

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

mass, which can only have been erected with the expenditure of much labour. Hence the *prima-facie* view is that they were piled up for some special and important purpose. The position of two of them, and the close proximity of all, precludes the idea of their being beacon-stations or landmarks. If, as seems not unlikely, they are tombs, we may hope to find objects of interest in them. The most practicable way of examining them would probably be to drive a mine to the centre along the ground level, as by this means any central interment or traces of incremation would be immediately discovered. These mounds differ essentially from those on the neighbouring Plain of Rephaim (so called), and known as Seb'a Rijúm—the Seven Mounds. These latter are merely heaps of hard limestone thrown carelessly together, and have all the appearance of being composed of the rocks and stones collected during the process of clearing the adjacent lands for the purposes of cultivation.

Jebel Ferdays (or Furaydís, as it is variously pronounced), the old Herodium. Herodium, has proved not without interest. The ruins are neither extensive, however, nor well preserved. The castle on the summit was circular in form, with semicircular towers to the north-west and south, and a larger circular one to the E.N.E. The most interesting point was a circular chamber with a domed roof below the northern tower. The masonry throughout has all the appearance of the Roman or Herodian work visible at Cæsarea and Tantura on the coast.

The outer part of this castle is a slope of 35 degs., composed entirely of *débris*, and now indistinguishable from the surrounding soil. This is to be accounted for by the fact that most of the stone used in the building is very soft and friable, and rapidly disintegrates.

Below the mound to the north are the ruins of a large oblong building, with vaults on the north and east. Some on the latter side are still in fair preservation. The roof is barrel, without a keystone; an inner arch, however, has one. Windows remain in the wall of the eastern vault, about 1ft. high by 2ft. wide outside, but cut away inside so as to throw the greatest possible amount of light within.

The other remains consist of a few wells, a small clump of ruined houses, and a tank called Birket el Hammam. This was formerly supplied with water from 'Ain Urtás, which rises about 60 ft. higher. I shall presently notice this aqueduct and its construction.

Lieutenant Conder has made a plan of the ruins of Furaydis, and also of the cave variously called Magháret el M'asa, or Magharet Kharaytún, which has by many been accepted as the Cave of Adullam.

The main objection urged against this being David's lair is its position, which is said to be too far eastward, but in all other respects it is most admirably suited for an outlaw's hiding-place. The cave El Tumaymíyeh, lately visited by Lieutenant Conder, seems from all descriptions to be most unsuited for human habitation. This cave, on the contrary, is

Magharet
Kharaytún

dry and airy, and resembles a rabbit warren in the extent and intricacy of its passages.*

A few words will show the strength of the position. On arriving at Bir el 'Ainayziyeh, a tank of seemingly Roman masonry, we found ourselves on the brink of Wady Kharaytún, a glen as rugged and precipitous as the Kedron at our present camp. To the left were the ruins of the monastic buildings dedicated to St. Chariton, perched on the brink of the precipice and clinging like swallows' nests to the ledges and crevices. To the right a steep, rugged zigzag descends to a broad ledge of rock leading to 'Ain el Natúf (the Dripping Spring), where even at this dry season there was a sufficient supply to fill a wine-bottle in three or four minutes. The water is collected in two little rock-hewn basins.

Halfway down the rugged path just spoken of we turned off along a ledge of rock some eight feet wide to the cavern. A huge fallen block, about seven feet high, has to be surmounted; between this and the upper rock is a space of two and a half feet. Continuing along the ledge we come to another fallen block, and mounting this we are confronted by the door of the cave. Two other openings beside the door fully command the path to 'Ain el Natúf, which consequently could not be used by an attacking party, whilst owing to the overhanging rocks a besieged party might draw their water with impunity, as the wady is too broad for archers to be able to harass them to any considerable extent.

The entrance to the cave seems the only part which has been touched by the hand of man. Several short intersecting passages would place any invader who had succeeded in penetrating so far entirely at the mercy of the defenders.

A few feet from the entrance we came into a large chamber some sixty feet long and perhaps thirty or forty feet high. A low burrow, which has to be traversed on hands and knees, leads from this to another chamber; mounting a few feet a narrow cleft leads to another large chamber, to reach which one has to descend a steep slide some fourteen feet high. From this chamber a main passage with intricate ramifications, which can only be understood by the plan, leads to the

* I have just been talking to M. Clermont-Ganneau, who arrived at Jerusalem a few days ago, and find that the cave and ruin of 'Ayd el Miá, which he discovered and identified with Adullam, lie some five or six miles farther south than the cave of El Tunaymiyeh described by Lieutenant Conder. This position agrees fairly well with the situation ascribed to the city of Adullam by Eusebius, namely, ten miles east of Eleutheropolis. In Joshua xv. 35 Adullam is said to be in the "valley" (*i.e.*, Shefelah), which could not apply to Magharet Kharaytún if the *cave* were in the immediate vicinity of the *town*, as is perhaps most probable.

Till, however, I have seen both places I feel that I must withhold judgment, only showing how admirably adapted this cave of Kharaytún is for an outlaw's "hold."

last chamber, beyond which nothing extends but a narrow winding passage which, in no place large, at last contracts to a mere crack. The greatest length of the cavern is 550 feet.

The air of the cave was dry and pure, though earth washed down from above shows that water penetrates it in the winter. The first chamber, however, would probably always continue dry. The whole cave seems formed by water action; the sides and roof are smooth, with frequent rounded hollows, and in more than one place passages run side by side, with merely a thin slab of rock separating them. The rock is hard and very white. We found bats in some of the chambers, but not in great numbers. In one of the side passages I picked up fragments of a brass or copper fibula much corroded; this and a piece of very ancient coarse pottery were the only relics we found.

Riding from here to Tekú'a took me half an hour. The ruins at this Tekú'a place are extensive but uninteresting. To the east are many excavated caves and cisterns, but the town itself is simply a heap of ruins, the stones of which are small and friable. A fine octagonal font, ornamented on four sides with crosses and the double square, stands over a well-mouth. It is cut in the hard pink marbly stone known at Jerusalem as the Hajr el Musallabeh, from the fact of the finest quality being found in the neighbourhood of the Convent of the Cross (Dayr el Musallabeh).

Proceeding westward, my object was to find the aqueduct coming from Wady el Arúb, which runs near Bayt Fejjar at a considerable distance to the south, and proceeding to 'Ain 'Atáu at Solomon's Pools, and so by the low-level aqueduct to Bethlehem and Jerusalem. This aqueduct was first traced, I believe, by Herr Shick, of Jerusalem. Its construction differs from that of the other aqueducts, and will be described farther on. After a slight difficulty at first where the passage was subterraneous, I was enabled to trace the channel as far as the hill south of Urtas, where it had been already observed.

The wadies in this part are steep and long, consequently the aqueduct winds in and out to a wonderful extent, and probably extends to five or six times the length of the direct distance.

It seems that Urtas is generally considered as the Etam of the Bible, but I am not aware whether it is known that a spring exists a few hundred yards south-east of El Burak (Solomon's Pools), called 'Ain 'Atáu, which corresponds exactly to the Hebrew עַמַּי.

Of these there are no less than six connected with Solomon's Pools and Urtas.

1. This is the longest, extending from Wady el 'Arúb to Jerusalem, a distance of ten miles as the crow flies. It receives a branch from Wady el Biyar, and again from 'Ain 'Atáu. As, however, the construction of its continuation from El Burak to Bayt Lahm and Jerusalem is different, this must be considered as a separate aqueduct. The part which I examined between Tekú'a and Urtas was sometimes cut in the rock, but mostly carried over a foundation of rubble masonry, the outer wall of

which in some places is as much as 6ft. or 7ft. high, and faced with ashlar. The channel varies from 18in. to 2ft. in width, and 1ft. to 2½ft. in depth; it is lined throughout with good cement, and covered in with loose blocks or slabs of stone.

2. Is the continuation of this, which still supplies Bethlehem, and occasionally the Haram at Jerusalem, with water. Earthen pipes set in masonry form the channel in this case, while air-holes at intervals relieve the pressure.

3. The high-level aqueduct passing through stone pipes is carried by the tomb of Rachel and the south of Mar Elias, on to the (so-called) Plain of Rephaim, whence it (conjecturally) passed above the Jewish Alms-houses, and rounding the Birket Mamilla entered the town from the north.

4. Is a ruined aqueduct, discovered, I believe, by Major Wilson, R.E. It passed near the high road from Hebron to Jerusalem, east of El Khadhr, but recent alterations have obliterated all trace of it.

5. This aqueduct leads from 'Ain Urtas along the northern side of the valley to Birket el Hamman at Jebel Furaydis. The upper part is cut in the rock. Lower down the channel rests on a substructure of rubble and large stones. Before reaching Jebel Furaydis all traces of it are lost in the soft chalky formation, but the direction shows its destination, which is further confirmed by the difference of level between 'Ain Urtas and Birket el Hamman.

6. Is an aqueduct traced by Lieutenant Conder from Urtas to a ruined Birket called Kasr el Tahúneh, along the south side of Wady Urtas. The natives assert that this also went to Jebel Furaydis, but this is impossible.

The construction of all these aqueducts, the masonry of Solomon's Pools, and the appearance of the cement used to line the channels, seems to me to be Roman work. This, too, seems probable on referring to Josephus' *Antiq.* xviii. 3. 2, and *Wars*, ii. 9. 4, where we are told that Pontius Pilate made an aqueduct with the Corban, or the money from the Temple treasury, bringing the water from a distance of 200 (in the latter passage it is 400) furlongs.

Mar Saba.

The monastery, or properly Laura, of Mar Saba, clinging to the precipitous side of Wady el Nar, as the Kedron is called, surrounded by the ruins of numberless hermitages built on rock-ledges or in hollows and caves, is too well known to need description here. The surrounding country is now a scene of utter desolation, a glaring wilderness of steep chalky hills strewn with flints and loose stones. Yesterday we had occasion to go to a point some seven miles distant in a direct line, and this took us three and a quarter hours to ride. Descending into Wady el Nar we crossed it and wound up a side valley till we reached its head. For some time our path led us up and down the heads of numberless valleys, but soon we found ourselves among rocks and ravines, where the horses could scarce find a footing. Tired of this, and finding that the guide knew but little of the country, I

struck upwards to a watershed, along which we travelled with ease, though the paths, originally made by, and intended for, goats, afforded barely sufficient footing for the horses, who by one false step would have been precipitated, in some cases several hundred feet, down slopes varying from 30 degs. to 40 degs. Descending at last an almost precipitous rocky slope, we reached Wady Dabbár, one of the most important drains of the country east of Jerusalem. Here we found two caves hewn in the side of the valley and filled with rain water. The lower consisted of two tunnels 40ft. long, and separated by a wall of rock, while in front a wall of rough masonry formed the cave into a cistern. The upper cave was deep and full of water.

Passing onwards we ascended a rolling spur, and by a rugged Nagb, or pass, mounted to the crest of the ridge, at the east point of which was to be our point of observation. Here we found two cairns of large heavy stones. The one was roughly circular, but the stones were strewn without order. The other was smaller, but appeared to have been in the form of a circle some 15ft. in diameter. They are known to the Arabs as El Tabz Ektayf, and are the only monuments of the kind I have yet observed in the country, though they are common in Sinai and the Badiyet el Tih.

There are no villages in this wilderness, and but two or three ruins. A few wells exist from which the Arabs procure their water, but there is absolutely nothing of real interest in the whole region. The Arabs are divided as follows:—To the south the Ta'amireh; near Mar Saba, El Abbaydíyeh; north of these El Hetaymát, El Sawháret, El Wad, and El 'Arab Abu Nusayr, who extend as far as Wady Kelt and Jericho.

NOTE.—Having occasion to ride up to Jerusalem the other day I found most interesting repairs going on in and outside of the Kubbet el Sakrah. All the *Kysháni* (encaustic tiles) have been stripped off one of the faces of the outer wall and the original masonry lies disclosed. The present pointed windows, six in number, are built within semicircular arches, and above these are thirteen arches also semicircular, which originally formed an open balustrade. I have taken measurements and sketches of the arches, cornices, &c., and will send them as soon as I can find time to finish drawing them out.

As this discovery seems important, I have asked Lieut. Conder, who has occasion just now to go up to Jerusalem, to have a photograph taken before the tiles are restored to their former places.