

EN-ROGEL, AND THE BROOK THAT OVERFLOWED.

THE POSITION.

THE boundary line between Judah and Benjamin fixes the position of En-rogel somewhere towards the south-east of Jerusalem.

Three sites for it have been proposed, viz. (1) the Virgin's Fount, *i.e.*, Gihon; (2) the Pool of Siloam; (3) Joab's Well.

It seems to me that En-rogel cannot be Gihon, because (a) two different names can hardly be applied to the same fountain in one story (1 Kings i, 9, 33, 38, 45); (b) it is incredible, and not consistent with the sacred narrative, that Solomon was anointed within a hundred yards of Adonijah and his supporters—just where David would *not* send him; (c) the *cliff* of Zahweileh certainly does not answer to the *stone* (*eben*, a moveable stone) of Zohemoth. Major Conder, taking the identification to be true, proposes (*Quarterly Statement*, 1885, 20) that En-rogel may mean "the spring of the channel," and would derive the name from "the famous rock-cut channel leading from the back of the cave in which the spring rises." A fatal objection, however, is made by H. B. S. W. (184), who observes "that *all* the passages in which the name occurs, relate to a time antecedent to the earliest date hitherto assigned to the rock-cut channel, and two of them mention the name En-rogel as existing *in the time of Joshua*." I must add that Major Conder himself attributes the famous channel to Hezekiah ("Handbook," 339), so that on this point he is divided against himself; and though since 1878 (*Quarterly Statement*, 130, 184) I have maintained that the Jebusites made the channel (it is part of the gutter up which Joab climbed—2 Sam. v, 8; 1 Chron. xi, 6), I cannot admit this site for En-rogel, even in favour of my theory.

2. H. B. S. W.'s (1885, 59) proposal to identify En-rogel with the pool of Siloam falls before his objection above; for no one, so far as I know, has assigned the Pool of Siloam to so early a date as the time of Joshua.

3. The great objections made by Major Conder (1885, 20) against identifying En-rogel with (Bîr Eyûb) Joab's Well have been (1) that it is too far from the cliff of Zahweileh, and (2) that it is not a spring (*ain*) at all. I have pointed out above that (1) is really no objection at all; and (2) is not conclusive, because Jacob's Well at Sychar is called both a spring (*πηγή*) and a well (*φρέαρ*) in St. John iv. Further, in Gen. xvi, 7, 14, the fountain (*ain*) in the way to Shur is identical with the well, Beer-lahai-roi. Again, in Gen. xxiv, 11, 13, 16, 20, 43, 45, we have both *ain* and *beer*, applied to the same source of water. Further, the *well* of Sirah (2 Sam. iii, 26) is identified by Major Conder ("Tent Work," vol. ii, 86) with the present *ain* Sârah. Thus, a spring reached by cutting the rock may, apparently, in the Bible, be called either *ain* or *beer*. To me Joab's Well seems undoubtedly to answer to the required position of En-rogel, but yet not itself to be actually En-rogel, and this brings us to a very interesting subject.

THE STORY.

Eleven years ago I pointed out (1878, 130) that there must have been a very clever man among the ancient Jebusites. Whether he was Melchizedec or not is uncertain ; at any rate, water was his specialty. I have told how; by the contrivance of "the gutter," he secured for his city an unfailing supply of water, and so enabled Zion, the castle of the Jebusites, to bid defiance to all Israel, until Joab's daring, in conjunction with Araunah's treachery, transferred the impregnable fortress into David's hands. Another benefit which this same Jebusite (I believe) conferred upon his country was the making of En-rogel.

It is probable that in pre-historic times water used, after heavy rains, to issue from the ground near Joab's Well, just as it does now by means of the well, and to flow in a voluminous stream down the valley towards the Dead Sea.

When, in after times, but before the Israelite invasion, the Jebusites found the supply from Gihon (Virgin's Fount) insufficient for their wants, this father of civil engineers prospected for water in the valley (*nachal*, or brook) near the present site of Joab's Well. Intending his countrymen to be able in stormy times to conceal from their enemies the spring he had resolved to find, he cut in the rock, about 75 feet north of the well, the entrance to a staircase discovered by Sir Charles Warren, which, after descending 6 feet to the west, divides into a northern and a southern branch. The northern staircase soon divides in two others ; neither of these last two enabled our Jebusite to find water, and therefore were abandoned, it may be, when the southern staircase gave indications that the excavators were reaching water. A grand day, indeed, it must have been for that primitive civil engineer, when he broke into the grotto or subterranean cistern marked west of Joab's Well ; and if nature had never hereabouts forced for its waters an outlet to the surface, tremendous must have been the excitement in "the torpid little town of Jebus," when tidings came that a strong stream of water was pouring forth from En-rogel ; in other words, that "the brook was overflowing in the midst of the land."

Consciously or unconsciously, some 3,400 years ago, or more, our Jebusite had constructed a periodical Artesian well, and thereby (unless he was anticipated by nature) endowed his city in perpetuity with all but an annual treat of a babbling brook in "the prettiest and most fertile spot around Jerusalem."

If it is allowable to give a Hebrew derivation to the name of a Jebusite spring (though possibly the later name is an equivalent for the older one, just as we have *shaveh* and *emek*), then I would interpret En-rogel as meaning *the spring of searching out*, i.e., the spring that was found by searching out, just as Isaac named one of his wells *Esek*, because they contended with him.

Useful, however, as En-rogel proved to the Jebusites, it was very inconvenient for their fair Rebekahs to have to go down for water through

the long dark staircase and passage; accordingly from the surface of the valley (or, if the grotto is under the hill, from a cave, like a tomb, in its side) a shaft was excavated to the roof of the grotto, through which (shaft) their vessels could be let down by a cord into the cistern below.

Centuries rolled on, and if the water had ever naturally issued from the surface near En-rogel, the fact was wholly forgotten. The only overflow that the Hebrews who now held Jerusalem ever witnessed was the periodical rushing of the waters up the staircase of En-rogel.

The Bible mentions this fountain in connection with two critical events in the life of David. In the rebellion of Absalom, Jonathan and Ahimaaz remained lurking in or near these staircases; and afterwards, "by the stone of Zohelath, which is beside En-rogel," the rebellious Adonijah gave his great feast, doubtless during the overflow of the brook.

Joab's Well itself may have been dug in the reign of Solomon, and deepened at a later date. It was certainly made *after* En-rogel. Possibly the age of its construction may be ascertained from the character of its masonry.

On Sennacherib's invasion "much people was gathered together who stopped all the fountains and the brook that overflowed through (or in) the midst of the land." Now, at last, Hezekiah reaped the fruit of the Jebusite's forethought. Covering up the entrance to Gihon he was able himself from within the city of Jerusalem to draw its waters by means of the gutter. Similarly it was easy to conceal all traces of En-rogel; but to stop "the brook that overflowed" proved in the end to be a work of extreme difficulty and extraordinary magnitude. At first, at a distance of 44 feet from the grotto (or cistern), he blocked up the rock-cut passage by "a masonry wall, 3 feet thick, and composed of cut stones set in a hard black mortar, apparently mixed with oil. At the bottom a hole or duct was left, 6½ inches by 4 inches, and on the northern side a stone plug to fit, and 12 inches long, was found in it" (by Sir Charles Warren in 1870; *see* Letters, pp. 141, 153).

Probably at the same time Hezekiah closed the shaft in the roof of the grotto with the "white stone," observed by this successful explorer (Letters, p. 141). All this was easy enough; but when the heavy rains came on, it would seem that the waters still issued from the surface, escaping either through some natural fissure in the rock below the soil, or because the shaft above the grotto or the staircase was not water-tight. The blocking up of the staircase (or rather its continuation to the grotto) by a *second* wall, seems to imply that suspicion lighted on the last-named passage. However this might be, the attempt was of no use. The brook still continued, as of old, to overflow. Yet Hezekiah and his people were not easily to be thwarted. If the brook would flow, it should certainly not *overflow*.

At an immense expenditure of labour a spacious aqueduct (6 feet high and from 3 feet 6 inches to 4 feet broad) was cut under the western

side of the Kidron valley, starting from the grotto (which was practically the source of the waters), and extending at least 1,800 feet down the ravine.

[To follow this to its end is a work worthy of the Fund and its supporters.]

Now, at last, the brook was stopped. Buried, as it was, 40 or 50 feet out of sight, and beyond hearing the Assyrian could never have found it.

A further attempt seems to have been made to continue this tunnel (or aqueduct) on the same scale northwards. Apparently the staircase was used for carrying out the chippings, but why the last 86 feet of it (*i.e.*, of the staircase which here is really a passage with a slight fall) were not utilised in this extension is to me at present unintelligible. Operations were began at a point 86 feet from the grotto, and after lowering the floor about 9 feet, a new tunnel was continued north for 148 feet, generally about 3 feet 7 inches wide, and 6 feet high, and then the work was abandoned.

Still, from the southern end of this 148 feet length, a passage was cut to the grotto, apparently to enable the water trickling through into the 148-foot tunnel to flow into the grotto.

The smaller dimensions ("it is only about 3½ feet high" apparently. Letters, p. 142) and irregular course of this connecting link seem to indicate that it was made without much care. At the point of junction (86 feet from the grotto) the old staircase has partly been cut away by this later work, so that here the roof of the passage is 15 feet high. From this point the *link* runs directly under the older passage, and comes out into the grotto, 9 feet below the other and 6 feet to the west of it.

If Joab's Well had been already dug, it too must have been stopped by Hezekiah. If it was not already made, then the excavating of the great aqueduct must have deprived the people of Jerusalem of their greatest treat. After Sennacherib's departure, they must have looked back with many regrets to the happy days when they used to disport themselves among the trees by the banks of the overflowing brook. And never afterwards, until the exit from the grotto was blocked up (which the presence of some large stones in the tunnel and at the bottom of the cistern or grotto seems to indicate was done), or until Joab's Well was either made or reopened, did the lower valley of the Kidron again present the bright and festive scene which must probably have been of almost yearly occurrence since Jerusalem was first inhabited, and certainly since the day that the clever Jebusite presented to his city the famous En-rogel.

THE PROOF.

The more congenial task now awaits me of presenting to the critics the proof that my topographical statements are correct.

In "Jerusalem Recovered," 261, Sir Charles Warren writes:—"This tunnel, as we have now examined it, extends from near Bir Eyûb to a point 1,800 feet down the Kedron Valley. It has been judiciously cut

under one side (the west side) of the valley, so that though it is from 70 to 90 feet under the surface of the rock, yet the staircases being commenced to the east (nearer the bottom of the valley), have not to descend by more than 40 to 50 feet. In the 1,800 feet we have cleared out, seven staircases have been exposed; they are about 3 feet wide, and descend at an angle of 35°. At the bottom of some of the staircases the aqueduct is deepened a little, so as to form a shallow pool."

As, therefore, work might have been begun at all these staircases at once, the time spent in making the aqueduct need not have been much longer than that required to make the tunnel between the two staircases most distant one from the other. Still, however quickly executed, the undertaking, by its very magnitude, witnesses to the extreme importance attached to it.

Had it been primarily made as a means of egress from and ingress to the city, the work would have been begun from the city so as to be available for use, as far as it was finished. If such could have been its object, then, as we find it, it would be nothing but a monument of wasted industry and unreflecting folly.

It is clear, however, that it was intended for an aqueduct. In proof of this we have "the little pools at the bottom of some of the staircases," and water in old time must obviously have flowed along it, as it is connected both with a cistern holding water at the present day and also with a passage stopped with a plug. Above all, its great size shows that it was made to admit of a large volume of water flowing along it, and such a flow actually takes place along it at the present day.

Its depth below the nearest surface, "40 to 50 feet," shows that the object was to conceal the waters from an enemy outside the city until they could be conveyed to some point where he could not reach them, probably where they would sink into the ground and so disappear.

We know from 2 Chron. xxxii, 3, that Hezekiah "took counsel to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city, and that much people was gathered together, who stopped all the fountains and the brook that overflowed through the midst of the land." Be it observed that *only ONE brook, the brook*, is here mentioned.

With the rock, near Joab's Well, once pierced either by nature or by the shaft of the well, or by the rock-cut staircase north of it, the water after heavy rains would inevitably issue forth in a *great stream*. As it would have been folly in Hezekiah to stop a brook elsewhere and leave this one still overflowing, and as he is only said to have stopped *the brook* (*i.e.*, one, not more), it is obvious that the brook that he stopped must have been the one rising at or near Joab's Well.

That there used to be such an overflow of water *hereabouts in Hezekiah's time* is clear, because (1) En-rogel was already in existence, being mentioned in the time of Joshua; (2) It was not at Gihon; and because, (3) as the boundary line from En-rogel went *up* the valley of Hinnom En-rogel was obviously towards the south-east of Jerusalem.

We have then the following interesting points established :- -

1. The *Ain* (spring) in the word En-rogel proves that at or near this spot there was a source and supply of *living waters*.

2. The *living waters* prove that the rock was (porous or) pierced by nature or art, so that the waters could pass through.

3. The rock having been thus pierced proves that there would be an overflowing brook at times then as now.

4. The great depth and size of the tunnel prove that it was intended to hide and convey away from the enemy a large volume of water.

As Hezekiah is distinctly asserted to have stopped "the overflowing brook," and no one else apparently had both the necessity and ability for doing so, the conclusion is inevitable that Hezekiah made the long aqueduct owing to the invasion of Sennacherib, or, in other words, that 2 Chron. xxxii, 4, must refer to this aqueduct.

The tunnel is continued on the north side of the cistern or grotto, on about the same level as it is on the south side, and cuts into a passage leading in one direction up to the surface, and in the opposite direction back to the cistern, which (cistern) the passage named reaches at a level nine feet higher than that of the aqueduct.

As this higher passage is now blocked up by a wall containing *the plug*, which (plug) would be useless when the continuation of the aqueduct had been made to cut into the upper passage (for then the water could flow along the lower passage, and, as it were, take the plug in the rear), it is evident that the wall was plugged:—

(1) Before "the connecting link," or lower passage, was made.

(2) Before the long aqueduct was made; for then the waters could no longer rise so high as the plug, as this is 12 or 13 feet above the bottom of the outlet aqueduct.

Therefore the staircase (leading down to the plug) being the only outlet to waters flowing along the plugged passage, was also made before the long aqueduct.

But the putting in of the plug could only have been done to prevent the water rising up the staircase. Therefore in the plug we have evidence of an earlier attempt to stop the brook before ever the long aqueduct or tunnel was made.

The presence of a *plug* instead of a wall, perfectly solid throughout, seems to me to show that the object was to keep the brook from overflowing, *only for a time*, as long as it might be desired, and not to *compel* (if the levels required it) the waters when they overflowed, to do so through the shaft in the roof of the grotto. If the top of the shaft is lower than the head of the staircase, of course the waters would issue from the former naturally. Anyhow, it is clear the plug was not put in for any object connected with the shaft.

As the staircase would practically be useless for getting water after Joab's Well was made, I conclude that the staircase was made before the well; for Joab's Well once made, could never have been both stopped and forgotten and its site lost before Sennacherib's invasion, and at that time it has been shown that the staircase was already in existence.

As previous to Sennacherib's invasion there was apparently no object in stopping the brook, it seems to me correct to attribute the device of the plug, as well as the making of the tunnel, to Hezekiah.

It is, however, a long step back from Hezekiah to Joshua.

A place where waters naturally issue at times from the ground, might justly be called a spring (*ain*). Therefore the fact that in the time of Joshua En-rogel is mentioned, does not, of necessity require us to admit that the staircase had been made in his time.

The fact, however, that instead of a vertical well (the easiest and surest way of reaching water in the valley) we find a staircase hewn out in such a manner that it might easily be covered up, and that one entrance is made to serve for the branches north and south, seems to me to show that the persons who constructed it contemplated the need of at times concealing it. From the time of Joshua to that of Hezekiah there was no call on the part of Israel to form such a contrivance, and after Joshua's invasion it was too late for the Jebusites to begin to make the staircase. If, therefore, there was no reason whatever for making such a peculiar staircase after Israel's invasion, we must conclude it was made before it, or in other words, it was the work of the Jebusites.

Nor need we think they were not equal to such a work. Centuries before Jacob's deep vertical well had been made near Shechem, and rock-hewn cisterns and tombs were common everywhere. The *gutter*, a still more difficult undertaking, had been already executed in Joshua's time, or soon after; for its existence is really the only thing which can explain the remarkable circumstance that Jebus alone, of the mountain strongholds, remained untaken till the time of David.

As it would be folly to cover up the staircase and leave Gihon (Virgin's Fount) flowing as usual, it follows either (*a*) that Schick's aqueduct (*see* "Waters of Shiloah") was made by the Jebusites, as a means of secreting the waters; or (*b*) that they inhabited Ophel west of Gihon, commanding the latter and having access to it by means of "the gutter," with the corollary that even from David's time Ophel was part of Jerusalem. As (*b*) has been proved beyond fear of refutation (1888, 46), it is superfluous to add 450 years more to the antiquity of the aqueduct by adopting (*a*).

Of two spots—one with nothing specially to mark it, and seldom, if ever, overflowing with water—and the other a living spring with a staircase, and periodically overflowing with water, there can hardly be any question, but that the latter rather than the former would be chosen for a land-mark. Unhesitatingly, then, I assign to the staircase the title of En-rogel.

Therefore I conclude: (1) That the staircase called En-rogel, leading to the grotto, was made by the Jebusites at a date antecedent to Joshua's invasion; and (2) that Hezekiah, on Sennacherib's invasion, put in the plug, and afterwards made the long aqueduct, thus stopping the brook that overflowed.

What changes take place! Once the ancient Jebusite, as an Oriental would, used to enjoy himself at Gihon,

“nunc viridi membra sub arbuto
Stratus, nunc ad aquæ lene caput sacræ.”

Now-a-days, lower down, Thomson (“Land and Book”), says: “I have seen the water gushing out like a mill-stream, some 15 rods south of the well; and then the whole valley was alive with people bathing (? wading) in it, and indulging in every species of bilarity.”

In the future, when the Jews with their money return to the Holy Land, they may spend some of it in “improving” Jerusalem, by making in the Kidron an artificial lake, to fish and boat upon, and illuminated in the evening with the electric light. All that is required is a great dam across the ravine close to “the spring of the fig” (near the end of the aqueduct). An average annual rainfall of 22 inches will do the rest.

In reference to Hezekiah, I have mentioned only Sennacherib and not Sargon, although Professor Sayce, in “Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments,” credits the latter with a capture of Jerusalem, and connects Is. x, 24-32; and xxii with it. But as (1) Sargon does not claim the capture on the monuments; (2) as Sennacherib does not boast of it in 2 Kings xviii, xix; (3) as the Bible says nothing about it; but rather (4) says (Is. x, 24), “Be not afraid of the Assyrian,” and promises (xxxviii, 6), “I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the King of Assyria; and I will defend this city;” it seems to me that one has no excuse for handing over Jerusalem to the tender mercies of Sargon.

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