

NEHEMIAH'S WALL.

MR. ST. CLAIR says that in his line for this wall he has "nowhere departed from probability." To me he rather seems to have plunged into impossibility. To reduce his theory to ruins, all that is needed is to prove that Nehemiah's Wall passed near 'Ain Silwân (Siloam), since thence to the wall of Ophel (Neh. iii, 27) it could never have passed up the Tyropœon.

It may be well to premise that, though he names Lewin and Warren, no support whatever from these two writers or from Thrupp accrues to Mr. St. Clair's theory, since Lewin draws Nehemiah's Wall down to Siloam, and Sir Charles Warren, in his plan ("Jerusalem Recovered" and "Temple or Tomb"), does the very same; while Thrupp, unable to bring his wall down to 'Ain Silwân, brings Siloam up to it instead—all of them having seen, what is obvious enough, that the wall passed *near* Siloam.

If Mr. St. Clair, as I pointed out (1889, 207), appeals to Josephus, his theory collapses at once, for the Jewish historian states that the first wall was built by the kings, and makes it to reach *to Siloam*. I quoted *three* passages to prove this, and it is no answer whatever for Mr. St. Clair to ignore *two* of them entirely, and, as to the third, to suggest that "thence" may refer to a place that has *not* even been named. Josephus distinctly speaks of part of the first wall as "bending from Siloam towards (or facing) east" (Wars, v, vi, 1). Again (as I pointed out) the Romans drove the Jews out of the lower city and "set all on fire *as far as Siloam*." How possibly could the wall bend from Siloam or the fire reach to Siloam if the wall on the north never came nearer to it than 1,500 feet, as is urged by Mr. St. Clair, and so shown on his plan. It seems wasting space to add that when the country for 90 furlongs round had been scoured for wood there would in August be nothing outside the wall left to set fire to "as far as Siloam."

Therefore *within* the city the fire extended to Siloam, or, in other words, the wall came near to 'Ain Silwân. Whatever support Mr. St. Clair may have for his new theory, he will find none whatever in Josephus, and perhaps now he will be willing to dismiss this witness, as the first wall of his time need not *necessarily* have been on the line of that of Nehemiah.

Accordingly, *without Josephus*, it is next to be proved that Nehemiah's Wall came near to Siloam. It is stated (Neh. iii, 15) that Shallun repaired "the wall of the Pool of Siloah by the king's garden." Happily, Mr. St. Clair admits that this pool was near 'Ain Silwân, and does *not* urge that Nehemiah is here said to build a wall near that pool, though distant some 1,500 feet from *his* (Mr. St. Clair's) city, merely to show that he had plenty of workmen to spare. Mr. St. Clair maintains,

however, that his wall across the valley, 1,500 feet distant from the Pool of Siloam, derived its name from that pool; just as now the Jaffa and Damascus Gates at Jerusalem are named from places miles away. Gates naturally have and had, as at Rome, their name from places to which the road led that passed through them; but that part of a city wall should have its name from the place as well as from the direction (as east, &c.) towards which it looked is quite a *different* question. Neither Lewin (so far as I remember) nor Mr. St. Clair attempts to give any instance of the kind.

Neh. iii, 15, mentions indeed the *fountain gate*, because the road through it led to the *fountain*. Whether this means 'Ain Silwân or En-rogel (see Jos. Ant. vii, xiv, 4, and Wars, v, xii, 2) need not now be discussed; and if the wall adjacent could have derived its name from the road, why, I may ask in turn, was it not called *the fountain wall*, instead of *the wall of the Pool of Siloah*? If there is any truth in Mr. St. Clair's way of taking the words, surely he can furnish us with an example to save his theory from destruction.

Until such an instance is produced, *the wall of the Pool of Siloah* must be taken to mean *literally what it says*; just as the Damascus wall means the wall of and at Damascus, and not part of the wall of Jerusalem, near the Damascus Gate.

Therefore, as Shallun repaired the wall of the Pool of Siloah, it seems to me that the conclusion is inevitable that the wall went close to the pool (so as to defend it), even if it did not actually enclose it, as seems to me to have been most probably, if not certainly, the case in *Nehemiah's* time.

And now my task on this point is practically done, since if the wall came near to 'Ain Silwân Mr. St. Clair's structure falls to the ground like a castle of cards, and there it must remain until it can be shown that the wall of the Pool of Siloah was not the *actual* wall of that pool.

A few other points, however, deserve notice.

1. I have never objected to a bay up the Tyropœon. I know as yet of no evidence that there was not such a bay (in the wall) in the time of Solomon, and at what point the wall crossed the Tyropœon is still an unsettled question; but I maintain that it can be proved that in the time of Hezekiah the wall on Ophel (so-called) must have reached close to 'Ain Silwân, and have thoroughly defended it, if it did not also enclose there the Pool of Siloah.

2. I fail to understand what Mr. St. Clair means by saying, "Their (*i.e.*, others' and my) wall does not and cannot effect a junction with the wall of Ophel." Why cannot *our* wall from the south join that wall just as well as his wall does from the west? As a matter of fact, Sir Charles Warren's and Major Conder's wall on their plans ("Jerusalem Recovered" and "Handbook to the Bible") actually do join the Ophel wall, and (1879, 179), on "Nehemiah's Wall," I state, "Here we seem to join the *wall of Ophel*."

3. He says again of our wall, "It cannot be made to satisfy the

descriptions in Nehemiah." What does this mean? If it means we cannot show "corners and turnings," I would observe that no reasonable person would expect to find such underground remains before the required excavations are made.

4. I believe the wall of Josephus had (as Mr. St. Clair says) a bend *above* Siloam; but this in no way prevented the wall afterwards going down to Siloam, and there enclosing the *spring* (Josephus's word) of Siloam, as seems probable from the fact that Simon held that spring.

5. After Mr. St. Clair's procession from the west reaches the Ophel ridge, we do not read of their passing any point named on the repaired wall. Why, then, after my procession reaches the same ridge from the south, is it to be required to pass any point named on the same repaired wall? It seems arbitrary to demand more from us than from himself. Evidently once on the ridge of Ophel the procession kept to it.

6. I am *confident* that the wall came *near* to the Pool of Siloah (though I have never insisted on its *inclosing* it), because *the wall of the pool is distinctly stated to have been repaired*. Mr. St. Clair is wrong when he says (*supra*, 47) I argue "that Josephus must mean this because he speaks of the wall bending thence again." As I am cautious about trusting Josephus, let me say I take him to prove that the wall came *near* to Siloam in *his* own time, but as to Nehemiah's time I do not care to ask on this point what Josephus thought.

7. I see no object in attempting to add details, without further evidence, to the line I adopted on p. 179 in *Quarterly Statement*, 1879. My reason is given in 3, above.

8. Where do I say "the wall of Ophel extended further east than Warren found it?" That it extended further south than he traced it is, I imagine, admitted now by everybody who writes on Jerusalem, except Mr. St. Clair. I quoted two passages from the Bible to prove that before the time of Nehemiah there was a wall on Ophel due west of the Virgin's Fount or Gihon. One of these (2 Chron. xxxiii, 14) Mr. St. Clair passes over in silence, not seeing (I suppose) how to get over it. The other (xxxii, 30), which speaks of Hezekiah's stopping Gihon, &c., he explains in an amusing manner, being unwilling to admit that the Jewish King made the tunnel through Ophel in order to prevent an enemy using the waters from Gihon. While he admits that Schick's aqueduct at that time carried water into the Tyropœon, he supposes that the waters sometimes could not rise high enough to flow into it, and that therefore the tunnel was made through the hill at a lower level for the waters to flow more constantly.

This beats all the odd notions one has heard of about Jerusalem. The difference of level between the bottom of the aqueduct and the water in the tunnel cannot be much more than 12 inches, though really the more the better (*see* "Defence of the Gutter"), and yet merely for this gain of about 12 inches Hezekiah is made to cut through the rock a tunnel 1,700 feet long.

Now, from what I have seen and heard of Gihon for some years,

I hereby certify Mr. St. Clair that it is a well-conducted spring, and, though remittent, still always obedient to natural laws and ready in old time to rise at a moment's notice all the inches necessary to reach the higher aqueduct; and more than this, to remain at that height unless emptied by over-drawing. Indeed, I venture to assert that the tunnel was made by Hezekiah because the waters would persistently *rise*, not because they would *not*, and not only rise, but also *overflow*; so that Hezekiah, do what he might, could not prevent their flowing and overflowing as usual, any more than he could by the plug stop En-rogel from overflowing after heavy rains. Therefore Hezekiah was forced to make the tunnel through Ophel to the Pool of Siloah, where the Assyrians could not get at the water.

It is this same Gihon that leads Kitto to observe, "It curiously shows how deficient men of liberal education and even eminent scholars are generally in knowledge of natural science." I believe, however, that Mr. St. Clair knows of the latter more than I do. He made "only a guess," intent at the time on his double wall with its corners and turnings, unless, it may be, his feeble defence was *meant* to portend his speedy abandonment of his strange theory.

Let me add that Schick's aqueduct carried (I believe) water to the King's Pool, below the later Pool of Siloah, in the Tyropœon, and that Hezekiah's tunnel carried water into the ditch (Isaiah xxii, 11) or Pool of Siloah, just below 'Ain Silwân. Further, Mr. St. Clair fails to tell us what Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii, 30) was going to gain by stopping the upper outlet of Gihon (at the Virgin's Fount) *in peace*, or even in war, if the Assyrian could draw the water lower down, at the Pool of Siloah.

9. Mr. St. Clair very prudently does not attempt to meet any of the proofs I have brought forward from time to time showing that the City of David, or the Acra of I Maccabees, or the Acra of Josephus, was solely on Ophel (so called), south of the temple. He "accepts," he says, "Warren's Acra;" as if that were enough (1889, 90).

10. Mr. St. Clair's explanation of ἀμφίκυρτος is also curious. He says it means *doubly curved*, and, therefore, counting the inner curve, he asks why it may not mean *crescent-shaped* as well as *gibbous*. Such ingenuity would enable this word to be applicable to the moon at any time except the moment when it is just half-moon. The Greeks, however, had three words to describe forms similar to the phases of the moon when less than full—ἀμφίκυρτος, *gibbous*, μνηοειδής, *crescent-shaped*, διχότομος, *cut in half*. I hardly think the lexicographers will accept this latest interpretation for the first word.

I have corrected enough errors, and will only add that I did not say that the throne of the governor *was* the gate of Ephraim, but that I believed it marked the position of the latter gate. Again, I did *not* say that a builder *invariably* began where the preceding builder ended, but that the expression *after him* (which is not *invariably* used) seemed, *when it is used*, to indicate that the fresh builder began where the preceding one ended.

My apology for these tedious notes must be that unless I can defend my own theory and show the errors of any adverse one relating to the position of David's sepulchres, I cannot reasonably expect the Executive Committee to begin the excavations necessary to finding the sepulchres of the kings.

W. F. BIRCH.

RUINS OF THE "SLIME PITS" IN THE VALE OF SIDDIM.

THE remains to which Mr. H. A. Harper has called attention in the first edition of his "Bible and Modern Discoveries" are undoubtedly the ruins of a *karaize*, such as Mr. William Simpson so well describes in the last *Quarterly Statement*, the underground connecting channel of which is called a *kanot*. But Mr. Harper has fallen into a mistake in supposing that the description I gave him applied to the *present state* of the ruins on the east of the Jordan situated in that singularly dry and waterless region in the *Ghor*, now absolutely desert, extending for some ten or twelve miles north of *Tell Nimrim*. This description, as it appeared on page 12 of the first edition of "The Bible and Modern Discoveries," though it is far from accurate, must have been given by me to Mr. Harper as that of a rough view of the system as it would be if restored, or as it now exists, where it is still to be seen in working order on the plains of Damascus, as described by Dr. Porter in "Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Syria and Palestine." So little like a water system is it, as it now exists in this strip of arid desert in the *Ghor*, held by the *Adwan* tribe of Bedawin, that Dr. Selah Merrill declares in his account of it that he had no idea of the purpose it served! Nothing like it, so far as I have been able to ascertain, is to be found in any other part of Palestine, for what at first was thought by those who made the survey of Western Palestine to be a similar ruin near *Kurn Surtubeh*, appears, from the account in the "Memoirs of the Survey Map" (vol. ii, plate facing page 397), to be some four rock-cut *beers*, or ordinary underground cemented water-cisterns, connected with an ordinary aqueduct, which rises three-quarters of a mile west of the *Kurn*. All that I saw, and all that now exists in the desert north of *Tell Nimrim*, are three rows of bason-like, circular mounds, about 5 or 6 feet high and some 30 feet in diameter, resembling in shape the dens of ant-lions. The actual pits themselves, which once yawned deep and wide within these enclosures, are now in all instances filled up. In the longest row there are no less than 31 of these shallow basons. They are generally 30 feet apart, but in some instances 50 to 60. As seen at a distance, the three rows resemble a string of monster mole-hills, only placed at regular intervals.

My discovery consists in recognising these remains, when on a journey to the highlands of Moab in 1873, as the exact marks left by such a