) across the valley, built of large drafted stones. A little higher up the wady are several excavated caverns, in one of which I observed (pigeon ?) holes similar to those which have so much puzzled travellers at Beit Jibrin and Deir Dibwan in Palestine. On my arrival at 'Arbid the kaimakam sent to ask me to rest with him, which I did. After breakfast the mejlis (tribunal) assembled and began to discuss affairs.

Imagine a room some 20ft. by 15ft., with mud walls and floor, and smoke-stained roof of beams and brushwood, supporting a layer of earth. At the end a divan occupied by the kaimakam and self; on two sides the native shaykhs, &c., seated on rush mats and smoking long chibouks; the other end, lighted by a window and door, through both of which zabtíyehs (horsemen), fellahín, and others, were continually coming and going.

The kaimakam was a civil little Turk, dressed in a cotton *kumbaz*, which would have been improved by soap and water, over which to receive me he had put a fur cloak, which the heat, however, soon compelled him to discard. His Arabic was scanty, and spoken with a broad Turkish accent. The members of the mejlis were of the usual type, one could read, none could write. Soon afterwards the mutassebji (tax-collector), a dapper, self-satisfied little Damascene Christian, speaking fair French, came in.

*First case.*—Enter a man and speaks to the kaimakam thus: "Oh, Bey, I wish for the release of Mohammed, now in prison."

Kaimakam, to zabtíyeh: "Bring him in."

Member of mejlis to prisoner: "What are you here for?"

Prisoner: "For shooting a man whom I did not shoot."

K., to friend: "What is the man here for?"

Friend: "For shooting a man in the ghor. The man's brother brought him here, but he's a Belga Arab, and is gone home, so I want you to let Mohammed go."

Member of mejlis (in dogmatic parenthesis): "As we have imprisoned him so we have power to release him."

Kaimakam: "But if we let him go and the other man wants to prosecute him, will he come?"

Friend: "Oh, yes, to be sure he will."

Exeunt friend and prisoner in triumph.

Secondly comes on a complaint from some of the villagers (Greek Christians) of El Hasm, that the Mohammedans prevent their drawing water from the only well in the place. Pandemonium in the mejlis. Six or seven men scream and gesticulate at one another for five minutes. During a momentary lull a voice is heard to observe quietly that this is like a quarrel between two Haríms. A dead silence for a few moments and then the matter is discussed more quietly, and the Moslems are ordered to let the Christians have their share of the water after ten days. The Moslem shaykh goes out spluttering uncouth oaths.

Then begins a discussion wilder and stormier than the first, till one of the chief disputants sinks back exhausted. A voice then suggests the fact—"There is no deity but God, and all men were made by Him; the rain is His gift: therefore let all men partake equally of it." A murmur follows of "Wallah! that's true! That's just!" and orders are given that the Christians are to take what water they require.

While a pack-horse was being procured I took a glance at the large circular basaltic mound which formed the old fortress. It is about three hundred yards in diameter, with a depression in the centre containing several ruins built of old materials. On the outside a wall of large unhewn stones is in places visible.

Balked in my intention of proceeding the same evening to Umm Keis, by the continued sliding of my baggage from the back of the Rosinante told off to carry it, I was compelled to stop for the night at Hatib. Just before reaching that place I was joined by some sixty irregular horsemen from Jerusalem who had been riding the Jebel 'Ajlún to collect the *willi* or tax imposed on the tent-dwelling Arabs.

July 16.—	H. M.	
Hatib to Belka .....	1.15	Lost thirty minutes here by mistake in road.
„ Sáfin.....	1.15	(? Safineh, the Ark.) A ruined Roman station on a tell to the left of the road, which in many places shows traces of pavement, and in others is cut through the rocks, and still shows marks of wheels.
„ Umm Keis	20	
	<hr/>	
	2.50	

The greater part of this route lay through a woodland of *ballut*, *butm*, hawthorn, *kharrub*, and large-leaved lime-trees. The road, as is almost universally the case with those engineered by the Romans, runs along a ridge, thus avoiding all unnecessary gradients.

The hundreds of basalt sarcophagi scattered about Umm Keis are of the regular *North* Syrian type, ornamented with bosses and floral scrolls on the sides, and covered by a ridge-topped lid having greater spherical knobs at the corners. Mr. Porter (Murray's Guide, vol. ii. p. 302) states that this basalt must have been brought from some distance. He is seemingly unaware that the town stands partially on an outcrop of basalt, which falls away in steep cliffs to the ghor due west of the town, and distant a little more than a mile. For a further account of the ruins I may refer to his description, which is, with this exception, correct.

Leaving the ruins I intended to go to the *Hammeh*, or hot-springs, and a *zabtíyeh*, who had been sent to escort me from 'Arbid, professed to have come that way only three days previously. Having no map with me I wildly put my trust in him, more particularly as we began

on the road which I had ascertained from the fellahín to lead to the springs. At the end of forty minutes, however, I found that to reach them we should have to go back to the ruins, and as this would have entailed sleeping in the ghor without food or forage, as we could not have reached Beisan that night, I was reluctantly obliged to give up visiting them.

Meeting a *natúr*, or watchman for the crops, I asked him to show me the way to Beisan, which could be seen from the edge of the cliff 100 yards distant. The man expressed unwillingness and ignorance. One of the soldiers then gave him a push on the shoulder with his open hand, and told him to go on. At this the man began to trot along the path, and wringing his hands to cry, "Dakhl Allah, dakhl Allah," &c. (I seek protection of God). Warming to his work he got into a regular howl, and then flinging his pipe and stick away on one side, slipped off his abba (cloak), then his blue shirt, and lastly his white one, then standing in a state of nature he wrung his hands and howled more wildly than ever. Finding that we were all laughing, he suddenly ceased and turned towards us with a most sheepish look. I blandly asked him if he was insane. He replied in the most natural voice, "No, I'm only a poor devil," and trotted off to pick up his property, doubtless feeling that he had been very much ill-used.

My route is as follows:—

	H.M.	
Umm Keis to edge of cliffs .. . . .	40	With a <i>détour</i> .
„ edge of ghor .....	1. 5	Steep descent; bad track.
„ stream at Wady el	45	Water-melons grown here; water tepid, with slight taste of sulphureted hydrogen.
'Arab .....		
„ Ford of Jordan.....	50	
„ Beisan .....	2.10	
	<u>5.30</u>	

The ford over the Jordan is nearly north-east of Beisan. At the best place the water was only 1½ft. deep, but I rode up the bed of the river for about 100 yards without the water coming up to my saddle-flaps.

At Beisan the Kadi asked me to stop with him, and I found him a gentlemanly Turk, who bitterly bewailed his banishment to such an out-of-the-way place. Talking of the Bedawi Ghaza, and the idea so born with the son of the desert that "stolen goods are sweet," he told an *à propos* story of a rich Kurd who stopped at his house in Anatolia. Another man happened to be there with a load of honey. In the early night he heard the Kurd continually getting up and lying down again. Watching what he was about he saw him go to the load of honey, take three dips with his finger, and then come back to his mattress and sleep like a child. On being remonstrated with the next morning he said he could not rest till he had filched a bit.

During the recital of this story I saw Husayn, shaykh of the Ghazáwi Arabs, licking his lips in sympathy. His tribe have for some time been constrained to give up forays, and now peaceably cultivate the soil of the ghor. Their appearance, like most of the inhabitants of the ghor and Belka, is more like that of fellahín than Bedawín, as they wear long heavy moustaches and beards: the hair on the true desert Arab's face being generally scanty. Good living has probably much to do with this.

At Beisan I found a broken inscription. It is on limestone, and lies near the Serai.

July 17.—	H.M.	
Baysan to Mazár Abn Faraj.....	1.10	A tree and tomb, with a few underground huts and matamoras tenanted by melon growers.
„ Rahub .....	1.0	A small village and spring at the foot of the hills.
„ Roman milestones in Wady Khashineh ...	30	
„ Tyyásir .....	1.0	Small village to left.
„ Túbás .....	1.10	Large village; water from wells only.
„ Burj Bardáwil .....	50	Copious springs and mill.
„ 'Ain Fár'a.....	15	Spring; head of Wady Fár'a.
„ Náblus .....	2.45	
	<u>8.40</u>	

Along Wady Khashineh I found traces of a paved Roman road as far as Túbás. Here I found wild olive-trees for the first time in Palestine. For two or three miles the hill sides are thickly clothed with them, and such trees and shrubs as *retem* (white broom), hawthorn, wild almond (*el asaf*), caper, *kharrub* (locust-tree), and *sarris* (a common evergreen bush bearing a red berry). Hence some execrable paths led me to the tents at Náblus.

### III.

P. E. F. CAMP, JEBA, Aug. 22, 1872.

Having finished the necessary observations from the trigonometrical stations within reach of Náblus on the 6th August, we—that is to say, Lieutenant Conder and myself—went up for a short visit to Jerusalem, leaving the non-commissioned officers to fill in detail.

Our visit there has strengthened my belief that there is still a great deal to be done, and this without any very large outlay. It will be seen from Lieutenant Conder's report that many points which will probably turn out of great value have not hitherto received the amount of attention warranted by their importance. I have great hopes that a few comparatively small excavations which he has planned will, when carried out, be productive of final results.

Up to this time there had been no occasion for any digging in the

country, except for the purpose of opening one or two tombs; which, as I have before mentioned, were unproductive. A few days ago we were told of wonderful remains at a place called Duwaymeh, lying at the eastern base of Mount Gerizim. An inspection of the place showed us two syenite pillars, fifteen feet six inches long, and about two feet in diameter, slightly bulging in the centre, and terminated by a plain fillet and astragal. A third column was taken from this place by Mohammed Saïd, the late pasha, and is now lying near the unfinished barracks between Náblus and Baláta. There is also a broken column at the former place. Here we determined to dig, and sent to the neighbouring village of Kefr Kallín for five men, who came and dug without a murmur, and never even asked what they were to be paid. A trench running north and south, at right angles to the two fallen pillars above mentioned, brought us, at the depth of about two feet, to a tessellated pavement of good colours but poor execution, and set in friable cement. The patterns were heart-shaped leaves, twists, and other commonplaces. The cubes are half-inch and consist of white, pale yellow, red, pink, and blue-black limestones. We found other cubes (three-quarter inch) scattered about, but none *in situ*. Pottery was not abundant: only a few fragments of coarse red, and a bit or two with a bad glaze, were turned up. I observed no glass except the mouth of a rude bottle, and one square of glass mosaic, part perhaps of some wall decoration. The workmanship of the pavement in no way equalled that of the pillars, hence the presumption that these latter were brought from some older building—perhaps the Gerizim temple—and made use of in building a Roman villa. A fellah who had been employed to dig by Mohammed Saïd Pasha, told me that the mosaic extended over a space some fifty yards square. In one place a small tank (bath or impluvium?) had been found lined with marble. Sister columns to the above-mentioned exist in a broken state in the ruined church at Jacob's well, and a perfect one lies between Joseph's tomb and the hamlet of Askar. Here, too, an extensive mosaic pavement exists.

The walls of this villa seem to have been simply made of rubble. The columns lay nearly due east and west, and this, joined to the fact that the mosaic beneath has been crushed by their fall, leads to the conclusion that they were overthrown by an earthquake.

The old town of Náblus seems to have extended much farther east than it does at present. Some vaults were found when digging the excavations of the before-mentioned barracks, which, though unfinished, are rapidly falling to ruin. Several persons, too, in the town declare that they hold title-deeds of shops and houses in the same locality, but I have not been able to obtain a sight of any of these documents. An oblong mound, with traces of a rude wall on the western side, blocks up the mouth of the valley between Baláta and Askar, and if, as some conjecture, the latter represents the name of the old Sychar, which I cannot but consider as separate from Shechem, this

may have been its position. Still it is one of those points which must always remain uncertain from want of evidence either for or against.

Before leaving Náblius we paid a visit to the Samaritan synagogue, to inspect the famous MSS. Taking off our boots, we entered the synagogue with the old priest Amran, who, without any difficulty, showed us the first MS. This is contained in a brass scroll-case ornamented with a florid arabesque of silver, fastened on in very thin narrow plates. I then asked him to show us the other two rolls—viz., the one said to be written by Abishuah and the next oldest. At this request the old man expressed the utmost surprise, and wished me to believe that this was the real Simon Pure. As, however, on my first visit with Mr. Palmer I had seen two, and on a subsequent visit with Captain Burton three, I was able to assure him that I knew all about them. He then said the key was with his nephew Yakub, who soon appeared, and after a little persuasion showed No. 2, enclosed in a case of workmanship similar to but better than No. 1. On one side of this are depicted the cherubim and altar, the branched candlestick, the pot of manna, Aaron's rod, the flesh-hook, and other sacred utensils.\* A legend round the edge gives the date A.H. 860—or A.D. 1456—the Samaritans have since, soon after the Mohammedan conquest, dated by the year of the Flight—and the name of the workman, Yakub ben Fawki, of the town of Damascus. Amran told me that an old tradition states it to be the work of a Damascene Jew. The style of work is distinctly Perso-Damascene, and is still employed in the ornamentation of narghiles, trays, dishes, and other brass ware, by a Persian Jew now living at Damascus. These things are often sold to travellers by the *bric-à-brac* dealers as genuine antiques. Having inspected No. 2, I asked to be shown the real MS. Both the priests immediately exclaimed that there were no more, but I again assured them that I had seen it. Yakub looked nervously at his uncle, and asked what was to be done. Amran shrugged his shoulders and said he did not care. Yakub then asked me why, having seen it once, I wanted to see it again. I replied that Lieutenant Conder had never seen it. He then said that he could not bring it out of its chest.† This was just what suited us, as we were able to see the rolls in their places behind the veil (a white quilted counterpane) and assure ourselves that there were no others. The roll (No. 3) is kept in a case of solid silver of modern workmanship, and has all the appearance of much greater antiquity than either of the other two. It is treated, too, with the greatest respect. On opening it Yakub kept repeating *Destúr* (permission) and *Bismillah* (in the name of God). The evidently real hesitation about showing this roll at once proclaims it to be the one venerated by these Cuthim. It is kept in a cupboard or upright chest with No. 2, No. 1 being in a separate box outside.

\* For photographs of this see the P. E. F. series, Nos. 225—228.

† This can only be done when the high priest is ceremonially clean, and has been that day to the bath.

The roll No. 3 is seldom shown to travellers; in fact, I believe that very few indeed have seen it. But as it is now getting generally known that there are three rolls, I hear that the Samaritans intend getting up a fourth to show instead of No. 3. In course of time they have grown to regard this roll as a fetish, and though they will forswear themselves by the name of God as easily as other orientals, an oath on this is sacred. An anecdote showing the value at which it is held by an intelligent British tourist, was told me on the best authority. A certain Englishwoman, travelling with a firman from the Sultan and at government expense, came to Náblius, and made arrangements to see the rolls by night, as it was the time of the Passover, and the High Priest was engaged on Gerizim during the day. Having seen it, she presented a backshish of one shilling. Such munificence ought to make us proud of our countrywoman.

There is a curious fact connected with the Samaritans. The whole number of the community is 135 or 136, and of these eighty are males and fifty-five females. Considering the long course of intermarriage practised by these people it is very remarkable, and is tending rapidly to destroy the race, as marriage, either for men or women, with other than their own sect, is strictly forbidden.

There is at Jerusalem, in the possession of Mrs. Ducat, a poor German Jewess, a Samaritan MS. called the "Fire-trie'd," about which a few notes taken from an account written by Dr. Jacob Frederick Kraus may prove interesting.\*

It is called the "Fire-trie'd" by the Samaritans from a note at the end of the Book of Numbers to this effect—"It came out from the fire by the power of the Lord to the hand of the king of Babel, in presence of Zerubbabel the Jew, and was not at all burnt. Thanks be to the Lord for the Law of Moses."

It is in the form of a book—not a roll—written on parchment, and contains 217 leaves. It is incomplete at beginning and end, as it commences at Genesis xi. 11, and ends at the beginning of Moses' blessing in Deuteronomy. The pages are 11 by 9 inches. The text is divided into verses and sentences; words at the end of a line are not broken, but—except in the case of the name of the Lord—the letters are spread out to fill up the required space. The letters are rather larger than those in Abishuah's roll (Samaritan No. 3), and some appear to have been gilt. The decalogue is not, as in later MSS., numbered at margin. The paragraphs are not numbered or described as in more modern ones, which, for instance, say, "This is the first book of Moses, containing 250 paragraphs," &c. Dr. Kraus considers these to be two proofs of great antiquity. He goes on to say that Abishuah's roll has a kind of acrostic in the middle of the lines, made by darkening one or more letters. Read down the roll this makes, "I, Abishuah, son of Phineas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest—the goodwill of the Lord and his glory be on them—have written this holy book in the door of the

\* See photographs Nos. 171—174.

tent of the congregation on Mount Gerizim, in the thirteenth year of the government of the children of Israel in the land of Canaan, with its boundaries round about. I thank the Lord."

The "fire-ried" MS. has no acrostic, but a note at the end of Genesis: "This holy Torah has been established by a wise, valiant, and great daughter" (?) "a good, precious, and intelligent leader, and by a master of all knowledge, from Shelomo son of Saba, a valiant man, a leader of the congregation, and an instructor of his generation, as well by his knowledge as by his intelligence; he was a benefactor and an interpreter of the Torah and a father of blessings; he was of the sons of Nun—may the Lord be gracious to them—and it was appointed to be a thing dedicated to the Lord, that men should read therein with fear and prayer in the house of the High Priest on the tenth day of the seventh month, and this was performed in my presence, and I am Ithamar, son of Aaron, son of Ithamar, the High Priest. May the Lord renew his strength. Amen." Thus far Dr. Kraus.

The MS. was obtained by Mrs. Ducat's late husband in the payment of a bad debt. Owing to the exaggerated price (£1,000) asked for it when brought to England a few years ago it has never been sold. It could now be purchased probably for about £200.

The survey is proceeding most satisfactorily, and in about another month we hope to begin measuring the second base-line on the plain of Esdraelon.

The other day we came across a volcanic outbreak which, as far as I am aware, has never been noticed. It appears beneath and west of Shaykh Iskander, a prominent tomb some nine miles W.N.W. of Jenin. Here I found volcanic clay, nodules of hard black basalt in beds of friable brownish-grey syenite (?). This accounted for the waterworn appearance so often assumed by basaltic boulders, and which had long puzzled me. The character of the superincumbent limestone seemed somewhat changed in places both in colour and texture.

For some distance to the south of this outbreak is a district covered with dense brushwood of *sindian* and *ballut* (*Quercus coccifera* and *Q. pseudococc*), of the *Arbutus andrachne*—locally *kykab*—mixed with a few trees of *kharrub* or locust. To the north, and extending as far as Carmel, is an arid uninhabited waste, treeless and waterless, rugged and pathless, covering perhaps some sixty or seventy square miles, which will take us a month to survey, and we shall doubtless feel glad when it is finished.

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## NOTICES OF PALESTINE IN THE CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS.

BY GEORGE SMITH.

THE Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions contain some of the most remarkable illustrations of biblical history and geography. During most of the period of the Jewish monarchs, the Assyrians were in direct com-