

In support of Mujedda, Lieutenant Conder quotes Ahaziah's flight.

Without giving an opinion on the position of "Beth-hag-gan," "Maaleh Gur," and Ibleam, I would point out that even if Ahaziah fled northwards towards en N'atrah, he might afterwards, under cover of night, reach Megiddo (near Lejjun) as easily as Mujedda.

His object seems to have been, not to get to Jerusalem, but to the nearest place of refuge, and afterwards (as we learn from 2 Chron. xxii, 9) "they caught him (for he was *hid in Samaria*) and brought him to Jehu." Thus it is probable that the words "he died *there*," (2 Kings ix, 27), ought to be translated "he died *then*," *i.e.*, at that time, when Jehu cut off the house of Ahab.

The Bible does not state by what road Necho approached Megiddo. I am not sure, however, that to march up the Jordan valley would not be more exhausting than "to toil over the *hostile* mountains of Ephraim," *hostile* only by an oversight, as Josiah's power reached even unto Naphtali (2 Chron. xxxiv, 6).

It is very satisfactory to find that the *great* plain near Taanuk is after all "the valley (*Bikah*) of Megiddo," as the uniform meaning of the word *Bikah* is hereby preserved. The next step is to admit that "Baalgad in the valley (*Bikah*) of Lebanon" (Josh. xi, 17; xii, 7) must be *Ba'albek* in *el Buka'a*.

The Jordan valley east of Mujedda seems to me hardly worthy to be called a *Bikah*, and if it were, it ought to be called the *Bikah of Bethshean* and not of Mujedda.

If one had to point out on the map where Barak fought, I should say *el Afuleh* or the *Birket el Fuleh*, just west of it, which is marked as "marsh in winter." Here Sisera's host would be shut in between the confluents of the Kishon. This spot is six miles from Taanach, and four from the waters of Megiddo, which distances I hope are not too great to be covered by the Hebrew *li*; but if they are, then the battle must be placed still nearer to Taanuk.

Until it is agreed what is *the* correct translation of the Mohar's adventures, it seems premature to attach any weight to them in this matter.

W. F. BIRCH.

HIDING PLACES IN CANAAN.

II. GIDEON'S WINE-PRESS AT OPHRAH.

OPHRAH of the Abi-ezrites was certainly in *western* Manasseh (Josh. xvii, 1-6), although Josephus speaks of Gideon's preparing to cross the Jordan ("Ant.," v, vi, 3) in order to attack the Midianites in the valley of Jezreel.

Lieutenant Conder in his "Handbook" states that this Ophrah is "probably the present village Ferâta, near Shechem, the old name of which was Ophrah (Samaritan Chronicle)." Happily the identification of Gideon's famous city need not rest on this insufficient evidence, as

the details of the Bible story will, I believe, be found to fix the exact spot beyond all doubt.

We have to find in western Manasseh, which reached apparently from Issachar to a little south of Shechem, a place satisfying the following conditions :—

(1.) It ought to be suitable for vines, and perhaps to contain some old wine-presses ; as Gideon was *beating* wheat in the wine-press. This would probably be in a vineyard on the southern slope of a hill.

(2.) There ought to be *cliff* near, since close to the wine-press was a *Selah* (A. V. rock, Jud. vi, 20), *i.e.*, a *precipitous* rock. Welcome again to this old friend, who has helped us before ! On this *sela* Gideon apparently built the altar called "Jehovah Shalom."

(3.) There ought also to be a *strong place*, or fortress (A. V. rock, Hebr. *maoz*, Jud. vi, 26), to which, I imagine, the inhabitants used to escape with their cattle in times of danger.

On it stood the altar and grave of Baal, which Gideon destroyed ; here too he built an altar unto the Lord (vi, 26). If (which seems uncertain) the two altars were identical, then the *fortress* must have stood *upon the cliff*.

(4.) There ought to be at least one *ancient tomb*, as Gideon was buried in the sepulchre of his father at Ophrah.

(5.) It ought probably to be *not far from Shechem*, as Gideon's concubine lived at the latter city.

(6.) It ought probably to be *on the south side* of Shechem, as Jotham took his stand on the *southern Gerizim*, and not on the northern Ebal.

Guided by conditions 1 to 4, I had in vain searched the country north of Samaria ; when however we turn to the Survey Map, to find some spot to which *all* the indicating lines 1-6 converge, we meet with complete success.

One and three quarter miles (5) south-west of Shechem, (6) is an elevated (2,508 feet) village named el Arâk (2), *i.e.*, *the cliff*. It is apparently marked as an isolated place perched on the *precipitous* extremity (3) of a narrow ridge running westwards from Mount Gerizim. As this spot most remarkably satisfies the conditions 2, 3, as well as 5 and 6, I do not hesitate to recognize it as the *maoz* or fortress, if not also as the *sela* or cliff mentioned in Jud. vi, 20, 26. I venture to predict that when search is made on the spot, *tombs* will be found to satisfy (4), and possibly an old wine-press to suit (1), as vineyards seem in the map to be marked on the southern side of the hill.

In regard to Arabic, as I have not even the little knowledge which is proverbially dangerous, I abstain from discussing whether the name of Ophrah does, or does not survive in the ruin called Khurbet Aufâr, on the opposite hill, three-quarters of a mile south-east of el Arak. The memoirs will probably give some interesting particulars *bearing on this identification*.

The tower of Shechem, the hold of the House of the god Baal Berith and Mount Zalmon. The tower though not *in* was obviously *near* Shechem, so

that Jebel Suleiman ("Handbook," p. 210), four miles off, cannot be Mount Zalmon, as Abimelech though willing once in a way to be *a hewer of wood*, would naturally demur to carrying his load further than was necessary. It seems to me that Zalmon ("Sinai and Palestine," p. 239) must be some part of Ebal. The curious ruin on whose summit ("Tent Work," i, p. 67) may well be *the hold* (a kind of tower) mentioned in Jud. ix, 46. An altar of Baal might as suitably have stood on the *top* of Ebal as of Carmel.

I propose in the next number to give the arguments for placing the cave of Adullam at Khureitûn, and the rock Etam near it in Wâdy Urtas.

W. F. BIRCH.

EMMAUS.

FIRST of all, Khamësa, which has of late secured some votes as the probable site of Emmaus, is at least $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles, as the crow flies, from Jerusalem, and by any possible road cannot be less than $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles from that city. The distance is therefore too great to tally with St. Luke or Josephus.

Now among the cities of Benjamin, Joshua (xviii, 26) speaks of Musah, as we read it, but in Hebrew **הַמִּצְדָּה** Hammosah, "The Mosah." Fürst gives Musah the meaning "place of reeds," but it seems more probable that it is equivalent to **מַצְוֵה**, a spring. Be this as it may, the Talmud says that this Musah, or Maûza, is the place whence willows were brought to adorn the Altar at the Feast of Tabernacles, and this suggests a valley; and elsewhere again the Talmud says that it was made a colony. (*See Caspari § 242.*)

But Josephus tells us in the well known passage that his Ammaus was colonised by the assignment of the place by Titus to 800 discharged veterans.

We have thus side by side these statements from totally different sources: first, that a place called by Joshua Hammusah became a Roman colony; secondly, that Ammaus became a Roman colony. Hammusah is therefore in all probability identical with Ammaus.

We now turn to the map. We find a well known place on the main road from Jerusalem to the west, called Kolonieh, manifestly from Colonia, and about a mile to the north of this, looking down on a valley which trends at that point south and west toward Kolonieh, a ruin called Brit Muzza.

Here we have another linking of these two, Hammusah, the fountain, and a Roman colony, and we must be near the place we are looking for.

But now let us pass up from Kolonieh along the valley, under Brit Muzza, and pursue our way along the whole length of the valley (Wâdy Bûwai) up to its head. We are then some three miles from Kolonieh, and