

NOTES ON A JOURNEY TO MOAB.

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January 30th, 1872.—After waiting in vain for Sma'in, Sheikh of the Ta'amireh Bedaween, who was to have been our guide to Kerek, we at length set out from Jerusalem without him. He did not overtake us until we had got beyond Bethlehem. We now refused to have anything to do with him, as we had determined to obtain an escort to Kerek from some other Sheikh. Sma'in and his people, however, followed at our heels in true Bedaway fashion, shouting and talking. They told us that they had a short time before guided a party of German travellers consisting of three persons, with their cook and servant, on a six days' excursion to Engedi, &c., for 500 piastres. Sheikh Hamza, a cunning old fellow, who usually negotiates all business arrangements between travellers and the Bedaween, came to see us at Hebron. He made himself extremely agreeable, as from the number of travellers, tents, and servants, and from the amount of luggage, he augured a rich harvest for his people. The Ta'amire Arabs had accompanied us in spite of our remonstrances, and were now encamped quite close to us in hopes of obtaining provisions. They received a satisfactory amount of food, and after getting a good backsheesh in return for having formed our guard of honour, a kindness we could have dispensed with, they withdrew muttering and shouting, but fortunately without having come to blows, a consummation we had greatly feared. As we had to pass through the country of the Jehalin, Hamza sent a messenger that very night to the chief of that tribe to engage him as our guide for the following day. The Jehalin encampment was not far from ours. A terrific storm arose during the night, which tore our flag to tatters, and threatened to blow down the tents.

January 31st.—Abu Dahuk did not appear. Hamza, who was half Bedawi, half Fellah, and possessed a touch of town breeding, tried all the morning to get the making of the contract for our guidance into his own hands. Our party numbered seven Europeans, an Arab dragoman, a cook, two servants and several muleteers. He promised to satisfy all the demands of the Bedaween, through whose territory we passed, for £10 a-day. Another negotiator appeared in the person of a son-in-law of the Sheikh of Kerak, Besides these, it contains iron, magnesia, soda and chlorine. It seems to me an undoubted fact that this sulphur *originated in a mineral water which contained a solution of sulphuretted hydrogen and bicarbonate of calcium.* When exposed to the air, deposits of sulphur and carbonate of calcium were formed. But as is well known, the former when thus exposed, gradually takes the form of flowers of sulphur and is dissipated as sulphuric acid. I have convinced myself that acidulated flowers of sulphur, together with sulphuric acid, contain some sulphurous acid. When carbonate of calcium is found mixed with sulphur, it is unnecessary to say that gypsum, and previously to that, sulphite of calcium, must have been formed. But as the last named salt represents the transition stage to gypsum, it is clear that it can only have been present in small quantities.

who offered to arrange everything for £5 a-day. Abu Dahuk joined us quietly in the afternoon. He was accompanied by his uncle, a pleasant-looking old man with a white beard. The nephew was a most extraordinary looking figure, and both were patriarchally naïf. After a long palaver, a contract was at length drawn up, sealed in all legal form with Hamza's signet, and given the proper finger pressure by old Abu Salame and Abu Dahuk. After a short hand-to-hand conflict between Sma'in's band and the Jehalin, all was settled, the conquered took their departure, and the conquerors encamped round us for our protection.

February 1st.—On leaving Hebron, we did not go past Kumul as we had at first intended, but struck into the direct road to Engedi. Barley patches were sown here and there on the hill sides, and the grain had begun to sprout. The road was rather muddy in consequence of the heavy rain that had fallen on the previous night. A village called Beny Na'im lay at a short distance to the left of our route. There is a Makam there, sacred to the Neby Sut. Farther on we passed a ruin, Khurbet Yakin. Besides this, the following ruins lay at a longer or shorter distance from our road: Zig, Umm Halaseh, Umm-ed-Dakakin (mother of shops), Zatut, and Umm Ghuzulat. We pitched our tents in a small plain sheltered by hills, close to the latter place, and about 15 minutes from an old tank called Serwal. During our journey, we had noticed a good many traces of former buildings, and a road marked out at each side with large rough stones (like the one at Amman). A little farther down the valley, the black tents of some Ka'abneh Bedaween were visible. We paid them a visit. According to the Bedaween, Ka'abneh is derived from "Ka'aba," and they got this name because their forefathers took a prominent part in building the Ka'aba (?) We also found some Ta'amire Bedaween, whom Sma'in had sent on here with provisions (small bags of flour), and who had now received counter-orders from him. It is really remarkable how quickly and securely the Bedawig Sheikhs can despatch messages, and carry out their plans in this uninhabited district, and also how the Bedaween can find their way through this labyrinth of hills and valleys.

February 2nd.—Dark storm-clouds announced a disagreeable day for travelling. Rain fell, but not heavily. We started at 10.15. The hills round about us were very striking in their fantastic shapes and colouring. A pointed hill we passed bears the name of Jebel-el-Bokrosiyeh. The road ran through a valley, narrow at first, but growing wider as we advanced, and called Wady Abu-l-Hargat (Valley of the Father of the Snakes); passed Jebel Muntar, and later on Jebel Dehiyeh. We passed in succession, Wady Mudabbah-el-Bakar (cattle slaughter valley), Wady el-Ghar, and Wady Dalal, and soon came to the romantically beautiful gathering of rocks, Nakl 'Ain-Jidy. We reached Engedi at 4.15, and pitched our tents there. We found some of the Rasha'ideh Bedaween watching their crops near the spring. Their camp was at Thekoa. Acacias covered the little plain, from which we had a splendid view of the Dead Sea and the Moabite mountains opposite. There were many caves

in the rocks. During the night the Jehalin and Rasha'ideh Bedaween performed a fantasia together. Abu Dahuk's people joined us in the Wady Abu-l-Hargat. They were wild-looking, poorly clothed, and small in stature, carried their provisions on their backs (small skins of flour), and were armed with matchlocks. They leaped from rock to rock with the agility of gazelles.

February 3rd.—The sky was very cloudy in the morning, and some rain fell. The name of the valley in which we had pitched our tents was Wady Sudeir. The mountain overhanging it was called Jebel Sudeir (probably from the Sudeir or thorn-trees that abound in this place). The Wady begins at the rising ground (tal'at), ed-Dawa'ireh, at Ras-el-Muchawwama. We resumed our journey at 12.30. At 12.37, we crossed the bed of the Wady-el-Ghar, the upper part of which the 'Oreijeh (not "Arayeh," as Van de Velde writes it), flows. At 2 o'clock, we passed the Khabra (not "Chuberah," as Van de Velde spells it), in a little plain covered with acacia-trees. At 2.40, we reached Wady Mahras. A large ruin, Keryatein, is said to be far up, at the entrance of this valley. We got to Wady Seyal at 3.20, and then went up Wady Nimriyeh (Valley of Leopards). About half-an-hour later, we saw opposite us the fortress of Sebbe, the ancient Masada. The tents were pitched here. The sky was cloudy, and there were showers now and then. The sea was somewhat rough. The songs of the Bedaween mingled with these sounds.

Our old Sheikh Salame told me, that when a young man, he had often gone on foot from Wady Mubagghek (s.p. 9), to Mazra'a, on the other side of the sea, and that the water only came up to his ankles; but it would be impossible for any one to cross now. The Jehalin often collect asphalt (hummer), at the Dead Sea, and afterwards sell it in Jerusalem for about 500 piastres per camel's load. Amongst the Jehalin, a bridegroom pays, according as he is rich or poor, from one to five camels (1,000—5,000 piastres), for his bride. The marriage customs are much the same amongst the Bedaween, as amongst the Fellaheen. Eight days before the wedding, the fantasia is performed. The Katib is present on the marriage evening to draw out the contract. At night, the bridegroom goes into the bride's tent. Then early next morning, as Salame told me, he rushes out of the tent ashamed (جباص) and hides himself behind a rock or a bush, until his friends come to fetch him. Names of the Bedaween, Mohammed, Suleiman, Mustafa, etc. Besides these, other names were given us to-day which commemorate some occurrence. For example, my young guide to Sebbeh was called Ghadir (pond), because he had been born beside a pond. As a proof of the inherent love of theft which obtains amongst the Bedaween, Salame told me that he and a number of his people had once gone on a 60 days' journey to Hejas, to steal camels, and that their raid was successful. Nothing makes a Bedawi so happy as the enjoyment of stolen goods.

February 5th.—We left our camping place at Seyal (opposite Sebbeh) at 7.35 in the morning. The sky was rather cloudy, the air pleasantly warm. At a quarter of an hour's distance further south we come to two distinct

water courses for carrying off the water which was collected at Sebbe during rain. A small treeless plain. The Bedaween get salt from here. 8.15. Wady el Kattar (or Kaddar?). 8.30. Wady Hafhaf. 9. Jebel Sinnin and Nakb Sinnin. In going up Wady Sinnin the following ruins are passed: Umm Rokba, Khurbet et-Tayib, Khurbet el Bayut, Kurbet el Keryatein, Kurbet el Jemby (written Jenby), el Mirkez. 9.15. Rabad el Jamus (Buffalo camp). From here a pointed hill is to be seen far away to the south, on which is situated Neby Barun, a holy place to which pilgrimages are made. Any Bedawi who may see the sacred place from here lays a stone on some rock as a sign of his presence and of his respect. Thus we found quite a heap of stones. I found little cairns of this kind at Engedi; they were erected in honour of the Neby Dawa'irsh. There are many such on the Scopus, that have been heaped up by pilgrims when they first caught sight of Jerusalem. At 10, Wady el-Kedr. This valley is called Wady en-nusurah (vale of Eagles) farther on. From 10 to 10.40, we were climbing over Mersed (wait?) a steep, abrupt promontory whose sides often sank precipitously into the waters of the sea. An excellent place for robbers to lie in wait for travellers and cut off their escape. Immediately after we had crossed this promontory, we came to Wady Hatura, in which there is a little plain. At 11 o'clock Wady Mubaghek (also spelt Umm Baghek), on each side of which are the remains of small forts. It is a romantic-looking valley with sparkling springs, trees and bushes. At 11.45 we left Mubaghek and got to Wady Nejd at 12.30., at 1 we reached Wady Zuweira and at 1.30, we came to the foot of the salt mountain, Jebel Usehum. We encamped there in a small plain covered with acacias.

February 6th.—We started at 6 in the morning and got to Rujm el-Muzoghal (stone-heaps of Muzoghal) at 6.30. A terrific storm of rain and thunder came on. At 7.20 we came to a large cave, in which we took refuge from the heavy rain. We were able to continue our ride at 8 o'clock. We reached the Sabsha, a dreadful morass at the southern end of the Dead Sea, through which the animals made their way with difficulty. There is no vegetation there, for the ground is impregnated with salt. To the south of Jebel Usdum is a pass, called by the Sheikh Nakb el-Am'az. We reached Wady-el-Milh (valley of salt) at 9.10. We had to wait there for a long time till the mules came up. Got to a stream with very little water in it in Wady-el-Ghor at 10.10. At 11 o'clock we reached Ghor-es-Safiyeh, "clear, bright," probably so called to show the contrast between its sweet waters and vegetation and the salt unfruitful ground near it. A troop of Bedaween armed with muskets, sabres, spears and clubs rushed out of the bushes and fell upon our people. One of our men was knocked down and wounded. Wild gesticulations and shouts ensued. The band, amongst whom we particularly noticed a strong, brown, naked fellow, was, as we were told, composed of Beny "Atiyeh and Beny Ma'az Bedaween from the neighbourhood of Hedjaz. After a long palaver we came to terms and resumed our journey, surrounded by the wild horde. We passed through a dense thicket and under great trees on our way to the camping place.

'Obeid, Sheikh of the Beny 'Atiyeh came to see us, he was very friendly and assured us that he would have guided us from Hebron himself if we had written to him. The guns that had been taken from our people were restored, but poor old Salame refused to be comforted regarding the indignity that had been put upon him.

At Ghor es-Safiyeh I was told of the following places which lie from west to east. Nakb el-Buweib, Wady el-Fikra, 'Ain-el-'Arus, Wady-el-Jeb, ed-Dabbeh, Hasal Madara. We found the stubble of the last harvest of dura (millet) in Ghores-Safiyeh together with a little fresh green, and there were also a number of nice-looking cows, sheep, goats and lambs.

February 7th.—The Jahalin had kept up watch-fires round our camp all night and had remained awhile shouting at intervals to protect us from robbery. It was "a wall of fire round about" (Zechariah ii, 5).—After a long palaver, four men agreed to show us the country in the immediate neighbourhood for 109 piastres. We left our encampment at 10.10 and wandered amongst the brushwood and trees until we came to some fields in which the barley had begun to show green. The fields were irrigated by water brought from the Safiyeh. Half-an-hour later we reached the ruin of Sheikh 'Isa. We found the remains of walls, pillars and doorways, and many huge blocks of red sandstone, amongst which was a carved stone of about 2 feet long with a cross, &c., on it; besides these there were tubes for conducting water and the remains of a Khan, with a great gate. Within the Khan, several human skeletons and rags of clothing were lying on a heap of sand. This building was called Kasr-el-bushirra. Farther on, we climbed a gravelly hill on which was a ruined hut. El-Mashnaka, place of the gallows, was its name. From this hill, we had a splendid view of the mountains, which appear to surround the Sabeha, in the direction of Nehy Musa, over the Dead Sea towards the north. This would be the place of all others for a watch tower to overlook the whole Safiyeh. Excepting these ruins there are no other old remains in the Safiyeh, perhaps because the people used long ago, as they do now, to build their dwellings of clay or of sun-dried bricks. We also visited the brook Safiyeh, a good sized, clear stream that murmured as it flowed. It comes down from Wady Karachi. In the afternoon the son of the Sheikh of Kerek arrived from Kerek with 15 or 20 horsemen to welcome us and accompany us there.

February 8th.—After a long and angry discussion with the Ghawarneh Beny 'Atiyeh and Ma'az Bedaween and the people that Sheikh Mujelly of Kerek had sent, matters were at last so far arranged that we were able to start. At 8.15 we passed a small ruin called Kurbet el-Hashib; unhewn stones were scattered about. At 8.25 we crossed the Wady Karach, a rather rapid brawling stream. The Bedaween bring the water to irrigate the Ghor es-Safiyeh, which is very fruitful, from the Safiyeh and the Karachy. The little plain, Numeira, begins on the other side of the Miswaha, a sluggish, evil-smelling brook, marshy and difficult to cross. The Miswaha is said to rise on Jebel Tuma, a mountain at no great distance. At 10 o'clock we were opposite Wady Khuneizir, through which

the people of 'Orak were accustomed to come down by a steep and rough road ; at 11.10 we had Jebel Jedireh before us, where we discovered traces of wild swine. At 11.15 we reached a considerable plain, strewn with pebbles, Lajarat en-Numeira. Wady Numeira is a small but very full brook, at the upper part of which, we were told, that there were six or seven springs and well watered gardens. Wady Sarmuj was opposite us. We passed several hills and defiles on the peninsula, "lisan." Of these hills, er-Rumeir, et-Tin, et-Tayan, er-Rasifeh were pointed out to us by name. At 2 o'clock we entered a wild romantic gorge, Wady ed-Dera'a. At half-past 2, Wady Weida, with its small palm-trees, lay before us. In Wady-el-Mantara, which we reached at 2.40, and Khurbet ed-Dera'a (3.15) we found traces of former cultivation ; the soil in both places is rich. The Bedaween only graze their cattle there now, the district is so insecure. At 3.30, we came to the little river Dera'a. We pitched our tents there. We found the ruins of 2 Kasr (towers) on a low hill. This point is of great importance as it defends the pass leading up to Kerak. There are no traces of any considerable ruins. Our Kerak Bedaween made a great noise late at night. Two nephews of the great Sheikh Mujelli demanded money from us. After that they quarrelled with each other and took to their pistols. I could not make out whether they were in earnest or only acting, hoping thereby to terrify us and so extort money. The robber horde talked, shouted and screamed all night long and we were thankful when daylight came.

February 9th.—After a long diplomatic discussion we were at length able to resume our journey at 8.20. The band demanded money and yet more money, refusing to wait until we got to Kerak. In comparison with this horde, the Ta'amin and Jehalin Bedaween were perfect gentlemen. Taking them all in all, the tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan are much wilder than those on the western side. It was so in the times of the Hebrews and it is so still. We went along Wadi Dera'a, the stream plashed merrily. What a pleasant sound it was in this waterless country ! its banks were fringed with different kinds of trees and oleander bushes ; we now came to a steep rocky pass Nakb el-Kharaza. There were about a dozen fine palms in the bed of the Wady. We passed two ruined buildings, called el-kabo (" vaults "). A Christian, Daghanjy by name, is said to have formerly levied tribute from travellers in this place. At 9.30 reached Nakb Umm Eshnan (a height). The whole road is very wild and extremely romantic. There are many natural caves in the rocks.

The following names of valleys and peaks were given me in this district : El-Moghra, Umm Kith, Umm Habla el-Bassat, Ruweij, Khuneifes, Sciles-Sachel.

Herds of cattle graze on the steep sides of the mountain ; the people of Kerak, who, like the Bedaween, are herdsmen, live in black tents. At 11.15 we came to a spring Ruseis ; at 12 o'clock we caught sight of the Fort of Kerak. At 12.15 we came to a small rivulet, Sahur pomegranates and figs grew in the valley ; after we had passed another spring, 'Ainel-Bassas, we reached the Fort of Kerak at 1.30.

February 12th.—We started at 8.10 on an exploring expedition in the

neighbourhood. After a steep descent we went up Wady Zijatin, and reached the top of a hill opposite Kerak at 9.15. There was a splendid view of the whole town. It is said that Ibrahim Pacha bombarded the town from this place. The name of the hill is Jalamet es-Sabeha. We were shown several villages in ruins; Umm Hamed, Middin, Abu Hammor, Mugheira, el-Bathra, Nakkad. The country is of a hilly character, the soil is good and partly cultivated with barley and wheat. We reached Keryatein at 9.20, and found there a considerable area of ruins on two low hills facing each other; amongst other things were the remains of pillars and cisterns, but no buildings were standing. From there we saw a small ruin, Masateb. At 10.30 we came to Khurbet Nakkad situated on a hill, and then one after the other to Khurbet 'Azzeh, an old wine-press, Wady Sheily, where there is a well of water and a small ruin, Za'zu, and farther on Khurbet Hawiyeh. We saw Hulhul about half-an-hour away. Came to Mahna at 11.5, where there are considerable ruins and old tanks. Besides this we had an excellent view of the surrounding country. We set out again at 11.40 and at 12.10 came to a stone pillar at Moteh. Here was a Roman milestone, whose inscription was partially defaced by the weather; other stones and pillars lay all around. About half-an-hour distant is Meshhed, where Abu Talib is said to have fallen (?). We left Moteh at 12.25 and saw Mirwad about half-an-hour farther on. At Middin, which is on a steep hill, we found extensive ruins, stones, broken pillars and sarcophagi. From here we saw Shihan, then reached Khurbet Ghuweir, and at 2.45 Khurbet Tatiyeh, where tanks and the remains of Roman roads are to be found.

There are said to be 270 Christians and 514 Muhammedan families in Kerak. The Christians have a church, a school, two priests and a school-master. The inhabitants belong to a great variety of nations, such as Egypt, Petrea, Jerusalem, &c., have no chronicles, and know very little about their ancestors. Their condition is extremely primitive and rude. The Sheikh and his family have autocratic power, but are not quite so despotic as they used to be. In spite of all our inquiries we could find no Phoenician inscriptions, pots or antiquities of value. Here and there we discovered Greek inscriptions in stone houses, but none of any interest. A few good specimens of lamps and coins found in graves were brought to us. Much might have been brought to light by excavation.
