

The only site which at all fulfils this definition is that of Tell Moghyfer (at one time identified with Gilgal), where are remains of a considerable convent of early period, fed by aqueducts which come down from Elisha's fountain.

The same writer, who was more enterprising than most of the early travellers, mentions *Thecua* as the site of the murder of many children by Herod, and a *Saint Zacharias*, which is evidently *Khirbet Beit Skaria*—the ancient Beth Zacharias. This brings back the date of the Church at Teku'a (of which only a few pillars and a magnificent octagonal font remain) to the eighth century, to which also, from the style of architecture, we should be inclined to attribute the remains of a church at Beit Skaria, now much destroyed, but showing capitals of early Byzantine character.

The Pillar of Salt. The traditional site of Lot's wife appears to have been entirely lost to modern writers. Benjamin of Tudela thus describes it:—"Two parasangs from the sea (about eight miles) stands the salt pillar into which Lot's wife was metamorphosed, and although the sheep continually lick it, the pillar grows again, and retains its original shape." It appears that the traveller did not visit it.

Sir John Maundeville (1322) speaks of the same site:—"At the right side of the Dead Sea the wife of Lot still stands in likeness of a salt stone, because she looked behind her when the cities sunk into hell."

Mandrell, in 1697, says:—"On the west side of the sea is a small promontory, near which . . . stood the monument of Lot's metamorphosed wife, part of which (if they may be credited) is visible at this day." He was not, however, tempted to visit the spot.

These descriptions seem all to refer to the same place on the west shore of the sea, and I would suggest that they refer to the unique and extraordinary crag which M. Ganneau describes on the western shore near to the Hajr el Sulah. This curious pinnacle of rock, standing out from the cliff, and rudely resembling a shrouded figure, is called by the Arabs, *Kurn Sahsul Hemeid*, a name for which I am unable to give any interpretation. It seems well fitted for the legend attached to it, and no other monument to which it could have been applied is to be found on the north-western shores of the sea.

CLAUDE R. CONDER, Lieut. R.E.,
In Command Survey of Palestine.

NOTE ON LIEUT. CONDER'S IDENTIFICATION OF NOB.

It seems to me that in seeking to identify Nob with Neby Samwil, Lieut. Conder has completely misunderstood the force and meaning of one of the most graphic and picturesque passages in the Bible, that of

Isaiah x. 28-32, which I give in full, as detached sentences are often misleading:—

He comes to Ai, passes through Migron,
 At Michmash deposits his baggage ;
 They cross the pass, Geba is our night station ;
 Terrified is Ramah, Gibeah of Saul flees.
 Shriek with thy voice, daughter of Gallim ;
 Listen, O Laish ! Ah ! poor Anathoth !
 Madmenah escapes, dwellers in Gebim take flight.
 Yet this day he halts at Nob :
 He shakes his hand against the mount, daughter of Sion,
 The hill of Jerusalem. (See *Dictionary of Bible*, art. Nob.)

In this passage, if it has a meaning—and I cannot suppose that it has not—the prophet describes, in such detail that it is difficult to believe he is not describing an actual event, the march of an Assyrian army upon Jerusalem ; and we may be quite certain that, with his knowledge of the country, and writing as he did for those who were equally well acquainted with it, he would describe a line of march which, under certain conditions, an army would naturally follow if its special object were the capture of Jerusalem. The conditions to which I allude are the passage of the great ravine at Michmash (*Mukhmas*), and encampment for the night at Geba (*Jeba*) ; why this route was selected in preference to the easier road along the line of water-parting we have no means of ascertaining, and it does not affect the question.

Of the places mentioned by Isaiah, we know with a considerable degree of certainty the positions of Michmash, Geba, Ramah, Gibeah, and Anathoth ; of the others nothing is known. From Geba to Nob was evidently a day's march in the progress of the army, and the order in which the villages are mentioned leads us in the direction of Jerusalem, and not of Neby Samwil. If we are to suppose that the King of Assyria went to Nob simply for the purpose of shaking his hand against Jerusalem, the lofty summit of Neby Samwil would answer admirably ; but if, as I believe, the passage means that the fierce Assyrian warrior was leading an army from Geba against Jerusalem, and that his progress was suddenly arrested at Nob on the way thither, we must seek a site for Nob on the road between those two places ; and I cannot imagine a more natural one than some place in the vicinity of that Scopus whence, in later years, Titus and his legions looked down upon the Holy City. Certainly no general advancing with an army from Geba against Jerusalem would lead it to Neby Samwil, a high peak four and a half miles from the city, and separated from it by an intricate country and the deep ravine of Wady Beit Hanina.

The only other passage in the Bible which gives any clue to the position of Nob, and that a very slight one, is the account of David's flight from Ramah to Gath by way of Nob ; it is of course possible that David may have reached the Philistine plain by way of Gibeon (*El Jib*), but it is equally possible, and in my opinion more probable, that he took

the road passing by Jerusalem and Bethlehem, his native place, which was quite as short and convenient, if Gath were, as there are some reasons for believing, at Tell es Safieh.

The fanciful derivation of the Neby of Neby Samwil from Nob will not bear a moment's scrutiny; there is no reason why this particular Neby should be derived from Nob more than any one of the hundred other Nebys in Palestine, and the Arabic Neby is hardly an exact reproduction of the Hebrew Nob. It may also be remarked that the tradition respecting Neby Samwil is antecedent to the Moslem conquest; in the time of Procopius there was a convent of St. Samuel on the summit, and it is only a natural transition from the Christian tomb and convent of St. Samuel to the Moslem tomb of the prophet (*Neby*) Samwil.

In his attempt to identify Nob with Neby Samwil, Lieut. Conder identifies it also with the "high place" of Gibeon, the site of the tabernacle during the early part of Solomon's reign; this, however, is unsupported by any passage in the Bible, and the quotations from the Talmud given in Lieut. Conder's paper seem to me to prove conclusively that Nob and the high place of Gibeon were distinct places. It is also reasonable to suppose that after the massacre of the priests at Nob the tabernacle would be removed from the scene of so much bloodshed; we do not know when it was erected at Gibeon, but there are some grounds for supposing that it was with Saul on Mount Gilboa. Dean Stanley has proposed to identify the high place of Gibeon with Neby Samwil, but he is careful to state that there are no grounds for the supposition except the apparent suitability of the place for the magnificent ceremonial on the occasion of Solomon's visit; on the other hand, it should be remembered that Neby Samwil is one and a quarter miles from El Jib (Gibeon), a distance so great that it would lead us to expect the place to have its own distinctive name rather than one derived from Gibeon. We may also observe that Gilgal and Shiloh, where the tabernacle rested for many years, were not prominent places; the Temple at Jerusalem was on the lower hill of the two; and even the temples of Jeroboam, at Dan and Bethel, were not on prominent sites such as Neby Samwil and many other peaks in Palestine. It would almost seem as if these positions were selected as a sort of protest against the general custom of worship on the high places, and there is certainly no indication that prominence was an object in selecting a resting-place for the tabernacle.

C. W. WILSON.

NOTE ON THE SOUTERRAINS IN THE NOBLE SANCTUARY, JERUSALEM.

A CONSTANT feature of the rock-cut tanks of Palestine is the rock-cut staircase running round the walls from top to bottom; the small bottle-shaped tanks of twelve to fifteen feet diameter being an exception to the general rule.