

KADESH ON THE ORONTES.

ARROS HOUSE, CENTRAL HILL, UPPER NORWOOD,
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It was scarcely worth Mr. Tomkins' while to carry our different opinions from the Society of Biblical Archæology, where we had his maps and diagrams, and ample opportunity for discussion, to your "*Quarterly*." As he has done so, however, I beg to re-state my reasons for agreeing with Lieutenant Conder, and disagreeing with him :—

1. Forty years ago the Rev. Dr. Thomson found the name Kadesh clinging to the place. In the "*Land and the Book*," page 110, he says, "At Kedes, an old city near the head of the Lake of Hums, I found the peasants breaking up beautiful marble columns with sledge-hammers," &c.
2. In 1872 I visited Tell Neby Mendeh, in company with Mr. Kirby Green, H.B. Majesty's Consul. We spent a night and part of two days in the place, and found the name still known to the people.
3. Mr. Tomkins' own maps and plans, showing the combatants in action all round the lake, practically disposed of Mr. Tomkins' theory.
4. The complaint of Rameses II, as he stumbled into the Khita ambush, that his army being at the Lake of the Amorites, had left him in the lurch. Had the Egyptian army been at the sheet of water at the city Kadesh, they would have been in the proper place to have supported their king, and they could not have been considered absent.

Regretting my inability to agree with Mr. Tomkins on this point, I gladly acknowledge the good service he has done in drawing attention to the subject.

WILLIAM WRIGHT.

ASSYRIAN DISCOVERIES NEAR BAGDAD.

DURING a discussion which recently took place on a paper read at the Victoria Institute by the Rev. H. G. Tomkins, on Biblical Proper Names, Mr. Rassam, the well-known discoverer of Assyrian relics, made the following statement in reference to his recent researches in the neighbourhood of Bagdad. "Mr. Tomkins has alluded to the discoveries I have been enabled to make among the ancient cities of the East. I am sorry I

cannot at present say much about what I have recently been doing, or I should have given the account elsewhere. Indeed, with one exception, I have not very much to tell you since the lecture I delivered here two years ago. I will, however, offer you a brief statement of what I have lately discovered. In March last I went out again to the East, as you know I am always doing, for the purpose of finding out the old cities which lie buried there. As I was journeying on one occasion in pursuit of this object, I met with an Arab who told me that he knew of an old ruined city, the remains of which were to be found within five hours of Bagdad—that is to say, taking the computation at three miles an hour, the place he knew of was fifteen miles from Bagdad. As I am one who never refuses to act on any information likely to lead to some practical result, I said I would go with him to the place indicated. I therefore accompanied him; and as we were travelling along the route pointed out by the Arab, we came at a distance of four hours' journeying upon an old ruin that I had never seen before—a ruin of great magnitude—so large, indeed, that it must be about three miles in circumference. I at first thought that this was the place of which my guide had spoken, and I said to him, "Oh! this is the place?" He replied, "No; that is not the place I told you of, it is further on." Then I said, "What is this place?" He answered, "I do not know." However, I made up my mind that I would certainly explore it when I came back. We consequently went onwards, and at last the Arab showed me a most wonderful ruin. I set to work and excavated there, but I found nothing of any antiquarian value. I afterwards went back to the place I had first seen, and commenced a thorough search there. The result was, that after digging for four days we came upon the top of some walls. This induced us to persevere with increased ardour, and we soon found that we had come upon an enormous building, in which we began to find inscriptions. I may here say that I am not an Assyrian reader. I am only a discoverer of Assyrian relics, which I send to the British Museum, where those who have made Assyriology a study interpret the inscriptions I find. We first of all discovered four rooms, and then came upon a fifth. They were what I should call generally of the Assyrian or Babylonian order, and paved with bricks or stones; but the fifth room was paved with asphalté, the discovery of which brought to my mind Solomon's saying—"There is nothing new under the sun." Previous to this I had always thought that asphalté was a modern invention. Singular as this discovery was, we dug through the asphalté, and in a short time we were rewarded by coming upon a coffer on which we found inscriptions. From this coffer we took two cylinders. These were covered with inscriptions, which are supposed to be the most important records of the oldest city in the world, founded, as historians tell us, by Noah after the Deluge, and where, according to tradition, Noah buried the antediluvian records. Well, I had to come home; but I left some workmen continuing the operations at the spot, and I have ascertained that they have found, after a few days' more digging, that in one of the rooms there was a channel, and

inside that channel there were records inscribed on nearly ten thousand tablets. These tablets are all coming to England, but we cannot of course as yet say what they contain. They may contain something of even greater value than anything that has hitherto been discovered in the course of our Eastern researches. It may be, indeed, that we shall really find on them the antediluvian records of which I have spoken. After I have been out there again I shall be happy to give you further information as to this interesting discovery on my return. I hope to be going out in another month, and then I trust I shall be able to make still further advances on what we have already discovered."

CROMLECHS ON THE EAST OF JORDAN.

CAPTAIN CONDER, in his interesting account of survey work done by him and his companions East of Jordan, speaks of having found some 400 cromlechs. This agrees with the statements made to my husband by his Arab escort when he visited that country in 1855, "our guides told us that they abound all over the hills." In his "Byways in Palestine," 1st Edition, p. 64, he gives a drawing of one of several which he saw after leaving Sûf, going northwards through Bashan. They were constructed of four huge slabs of brown flinty looking stone forming a chamber; two for sides, one for back, and a cover over all which measured eleven feet by six and about four feet high. Mr. Finn considered them to be of Pagan origin, and that they were altars.* This view has been adopted by Captain Conder, who finds that they are connected with sacred centres and with stone circles, and he shows how, in placing an offering on the top slab or lintel, the offerer must face east, as most of the cromlechs occur on the west of the circle. Some have supposed the last half of the word cromlech to be identical with the Hebrew לִרְוַח *l'rwach*, "tablet" or "slab." It is interesting to observe that the cromlechs found by Captain Conder are mostly placed on the live rock. He also finds holes often excavated in the live rock close to the cromlechs, as also a similar hole in the top slab, probably to receive the live embers (charcoal) for kindling the sacrifice. Various passages of Holy Scripture come to mind in reading these things, and first in importance are the numerous references to the rock צֶרֶף as an emblem of God (see Deut. xxi, 4; and xxx, xxxi; and 1 Cor. x, 1 and many other passages).

Moses speaks of the heathen gods: "Their rock is not as our rock." Deut. xxxii, 31. Again, God forbade hewn blocks or slabs to be used in building His altar, Ex. xx, 25. The very altars were to be different. It is interesting to notice that Manoah placed his altar upon a rock, Judges, xiii, 19. And the connection of the great rock on Moriah with the temple and the altar is very interesting. The rugged simplicity

* See also "Byways," p. 283, for the account of a remarkable rude stone monument between Tyre and Sidon.