

THE SURVEY OF PALESTINE.

LIEUT. CLAUDE R. CONDER'S REPORTS.

XVI.

P.E.F. CAMP, BLUDAN, *August 27, 1873.*

In my winter report I endeavoured to give a detailed account of the proportions of various kinds of archæological relics, interesting to the explorer and Biblical student, with which we had met during our preceding work. I will on this occasion endeavour to give a general idea of the country we have passed through, and of its ruins and natural features.

The Ordnance Survey now extends over 1,800 square miles. The upper part of the Plain of Sharon and the Carmel promontory are complete, and thus two sheets are ready for publication along the coast, namely, the Athlit and Cæsarea sheets. Before Christmas I have great hope of completing the Jerusalem sheet, and in early spring the Jaffa and Ramleh sheets will also be fit to engrave. Thus there will soon be a possibility of presenting to the public the results of part of our labours, which have extended over portions of no less than eight sheets of the map. Progress of Survey.

Our summer and spring work was in the district between that of the year 1872 on the east, and the sea on the west. By keeping the camps as far apart as possible, and increasing the size of the triangles, we were able to obtain a material increase in the rate of work, and left on breaking off rather less than a fortnight's work in the Plain of Sharon to fill up the whole of the blank space and to complete the coast line from Haifa to Jaffa.

The south side of Carmel—a rugged and tangled country of hard grey rock and pistachio wildernesses—is undivided by any great natural feature from a block of hills of rather less elevation, but equally steep and wild. The Plain of Esdraelon is to the east, and a narrow strip of flat fertile corn-land lies to the west, separated from the shore by a sort of wall of sandstone, and edged by groves of olives at the very foot of the hills.

This line of country runs southward for about twenty miles from the Carmel promontory, and is bounded by the River Zerka, a torpid stream flowing through fetid marshes, in which reeds, canes, and the stunted papyrus grow, and where alone in Palestine the crocodile is found. Beyond the river the plain suddenly widens to more than double, and a new character of country succeeds.

In the midst of the wild range thus bounded the remains of an ancient cultivation are still traceable. Little square watch-towers with dry-

stone walls, huge rock-cut wine-presses, ruins of terraces and stone boundaries, occur here and there. A Druse village, remarkable for its fine race of hardy men and fair women, bears the name of Dalyeh (the trained vine), and the rich soil which covers the iron rock, even though now untilled, supports a luxuriant wild growth of bushes and small trees: mastics, oaks, and hawthorn abound, and in spring a carpet of gay-coloured flowers is spread, a marked contrast to the bare mountains of Judæa and the brown corn-land of the Plain of Jezreel.

In the middle of this wild country, in a strong site, with a deep bare ravine behind it, stand the ruins of Kh. Semmaka, a Roman town, of which the wall, the foundations of a little temple, and other relics, remain. I have in a former report* given the reasons which seem to point to its identification with the Ecbatana of Josephus.

Descending into the plain beneath, we find ourselves in a land of tombs. Both faces of the sea-wall are excavated into innumerable sepulchres, and the rocks at the foot of the chain are similarly mined out. The probable date of these tombs is that of the Roman occupation of Palestine, and all, without exception, have been opened and their contents rifled.

Although at the present day this is one of the wildest and least populous districts of the country, there is little doubt that then it must have been covered with villages, and as fertile as any other part of Palestine. Along the sea-coast runs the great high-road to Egypt, and the ruts of the light chariot wheels are still visible in places on the rock. Passages leading to the various towns were cut through the sea-wall, and contained guard-houses on either side. The masonry of the various sites has long since crumbled away, but cisterns, steps, and foundations cut in rock attest in places the existence of considerable buildings.

Dor.

The site of the ancient Dor,† called later Tantura, appears to have been the chief town at this period. A great mound alone remains, from which the ashlar has been long ago abstracted, and on the shore of the little harbour the bases and capitals of large columns belonging to the temple of some maritime deity. A landing-place with flat slabs and traces of a building, no doubt for the accommodation of sailors and traders, are found upon the shore. Behind the town a fine causeway runs south, and passes by a number of granite shafts planted perpendicularly in a line beside one another.

Here also are remains of another great building epoch, that of the Christian occupation of Palestine, consisting of a tall solid tower of rubble faced with ashlar, which is a conspicuous landmark for a great distance on every side. It formed one corner of a fortress long since fallen into dust, and stands boldly out on a little brown promontory south of the Roman town.

* *Quarterly Statement*, 1873, p. 96.

† Joshua xi. 2; xii. 23; and Judges i. 27.

The headquarters of the Crusaders were, however, farther north, at the great seaport of Athlit, the *Castel Pelegrino* of mediæval writers, Athlit. where first the new levies landed on the comfortless coast of the Holy Land.

Very impressive must have been the general appearance of the town to the pilgrim. The church, a decagon, with its three eastern apses, the great hall of El Kaynifeh towering above all, the long vaults for stabling and storage, the groined roofs and noble masonry, with the strong surrounding walls, must have made Athlit perhaps the finest town of the period in the country. The strong outworks of Dustrey (Petra incisa) and other ruins made it unassailable on the land side; whilst two shallow harbours, protected from various winds, rendered it accessible at any period of the year.

The pilgrim travelling inwards was defended by a line of forts at easy distance. Shellaleh (the cascade) and Rushmia carried him over Carmel to the Plain of St. Jean d'Acre, and Seffuriyeh brought him close to Nazareth. Going south he passed from Tantara to Cæsarea, and thence, by the high tower of Kakun, the beautiful hall at Kalensawyeh, and the caravanserai at Jiljulia, down to the settlements near Ramleh, and hence to Jerusalem.

On crossing the Zerka we enter another region. The precipitous inland cliffs which mark the shore-line of a former geological period recede suddenly, and form the north boundary of the great Plain of Sharon. The Plain of Sharon. Half of its width is of marl and alluvial soil, the other half of old red semi-consolidated sand of sandstones and shelly breccias of brown sand in huge encroaching patches. The hills beyond are of the softest chalk, lying in gentle slopes, which are in parts covered by woods of oak, the trees standing park-like at intervals, with a floor of sand in some places, or of hard limestone in others.

It was here that Herod the Great chose the seat of his capital, and built upon a barren coast, of white stones brought from a distance, the Cæsarea Palestinæ which was to form the connecting seaport between Cæsarea. Jaffa and the northern harbours. Hidden by rolling sand-hills, it stands low on the sea-shore, and exhibits in April long expanses of a yellow composite flower, with thin patches of weed-strangled corn, from which the brown ruins stand out contrasted. The period was unfavourable for excavation, and we were content with survey alone.

The Roman town was of considerable extent, but little of it remains except the mounds which indicate where masonry has been. The line of the wall we were able to trace, and the site of some of the principal buildings enumerated by Josephus in his account of the foundation.

His estimate of the harbour as being equal to the Piræus is exaggerated, as it only measures about 300 yards across. The mole on its south side, equal nearly in length, still remains, and though its buildings are Crusading, the original plan seems to have been reproduced, for half was left as a breakwater (*прокуратия*), the rest, covered with buildings, replacing the tower Drusus of Herod. Great blocks of granite lying at

its feet in the water are no doubt fragments of the huge stelæ which rose on the same spot, like towers. Of the temple to Cæsar only a foundation wall remains. It would, however, perhaps repay excavation. Its white stones contrast with the brown sand-blocks of the later builders, and attest Josephus's accuracy in describing the materials as brought at great expense from a distance.

But perhaps the most interesting relics are those of the theatre and amphitheatre. The Greek of Josephus's account, accurately rendered, runs thus: "He made also a theatre of stone, and towards the south of the port he placed an amphitheatre capable of containing a great number of men, suitably situated for a view of the sea." We see at once that by the amphitheatre is intended the great earthwork with its surrounding ditch, its ramp, and principal entrance, which exists south of the mediæval town. This may well be described as capable of containing a great crowd of men; 30,000 could be gathered within it. The situation of the theatre is not defined, but it is specified to have been of stone; and a semicircular stone building, sufficiently large to have been a theatre, exists in the mound itself. It seems, therefore, within the bounds of probability that the *αμφιθέατρον* was rather the building *round* the theatre than a double theatre, according to the usual acceptation of the term.

Close to the wall of the Roman enceinte on the east is a longitudinal sunk enclosure resembling a stadium, with fallen stelæ of beautiful granite. This building, however, is unnoticed by the historian.

The second building age of Cæsarea has left ruins far more perfect, though of less interest. The great cathedral rose almost on the foundations of the Pagan temple. The fortress of the port stood on the site of "Drusus" above the tessellated pavements of the earlier age. In the north quarter of the town another small church was built, whose ruined walls overhang the low cliff. The enceinte, however, was reduced to about a tenth of the area.

The water-supply of the town was a matter of some difficulty, from the nature of its porous, sandy soil, and its level, which was very little above that of the sea. One shallow well exists near the cathedral, and numerous cisterns are scattered about, but in Roman times the population must have depended principally on the great aqueducts.

The low-level aqueduct, with its single tunnel, 7 feet high, ran straight to the Zerka. A dam here erected, 20 feet in height, collected the waters in a pool, whence they were drawn. A fine masonry wall stretched from the hills to the sea-wall, and prevented the drainage of the northern marshes from finding any other channel of escape than the Zerka river. But the high-level conduit was a far more ambitious attempt. Starting at the clear chalk springs in the hills, near Sindiain, it collected a further supply of good water banked up by weirs near **Miamas**, and crossed the marshes on arches of fine masonry. The sea-wall intervened between it and the shore, and was pierced by a tunnel, to which great flights of steps led down a depth of 30 feet. This difficulty overcome, the remainder of its course was less difficult to engineer,

and the long row of arches are visible covered with the blown sand hillocks in part stretching along the shore of the sea. The channel was double, but the existence of a cornice built into and hidden by the substructions of the western conduit show that this second was added later, when the supply proved insufficient.

North of Cæsarea, and at the foot of the hills, we find at Miamas Miamas. another centre of Roman life. A theatre only remains, converted later into a Saracenic fortress, but the strewn columns by the springs in its neighbourhood point to the existence of other public buildings. Upon the hill above are some curious vaults, which are undoubtedly of Roman origin, but for what purpose, unless for the kenneling of the wild animals, it is not easy to decide, and the distance from the theatre is considerable.

But little else of interest was left to explore in the plain, as the remains of Antipatris were without the limits of this year's work. At Mukhalid and Burj el Atut are relics of the Mohammedan great build- Mukhalid.
Burj el
Atut. ings—a tower and a khan. Tombs, with the interior painted and cemented, occur in parts along the sandstone cliffs, and here and there an artificial mound or tell. The towers of Kakun and Kalensawych Kakun
Kalensaw
yeh. represent Crusading times; and a fine hall of Gothic architecture, roofless and half-obliterated, exists at the latter place.

The third district, which occupied us during May and part of June, was the low hill country east of the plain, and at the foot of the central The Low
Hill
Country. range. It consists of a hard limestone, with a few flints and fossils, covered with more or less underwood, and with straggling patches of barley, destitute of springs, and becoming more and more difficult and barren as we advance south. The miserable villages stand deserted and half broken down, and the ruin of the broken-spirited inhabitants by the exactions of greedy tax farmers gives a desolate appearance to its whole extent, contrasting with the rich and fertile olive-groves and corn-lands of Samaria and Galilee. The grass grows on the housetops and the stones choke the corn. The district is unvisited by the ordinary tourist, and the savage, inhospitable brutality of the peasants, with bad water and scarcity of provisions, made us glad to find ourselves at the end of our work in the Belad el Jem'ain and Beni S'ab. The first site of importance which we found was the Khirbet Dayr Asruhr, or perhaps more properly Serur, although there is no vowel in the Arabic to direct the spelling. I have described it fully in a former paper.* Its other names are Khirbet el Musk'ufi, "Ruin of Ceilings," and Khirbet Nasirah, "the Christian Ruin." I feel but little hesitation in identifying it with Sozuza, the seat of a Christian bishop, first mentioned at the Council of Chalcedon (in the middle of the fifth century), and placed on an ancient map to be found in the "Geographia Sacra" of Carolus a Sancto Paulo (Amsterdam, 1704), between Cæsarea and Samaria, close to the actual position of the ruin in question. No earlier notice appears to exist, but the town must have dated before

* *Quarterly Statement*, 1873, p. 139.

Christian times, or it would scarcely have been chosen as an ecclesiastical centre. The ruins also seem of Roman character, and the great public building, although with its door to the west like a church, has no apse, and is founded on a moulded podium, like the temples of Cœle-Syria discovered by Captain Warren. I have already mentioned that we obtained a Roman coin on which S C alone was legible, said to have been found on the spot. Roman tombs also exist in a necropolis east of the town.

The next camp was principally noticeable for the number of small square towers which were found in every direction. Their time-worn appearance and large stones point to their great antiquity. A dozen sometimes are to be seen within a few hundred yards of one another. They are no doubt the signs of an ancient cultivation long since swallowed by the spreading wilderness of pistachios, and remind one of the rich man who "planted a vineyard, and set an hedge (of stone) about it, and digged a place for the wine-fat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country" (Mark xii. 1). The great wine-vats, hewn in rock on flat places, attest the ancient fruitfulness of this deserted land.

Wady Kana. [■] Having with difficulty conducted our heavily-laden pack animals over the terrible Wady Kana (the boundary River Cana of the Book of Joshua), we found ourselves in a part of the country where ruins were numerous. The principal were convents, of which Dayr Kala'ah, a fortress overhanging a deep precipitous valley, was the finest and best preserved specimen. Their date is probably about the fourth or fifth century of the Christian era.

Farther south yet we visited the wild and rugged site of Joshua's home, where, amidst deep valleys and steep hill-sides, the simple tomb stands blackened by the smoke of its hundred votive lamps. Hence to the plain we traced the noble Roman road, with its firm pavement and ably engineered slopes, along which St. Paul was hurried by night to Antipatris; fallen milestones, with lettering long since worn away by rain, lie beside it, and at Dayr 'Allah we pass by a large Roman town, with just the traces of its little temple visible in the middle.

This rapid review of the country thus thoroughly explored, in conjunction with the copies of our various surveys sent home, the full list of which I attach, will show, I think, that our time has been spent in a district little known, and amongst ruins which cannot fail to be of high geographical and antiquarian interest. The work to which we shall so soon return in the Bethlehem hills, and along the lower part of the Jordan Valley, by Jericho, the Dead Sea, and the wild Marsaba ravine, will, we hope, prove equally interesting, if not altogether such unstudied ground.

XVII.

P. E. F. CAMP, BEIT 'ATAB, 19th October, 1873.

Our pleasant stay in the Antilibanus came only too soon to an end, and all our spring and summer results were only just fully worked out, when we again started on a long journey to the south, in accordance with my plans already explained.

Our great caravan of eighteen pack animals and eight horses created quite a sensation as we went down the steep, narrow streets of Bludan, and winding away over the hills descended by a steep wady into the great Buka'a plain, losing sight of our hospitable home for the last three months. Next day we were in Beyrout, and on the 29th of September I marched out again, accompanied by Corporal Armstrong, to perform the journey to Jaffa by land, partly in order to see Tyre and Sidon, partly to shoot sea-birds for stuffing along the coast, but chiefly because I was unwilling to leave our valuable animals to the care of Syrians without supervision, especially after the miserable appearance they had presented on arriving at Beyrout from the south. The journey was long and tedious, especially 11½ hours the last day, but on the 3rd of October we reached Jaffa at sunset, and found Sergeant Black safely landed with all our heavy baggage. Saturday and Sunday were allowed for rest to man and beast, and a violent storm of rain on the latter day was opportunity, as we were not under canvas. Monday night found us at Jerusalem, where considerable operations of packing and refitting occupied a few days. Friday we reached our present camp, chosen on a spot whence the west and south limits of the Jerusalem sheet can be reached; and so rapid has been our work under the new arrangements that I hope to find eighty or ninety square miles complete at the end of the twelfth day.

The country we are at present surveying is perhaps the most interesting we have as yet visited. A great number of Bible sites have already been identified in it, and more remain to be fixed. A few suggestions of interest I will venture here, although identifications are not in my department of the work.

The wild and impassable wadies, the steep, hard, rocky hills, with their wildernesses of mastic, clear springs, and frequent caves and precipices, are the fastnesses in which Samson was born, and from which he descended into the plain to harry the Philistines. The possessions of his father, Manoah, lay between Zorah and Eshtaol (Judges xiii. 2), and in the same spot he was buried (Judges xvi. 31). The former has been identified with the present Sera, and Sergeant Black has suggested that Eshú'a, a mile or so to the east, may be the representative of the other name.

Another site to which we directed our attention was the rock Etam, to which (Judges xv. 8) Samson retired before his cowardly surrender The Rock Etam.

by the elders of Judah. I am ignorant what may be the precise translation of the word rendered "rock" in the English translation, but the place must have been one supplied with water, and also of considerable extent, for in verse 11 we read that "3,000 men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam." It was not far from the patrimony of Manoah, from which Samson "went down" to it. The requisites of the case are all met by Beit 'Atab, which Sergeant Black suggested might be the place for which we were hunting. Standing somewhat lower than Eshú'a towards the south, it yet, from the gradual slope of the ranges, is a conspicuous point from more than one direction. It could not be better described than as a rock—a steep, stony, bare knoll standing amidst the winding, narrow valleys, without a blade of corn upon its sides, whilst long olive groves lie at its feet and round its three clear and abundant springs. The site is a remarkable one, and one or two old tombs are found in the northern valley, whilst a cave, narrow, but of considerable length, exists in the hill, running from near the spring to the middle of the village, the whole 250-ft. being artificially mined out.* Timnath, the present Tibneh, where Samson chose his first wife, is but a little distance west of this place, but its vineyards, in which he slew the lion, are now only marked by the traces of ancient cultivation and rock-cut wine-presses existing in the vicinity.

Valley of
Sorek.

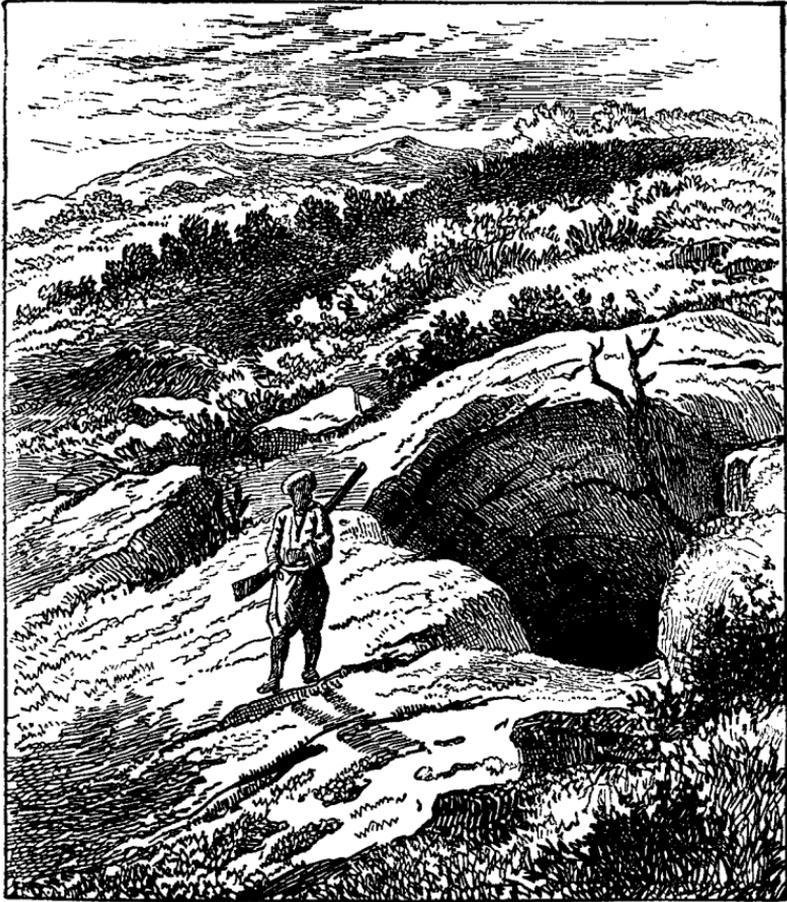
I may add another identification, which almost fills up the list of the places noticed in this part of the Scripture. The valley of Sorek was the home of Delilah, and appears to have been a natural feature of some importance on the borders of Philistia. There can, I should imagine, be but little doubt that this is the present Wady Surár, which runs as a broad, flat valley through the lower hills, and reaches the sea at Yebneh. It must have been up the same valley that the little cart with its lowing kine came jolting in the "straight way" unbroken by a single hill from Ekron to Bethshemesh, now Ain el Shems, when the peasants, lifting their heads from the reaping, saw the ark, as we can picture to ourselves, coming up among the round white hillocks, dusky in the sloping light of the afternoon sun, which casts long shadows among the winding valleys, backed by the brown plain and yellow sand-hills of Philistia which stretch far away to the gleaming horizon of the sea.

The place, however, which may perhaps prove of the highest interest

* Beit Atab is situated on a high hill, and is seen from all parts of the country round; but although it overlooks a great extent of the lower region towards the south and west, it does not afford so extensive a view of places as we had hoped to find. The country is full of sites of ruins and villages, some inhabited and some deserted, at least for portions of the year. Beit Atab has several high square tower-like houses of two stories; the rest are small and low; but all are of stone, solidly built. In the centre is a ruined tower or castle, but so dilapidated as to be nearly lost among the houses.—Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, vol. ii., p. 339.

is a cave called Mogharet Umm el Tumaymiyeh. On the 17th inst. I visited it in company with the Rev. Mr. Neil and Dr. Chaplin, and we executed a careful plan, to which I have added several sketches. We obtained the same guide who accompanied M. Ganneau, and I subjoin a full description of a site which may prove of importance.

Mogharet
Umm el
Tumay-
miyeh.



MOGHARET UMM EL TUMAYMIYEH.

Flying from the face of Saul, David first sought refuge at Gath, and thence he came to Adullam, where he remained whilst sending news of his position to his native town.

It is remarkable that the range of country over which his wanderings extended was never large, and even when most pressed and driven away south to Maon and Ziph, he was scarcely 30 miles from his home. This

may perhaps be accounted for by the very difficult nature of the country he had to traverse, and the facilities for hiding from an enemy even when close at hand. It would seem, therefore, natural to suppose the Cave of Adullam to be at no great distance from either Gath or Bethlehem. The position of Gath is very distinctly stated by Jerome (Comm. on Micah i.), as being five miles from Eleutheropolis (Beit Jibrin), on the road to Gaza. Thus the site in question would be on the way from Gath, and some ten miles from Bethlehem.

The present name is Mogharet Umm el Tumaymyeh, "The Cave of the Mother of Two Twins." We have not found the name of Adullam, unless it be recognised in Wady Dilbeh, which bounds the ridge in which the cave is found, on the northern or opposite side.* The cave took its name, Josephus tells us, from the city of Adullam, in its neighbourhood; a ruin called Kh. S'aireh or Kh. Dilbeh exists on the south of the wady about a mile north of the cave, above a very fine spring. It is not, however, of any great extent.

The place is one very striking to the imagination, and commends itself as a likely site. Leaving the ordinary road, we descended into a very narrow ravine between steep and rocky hills. No path led over its loose shingle, alternating with smooth, slippery slides of rock, worn by the winter torrents. The wild, dark pistachio bushes sprung in a dense thicket, interspersed with thorny shrubs, with bushes of cistus and a carpet of thyme and mint growing amongst the hard, dark ledges of the limestone. Traces of ancient terraces we passed in places, but all is now a silent, tangled wilderness. At length, before us we saw a cliff with a small cave some few hundred feet up the slope, and I naturally supposed this to be the place until my attention was called to an opening close at hand in the shelving rock. So curiously is this formed that one might easily pass by without seeing it, and a few bushes would effectually hide it from observation.

Descending rapidly, we found ourselves in a great round vestibule, partly choked by fallen *débris* from the roof, and measuring about 160 feet in diameter. The height is greatest at the sides, where a passage leads round to other compartments. On the extreme east is a small one, sinking suddenly, and supported on stalagmitic columns, one of which, supposed to resemble a man in a helmet, I have sketched. Several curious low excavations, like rough tombs, run in from its sides. North-east of this is a second basin, surrounded curiously by a natural raised gallery, supported on stalagmitic columns: seen in the lurid light, half of day and half of our candles, it seemed like one of the mystic halls which Southey describes in Thalaba, a weird and indefinitely extensive succession of caverns, pillars, and pendants, glistening like silver.

Farther north is a more important part of the excavation, showing the handiwork of man. A little pool, which even at this time contained over a foot of water, famous for its medicinal qualities, is cut in the floor of a small cave on a higher level, and is no doubt supplied by the infil-

* See *Quarterly Statement*, 1872, p. 116.



McGHARET UMM EL TUMAYMIYEH (INTERIOR).

tration through the strata. A channel leads down at a steep angle, apparently to a second cistern, now much broken. The sides of the rock are here cut with the pick, a work of some considerable labour.

The most striking feature, however, remains to describe. A narrow winding gallery, with pillars of stalagmite, leads to a long tunnel, ending in a natural well over 60 feet deep. This gloomy place possesses an interest of its own. The Mohammedan peasantry are extremely strict in certain moral points, and this well is the death-place of those who offend. Only two years ago an unhappy woman and her lover were brought here. The man was thrown down the steep slide which leads to the hole and shot at as he fell. The girl followed, but was not shot, and fell upon his body. She was rescued later by her relatives, but did not escape her fate.

The slide is a place somewhat difficult to descend, as the floor is covered with bats' manure, and affords hardly any hold for foot or hand. I was therefore made fast by two stout ropes, and crept cautiously to the edge of the well, to the very bottom of which I was unable to see even then. The difficulties of descent were so great, that I did not go any farther, and calculated the depth, by the fall of a pebble, to be about 50 feet. The well is dry, I believe, and almost circular, about 15 feet across. To all appearance it is entirely natural. Any one who went heedlessly or in the dark to the edge of the slide must inevitably meet with his death.

As I have said before, the cavern suggests itself as a likely site to the imagination. The four hundred men in distress, in debt, or discontented, who stole up that stony ravine to join the outlawed chief, we can well fancy seated round their smoky fires; poor, ragged, sunburnt fellows, no doubt, stealing in and out of the gloomy, damp recesses of the cave, and startling the thousand pigeons which may then as now have found refuge in the clefts of its rocks. For defence also the place was admirably suited, not only from its inaccessible position and inconspicuous entrance, but also by reason of the great mass of earth, fallen like a traverse, as the word is used in fortification, before the door, round which, in a narrow passage, the invaders must advance. That this *débris* is ancient is, I think, shown by the pillar which is formed by the junction of a stalactite from the roof with a stalagmite on the rock which has fallen.

On the other hand, however, there are objections to the site, the principal of which is its entire unfitness for human habitation. Water there is, indeed, but in too great a quantity; everywhere the stalactitic pendants adorn the roof, the sound of dropping water is heard, and a damp and hot atmosphere, almost unbearable, exists throughout. Nor is this a modern alteration, for the character of the rock permitting the infiltration which no doubt first formed the cave is unchanged. The great columns require an action of an indefinite period for their formation, and bear witness to the same fact. For men to live in the cave or sleep in it for even a night must inevitably result in a severe attack of the

same fever and ague with which Mr. Neil was slightly affected during a very short visit.

Our next undertaking was to hunt for the tomb of Samson between the two villages already noticed. To say that we have found it may perhaps be too bold, but we have found what may be very probably assumed to be the same. The book of Judges places it between Zorah and Eshtáol, but Josephus says that Samson was buried "in Sarasat (Zorah or Será), his own country, with the rest of his family" (*Ant.* v. 8.12). Now about a quarter of a mile north-east from Será are the remains of a rock-cut cemetery, the tombs being broken and filled with rubbish, and amongst them is a large tomb, now only a cave, being broken away from its original form. It is highly probable that here we have the burial-place of the strong ruler and the patrimony of his father, Manoah. Is it too much to imagine that the name Sh. Samat, which is an unusual one, and has never occurred in our work previously, but which here is found in the village of Será, may be connected with some tradition of Samson.

Tomb of
Samson.

The country is also full of ruins and names which belong to a time of Christian colonisation; among these are Bir el Sahb (Well of the Cross) twice occurring, Khallet Musellabeh, 'Ain el Kassis, &c. Such titles never occur except in parts where the early or Crusading Christians had for a time a footing. Among the ruins are three small churches with very thick though roughly built walls, occurring at El Kubna, Kh. Ain el Keniseh, and 'Allar el Sifteh. Beit Skavia also, a ruin on the watershed line close to one of the fine Roman roads which here traverse the country in every direction, was a place of some importance in Christian times. In it I discovered two Byzantine columns with the usual clumsy capitals of ninth or tenth century work; at Kh. S'aideh are also traces of some large building with a crabbed Greek inscription of which I send a sketch. A Hebrew inscription we discovered on the door of a tomb near Beit Natif.

There are a greater number of names in this part of the work; we have from this camp collected 240, 36 of which are on Vandevelde.

There are an immense number of springs here observable, due perhaps to the very regular bedding of the hard uptilted limestone, which causes a supply of water collected on the hill-tops to flow down through one fissure between two beds undispersed till it reaches the lowest point, or one where it can easily escape. In the course of three days' survey I fixed twenty springs, of which only one is shown on Vandevelde's map. Our list of names from this camp includes no less than forty-one, not numbering those which have the name of the village they supply.

We have been successful in obtaining many fossils which will no doubt be of value. They are principally bivalves belonging to the Jurassic period, but there exists in one spot a regular bed of fossil oysters of some extent.

At Nehalin, a village not far from us, is the tomb of a famous sheikh. Haj 'Alfan, whose story, related to me by our very intelligent guide, is more worthy to be recalled than most Mohammedan legends.

Nehalin.

Travelling from his native town along the coast this poor old hermit went, according to custom, into the mosque to pray. His raggedness, misery, and uncleanliness offended the fat and comfortable worshippers from the rich seaport town, and the abba he spread was regarded as a contamination to the sacred place. One by one they withdrew from near him, and the mosque authorities finally turned him out. Driven to the shore, in his anger he flung the abba, which he could not spread on earth, into the sea, but obedient to God's command the waves at once became smooth, and a firm standing-place was found for the pilgrim on the untrodden sea. The miracle once known, the sanctity of the sheikh became generally acknowledged, and his name, long after he slept under the great shadowing oaks which surround his white tomb-house, was remembered from one end of the land to the other.

CLAUDE R. CONDER.

MR. TYRWHITT DRAKE'S REPORTS.

XV.

ON October 25th I rejoined the Survey at Bethlehem, where the rest of the party had arrived the previous evening from Bayt 'Atab.

The immediate neighbourhood of Bayt Lahm (Bethlehem) shows well the extent of ground which can be brought under cultivation in even the steepest wadies by means of terraces. Every available inch of ground is planted with olives, figs, and vines. At some of the neighbouring villages, for instance El Welekeh and Bittir, the water-supply is abundant, and the terraces are green with vegetables of many kinds, for which a ready sale is found in the Jerusalem market. At the latter village, indeed, many of the old olive-trees are being rooted out, and vines planted in their stead, as being much more profitable.

Tumuli.

North of 'Ain Yalo we came across some very curious mounds, unlike any that I have ever seen in this country, with the exception of that near 'Amwas, which is called by the natives Rijm el Haik bint Sultan' el Fenish, "the Spinning Mound of the Phœnician King's Daughter," as I mentioned in a former report. There are in all five of these mounds, of which four are on the crests of ridges, while the other is situated near the head of a shallow gully. The three largest are named Rijúm el 'Atyyah, El Tárúd, and El Barish. Small tentative excavations—by Captain Warren, R.E., as I am told—have been made in this last, but a thorough examination of one of them would, I think, be likely to prove of great interest.

The mounds vary from twelve to thirty feet in height, and from fifteen to fifty feet in diameter at top. The construction of all seems identical. Rough stones of no great size are closely packed with chips and a certain proportion of mould, and thus form a very compact