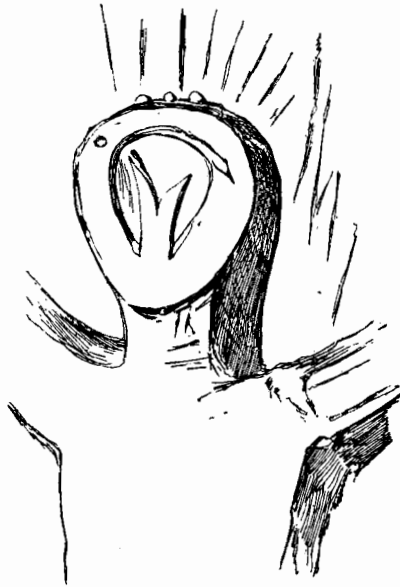


CAVE OF SARIS.

I HAVE again visited the cave at Saris, and forward the results of my attempts to obtain squeezes of the marks or characters which were noticed by me in the place where an inscription was said to have been, but which was destroyed by the peasant who had hoped to find treasure.

Mr. Schick was unable to accompany me, but he kindly allowed me to take with me an intelligent young man in his employ who proved very useful.

I was also happy in being accompanied by Mr. Lees, who came at my invitation and kindly sketched the two figures in the cave. These sketches I also forward with the squeezes, and a rough plan of the cave, with section of the pit, and also a sketch copy of the vestiges of letters, and a full sized sketch of the head of the figure on the east wall, which is very curious, the face having instead of eyes, nose, mouth, &c., an ornament very much resembling a double dagger-shaped leaf.



We did not find any letters near the figures, but a close inspection showed that when the cave was made, they had been outlined by means of a drill or borer, in such a manner that when the adjacent stone was cut away, the figures remained standing out in relief. The lower portion of many of the drill holes is distinctly visible, as shown in one of Mr. Lee's sketches, and also in that of the head itself.

Since I first visited the cave last June others have been on the spot.

The Jerusalem Freemasons especially, seem to have been quite excited by the accounts of the attitude of the figures, and about two months ago a large party of them, headed by the Master and some other officers of their society, actually made an expedition in search of it, and cleared the earth, broken pottery, and bones, in the pit or square trough in the south-eastern corner. I have made special enquiries of some who were of the party, but could not learn that they had discovered anything of importance except some broken jars or cruses (imbriks). However, their visit was of service in so far as it saved us the trouble of clearing out the four-foot deep pit or trough, which at the western end has at the top a step or ledge. The floor of the cave round the western and southern walls had been cleared, so that we had only to excavate in the centre to ascertain the level there, as the floor outside the pit seems to shelve towards the centre from all sides. To do this was no easy task, as besides the stuff which had come out of the pit, the soil in the cave is very hard and full of tree roots which had penetrated in search of moisture. The rock floor in the centre of the cave is five feet from the ceiling. At the north-west, south-west, and south-east corners it is three feet from the ceiling. In the south-east corner the rock overhangs the pit.

In the rubbish that had been taken out of the pit Mr. Lees found a broken *siraj* or earthenware shell-shaped lamp like those used at the present day by the Fellahin, only larger. From the rock terrace above the cave there is a magnificent view over the sea-board plain. We saw the range of Carmel very clearly with the naked eye, and, of course, yet more so with a field glass.

I enclose a squeeze of a small Greek inscription in raised letters found stone dug up lately close to the tombs of the Prophets on Olivet.

I have not had time to write out the list of Judeo-Spanish proverbs which I promised some months ago. I have begun but do not know when I shall finish. We missionaries, however intensely we may be interested in the Palestine Exploration Fund work, can seldom find leisure to indulge in it.

P.S.—In my report I described the cave as being hewn out of *narie* rock, soft to work, but hardening by exposure; I was mistaken, it is hard *mizzie*.

J. E. HANAUER.

IRRIGATION AND WATER SUPPLY IN SYRIA.

REFERRING to the notice by Mr. Simpson upon the above subject in the last *Quarterly Statement*, I may mention that in April, 1889, while riding with my wife from Palmyra to El Beda, on our return journey from the former place, I observed a considerable number of pits such as those which Mr. Simpson describes. Those that I saw were within a few miles of Palmyra, and were, I should judge, distant from 200