

IV.—ZION, NOT JERUSALEM IN GENERAL, IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS.

This broad view, which allows every site to be right, except the correct one, needs but little notice. It meant to make things pleasant all round, by telling each combatant his site was true, and could be proved by sound argument.

(1) As I have shown that there is no evidence for the western or south-south-western or northern position for the City of David, while there is abundant evidence for the Ophel site, it is to be hoped we have heard the last of this greatest of imposters.

(2) It may be urged that the LXX in one passage substitutes Zion for Jerusalem (1884, 198), and that Josephus always substitutes Jerusalem for the City of David in speaking of the burial of the kings.

To this I would reply that Zion in the prophetic books often seems to be equivalent to Jerusalem, so that it might easily be interchanged for Jerusalem in the LXX, though possibly the translator in 1 Kings, viii, 1, may have made the change accidentally, or to show off his topographical knowledge.

Josephus, on the other hand, merely sacrificed precision by the alteration he made, and being perhaps perplexed thought this the best way out of his difficulty.

(3) It is urged that Josephus (*Ant.* VII, iii, 2) says that David called Jerusalem "the City of David." I ask—Whence did Josephus obtain this information? And if it is said he obtained it from 2 Sam. v, 9, then (in *Quarterly Statement*, 1886, 29) I showed how very far his paraphrase is from being true to his text.

I now claim to have proved beyond fear of refutation, that Zion, the City of David, was solely and entirely on Ophel.

Contradiction, without either argument or any attempt to meet the evidence I have brought forward, I take to reflect not on my theory, but on the intelligence of the opponent, as condemning a theory which he cannot upset.

To the map-makers I make my humble request that they will not for the future perpetuate a glaring and flagrant falsehood by ever writing the name, "the City of David," at Jerusalem, anywhere except on the hill south of the Temple.

W. F. BIRCH.

NEHEMIAH'S NIGHT-RIDE.

THE topography of ancient Jerusalem is a very perplexing question, and in studying it, while nothing is more helpful than to compare the third chapter of Nehemiah with the twelfth, nothing is more vexing than to find that even the two accounts taken together are insufficient. They may, however, be supplemented, to some small extent, by Neh. ii. 13-15: "I went out by night by the valley gate, even toward the dragon's well,

and to the dung gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. Then I went on to the fountain gate and to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass. Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall; and I turned back, and entered by the valley gate, and so returned."

I have always been inclined to fancy that Nehemiah left the city by the Jaffa gate, rode southward, made a vain attempt to ascend a re-entering angle at the Tyropœan valley, and retreating thence followed the brook Kedron northward, turned to the left at the N.E. corner of the city by the sheep gate, and thus got back to the Jaffa gate, after making the circuit of the city. But the valley gate may not be the Jaffa gate, and if Neh. iii, 13, means that the dung gate was only 1,000 cubits from the valley gate, it cannot be so. We have the dung gate bearing the same name still, and with the sewage flowing out near it. Taking this as a fixed point, the gate 1,000 cubits west of it is the gate of David. I will only assume, therefore, that Nehemiah left the city through some gate near the south-west corner. He then made towards the *dragon's well*. This we may probably identify with the Virgin's fountain, seeing that this fountain has been called the well of the dragon, and the well of the sun, and a common legend explains the intermittent flow of the water by declaring that a dragon lies within it who wakes and sleeps. When awake he stops the water, but when he sleeps it flows. (By the way, it seems worth remarking that in the myth of Cadmus the well of Ares was guarded by a dragon, which the hero killed.) Having come near to this well—towards it, but not unto it—Nehemiah bent his way northward to the dung gate. I conceive that the fountain gate and the king's pool, which he came to next, were situated in that part of the chine which is now within the city wall, and filled with *débris*. In Nehemiah's time it was so far from being filled that the entrance to the sepulchres of the kings was visible, and so far from being on a level with the ground east and west of it, that pedestrians in passing from one hill to the other had to make use of the stairs that went down from the City of David (see Neh. iii, 15; xii, 37).

Two or three things deserve mention here:—(1.) Such a re-entering angle appears to be required in order to find room for the length of the wall as indicated in Nehemiah's descriptions, for without this the many places mentioned will seem to be too crowded together. It is because there is such a sinus that the first company, in chap. xii, forsake the wall, and make use of the stairs of the City of David, after which they get on to the wall again. They may forsake the wall and take the short cut, either to reduce their journey to the same length as that of the second company, or possibly because that inner part of the wall was not broad enough to walk upon, or was not yet completely repaired.

(2.) The passages favour the idea that the City of David was on the eastern hill. The stairs "go down from the City of David," yet the

company goes up by those stairs in a journey which seems to begin somewhere near the Jaffa gate, and end at the Temple.

(3.) The obstruction to Nehemiah's progress seems to be accounted for by the nature of the spot. There being two walls running parallel to one another for some distance along the sinus, the destruction or dilapidation of both would result in double heaps of ruins in a narrow space.

(4.) It will be observed that the greatest desolation is found on the south side of the city, as though the last assault had taken place on that side. Nehemiah surveys the southern walls and gates first—surveys them leisurely—mentions one spot after another, and the impossibility of getting along; and then hurries over his journey by the brook and round the north of the city homeward. The impression we thus get of greater destruction on the southern side is confirmed by the description of the work of restoration in chapter iii, where it would appear that a larger number of independent workers find occupation on the southern side than on the northern. It is generally assumed that because the northern part of the city afforded higher ground, from which the assault could be delivered more easily, that, therefore, the city would always be assaulted on that side, and the southern and south-eastern parts would not suffer much. But even supposing this to be so during the actual assault, the conqueror might take all the more delight in demolishing afterwards the walls which had defied him.

GEORGE ST. CLAIR.

SEPULCHRES OF THE KINGS.

WHY should not excavations be made at Jerusalem with the direct object of finding the tombs of David, Solomon, and their successors? The area of search would be limited, for most of the kings were laid to rest "in the City of David."

1. We may assume that the tombs would be excavated in the hill-side. In a country so rocky as Palestine, the dead could not be buried in the soil as a general rule, for the soil would be absent and an excavation must be made. Tombs could be excavated in the side of a hill with less labour than from the upper surface, and would be more accessible.

In ancient Egypt tombs were built of brick and stone, or hewn in the rock, according to the position of the necropolis; and whenever the mountains were sufficiently near the latter was preferred (Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians," chap. x).

Tombs thus excavated in the hill-side may be seen at Jerusalem, on the eastern side of the valley of Jehoshaphat.

At the so-called Tombs of the Kings, north of the city—the most noticeable sepulchre at Jerusalem, and regarded as the tomb of Helena, Queen of Adiabene—a trench is indeed sunk in the rocky level, and a large court also, open to the sky; but this artificial hollow is made for the