

A JOURNEY ON FOOT THROUGH ARABIA PETRÆA.

(A Paper read, before the Geographical Section of the British Association.)

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EARLY in the morning on the 29th of last March I arrived at Suez, having left London on the evening of the 21st. I had only ten weeks at my command; but allowing a fortnight for the journeys out to Suez and home again this would leave me eight weeks, which I hoped would prove sufficient to enable me to accomplish the objects of my expedition, which were (1) to examine the sandstone district in the Peninsula of Sinai, lying between the ancient Egyptian mining stations of Wady Mugharab and Serâbit el Kâdim, with the view of the possible discovery of other Egyptian ruins or inscriptions; (2) to trace out the various routes that the Israelites might have taken on their march northwards from Mount Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea, so as to institute a just comparison between the facilities or the difficulties which attend them; (3) to explore Jebel Mughrâh and Ain Kadeis, in the hope of throwing some additional light upon the question of the site of Kadesh-Barnea, and the boundary of the ancient kingdom of Edom; and (4) to follow the road from Wady el Arish by the ancient Lake Serbonis to Kantara, which Brugsch Bey has suggested as the route which the Israelites took when they left Egypt.

Having paid four previous visits to the Peninsula of Sinai, I was already well known to the Towârah Arabs who inhabit that region, and found little difficulty in coming to a satisfactory agreement with Sheikh Nassâr to accompany me with two other Arabs and three camels. As on former visits I preferred myself to travel on foot, as more convenient for taking notes of the country, and for using the instruments which the council of the Royal Geographical Society had kindly lent to me. I had no other companion or attendant besides my three Bedouin Arabs. Two of the camels carried my tent, baggage, and provisions for two months; the third one, the Sheikh, and the Arabs' supply of corn.

On Sunday evening, March 31st, I walked quietly down to the Wells of Moses, to which place I had sent on my camels, and the next day I fairly started on my desert journey. On reaching Wady Gharundel we found that Nassâr's tents had been removed here from Wady Nusb, where we had expected to find them, and I was compelled to stop one day as his guest, so that I did not reach the latter place till Friday. At Wady Nusb there are extensive ancient workings for manganese and hæmatite iron-ores, but there is *no direct communication* with the turquoise mines of Serâbit el Kadim. Passing over the head of Wady Nusb, where there are many Sinaitic inscriptions, and up to the head of Wady Lahyan I entered Wady Sahow, and tracing it down discovered that after running in a westerly direction about four miles as a broad open valley, with fine seyal trees and much herbage, it changes into a narrow winding rocky ravine, enclosed by high granite cliffs, in one place only nine feet wide, and finally, below a fall of considerable depth, takes the name of Wady Shellâl. It is impassable for camels, but a footpath leads down it. The

mouth of Wady Shellâl is well known, since the usual road to Wady Mokatteb leads past it, but the origin of its name, "The Valley of Cataracts," so-called from the fall which I have mentioned, and its connection with Wady Sahow has not, I believe, before been traced.

I found extensive turquoise mines in Wady Sahow in full work by the Arabs, but there were no traces of ancient workings, or Egyptian inscriptions; nor is there any direct road down Wady Sahow to Wady Mughârah, as I had been led to expect.

I returned by Wady Lahyan to Serâbit el Kadim, and stopping there two days had an opportunity of thoroughly exploring the ancient Egyptian mines on that mountain, and quite satisfied myself that they were worked for turquoise only. The Arabs still work these mines, and as at W. Mughârah have destroyed by blasting many of the hieroglyphic inscriptions.

On leaving Serâbit el Kâdim I followed the usual road by Wadies Kamileh and Bark, and the pass of Nukb Howa, to Jebel Musa, which I reached on April 14th.

I stayed here one day, ascending the mountain and renewing my acquaintance with the monks at the convent of St. Katharine. On the 14th I started onwards to trace the route of the Israelites northwards to Kadesh.

Crossing over the mountains from W. er Kahab to W. Tlâh I descended that valley, and then turning to the east, up W. Gharbeh, reached el Watiyeh, the pass in W. es Sheikh which marks, I believe, the site of Rephidim. I thus passed along the northern face of the high mountainous district, known to the Arabs by the name of El Jibâl, and, I think, to the Jews of old by that of Horeb, my object being to examine the water supply on the north-west of el Watiyeh. My camels I sent round by W. es Sheikh.

The next day I continued eastwards, south of the el Watiyeh range, for about four miles, till I reached the head of W. Sa'al el Refyan ("the watery"), which I traced down to its junction with W. Sa'al el Atshân ("the thirsty"), which forms the usual road from Jebel Musa; I followed the course of W. Sa'al to Erweis el Ebeirig, from which point I crossed over north-east to W. Murrah.

I had before explored W. Sa'al el Atshân, and the other wadies to the south, and am of opinion that all these wadies are too narrow, rugged, and winding to have formed a road for the passage of the large host of the Israelites; nor can I at all agree with my friend Professor Palmer in finding in the numerous heaps of stone at Erweis el Ebeirig, the traces of the Israelitish camp at Kibroth Hataavah, nor, again, do I hold it possible to identify Ain Huthera with Hazeroth; the names are similar, but the difficulties of the route appear to me to place the latter identification out of the question.

After journeying eastwards to within a few miles of Ain Huthera I retraced my steps to Wady Murrah, which I followed up to its head, and ascending the pass of Aragib Rahi, and crossing an elevated sandstone

plateau, reached Ain el Akhdar, the gardens of which I had fixed upon as a shady and well watered spot for resting on Easter-day. I had thus examined what I may call the lower range of Jebel et Tih, without finding any road over it, except a difficult pass called Nukb Murrah; and having explored on this or in previous journeys every wady leading from Jebel Musa, in the direction of the Gulf of Akaba, I felt convinced that all were unsuitable for the passage of the 600,000 men, besides women and children, of the Israelites. I had also explored the country to the north-west of Ain el Akhdar with similar results.

On April 22nd, crossing Joûfa el Akhdar, the sandstone plateau, which lies to the north of the wells, I arrived at a large Arab encampment, where I was entertained by Zeid, whom I now took as guide in the place of one of my other Arabs. In the afternoon we ascended Nukb Dhalal, an easy pass to the top of the mountains, but there was no road beyond. There is excellent pasture on the limestone plateau which we reached, and the pass is evidently much used, but only for taking the flocks and camels to pasture there. Near the head of the pass there are some interesting nuwâmis, ancient storehouses, or dwellings.

Towards the north of the plateau of El Joûfah is situated a prominent conical hill of white sandstone, capped by a hard stratum of limestone containing echini and other fossils, and called Galâib. From this I obtained bearings to several mountain peaks, the position of which had been fixed by the Ordnance Survey.

The district to the S.E. of Galâib is called Zeranik, and consists of an elevated sandstone plateau, to which there is a gradual ascent of open ground from W. es Sheikh, and the pass of el Watiyeh.

From this I descended by W. Deresêyeh over a succession of terraces of white sandstone to the head of W. Zelleger. In the former wady we found a good supply of rain water that had been retained in a large pithole. There are extensive sand-drifts in the upper portion of W. Zelleger. Here bulbs abound, and in January, 1867, I found large numbers of crocuses, whence I believe comes the name Safran, by which this wady has sometimes been known. There is also a large quantity of retem or broom, with which probably is connected the name of Rithmah, the station of the Israelites which stands next to Hazeroth, which latter place I am inclined to place on the Joûfah plateau, where the ruins of ancient enclosures still exist.

W. Zelleger is a broad valley with a smooth, level bed, running north-east between two lines of low mountains, which appear to be very rich in pasturage. About twenty miles down it W. Arâdeh runs in from the south. This is a very large valley, with abundance of vegetation. About six miles lower W. Edeid enters from the north. I turned off up this valley in order to visit the pass of Nakh el Mirad, which has been described by Professor Palmer. Its rocky bed afforded a very bad road for walking, and W. Biyar, which runs into it about nine miles up, was no better, and we were heartily glad to reach our halting place at the wells, which give the valley its name. We found

some Arabs here watering their flocks and camels and washing their sheep.

Taking Zeid with me as guide, I walked on to the pass. We reached the base of Jebel Ejmeh in an hour, and were just forty minutes in ascending to the top. The pass is steep and winding, and impracticable for waggons. This and the rocky character of the wadies leading to it appear to me to put it out of the question as a possible route for the Israelites. It is much used by the Arabs, but merely as a road for bringing down the goats and camels from the mountains to water them at the wells. From the summit of J. Ejmeh I obtained a series of distant bearings to J. Katharine and other mountains, and while engaged in taking these Zeid was equally busy in manufacturing a flint implement to cut his toe-nails.

The wells, of which there were formerly more than a dozen, have suffered much from neglect, and two only contained water, but owing probably to the accumulation of the droppings of the animals around them for many centuries the water was very bad. Washing it was easy to dispense with, but we had nothing else to drink, and all suffered severely. Sheikh Nassar observed "that if my Lord Moses had brought the 600,000 Israelites here, they would all have fallen ill," as we had done, and was greatly amused at the idea.

We only stopped one night at the wells, and on reaching the junction of Wady Biyar with W. Edeid Zeid started off up the latter, and after three hours returned with a skin of excellent water.

On reaching Wady Zelleger we followed it down to W. el Ain el Elya. Here the valley, which has hitherto been broad and open, takes a sharp turn to the south through a narrow rocky ravine. Water is plentiful, though not very good. An easy pass, Nukb el Chlyil, which we were about half an hour in crossing, brought us again to a succession of broad open valleys, and three miles on we reached Wady Sowâni. I had before travelled from this point up W. Zelleger. I now entered upon new ground. In W. Sowâni we obtained excellent water from some holes dug in its bed, and it appeared that in this way a very large supply might easily be obtained both here and also in many other places above a point where a large valley is contracted by rocks, and thus the water is brought near the surface. W. Sowâni runs down from J. Ejmeh. We followed up its stony bed for half a mile, and then, turning to the right, north-east, up a narrow gully, crossed a rocky plateau, and descended into W. Shebaikheh, where there are many acacia trees and good pasturage. Here we camped for the night, and intended to stop the following day, which was Sunday, but the number of midges made rest impossible, and compelled us to travel on. Passing over some low granite hills, beneath a higher range which lay on our left, we reached W. el Atiyeh, about eight miles distant from W. Sowâni. This is a broad, open wady, with a smooth gravelly bed. We entered it opposite Jebel Haramât, a large outlying sandstone mountain.

The road which we had followed from W. Sowâni appeared in places

too steep and rocky for the passage of the Israelites with their waggons, so, taking Zeid with me, I traced down the lower portion of W. el Atiyeh to near its junction with W. Sowâni, and found that it afforded a far easier road. We rested in W. Soûrah, in a small cave in which there was a spring, which formed a pool of delicious water. On returning we followed Derb es Soûrah, a good road lying between W. el Atiyeh and our other route.

In the afternoon we continued our course north-east up W. el Atiyeh to Jebel el Herte, passing on the way a large Arab cemetery. I ascended Jebel el Herte, hoping to get a bearing to some fixed peak, but in this I failed, although I obtained a magnificent view of the surrounding country. It is not a high mountain, but from its prominent position is seen from far. At the top is a hole surrounded by large stones, as if for a beacon fire in old times. I have noticed similar remains on many other prominent mountains in that country. North of this point are a succession of low ranges of limestone mountains, through which the wady, which now takes the name of W. el Hessi, runs. As we ascended to a higher level the surrounding mountains gradually appeared lower, and the country became more open. About five miles on the name of the wady again changed to W. Edwah. Here we turned eastwards up a broad valley, still bearing the name of W. el Hessi, to a well about six miles distant, where we obtained water. Thus far I had, I believe, been following the route taken in 1840 by Baron Koller from Sinai to Akabah, and my names and distances agree fairly with his, as given in the *Royal Geographical Society's Journal* of 1842.

Wishing to explore what I believe to have been the route of the Israelites further northwards, we retraced our steps to W. Edwah. After following this up about four miles, we entered W. Sha'arah. The country now partook of the character of large rolling plains, with abundant herbage. I saw many traces of Arab camps, but the dryness of the season had driven all the Arabs northwards in search of pasturage; the herbage was very dry, and we had great difficulty in finding sufficient food for our camels; a difficulty that was much increased by large flights of locusts. After proceeding about fifteen miles further northwards, we crossed the watershed, and entered Wady Meleg, which flows towards the Arabah. This wady is a very remarkable one. It has formed a cleft in the hard limestone rock 40 to 100 feet deep. In this huge pot-holes, 20 feet or more in diameter, have been made by the boulders. Here the water lodges in a series of these natural wells, the sides of which are deeply worn by the ropes of water-drawers, proving that they have been used for many centuries. Zeid informed me that the wady took the names of el Alalik, and Nub'a farther northwards. We reached this watering-place about 8.30 on May 1st, and stopped three hours to draw water and make bread. On starting onwards I took Zeid with me to examine the Wady lower down. In crossing some rising ground to rejoin our camels, we saw two Arabs and a camel pass behind a hill beyond. We dropped down till they were out of sight, and then running

on, stopped our camels, and Nassar and Zeid ascended the hill behind which the Arabs had disappeared. They soon returned, and reported that we were close upon a large gôm, or raiding expedition. We instantly turned, and drove back our camels as fast as possible, avoiding all soft places that might leave tracks and rising ground. About 4 o'clock my Arabs began to breathe more freely, and we looked out for camping ground, while Zeid was sent back to try to gain some tidings of the direction that the gôm was taking. Suddenly Selim exclaimed, "Here they come!" and looking back I saw two dromedaries carrying four men in hot pursuit. When about 300 yards from us they dismounted, and called upon us to surrender, which my sheikh refused to do. They then formed in a line, and with lighted matchlocks tried to drive us up a side valley. There was much clever manoeuvring on both sides, and a great deal of angry gesticulation, shouting, and presenting of guns, our object being to gain time for Zeid, whom we saw running up in the distance, to reach us. It was neither my inclination nor my policy to fight, so I handed my gun to Nassar and walked quietly beside him with my umbrella up as a sign that I was a non-combatant, much amused at my position, deeply interested in observing their manner of attack and defence, and determined, when matters had come to a crisis, to claim as my escort whichever party was victorious. At last the raiders had approached within 30 yards of us. Nassar loudly appealing to God to witness between him and them, now drew a line upon the ground with my gun; this he did three times, each time retiring a few steps. Then taking his stand at the third line with Selim, they stood with guns presented ready to fire the instant the first line should be crossed. On reaching this, the four raiders halted; and seeing my English gun, and hearing Zeid running up from behind them, they came to the conclusion that we were the strongest; so, pulling down the handkerchiefs with which their faces were concealed, they exclaimed Salamâk, "Peace be to you," and crossing the lines, my sheikh and theirs, who recognised each other, fell into each other's arms and kissed; and then we all sat round in a circle and heard their story of how they had tracked us from the watering-place at W. Meleg. They belonged to the tribe of the Haiwât, and with 50 dromedaries and 100 men were on their way for a raid in the Maâzi country to the north-east of Akaba. Three of them camped with us that night; one disappeared, we expected for the purpose of bringing up the rest of their force, and my Arabs stood to their guns all night, but we were not further molested. The want of pasturage and water had already led us to decide upon making for Nukhl. I had much wished to visit Akaba and Dr. Beke's Mount Sinai (Jebel en Nûr), but found it impossible to do so.

The presence of this raid, and the prospect of a return raid from the Maâzi made us abandon our plan of reaching Nukhl by the Hajj road, which runs from Akaba to Suez; and we took a more southerly route, which was known to my Arabs, but has not, I believe, been followed by any previous traveller.

After crossing a succession of hard flinty plateaux, divided by branches of W. Tasyibeh, we reached in $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours a low hill called Mnirdri beta Namûs, from the large number of round houses or tombs scattered over its top and sides. We came to similar ruins farther on, and near these I found several drawings of ibex, and a well-cut Sinaitic inscription, the only one I saw in the Tih desert. In $1\frac{1}{4}$ hours more, we reached W. Umm Shyish Herâni, in which there is a large well, much frequented as a watering-place. It was surrounded by eight stone troughs, and another group of troughs a short distance higher up the wady marked the position of another well, which has now disappeared. Two roads lead from this point to Nukhl. The northern one by the plain north of J. Fahih (probably that followed by Wallin in 1845, leading past Bir Kureis), the other across a mountainous district to the south. We took the latter as the safest from the dreaded raids; my Arabs pointing out in the distance J. Kureis and J. Themed. They told me that there are five well-known wells south of the Hajj road; viz., Themed, Kureis, Taiyibeh about three miles north of our road, Hersi, and Umm Shyish Herâni; Zeid added that there are many other *watering-places*, and much water after rain, but no more *wells*.

Our route was a dreary one across barren and monotonous ranges of chalk mountains, but groups of round tombs here and there in prominent positions proved its antiquity as a road.

After journeying three and a quarter hours we reached W. Nefés, a large valley running north-west. As we followed this down it gradually broadened out, and the mountains became lower. After three and a half hours we left the bed of W. Nefés, which turned towards the west, and for fourteen hours continued to cross a succession of wadies, divided by tracts of stony desert and low ridges. Our water began to run short, and we had to travel by night as well as day. We saw large numbers of storks here. At length we halted on May 4th at midday, about ten miles south-east of Nukhl, in W. Tureifeh, and sent on our three camels for water and flour, having almost run out of both. The sun set, and our camels had not returned. I was left alone with Sheikh Nassâr, who began to suffer greatly from thirst. He spoke with difficulty, and asked me to keep a look out for the camels, as his eyes began to grow dim from feverishness produced by thirst; and yet I was not able to induce him to touch the little store of water which he had put aside for me. This was only one instance of his self-denial for my sake; and whenever we were in difficulties with regard to food and water, all my three Arabs insisted on reserving whatever there was for me, no matter how much they were suffering. I never had more cheery or faithful attendants. They were all, too, most anxious to give me all the information they possessed, and I never found them willingly misleading me. I cannot speak too highly of the character of the Towârah Arabs for honesty and faithfulness.

At half-past eight Selim arrived with water, and letters from Nukhl, and it turned out that the Egyptian soldiers at the Castle had impounded my camels, and only let them go when night set in and they found no more *bakshêesh* forthcoming.

On May 5th we had a high south wind and sand-storm. It was the most trying day I had, the thermometer in the shade standing at 102° at midday. Being Sunday we had intended to rest, but want of pasturage, in consequence of the drought and locusts, compelled us to move on to within three miles of Nukhl.

We were now in the country of the Tiyâhah tribe. I was much afraid lest some of the Tiyâhah should be at Nukhl, and claim their right to take me on, in which case I should have had to part with my Towârah Arabs. Fortunately, only one was there, and we managed to give him the slip, making our way past Nukhl by the bed of W. el Arish, whilst he, determined to catch us, must have passed within half a mile of us on his way to our camp in W. Tureifeh, which we had just left. We pushed on northwards, and he did not succeed in overtaking us.

Our course now lay north-east up W. el Arish. About three miles north of Nukhl its overflow forms a large alluvial plain, which continues more or less, I believe, to the mouth at the Mediterranean Sea. The real bed of the wady is small, and lies to the west of the alluvium, which appears to be a deposit from the drainage from neighbouring ranges of white chalk hills. Large tracts of it were ploughed up by the Arabs ready for sowing corn after the rain; and in many places I saw the stubble of last year's crop of maize, doura, or barley. The process of ploughing is very simple. A rope is tied to a stake about a foot from the bottom, and a camel being attached to the other end of the rope, the stake is drawn along the ground backwards and forwards, scratching up furrows about one and a half feet apart. In these the corn is sown after rain. Isolated mounds of the alluvium show that the bed of the wady has at some time been at least 15 feet higher than at present.

Wady el Arish, on receiving W. el Aggâbah, sweeps round to the west of J. Ikhrim, between that mountain and J. Yeleg (*not* west of J. Yeleg, as shown on Professor Palmer's and Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake's map). It then flows to the east of Jebel Helâl, and through the north of that mountain by a narrow gorge. I need not stop to describe my route by the east of J. Ikhrim, across W. Garaiyeh and Jebel Sheraif to W. Muweilah. Professor Palmer and others have already done so. One passes over a succession of wadies conveying the drainage from J. Mugrâh to W. el Arish, all abounding with broom and desert herbage. All was dried up now, but in many spots the stones were thickly covered with lichen, which seemed to denote a considerable amount of damp, and vast quantities of white snail-shells (I have counted upwards of a hundred in one small shrub), tightly sealed to twigs or stones, were a sure sign that there must, during a great part of the year, be an abundant supply of succulent vegetation. There were also evident traces of volcanic action. J. Ikhrim appeared to consist of a disrupting core of igneous rock, which had displaced and thrown up the overlying strata of sandstone and limestone. Jebels Yeleg and Helal, as far as I could judge from the distance of a few miles, had been formed in the same manner, and probably the limestone cliff extending eastwards from Nakb el Fahdi,

and the long ridge of Jebel Sheraif had been thrown up by volcanic action. It is interesting to notice this in the probable vicinity of Kadesh Barnea, where the opening of the earth (caused doubtless by similar agency) swallowed up Korah and his company.

At Jebel Sheraif we again fell short of water, and turned westwards to the bed of W. el Arish in hopes of finding some pools of rain-water. In this we were not successful, but Zeid rode over to Hathirah, a basin in W. Halâl, and obtained some there; but we had to pay for it. Thus I was reminded of Israel's offer to the Edomites at Kadesh: "If I and my cattle drink of thy water then I will pay for it" (Numbers xx. 19). There are six wells at Hathirah; in five the water is bad, but in one very deep one, excellent. As we approached W. Muweilah we found large numbers of sand-grouse, and had it not been the breeding season we could have kept ourselves well supplied with game. We often saw gazelle in crossing the Tih desert.

The head of W. Muweilah, which has been identified with "Bir-el-lahai-roy ("Hagar's Fountain"), forms a well-watered basin; and here and at W. Guseimeh, a little further on to the east, we found a number of Tiyahâh Arabs watering their camels. They informed us that J. Mugrah was the territory of the Hriwât Arabs, and not of the Azâzimeh as has always been stated; and they directed us to the principal camp of the Haiwat close at hand in W. el Ain. There we camped on May 11, and became their guests. A great dinner was at once organised in our honour, at which more than fifty sat down, and portions of bread, and boiled mutton, and *fat*, an Arab's chief luxury, were dealt out to each person by name by the sheikh, differing in quantity according to their rank and position. I had a portion of about three times as much as anybody else, and Arab manners compelled me to pocket what I could not eat; I was not allowed to give it to others. The meat and bread were not bad, but would have been more palatable to me if the sheikh's wife had left in less of the wool, and if I had had a cleaner plate than the skinny side of the sheep's-skin which formed the sheikh's great coat. However, I had an important bargain in view, so I tried to do justice to the feast, and to keep up the good impression which I had already created by dealing out before dinner with an ungrudging hand to my host and all his friends doses of Gregory's powder. I always found wherever I went that medicine was a sure way to a Bedouin's heart, and when my bottle of Gregory's powder was produced, almost everyone present took the opportunity of fortifying himself against some prospective, if not present, malady. And since gorging, whenever the opportunity occurs, is one of an Arab's commonest causes of illness, I could perform the office of doctor with an easy conscience. When, eleven years ago, I was leaving the Peninsula of Sinai after a walking tour of four months, Sâlim, who had been my constant companion, told me he feared that he was becoming blind. He had often lately been unable to see well. After asking him a few leading questions, I ventured to name certain places at which this blindness had occurred.

He threw up his arms, exclaiming "By Allah, you are a great doctor;" but looked heartily ashamed of himself when I pointed out that I had only named places at which we had stopped the day after I had bought a sheep or wild goat. He had literally eaten till he could not see. Well, after my dinner with the Haiwât, we proceeded to business, and in course of time, a bargain was made for an escort, consisting of the sheikh and seven Arabs, to accompany me on an expedition of five days to J. Mugrah, whilst my own Arabs stayed at their camp. *Sunday, May 12,* was a day of much-needed rest, but I walked some distance up W. el Ain, and ascended a mountain from which I obtained a splendid view of the surrounding country, and I saw clearly that Jebel Mugrah does not extend northwards in an unbroken line (as stated by Professor Palmer), but that a large plateau of a lower level intervenes between it and the mountains south of W. Marreh, and also that Jebel Mugrah breaks down to a lower level on the west in the same way, a lower range of mountains, through which W. Kadeis runs, intervening between the higher range and the basin formed by Wadies Jaifeh and Jerur. W. el Ain apparently takes its rise at J. Towâl el Fahm in the plateau north of J. Mugrah, but I was unable to ascertain whether the name Ain Gudeirat is given to a spring which I saw a few miles up W. el Ain, or to one nearer the head of that valley. In W. el Ain and W. Kusineh are found numerous ancient walls which in former times supported terraces of alluvial deposit. These are still sown with corn by the Arabs, but the walls are neglected, and when broken down by floods are not rebuilt. Thus everywhere around one sees the desert gaining ground from the neglect of the Bedouin, and large tracts of land, which in the old days were reclaimed, and must have been extremely fertile, are now barren. By the simple plan of laying lines of large stones, or building walls across the broad wady beds, an enormous tract of corn-growing land was, and might still be, obtained in this district. That it was once a busy centre of life is proved by the very large number of flint flakes and arrow heads that lie on the surface of the ground, and by the numerous ruins of walls and houses, or tombs, many being evidently of a very early date; and the size of the stones employed in the building called forth from my Arab the exclamation "that there must have been giants in those days."

On Monday, May 13, I started with my escort of eight Haiwât Arabs and one of my own Arabs for Jebel Mugrah. They were a wild set of fellows, fully armed, and evidently ready for any mischief, and not easily to be led, but having placed myself under their protection I was perfectly safe now, although it turned out that they were the very men into whose hands I had nearly fallen in the raid at W. Meleg, and who would then have readily stripped me of everything; and by Arab manners and custom they would have been quite as fully justified in doing so then as they were bound to be my protectors now. We struck southwards towards Wady Kadeis, but soon we met numbers of Arabs driving in their flocks and camels to escape a raid of the Maâzi that

were coming our way; and we heard that they had three raiding expeditions out, of 100, 200, and 400 men. The latter were expected to sweep round by W. Kadeis by the very road which we intended to take, so we stopped about two miles short of it, and concealed ourselves for the night in a corner under the mountain, sending out scouts, who in the morning reported that the raid had turned eastwards south of J. Mugrah, but that they had carried off a number of Haiwât camels, and that there had been a fight in which five men had been killed and seven wounded; news which greatly excited my Arabs and lost me much valuable time, for they stopped on every opportunity to discuss it.

On the 14th we ascended W. Kadeis, its bed is rocky, but affords a fair road. At Ain Kadeis, about two miles up it, there are four springs, about 40 yards apart from each other, three on the mountain side and one in the bed of the wady. From the lower one of the former there flows a good stream of water down the wady for about 100 yards, forming pools where the Arabs water their goats. The upper spring is built round with large stones to a depth of about 5 feet, and there is a rude trough here and at the lower spring. There is another deeper well under a rock about 50 yards higher up the wady, surrounded by rudely-built troughs. We followed up the wady to its head. It is rocky and narrow, but contains occasional terraces and ruins. A very steep path led us over a pass into the higher range, and we descended into W. Harâsheh, which runs northwards to W. Hancin. On the following day we continued to ascend W. Harâsheh and entered the rocky basin which forms the head of W. Lussan; this wady drains the southern portion of J. Mugrah, and has several branches, all known to my Arabs by the one name. When one has mounted it, Jebel Mugrah no longer presents the flat-topped appearance that it does from a distance, but consists of rounded limestone hills covered with herbage. There are many ruins and terraces formed by walls in the mountain basins, and large number of flint flakes are generally to be found near the ruins. I was astonished at the fertility of the ground, and saw corn growing in several places.

On the east Jebel Mugrah only extends to about lat. 35°. Here it terminates abruptly in a steep cliff, and is separated from J. Jerâfeh (a high mountain to the south of Palmer's W. Jerâfeh) by a broad, gently-sloping valley, to which the Haiwât Arabs gave the name of Ras W. Garaiyeh. A good road leads from it into W. Jerâfeh, known by the name of "Sikke el Gôm," because it is the road usually taken by raiding parties from the east. There appeared also to be a road leading northwards to W. Râmán to the broad caravan road followed from the north by Palmer; and this, I think, may be the old road from Kadesh which was known to the Israelites as "the way of the spies."

Kadesh Barnea, if not at W. Kadeis, may probably be placed near the south-east base of J. Mugrah in Ras W. Garaiyeh, which formed, perhaps, the western boundary of Edom. I regret extremely that I was unable to descend into this valley and thoroughly explore it, but nothing would

induce my Arabs to accompany me; and, being short of food and water, we were forced to return by W. Lussan. I hoped still to get round to the southern face of J. Muḡrâh by J. Araif, but my Arabs would not go; and on ascending the peak which stands at the south-east corner of J. Muḡrâh, I saw that a broken tract of low mountain lies to the south of it, which would have rendered a rapid inspection impossible. We returned on the fifth day to the Haiwât camp by a rocky and difficult pass leading from W. Lussân to W. Jaifeh, to the east of J. Meraifig, which certainly was not the route of the Israelites. The only other road runs much further to the west.

I started to return to Egypt that same afternoon, May 17th.

Descending Wady Muweilah, we reached W. el Arish, near the base of J. Helal. I then saw what a very bad road this wady afforded, owing the alluvium, which formed its bed, having been worn into a series of deep and irregular ridges and furrows. We were nearly an hour in crossing it, and to follow it down to the Mediterranean, as I had intended, would have been almost impossible. Besides, my three Towârah Arabs were loud in their praises of a direct road to Ismailia, well-watered and good, which I at once saw must have been a very important one in olden days when Petra was a flourishing city, and the Neḡeb, or "south country" of the Bible was a thickly inhabited and cultivated country, as I had seen clearly that it formerly was. So I determined to explore this road. Skirting the south of J. Helal, we reached on the second day W. Hâsana, a large wady running northward and to the west of J. Helal. Here are three wells built round with masonry, and with several curious round water-troughs, which looked as if they had been formed out of old columns. There were a large number of Terabin Arabs here watering their camels. They were much inclined to be troublesome, and to claim the right to take me on; but again my bottle of Gregory's Powder served me well, and by numerous doses I soon created a favourable opinion. I was much amused with one of my patients, who carried off a store for future use. He left me after making, as I thought, *every possible* inquiry as to the manner and time of taking his medicine; but he returned shortly to say that he had forgotten to ask me one *most* important question—"Was he to take it through his mouth or through his nose?"

On leaving W. Hâsana we crossed some low chalk hills lying to the north of J. Yeleg, having on our right a large plain sloping northwards, and having before us a long mountain range called Jebel Muḡhârah, between which and Jebel Yeleg runs W. Dôw towards the north-east. Crossing this we reached "Emshash," a group of seventeen wells. One only was built up with stone from the bottom, the coping-stones being deeply worn by ropes. Most of the wells had fallen in. The water was not good. After filling our water-skins Nassar descended the well for a wash—a process not calculated to improve the water for the next comers. How many had done the same before him? It was well not to ask. We now ascended a steep slope, on which were situated some old round

tombs, and entered the Mughârah range. Both J. Yeleg and J. Mughârah stretched westwards as far as I could see, and the intervening valley was said to have near its head another group of wells, like "Emshâsh," called "El Jidy." Near these ran a road to Suez. A long ascent by W. Mughârah brought us to the watering-place which gives this name to the mountain. It is now a dirty water-hole, but around it are massive foundations of masonry, and probably it was once arched over, the arch suggesting to the Arabs the name Mughârah, or cave. There were many ruins of round houses, or namûs, near, and opposite the water-hole a square building, about 30 feet by 20 feet, built of roughly-hewn stones without mortar. The interior was a heap of stones. Around the water-hole were twelve remarkably large watering-troughs, built of rude masonry.

We next crossed a wild pass, the road running northwards along the natural shelves of hard crystalline limestone, polished like marble in many places by the camels' feet.

This led us into W. Mutlâhah, in which were many fine seyal-trees; and again turning westwards we entered W. Hathâyib, a large basin, with cornfields. There were many Arabs of the Aïaïdeh tribe here, and as they seemed inclined to be troublesome, as soon as it was dark we slipped on past their camp, and, crossing J. Hathâyib, travelled on till midnight. On lighting a fire to make bread more Arabs soon appeared, and we had again, as they left with the intention apparently of bringing up others to stop us, to pack up our things and move on during the night. Our course continued due west over a rolling plateau with many sand-drifts, which increased as we approached the Isthmus of Suez. There were few points of interest on the road. The district through which we first passed after crossing J. Hathâyib was called Elloo; and about half way across the plateau was a prominent ridge, on which was situated a large group of namûs, and near them I found a great number of flint-flakes and several beautifully-made arrow-heads. The whole way, wherever there were no sand-drifts, the ancient road could be traced by these flint-flakes.

We were very short both of water and food, and pushed on as fast as possible; and early on Thursday morning, May 23rd, we arrived at Ismailia.

Thus ended my journey. I failed to accomplish *all* that I had hoped to do, but I believe that I have succeeded in fixing satisfactorily the route of the Israelites northwards from Mount Sinai. I have also thrown some additional light upon the position of Kadesh and the boundary of Edom; and, although I was unable to follow Brugsch Bey's proposed route of the Israelites out of Egypt, I have discovered an ancient road to Egypt from the east, which must formerly have been one of very great importance, and is of great interest to the Biblical student. There can be little doubt that it was the road followed by Abraham and Lot in their journeys to and from Egypt.

I have at least done my best to add to our knowledge of a most interesting country. The drought and the raids were against me, but in

the space of eight weeks I walked upwards of a thousand miles, at least one-third of that distance being over ground previously unexplored; and I have proved, I think, that any future traveller who will rough it a little, and has a slight knowledge of Arabic and Arab manners and customs, may easily follow my steps, and that there is a most interesting district within easy reach which still needs careful exploration, and which will, I hope, before long receive the attention of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

THE FELLAHHEEN OF PALESTINE.

NOTES ON THE CHIEF TRAITS IN THEIR CHARACTER, THEIR
FAULTS, AND THEIR VIRTUES.

By MRS. FINN.

THE Bedaween have a saying—

“El Medeny maidat ed-duniah,

El Fellâhh khamâr ed-dunieh,

El Bedawy Sultân ed-dunieh ”

“The townsman is the table of the world (provider),

The peasant is the donkey of the world (menial),

The Bedawy is the Sultan of the world (ruler).”

But the Fellahheen give a different version, and retort, saying:—

“What is the townsman? The Sultan of the world.

“What is the Fellahh? The donkey of the world.

“What is the Bedawy? The dog of the world, for he snatches from everybody; but nobody dares to snatch from him.”

“What have we to do with thee, thou father of cabbages!” was the contemptuous speech made by a Bedawy to the Fellahh sheikh of a village near Bethlehem. And yet the Bedawy had in all probability never tasted a cabbage in his life, or even so much as had one in his hand

One day an acquaintance came to us with the following tale:—

“Fâtimeh tells me that there has been a robbery in her village, and that they called in a Bedawy to find out the thief.

“He heated an iron and branded the tongue of every man, woman, and child, telling them that the tongue of the thief would swell, and that he would then make him pay the value of the theft.

“All their tongues swelled, and he made them pay the money among them!”

But the woman did not perceive the joke of the thing, though she told it of her people.

The Bedaween often outwit the Fellaheen, whom they utterly despise. A story is told on this point how that once a Bedawy and a Fellahh arrived at the same village as guests and repaired to the Sahha. Supper was put before them, and the Bedawy observed that it was only enough for one. He accordingly engaged the Fellahh in talk, asking, “What presents do you give to the bride at a Fellahh wedding?”