

Thus I may close the report of our winter's work in Haifa. Little remains for us to finish there, and in another week or fortnight we shall be able to leave the comfortable little house in the German colony, where we have been stationed during the rough weather (what little there has been of it this year), and have met with every kindness and hospitality from the worthy and energetic little society who have here gained a footing in Palestine. We shall return to tent-life and outdoor work, and endeavour, if all goes well, during the spring to fill in the country between our former districts and the sea-shore, and attentively to examine the ruins of Cæsarea, Antipatris, Tantura, Castellum Peregrinorum, and other sites in this hitherto little visited and almost unexplored part of the Holy Land.

CLAUDE R. CONDER, Lt. R.E.,

Commanding Survey Party, Palestine.

MR. C. F. TYRWHITT DRAKE'S REPORTS.

XI.

SHAYKH ABRĀYK, Dec. 9, 1872.

Vineyard-towers (ancient).—In reply to a question about the watch-towers mentioned in my last report as existing in the thickets near Umm el Fahm, I may say that they have all the appearance of vineyard-towers or garden-houses, but of more solid construction than those now used in Palestine. The old buildings are usually about 20ft.—25ft. square, and constructed of roughly-squared stones, measuring from 3ft. to 4ft. in length, by 18in.—20in. in depth and breadth. These are occasionally drafted with rustic boss. The door is usually very small; the roof of lower chamber, which in one instance remains, is made of blocks laid over a rude arch, which forms their central support. In no case was any trace of mortar or rubble visible. The walls were probably dry, and the crevices would allow a free circulation of air, a great desideratum in buildings such as these, intended only for habitation during the hottest part of summer. Not only amongst the brushwood here, but also in the thickets of Mount Carmel, terraces are frequently met with, showing that once cultivation extended over even the highest parts of the hills, which are now the haunt of the panther and wild boar, the fox, jackal, and wolf, which with the partridge and woodcock are seldom disturbed even by a passing goatherd.

Aqueduct.—Lieut. Conder made mention in his last report of an aqueduct near Saffūriyeh, of which we made a survey. A few remarks on this work may not prove uninteresting. In Jebel el Siah (collection of water) are three shallow pits which give an unfailing supply, and are

called 'Ayyun el Jinnan (the springs of the genii). Close to these, owing to the alluvial nature of the soil, the aqueduct cannot be traced, but on the hillside below El Mesh-hed it may be seen, a narrow and shallow channel cut in the rock. This winds along the hillsides for a distance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and then crosses a small valley. Beyond this are a series of caves now broken in, through which the channel doubtless passed. A little farther on we come to traces of a constructed aqueduct. This gradually becomes more distinct, and at last assumes the form of a rubble wall 5ft. high. This wall is constructed of large rough blocks packed with smaller stones, the interstices being filled up with a hard mortar, into the composition of which potsherds and ashes largely enter.

At the end of the wall all trace of the aqueduct is lost, till we find it again a channel, 2ft. broad and 6in.—8in. deep, with an inner channel 1ft. broad and 4in. deep, cut in the rock. A little farther and we come to the entrance of a cave, which extends to a length of 580ft., with a height of from 8ft. to 20ft., while its breadth varies from 8ft.—15ft. At the west end of this tunnel the exit passage is blocked up with earth, but leads in the direction of Saffūriyeh, distant $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, for the supply of which the aqueduct was presumably constructed. Two large *barrages* occur in the cavern, cut in the solid rock, and where necessary supplemented with masonry. In the second or western there appears to have been a lower and an upper sluice; the former through a rock-hewn passage, now stopped up with earth, and the latter through a channel of masonry on the top of the *barrage*. Square holes are cut in the roof at intervals, partly no doubt to facilitate quarrying, and partly for the purpose of drawing water. In many places, especially towards the west end, the roof has fallen in, and the original level of the floor cannot be ascertained. We found, however, a well-defined water-line, and on drawing out the sectional plan this was found to correspond with the level of the entrance and exit. The sides of the caves are lined with several coats of cement; the inner is frequently half-covered with potsherds, stuck over it while wet. Above this comes a layer of cement mixed with ashes, and on the surface a firm hard cement of a pinkish hue, from the quantity of pounded red pottery used in its composition. The roof is not plastered, and in many places natural horizontal cracks in the rock have been somewhat enlarged, the better to act as land-drains for the collection of surface water.

The whole length of the aqueduct from Jebel el Siah to the end of the cave is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The style of the work leads to the conclusion that it is Roman. There is nothing, however, to show that it is not late Jewish, constructed under the influence of contact with western civilisation.

Caves and Tombs.—In the rocky glen which leads down from the ruins of El Tiréh to Iksal we found a cave sufficiently curious to deserve mention. A cross cut on a large fallen lintel at the entrance shows it to have been used by Christians, and the interior arrangement seems

to point to a hermit as its occupant. The cave is mostly natural, and is situated in a spur of the hillside, in such a manner that by building a wall of masonry on one side, and a gateway (now ruined) at the end, a chamber was enclosed at the cave's mouth. The stones of the masonry are about 2ft. or 3ft. long, and 1½ft. to 2ft. deep and broad: they are filled in with rubble, and the mortar is mixed with earth and broken pottery.

A cupboard-like recess is left in the masonry, possibly to serve as a seat. The cave itself is divided into two parts: the outer is some 15ft. high at the mouth, but gradually slopes inwards like a funnel, till it ends in a doorway, 5ft. × 3ft. This was formerly closed by a stone door 14in. thick. Inside, the cave is an irregular oval in shape, and about 12ft.—14ft. high. At the far end is a small recess 9ft. from the ground, which can be reached by three rude steps. This would seem the reverend hermit's larder. On the right hand are two more natural recesses, and between them and the door a place has been hewn out which doubtless served as a bed. The floor is many inches thick with the droppings of bats. Struck by this unusual circumstance—most caves being used to shelter the flocks in the rainy season—I asked the reason of it, and was told that the cave was inhabited by a *Ghuleh* (ghoul), and that none of the shepherds dared enter. The native name is Magharet el Mat-húneh.

I may observe that the tombs which occur in such number at Iksal (see Lieut. Conder's report), sunk in the rock with an arched loculus on either side, are exactly similar to those I described as existing in the neighbourhood of El Tireh and 'Amwas, on the edge of the Jaffa plain, and in Jebel el Zawi, near Aleppo. The lids, however, differ from these last, which are larger, and worked with a ridge roof and other ornaments, as is common in the case of sarcophagus lids.

From Nazareth we visited some caves at Yafa (ancient, *Japhia*), which are very interesting. As far as I am aware, they are unique in arrangement, for I have never seen anything at all like them in Palestine or Syria. The entrance to this curious place is through a small passage leading out of an ordinary cave of moderate dimensions. This passage is only about 12ft. long, and leads into a small roughly circular chamber, nearly 5ft. high, and some 12ft. diameter. In the floor of this are two circular man-holes, "joggled" round the edge to admit of a slab being inserted; these lead into two lower caves, which again communicate with a still lower story. Besides these circular man-holes there are small doorways in the walls, so that every chamber communicates with each of its neighbours above, below, or at the sides by one or more openings. These ramifications are very intricate and puzzling. My sketch-plan and section will show better than any description the style of cave.

From this peculiar arrangement I cannot look upon them as tombs, for which purpose the number of openings would be clearly objectionable. I am inclined to think they were *matamir*, or chambers for

storage of grain, &c. In that case the upper opening would be used to throw the corn in at, while one of the lower ones would be well suited to draw it out at. The stone in which they are cut is very soft, and can easily be cut with a knife. The tool used in excavation was a pick 2½ in. broad. These caves were first discovered by the fellahin a few years ago, and no bones were found in them. There are, however, rude niches in the walls for lamps: these may have been used by the men who quarried them.

In the neighbouring village of M'alul is a remarkable tomb constructed with fine masonry. The architectural details of this were sent home by last mail. The natives call it Kasr el Zir, and they say that Zir was brother to Kulayb (the little dog), and Jerro (the whelp), and that this latter was founder of the great tribe of the Beni Helal (sons of the crescent moon). Of these Beni Helal many tales are told: their original country was in Yemen and Himyar, and the history of their wars is mixed up with accounts of Abu Zayd, of mythical renown. Defeated by a Himyarite king, they took refuge in the plain of Esdraelon; and near Sammúneh some trees of *Acacia nilotica* (the only specimens I have met with in Palestine) are said to have sprung from their tent-pegs. For some reason this country did not suit them, and they emigrated to Egypt, many being slain *en route* by the Emir of Ghazze. From Egypt they went to Trobolus el Gharb (African Tripoli). This is the popular story, but Shaykh 'Amín, the chief Moslem at Nazareth, says that Jerro was father, not of the Beni Helal, but of the Beni Wail.

The Beni Kulayb was formerly a most powerful tribe of Arabs. I am not aware whether they still exist in Arabia, but have reason to believe that they do not. A relic of the tribe, numbering some eighty tents, may usually be found towards the south-east of the Sea of Tiberias.

At this place we have examined and made plans of a large number of cave-tombs. Some of them are of considerable extent. The only trace of inscription consists of the single word $\pi\alpha\rho\theta\epsilon\text{N}\iota\epsilon$ scratched over a loculus, and rudely marked with red paint. The most noticeable peculiarity of the tombs here is that they have both pseudo-sarcophagi and pigeon-hole loculi. By the former I would designate those loculi which are sunk beneath an arch parallel to the walls of the tomb, and have a thin partition of native rock on their outer side; they have much the appearance of a sarcophagus placed in a niche in the wall, but having no space at either end. The pigeon-hole loculus is of the type so well known near Jerusalem (*e.g.*, in the so-called tombs of the judges), which is driven at right angles to the surface of the wall, and is usually about 7ft. long by 2ft. wide, and 3ft. high, the roof being slightly arched in most cases.

Several of these tombs have produced skulls, which add largely to my collection. No other objects except two small wide-mouthed glass bottles, with handles, and of very pretty shape, have been found in

the tombs. A coin bearing a helmeted head and the legend *URBS ROMA*: reverse, a wolf suckling two children; above, two stars, and below, *SMHS*, another coin of Constantine, together with the many fragments of Roman tiles (red earthenware) and large hewn stones, point to this place having been an important town during the Roman occupation. Just in front of our tent is a limestone sarcophagus. At one end is a bull's head in relief, surmounting a pendent garland; on one side is a tablet (without inscription) of the ordinary Roman type with two triangular ears; on either side of this are bulls' heads, and below a garland; on the opposite side are a bull's and two cows' heads, with comical semi-human faces, also with garlands beneath. A coin (of the Seleucidæ?) was picked up in the valley below us: obverse, three ears of wheat; reverse, an umbrella, and legend *BACIAEVC* (?). A small female head, of classical type, was picked up a year or two ago near the village, and is now in the possession of Mikhart Kawwar, native Protestant priest at Nazareth.

In one of the tombs, which was found a few years ago by women digging for clay to mend their roofs with, but having been stopped up by the washing down of the soil, had again to be opened, we found a quantity of rude ornamentation in red paint, evidently smeared on with the finger. The interior of the arch, over three of the pseudo-sarcophagi, was daubed in a way similar to that in vogue amongst the Kurds and Arabs of the present day. Lines and intermediate dots form for them the acme of artistic decoration. In other places a palm branch, a rude wreath, a daub representing pendent garlands, a circle filled with cross lines and having two long curved lines terminating in something like the conventional ivy-leaf so frequent in Roman art, proceeding from its lower part, the representation of a palm-tree (?) partly cut in the rock, and a branch-like ornament with six lines on each side recurved at top, form the total of these rude attempts at decoration.

In this chamber we found the two above-mentioned glass bottles buried in the soil which covered the steps of the original entrance, now blocked up, and were just beside a closed *loculus*. This had escaped notice, as the colour of the plaster which covered the two stones forming its door was very similar to that of the walls. On opening this *loculus* we found it full of stones; these were cleared away, and beyond, a chamber was discovered also full of stones, which seem to have been thrown in from a hole in the roof. Nothing but a few bones in *loculi* sunk in the floor was found in this chamber. The corresponding *loculus* on the other side of the entrance door had been opened, and does not lead to any further excavation; hence when we first found this carefully-concealed passage we were in hopes of finding something to repay our trouble. The pseudo-sarcophagi had been covered in with slabs, over which mortar had been laid in the shape of a ridge.

The real entrance to the tomb still has its door *in situ*. It is of stone, and hung on two projecting knobs, which fit into sockets in the lintel

and sill. The walls of this cave, which is cut in very soft white stone similar to that at Yafa, are very smoothly dressed. From this cave a way has been broken into a series of ruder ones which contained nothing of special interest. These farther caves, which evidently belonged to a different tomb or tombs, were roughly dressed with a pick one-third of an inch broad. In these, as well as in all the other tombs we have found here, the pseudo-sarcophagi are more numerous than the pigeon-hole loculi; the probable reason being that the former were originally made, and subsequently, when more of the family wished to be buried in the cave, it was found more convenient to excavate a long loculus beneath the older ones than to cut a new chamber. In the immediate neighbourhood of these tombs, which occupy the hill to the west of the present village, are the foundations of three buildings. The stones are of considerable size (about 3ft. \times 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ \times 1 $\frac{3}{4}$) which perhaps were tombs of masonry either independent of or constructed over the caves.

Tells (mounds). Mounds (Ar. *Táílíl*) form a marked feature, not only of the Merj ibn 'Amr, but also of the Plain of Akka and the *ghor* or Jordan valley. In this report I shall, however, confine myself to a few remarks about those in the former locality. They are artificial either wholly or in part, and are, or have been, occupied by buildings. The principal in the Plain of Esdraelon are—1. Tell Ta'annik (*Taanach*); 2. T. Mutasellim (near Lejjun; *Megiddo*, the Roman *Legio*); 3. T. Shaddúd, near *Akhrayfis*; 4. T. Sammúneh (partly volcanic, *Simonias*); 5. Tell el Kasis, and 6. Tell Kaymun (*Jokneam*). Besides these are the smaller ones of Tell el Shemman, T. el Dhahab, and Tell Thora (mentioned by the same name in old itineraries). In cases (as at 2, 4, 6) where a projecting spur at the edge of the plain has been made use of, the earth dug out of the deep trench which was cut to separate the mound from the mainland, so to speak, was used to heighten that side of the mound; the steep sides, surmounted by a wall, being doubtless sufficient protection on the plain side.

On Tell Kaymun, which is a very good example, we found the ruins of a square crusading fort, measuring forty yards each way, and containing five chambers on each side opening into a courtyard. A vault still exists at the north-east corner with a pointed roof of rag-work. A little below this is the foundation of the east end of a church with triple apse. That in the centre is circular, while the side ones are rectangular. Judging from a corbel found here, the building was used by the Crusaders, but a Byzantine capital found among the Arab graves on the plain below points to the probable date of the original building.

Autumn weather.—The winter rains still hold off, though the quantity that fell in October and November—the “former rain”—has proved quite sufficient to enable the fellahín to begin their ploughing. These rains produced an immediate change in the appearance of the country: grass began to sprout all over the hills, the wasted grain on the threshing-floors soon produced a close crop some six inches high.

The cyclamen, white crocus, saffron crocus, and jonquil are in full flower on the mountains, the *ballut* (*Quercus aegilops*) is fast putting out its new leaves, and in sheltered nooks some of the hawthorn trees are doing the same. The *Zemzarût* (species of Judas tree?) is gorgeous at the foot of Carmel with its clusters of lilac blossoms. These, to our notions, are hardly signs of coming winter, but the advent of numberless starlings and common plovers on the plains and woodcock in the woodlands point to rain not far distant. We hope, however, to gain our winter quarters at Haifa before really bad weather sets in. For the next two months we shall be principally engaged in completing the work done in the field since July. There are, amongst other things, some 600 square miles of country to be put on the fair plan, making in all just 1,200 square miles surveyed. These, we hope, will be ready for sending to England not later than the middle of February.

1873. *Difficulties with Natives*.—We have lately had some difficulties with the natives, which have proved rather serious. This is entirely the fault of the local Turkish Government, who are unwilling to finish any case off-hand, and thus teach the insubordinate fellahin a lesson which they would not forget, and which would secure us from further annoyance. On the contrary, each official tries to make the affair as long as possible in order to gain the more bribes. Promises of assistance have been sent us from Constantinople and Beyrout, and I hope the affairs will be satisfactorily settled before we leave Haifa.

The last ebullition of feeling on the part of the fellahin took the form of firing on one of our surveying parties, happily without effect.

Temperature.—There has lately been a great and welcome change in the temperature, the average of the maximum thermometer being about 75 deg., and the minimum 45 deg. in the twenty-four hours.

Star-shower.—On the evening of the 28th ult. I noticed a star-shower which continued for some hours. The shooting stars seemed all to fall from the zenith. There were remarkably few to the south-east and south-west, while to the north and north-west they were particularly bright and numerous.

Of late, east winds have been very prevalent, which, though dry and cool, are exceedingly trying to those who have been any length of time in the country. To new-comers they appear fresh and agreeable. So long as they continue, rain cannot fall, but as soon as the wind changes to the south-west we may expect a downpour. During the east winds the ozone papers are hardly affected, while a south-west or west wind turns them the deepest possible colour. These latter winds are a most grateful tonic, and one whose effect is immediately felt after the heats of summer.

HAMAH STONES.

HAIFA, Dec. 15.

Having lately seen my friend, the Rev. W. Wright, of Damascus, I urged on him the advisability of taking plaster casts of the Hamah

inscriptions. I have just received a letter from him saying that he has made casts of the stones (P all) under the most favourable circumstances, as he was able to wash and turn them as it suited him, the stones themselves having been bought by H.I.M. the Sultan. They are probably on their way to Constantinople by this time. Mr. Wright has most kindly offered to place these casts at the disposal of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and I am writing to him on the subject, and hope that they will reach England next month.

We are now in winter quarters, and have begun our indoor work. The house we have taken for the rainy season is one belonging to the Prussian colony, of which I hope shortly to send some account.

XII.

GERMAN COLONY, HAIFA, Jan. 27, 1873.

IN a former report (*Quarterly* for July, 1872) I gave a short account of the Prussian colony at Jaffa. In face of the changes likely to come about in Palestine, these first attempts of Teutonic colonisation cannot fail to be of interest. I may preface the account of the colony with a few additional words regarding the origin of the society, and the first steps taken to obtain a footing in the Holy Land.

The elder Herr Hoffman—father of the President of the Jaffa colony—was a well-known lawyer, and a friend and admirer of Dr. Bengel. He had also great influence with Frederick, first king of Würtemberg, who made him a grant of a large tract of somewhat barren land at Kornthal. Here a colony was formed of Pietists—a sect which numbers many adherents among the simple folk of the Black Forest. After a time, however, the character of the settlement became more communistic than religious.

Herr Hoffman the younger, who had never been a member of the Kornthal community, then founded the Society of the Temple at Kirschenharthoff. Any persons who joined this society had lands allotted to them, which were bought back at a valuation if the settlers chose to go away.

After the establishment of Kirschenharthoff it was judged advisable to begin the real colonisation of Palestine. In 1862 four men came out, and after a short stay at Urtás—near the Pools of Solomon—they came to Nazareth. After many difficulties and much privation endured, they were obliged to leave the country. In 1866 twelve persons established themselves at Akhnayfis, near Nazareth, on the edge of the plain of Esdraelon. Here they lived in huts and hastily-improvised shelters, the result being that several succumbed to the climate. The rest moved on to the neighbouring village of Sammúneh, where they all fell victims to fever. In the end of 1868 the colony at Haifa was founded, and hitherto has proved much more healthy than that of Jaffa. In the

former place but few deaths have occurred, while in the latter nearly every member of the community has been attacked with fever, and no less than eighteen deaths from this cause have occurred during the summer.

The inhabitants of the colony are: men—single, 40, married, 47: 87; women—single, 32, married, 51: 83; children, 84. Total, 254. These persons occupy thirty-one dwelling-houses, to twenty of which out-houses, such as cart-sheds, stables, granaries, &c., are attached. The houses are built of a soft white, chalky stone, which is easily dressed, but hardens on exposure. This is quarried from the side of Carmel, half a mile distant. A few of the houses are built of a reddish rag-stone, quarried on the spot, and much harder than the former. All the constructions are neat and well fitted with European doors, windows, &c., forming a striking contrast to the squalid, untidy dwellings of the natives in the town and on its outskirts.

The trades and occupations are distributed as follows (the figures denote the number of men employed in each): 1 architect, 3 black-smiths, 2 butchers, 18 carpenters (of these 4 are natives), 1 cooper, 1 dyer, 20 farmers, 1 master-mason and stone-cutter (employing 6 Germans and from 40—45 natives), 2 merchants, 3 millers, 2 mill-wrights, 1 painter, 1 saddler, 3 shoemakers, 2 tailors, 1 turner, 10 vine-dressers, 2 waggon-builders, 2 whitesmiths.

Of these the architect, carpenter, tailors, and general dealer or merchant are frequently employed by the natives, their work being much superior to any other procurable in the country.

The wages paid to Germans are—

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|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----------------------------|
| Man | ... | ... | ... | 12 to 20 piasters per diem. |
| Woman | ... | ... | ... | 7 to 10 " " " |
| Child | ... | ... | ... | 3½ " " " |

To natives—

| | | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|----------------------------|
| Man | ... | ... | ... | 5 to 15 piasters per diem. |
| Woman | ... | ... | ... | 5 " " " |
| Child | ... | ... | ... | 3½ " " " |

The total extent of land hitherto purchased is 450 acres, of arable land, which also contains 140 olive trees, and 17 acres of vineyards on the lower slopes of Carmel, near the houses. Deceived in their hopes of obtaining the grant of land promised to them by the Turkish authorities, the colonists have determined to buy such land as they require when opportunity offers. The vineyards are likely to prove successful; vines grown from a layer have produced grapes the first year. In colder climates they seldom produce before the third or fourth year. Wine has been made with considerable success.

There are two schools established here, conducted by 3 German and 1 Arabic teachers. In the upper school there are 25 boys and 16 girls; in the lower, 25 boys and 2 girls. Total, 68. In the upper school the subjects taught are, reading and writing in Arabic, English French,

and German, arithmetic, drawing, geography, history, mathematics, singing, and the study of music. In the lower school, reading and writing in Arabic and German, arithmetic, and singing. Religious instruction is given in both. The girls are taught knitting, sewing, and embroidery in the industrial school.

On the whole, the colonists have not experienced much difficulty in dealing with the natives and Turkish authorities. One of the most constant annoyances is the want of anything like a legal determination of landmarks and boundaries. Frequently when a piece of land has been bought, and the colonists commence to cultivate it, a part is claimed by the neighbouring proprietor. Annoyances such as these are somewhat difficult to surmount, especially when the "custom of the country" (bribery) is utterly eschewed.

It is proposed to increase the colony as occasion serves. The main difficulty consists in the choice of proper persons, who will propose to themselves to further the spiritual rather than the worldly aims of the society.

The site of the ancient Sycaminon has always, I believe, been placed at Haifa el 'Atikah or old Haifa, which lies on the eastern side of the spit of land projecting north from Carmel. Indications as to its site are sufficiently vague, its position in the Antonine and Jerusalem itineraries being laid down at twenty and twenty-four, sixteen and fifteen miles from Cæsarea and Ptolemais ('Akka) respectively. Haifa el 'Atikah is about twenty and ten g.m. from the two places. There is a neighbouring ruin, however, to which no history attaches, but the claims of which may perhaps be stronger. This is now called Tell el Semak (Fish-mound), and in this word the three initial consonants of Sycaminon are found; it is very possible that the Greek name having no meaning to Arab ears, has, as is so often the case, been corrupted into a common Semitic word. The traces of ruins at this place are very considerable; a tell on a little promontory forms the nucleus, around which are found innumerable fragments of marble slabs, glass, pottery, and hewn stones. This place entirely commanded the coast road, as the sides of Carmel here rise abruptly, and only leave a plain of some 200 yards in width along the shore.

Haifa el 'Atikah is said by the inhabitants of the modern town—and not perhaps without reason—to have been merely the old site of Hepha. The ruins are now covered with gardens belonging, according to tradition, to the owners of the houses which formerly stood there. One of the principal Christians told me that he was many years ago digging there—according to the usual custom—for ready-dressed building stone, when beneath the sill of a doorway the workmen found a small brass jar, containing 1,000 gold pieces, as he added, of the date of Helena. Helena's name, however, is used to imply remote antiquity, as Cæsar's and the Devil's (of Cæsar's camp, the Devil's highway, &c.) are in England. The coins were probably early Byzantine, as I have lately procured a fine gold coin of that period, found near the same spot.

Among the gardens are found some rude tessellated pavement *in situ*, and on the shore are traces of a small harbour and a mass of rubble work, seemingly of Roman construction.

About a mile and a half south-east of Tell el Semak is a wady, the mouth of which is laid out in gardens, producing vegetables, figs, olives, locust trees, pomegranates, vines, and apricots. These are watered by a spring called 'Ain el Siah, which bursts out of the hard white limestone rock, here plentifully sprinkled through with black flints in finger-shaped nodules. Below the spring is a rock-hewn tank with filtering apparatus, from which the water is led by an aqueduct into the gardens. A little higher up the wady are ruins of two massive buildings, the ashlar of which has nearly disappeared, leaving only the stout rubble, which has the appearance of Roman work, as has a broken semicircular arch. These are called the diura, or monasteries, and tradition says that the last abbot was one Thul el Serjiláui, which seems a reminiscence of Paulus Sergilius. On the opposite side of the narrow ravine is a double cave, inhabited by a fellow who owns a small garden here. This cave is called the monk's stable and Liwan. The lower cave has square recesses cut out of the rock along two sides, which are to all appearance mangers. The upper cave, which is open in front, is reached by a staircase from the first. Facing this place is a spring flowing from a small recess hewn in the face of the rock; beside it are two niches with angular tops much resembling in size and shape two *sedilia*. The name ('Ain Umm el Faruj) and appearance of this spring denote its former connection with some phallic rites, now long since forgotten.

Weather.—This winter there has been an unusually small amount of rain in Palestine, and unless there is a pretty heavy fall before the end of the month there will be a total want of crops in many places where they have hitherto been unable even to plough. This is especially the case in the district of Jenin and Nazareth. Further north, in Syria and the Hawran, I hear that there has been a sufficient rainfall. Up to date the raingauge shows 2.25 inches less than had fallen at the same time last year. The weather has generally been bright and clear, colder than usual, with almost continual east winds. The Nahr el Mukatta (Kishon) and Nahr Naamán (Zelus) have only lately been able (by the help of easterly gales) to force open a channel to the sea through the sandbank which closes their mouths during the dry season.

On the sand-dunes near the mouth of the former stream, I observed a curious deposit of pumice-stone, the pieces varying in size from a good-sized apple to a pea, and being mostly water-worn. This is in the inner part of the bay, whither the current brings the finest and lightest things, small sand, seaweed, and tender shells; the heavier pebbles and shingle are left farther west. The only place whence this pumice-stone can have come, as far as I am aware, is from one of the Italian volcanoes, wafted over, in all likelihood, by the west winds which prevail in summer.

CHAS. F. TYRWHITT DRAKE.