

marly, and a deep pit has been roughly hewn and still holds water—a narrow flight of steps leads down to it. Immediately above is a solid mass of masonry, the stones of great size and roughly hewn; two or three fine oaks overshadow it; it measures 35ft. by 30ft., and is some 6ft. to 8ft. high. Close by is the tomb-house of Sheikh Selámeh, and a little farther on the same hill is the Roman temple. There is no reason to doubt that we here find an instance of the altars erected “under every green tree.”

In concluding this paper I would remark that there are two methods of studying the subject of identification. The one natural in England is the literary comparison of various passages leading to conclusions which it is sought to verify by aid of the map. In Palestine the process is naturally reversed. The prominent points in the landscape arrest the eye, and the interest of connecting them with Scripture history is far greater than that of the study of obscure Hebrew names. The prosecution of this method must naturally lead to discoveries of the greatest interest, and among these may be mentioned those made lately during the prosecution of the Survey, of which a list is given below.

1. Kh. Semmakah (Ecbatana, a Roman town on Carmel).
2. Kh. Deir Serúr (Sozuza, an early Christian episcopal town).
3. Keráwa (Archelais, a site not as yet described).
4. Tell el Semak (Sycaminum—according to Mr. Drake).
5. Eshu'a (Eshtaol—with the probable tomb of Samson).
6. Jiljúlíeh (Gilgal—a confirmation of former discovery).
7. Wady Suweinit (the Senneh of Jonathan, with the site of Philistine camp).
8. 'Ain Zahrah (Zereth or Zerthan, mentioned in Gideon's history).
9. Tubás (probably the Tabbath of the same passage).
10. 'Ash el Ghoráb (Rock Oreb of the same account).
11. Tuweil el Dhiab (winepress of Zeeb in the same connection).
12. Kurn Surtabeh (the altar of Ed, Josh. 22).
13. Beit 'Atab (Rock Etam of Samson, as suggested by Sergeant Black).
14. Nebi Samwil (the high place of Gibeon and city of Nob).

CLAUDE R. CONDER, Lieutenant R.E.

THE SCENERY OF DAVID'S OUTLAW LIFE.

BY LIEUTENANT CONDER, R.E.

THE extension of the Survey in the hill country of Judah has now enabled us to explain the wanderings of David in his outlaw life, during the latter period of the reign of Saul; a story which, in its romantic incidents, yields in interest to none of the many adventurous histories of the Old Testament. Four new identifications may now be published with a great degree of confidence, and the thorough examination of

the country forming the theatre of these episodes enables us to give force, by the comparison of its existing character with that required by the narrative, to the faithful indications of the ancient accounts.

David's first flight was from the royal capital of Gibeah of Benjamin, probably the present Jeb'a, which stands on a plateau on the south brink of the great Michmash Valley, in the centre of the lot of Benjamin. His first resting-place on his way to the Philistine plain was at Nob, then the resting-place of the Tabernacle and the chief religious centre. For this site, hitherto unfixed, I have already proposed the modern Nebi Samwíl, which fits well with the requisites of the present narrative. Leaving immediately the fated spot, soon desecrated by the daring murder of the entire priestly family, David descended into the borders of the Shephalah, then in the hands of the Philistines, and took refuge with Achish, King of Gath, a Philistine capital not as yet fully identified, but which seems most probably identical with the great White Mound of Tell el Safi, on the borders of the Maritime Plain, commanding one of the main adits to the hill country, the Valley of Elah, already so famous in David's history as the scene of the death of Goliath of Gath. A confirmation of this identification (first proposed, I believe, by Dr. Porter), from a passage in Josephus, where Gath appears under another name, I propose to put forward later on. In the meantime it is sufficient to say that the distance at which David now considered himself safe from the pursuit of Saul was less than thirty English miles.

Indeed, in the whole account, nothing is more striking than the small extent of the country traversed, and its short distance from the royal capital. David appears to have wandered in an area the radius of which did not exceed twenty miles from his native town of Bethlehem. Generally speaking, he interposed this city between himself and Saul, and as we know that he was able to communicate with relations there (1 Sam. xx. 1), it seems probable that he thus ensured an early notice of any attempt on the king's part to surprise him when betrayed by the men of the various localities in which he sought refuge.

Recognised at Gath, David again fled and entered the possessions of Judah, hiding in the far-famed Cave of Adullam. This site is as yet outside the bounds of the Survey, but has been identified by M. Ganneau with a great degree of certainty. There was a city of the name, and an important place, enumerated among the royal Canaanite capitals. The cities which occur in connection with it—Maresha (El Marash), Jarmuth (Yarmuk), Socoh (Shuweikeh)—all lie in a short distance of one another in the low hills south of the Valley of Elah (Wady el Sumt) close to the scene of the famous duel. It is here that M. Ganneau finds the name of 'Aid el Mía, which represents very well the Hebrew 'Adlem, an identification which we hope afterwards to confirm. The site is a hill-side near Socoh (Shuweikeh), which is burrowed with caves, part natural, partly enlarged by human agency.

Hareth.—From Adullam, David next went over to Moab, to seek an asylum for his father and mother in the country of his ancestress Ruth.

It appears that he then lived for a time in the desert, for the parallel passage in Josephus represents the prophet Gad as recommending him to leave "the desert," and go into "the portion of Judah" (Ant. VI., xii. 4). The Authorised Version gives "the hold," a title which it applies to more than one of David's places of refuge. The place to which he next departed is called in the English the "Forest of Hareth," and many theories on the ancient fertility of Palestine are founded on the existence of this forest, and of the "Wood of Ziph." It may, however, appear in this paper that both these readings are mistaken, and we may, in fact, succeed in cutting down both the forests at a single blow.

The word used in the Hebrew is (יער), *Y'ar*, which means properly a grove; but a remarkable difference exists in the Septuagint. The Vatican and Alexandrine manuscripts both read *εν πολει*, in the city, a difference which is due to the transposition of *Yeh* and *'Ain*, reading *'Ayr* for *Y'ar*. The parallel passage of Josephus also reads the "city" of Hareth.

The improbability of any forest or collection of timber trees having existed in this part of Palestine cannot be too strongly insisted on. That extensive woods have been cut down, that a forest once covered half the Plain of Sharon, that wild thickets abounded as they still do on the slopes of Carmel, is certain; but it is contrary to the character of Judæan scenery to suppose in times as late as that of David, when the water supply and seasons were almost the same that they now are, and just before the time when Solomon was forced to bring all his building timber from Lebanon, that any forest properly so called should have existed.

We are bound, it seems to me, to take the concurrence of the two ancient manuscripts with the authority of Josephus, when thus taking the side of probability, rather than the translation of the Authorised Version, depending upon a transposition of the letters, which might so easily have occurred.

The second part of the question is to discover the position of the town of Hareth, thus transformed into an imaginary forest. It is not mentioned in any other passage, and we have only two indications of its position, and these but slight. In the first place, it was in the lot of Judah, and from the general indications above noticed, we should be inclined to place it south of Bethlehem, though the Onomasticon puts it west of Jerusalem, probably close to the boundary of the tribe. The second indication is more precise. From thence David went to the aid of the men of Keilah attacked by the Philistines. There was no special reason for his succouring this town except one. Keilah (now Kilah) is a well known place at the foot of the higher hills, south-east of Adullam, and some six miles from it. It is not, therefore, in the region of David's native place, and its inhabitants were in no way specially attached to him, for we find that, with the ingratitude so characteristic of the ordinary oriental, they were ready to deliver up their deliverer to Saul, immediately after he had saved their threshing-floors from the Philistine

nomadic hordes. The simple reason must, therefore, have been that David and his men were at the time in the immediate neighbourhood of the village, and that his own safety was to a certain extent endangered by this unusually far-pushed Philistine ghazoo.

We may, therefore, look for Hareth, or, as the Hebrew is properly transliterated, *Kharith*, in the neighbourhood of the modern village of Kilah, and here, up higher in the hills, on the north side of Wady Arneba, one of the heads of the Valley of Elah, now stands the small modern village of Kharás, a name embodying all the essential letters of Harith, though with a slightly different termination. The site is an ancient one, with the usual indications—ancient wells, cisterns, and rough caves in the hill side. Its position in the same district formerly serving as a refuge to David is interesting, and it may, I believe, be accepted as the site of the City of Hareth.

The confinement in a city "that hath gates and bars" was not consistent with David's predatory and fugitive life. From Keilah he escapes yet further south, a distance of fifteen miles, and "abode in the wilderness in strongholds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph; and Saul sought him every day."

We now come to one of the most beautiful episodes of the history. The unselfish love of Jonathan (perhaps the finest of the Old Testament characters) prompted him to seek the oppressed and fugitive bandit, and renew his pledges of friendship. Jonathan goes to seek David, who was "in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood," and went to David "into the wood and strengthened his hand in God" (1 Sam. xxiii. 16).

Wood of Ziph.—We are, therefore, here called upon to identify or to destroy a second forest, and this with even greater certainty than that of Hareth. The position of the northern Ziph, at Tell Zif, has long been known. It is a conspicuous mound, lying south-east of Hebron, and although it shows at the present day no trace of buildings, we found a quarry on the northern side, and some large Jewish tombs; one, having a portico with rude rock pilasters, is to be found lower down on the south. It is, however, usual to say, "that the wood of Ziph has disappeared," which we may further supplement by asserting that in all probability it never had any real existence.

The Septuagint versions seem here to give the local colouring with unusual fidelity; the "wilderness of Ziph" they translate by the word (*ἀνχύδς*), meaning dried up or parched, and the wood appears as *γη καινη* in the Vatican, and *ἡ καινη* in the Alexandrine—"the new ground," or the "new place" of Ziph. It is very striking to find, on turning to Josephus, whose works date earlier than either manuscript, that the interview is said to take place "in a certain place called the New Place belonging to Ziph" (Ant. VI. xiii. 2). The explanation is, however, very simple, and the verdict must once more, I think, be given against the English reading. The Hebrew term here used is *Chores*, and the difference between it and the word translated by the Septuagint, "the New Place," is not one of letters, but merely of points.

This is by no means a solitary instance. Many others could be cited in the topographical passages of the Bible in which the points cause a considerable difference. It is evident that the modern points cannot have been the same as those used (if any) at the time of the Septuagint translation, and in a question turning upon points alone, the decision must be made on independent grounds.

The existence at any time of a wood in this part of the country is geologically almost an impossibility. From Hebron to Beersheba not a single spring of any importance exists in the eastern hills in which the story now lies. The soil is a soft, chalky limestone, so porous that every drop of water sinks through the strata to the hard dolomite beneath. The rounded hills, which invariably mark this formation, are not only entirely without culture, but show no signs of any different condition at a former period, except in the immediate neighbourhood of some of the large sites, where the vine seems to have been cultivated. The country is emphatically a dry land, looking down on the barren wastes which lie above the Dead Sea between Masada and Engedi. There is no moisture capable of supporting vegetable growth. The cistus and the belan bushes grow among the ledges, but not a single tree exists in the whole country.

The character of the district leads us therefore to adopt the Septuagint reading and that of Josephus, but yet further we have recovered amongst the two hundred names in the country round Yutta, that of *Khirbet Khoreisa*, which is applied to an ancient site about one mile south of Tell Zif. I have occasion to speak more fully of this site in another report, as we found in it a Greek Christian inscription of some interest, but it is sufficient here to say that its bell-mouthed cisterns and extensive caves burrowing the hill side, prove it to be an ancient locality, and we can have little hesitation in identifying it with the Choresh of Zif, a village or hamlet belonging to the larger town at Tell Zif.

The Rock of Maon.—The inhabitants of the district seem to have been no better than their descendants, and their betrayal of David forced him to descend still further south. In the wilderness of Maon he abode, according to Josephus, "in a great rock." The passage in Samuel has the curious expression that he "went down unto a rock." Maon is no doubt the present Tell Ma'in, the most prominent object in the landscape, a huge knoll, some 100 feet high. It is, however, on the same level as Tell Zif, and I would suggest that the passage refers to *Wady el Wa'r*, "the valley of Rocks"—a place so rugged as to be particularised by a name which might be considered in some degree applicable to many of the neighbouring valleys. The wady has its head close to Tell Ma'in, and the long ridges running east to the Dead Sea form a fitting site for that narrow escape, when, separated but by a single crest, David was only saved from discovery by the dramatic incident of a sudden Philistine invasion.

The scene now changes to the vicinity of Engedi, where David next retired. It may be remarked that thus descending gradually to the

lower level, and again returning at a later period to the neighbourhood of Ziph, David follows the custom of the modern Bedawi, whose tents in winter are on the sheltered plains by the Dead Sea shore, but in summer on the hills at the verge of the cultivated districts. It is very probable that in this we have an indication of the season, and that it was only the unbearable heat of summer that forced the band from their secure fastnesses, "the rocks of the wild goats," or ibex, still found in Wady Umm el Beden, to the hills of Ziph, where they had already so little cause to expect a safe retreat. Saul again pursues David, and the magnanimous treatment which the king receives at his hands brings about a temporary reconciliation. The scene is a cave which Josephus mentions as being deep and hollow, and also near Engedi. That it was on the roadside from Gibeah we learn from the Authorised Version. Caves are not very numerous in that district, and we may succeed, when surveying that part of the country, in determining by these indications the exact cavern in question. Meanwhile it may be remarked in illustration of the passage, that nothing is more usual in Palestine than the herding of sheep, goats, and cows in the innumerable caverns which are found everywhere. The cave in question must have been of considerable extent to have given shelter to David "and his men." His band numbered about 600 at this time, although it does not follow that they were all in the cave.

The next episode is that of Nabal of Carmel. Of this there is little to write. The fact of his possessions being in Carmel, whilst he himself, a Ziphite, lived in Maon, is easily understood, for the distance from Maon to Carmel is only about two miles. It is possible that the latter place was chosen for the sheep-shearing, in consequence of the fine reservoir lying in a hollow beneath the great Crusading castle. Even in autumn it was full of water, and surrounded by herds of the Arab camels. The country in this part preserves its original character; a little corn and maize is grown in the valleys, and at the ruins are traces of wine-presses, showing the former cultivation of the grape, but the greater part is pasture land, rough rocks with the dry vegetation on which goats and even sheep seem to thrive. The village of Yutta is said to boast 17,000 sheep alone, the sheikh himself owning 250, besides goats, cows, camels, asses, and good horses.

The possessions of Nabal would therefore entitle him to be considered one who "liveth in prosperity" at the present day, as he owned 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats—the latter being still the less numerous here, whereas in other districts they outnumber the sheep by perhaps ten to one.

In connection with the character of the country, it is also interesting to note the present brought by Abigail—200 loaves, two skins of wine, five sheep, five measures of parched corn, 100 clusters of raisins (now extensively manufactured around Hebron), and 200 cakes of figs. These products show the cultivation to have materially decreased, though the pastures remain probably unchanged.

The Hill of Hachilah.—We now come to the last meeting which took place between Saul and David, the last reconciliation which was soon followed by the disastrous defeat on Gilboa, and the termination of David's nomadic life. From the wilderness of Paran he comes up again to the territory of the treacherous Ziphites, who bear news to Saul in Gibeah—"Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before the Jeshimon." From another passage we learn that it was "on the right hand" of the Jeshimon, and from Josephus it appears that Saul, coming down to Ziph, was overtaken by nightfall in the hill over which or by which the road ran, and so encamped; "and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him," 1 Sam. xxvi. 5. From the bolster at his head David took the king's spear and the cruse of water, which is never found far from a sleeping Syrian; resisting the temptations of his nephew, marked with the same cruelty which the other brother, Joab, showed afterwards to Abner, David ascended a hill top, far off yet within call, and there upbraided the sleeping guard, "for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them."

The topographical indications in this passage are so definite, and the scenery of the country so marked, that there can be but little question as to the locality of this closing scene. From Hebron southwards to Maon the country presents one uniform surface, rising eastwards to a long cliff over the lower plateau of Engedi. Ploughed as it is by shallow valleys, it yet presents no stronghold or remarkably high hill, but, as viewed from the summit of Tell Ma'in, a succession of long-succeeding rounded ridges. The site must have been north or north-east of Ziph, where the hills rise to a greater elevation, and where deep wadies start suddenly and fall steeply down towards the desert. Such a position agrees also, as shown above, with the requisite position of Saul's camp. The hill must, moreover, face the Jeshimon on the right hand, that is to say, in speaking from Gibeah on the west. A site fulfilling these requisites has necessarily a very limited choice of positions.

The Jeshimon (for the article is invariably used) was, as the word signifies, a desert or solitude. Peor and Pisgah are mentioned in another passage (Num. xxi. 20) as facing the Jeshimon, and we cannot hesitate to identify it with the plateau or Bukera above the Dead Sea on its western side.

The probable site of Hachilah is the high hill bounded by deep valleys north and south on which the ruin of *Yekin* now stands. Vandervelde, with some hesitation, suggests this as the town of Cain, but apparently is unaware of the proper form of that name, which is written *Hakin* in the Hebrew, thus considerably closer to the present form than he appears to have supposed. Between *Hakin* and *Hakila* there is a very strong affinity, and it is unnecessary to state that the *n* and the *l* are frequently interchanged, as for instance in the words *Sinasil* or *Silasil* which in modern Arabic both mean an earthquake.

The name therefore exists almost unchanged, and the indications on the

spot are strong. A good road following the Judæan watershed and leading south to Ziph exists on the side of the hill. A large ancient ruin with caves and cisterns stands on the brink of the steep slope, and looks down upon the white marl ridges of the Jeshimon, barren and rugged, patched with buff and brown, dotted with low black tents, but destitute of any single shrub or tree. On the north the twin peaks of Jebel el Shukuf above Ain Jidy, and beyond, all separated by the gleaming thread of sea, scarce seen in its great chasm; below are the long ridges of Moab, the iron precipices, the thousand watercourses, the great plateau of Kerak, the black volcanic gorge of Callirhoe, all lying in deep shadows under the morning sun, or brightened with a crimson flush at sunset. The scene is as wild and striking as could be desired for the drama there enacted.

Yet further the meaning of the "trench" may perhaps be explained. On the south side the road passes by a flat plot of ground, lying low and having steep cliffs on either side; it forms the head of a large wady, and has two wells of living water close to the roadside. It was no doubt here, sheltered from view and near to water, according to the modern Arab fashion of hiding an encampment, that Saul would pitch his tents. High up on either of the hill tops David stood to call to the host, and no doubt the special expression that he passed over to the other side intimates his crossing the valley and ascending the opposite hill.

Here we may close the record; the town of Ziklag is not yet known to which David retired, and where he was at the time of the battle of Gilboa. Its position, north of the Brook of Besor, in the territory of Gath, three days' hard journey from Jezreel, will, however, I hope, enable us to fix it next spring, when surveying the southern Maritime Plain.

The extremely definite character of the topographical notices was insisted upon by Mr. Grove in the "Bible Dictionary," and first drew my attention to the subject. "It is very much to be desired," he says (See Maon, "Bible Dictionary"), that some traveller should take the trouble to see how the actual locality of M'ain agrees with the minute indications of the narrative." I hope that the preceding pages, the result of careful comparison of the various passages, and a detailed inspection of the ground, may be considered satisfactory in settling the disputed points and in giving clearness and consistency to the history of the nomadic life of David and his men.

THE ROYAL CANAANITE AND LEVITICAL CITY OF DEBIR.

BY LIEUTENANT CONDER, R.E.

EL DHOHERIYEH, *November 7, 1874.*

THE systematic arrangement of the topographical lists of the Book of Joshua is a subject which has as yet been little studied, and very