

## “TELL YUNIS.”

THE Gardens at Jaffa extend  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of the town, where a tract of sand hills begin, 7 miles long and nearly 4 miles broad.

This tract is a blank, bearing only the names of two tribes of wandering Arabs on the large Map of the Palestine Exploration Fund, sheets xiii and xvi.

In making an excursion close to the sea-shore to the south of Jaffa, my attention was arrested by a remarkable knoll named “Tell Yûnis,” worthy of insertion in the maps.

In going there one follows the road leading from Jaffa southwards, between the Gardens, having houses on both sides, some of which are old, but the greater number new, to the Saknet el-Jeballyeh settlement on the hill.

About eight minutes further on, the road descends between sand hills to the sea-shore, and then for 3 miles further along the beach, having on the one side the sea, and on the other steep cliffs about 150 feet high, with a rocky crest in a straight line and uniform height, sometimes broken by small ravines. The road approaches a remarkable hill, having a steep slope in a straight line towards the sea; wide at the basement and narrow at the top, thus forming a regular pyramid. It stands isolated, as north of it is a deep depression, going down nearly to the level of the beach; and on the south there is a regular glen, with a kind of water-course.

As I had no instruments with me I was unable to take regular measurements, but made the notes simply by counting the paces. Its height is about 200 feet, and the top is of comparatively small extent, and is crowned with ruins almost buried in the sand; the line of the walls is, however, still recognisable.

The top was a platform, surrounded by walls of about 70 feet long and nearly 70 feet broad. A building once stood in the middle of it, measuring 45 feet from west to east in length, and 40 feet from north to south in breadth.

This building was divided into three apartments, the middle one being wider than the outer two, and very much resembling a small Basilica. A smaller platform, having ruins also, is in front of the east side of the platform, but on a lower level, which I consider to have been the entrance, having a tower with gate, &c., as from these ruins a kind of road descends through a small ravine, first in a northerly and then in a north-westerly direction to the foot of the hill.

Many fragments of coloured stones—some of which are polished, and of exceedingly white marble—besides many pieces of bricks and pottery, are lying about on the top and round the brow of the hill, giving the impression that the ruins were those of a costly building, and that excavations would give good results.

I hoped to find many interesting things, but did not see any hewn stones of any size, which were, perhaps, already taken away or buried in the sand. Those stones which once belonged to the walls were not hewn like those which are in the neighbourhood of Jaffa, but broken from the cliffs. Behind the hill is a kind of plain, the height of which is not many feet above the beach, and as there are indications that the sea once came nearer to the cliffs, and even to the foot of the hill, it is probable that the plain was a little bay or creek, and that the hill in question was at that time a peninsula.

The question now arises : what site is this, or what stood on the top of this hill? Its name being "Tell Yûnis," Hill of Jonas, reminds one of the Prophet Jonas, who met with his fate in this neighbourhood.

That a temple, church, or any other monument may have been erected to his memory, we cannot say. There are several sites dedicated to this prophet, leaving out the one at the Euphrates. Major Conder, in the *Memoirs* ("Special Papers," p. 295), speaks of *four* in this country : one in Meshed, where his tomb was shown at an earlier period ; one south of Jaffa, on the south bank of the River Sukereir, near the sea, and 13 miles to the south of the hill in question, or 17 miles south of Jaffa (about which Major Conder remarks, "probably the traditional spot where the prophet was left by the whale"); the third at Hûlhûl, near Hebron ; and the fourth at Sarepta, near Tyre. The one now found would be the fifth.

This newly discovered hill is the property of a native at Jaffa, who wishes to sell it. Several Europeans went there, but hitherto no purchase was effected.

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*Jerusalem, November 29th, 1888.*

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## IMPROVEMENT OF ROADS IN PALESTINE.

Much zeal on the part of the Government may be observed in the last two or three years for making roads in Palestine.

The existing one, from Jaffa to Jerusalem, has been much improved lately, and the work is still going on.

Not only the line itself is improved, but in many places new and better lines have been made. There are three chief places especially in which such improvements were made :—

1st. The Serpentine line, going down the steep descent into the Kulonieh Valley, west of Jerusalem, was abandoned, and an entirely new line made north of it, on the northern brow of the large valley of "W. Beit Hannîna" and "Kulonieh." The descent now begins at the second watch-tower, and passes near the village of Lifta, in a regular descent of 5 in a 100, along the brow of these barren hills to where it joins the old road, near the new and handsome bridge at Kulonieh. It is