

ascribe the whole of the Haram wall to Herod. This also strengthens the view that Ramet-el-Khallil is an early building, as no trace of comb-picking is seen on the massive blocks there, but only on the later relining of the building.¹

W. M. FLINDERS PETRIE.

THE WORK AT TELL EL HESY, AS SEEN BY AN AMERICAN VISITOR.

It is with pleasure that I accept your invitation to send you an account of my visit with Mr. W. M. Flinders Petrie. What you want, I am sure is not any archæological dissertation, or any account of the "finds;" but rather a description of some of the things which would interest one new to the country, and new to the work of excavating.

The trip from Jaffa down the coast, past Ashdod and Ascalon, towards Gaza, was a memorable one. The hedges of prickly pear in full bloom, sometimes twelve feet high and twelve feet deep, which surrounded the village, and the date-palms which lovingly moved their beautiful plumes over the mud huts and queer conical-shaped ovens, made Philistia appear to me more beautiful than any other part of Palestine.

These level sandy roads, though, impress one that the "way of the Philistines" would have been just fitted for the chariots of Egypt, and the worst road in the world for a band of slaves to take when attempting to escape from the Pharaoh.

What could be more romantic than a journey over this historic "high-way," sleeping in a khan at night, having a box for a bed and the sky for a roof, and passing scarcely a town that did not have some granite shafts or marble capitals—sometimes as richly carved as those of Baalbek—built into its mud walls or used as a donkey trough at the village well?

There was constant evidence that I was walking over ancient soil. Not only was the summit of every mound that I visited covered with broken pottery, but at Ascalon I was offered many old coins and an image of a goddess, which I suppose to be Ashtoreth; at Umm Lakis, a *fellah* tried to sell me a Phœnician *menhir*; and at El Kustneh I descried a raised platform surrounded by mats, and a heap of stones and a lamp, which seemed to hint at the perpetuation of the ancient Canaanitish worship even to this day.

Charming as was all this, however, I was glad when on the morning of the 8th May, I caught sight of the end of my journey—a gashed and broken tell lying by the water-brook like some hurt creature of the

¹ Full detailed reports of the results of these excavations, with plates plans, and sections, will be published later on. Portions of the pottery and other antiquities which have been brought home will be exhibited at Oxford Mansions in September, together with Mr. Flinders Petrie's Egyptian discoveries of the past season.

geologic ages fallen in its dying agonies. In the distance this fancy was encouraged, because of the many little objects which could be seen crawling in and out of the fresh wounds. On approaching nearer these moving objects took shape as Arabs, who seemed to be mangling the poor carcase in a most reckless way, until the discovery was made that every stroke of the pick was directed "from above," and that every puncture and furrow and tunnel had some definite object.

These Arab picksmen looked picturesque enough in their single garment, and their wives no less so, as, unencumbered with very little clothing excepting their necklaces and armlets, they carried away upon their heads in ragged native baskets, and pitched over the cliff the results of their husbands' manly toil. The cliff was formed by Dame Nature, who, in her interest for Palestine explorations, ages ago sent a torrent tumbling along this wady, and sliced the tell from the top to bottom, much better than any modern excavator could have done it; thus leaving a clean face for accurate chronological investigation of the various eras of the mound's occupation. I am not sure whether this tell got its name, "The Mound of the Water Pit," from the hollows in the bed of the little creek which yet runs through the wady, in which water can be found in the summer after the stream is dried up everywhere else, or whether it comes from the spring of good sweet water which trickles out of the rocks at the base of the tell.

I was in the camp several days before I found this spring, and delighted enough I was to find it, for it was the first draught of cool water that I had been able to get for a week. It was a novel sight to sit on the cliff in the evening and watch the Bedawin girls crowding about this spring, each seeking to be the first to fill her black jars and lift them into the wicker baskets hung on each side of her donkey's back.

The Bedawin were plenty. At any time one might count half-a-dozen camps in sight, each camp containing from four to forty tents. All the details of their daily life became very familiar to us. Their fields of grain were all around us. In one direction might be seen a large ungainly camel dragging the little wooden plough; in another, the shepherd leading his sheep and calling back the strays with his keen quivering whistle; in another, the harvesters reaping the barley crop, or rather pulling it up, for even those who had sickles did not pretend to cut the stalks of grain with them, but only used them to collect more comfortably the handfuls, which they then extracted by the roots!

Yet we may be glad that they are willing to "farm it" even as much as they do. For untold centuries these "children of the East" were accustomed to live in the desert, and then just about harvest-time they would come up "like grasshoppers" as far as Gaza, and pitching their black tents, help themselves. (Judges vi).

In Gideon's day it was a great encouragement to the Hebrew captain to hear one of these thieves tell his comrade that he had just dreamed that one of the stolen barley loaves had grown astonishingly large,

and rolled down the hill against his tent and overturned it. Having tried for some time to live on native barley bread, I can understand how, after a heavy supper, one might easily dream that these loaves could be used effectively as cannon balls, or as ammunition for a catapult.

But that cannot be said of the Arabic bread with which I was served at Tell el Hesy. I never relished a *table d'hôte* better than I did there. We were nomads, and had the pleasure of a perpetual picnic. Tinned meats, and the preserves for which we longed as boys, were luxuries which we enjoyed at every meal—and to eat out of the can saved washing a dish. We solved the problem of living comfortably without being everlastingly tormented with the presence of His Highness, the *chef de cuisine*.

Our most elaborate repast only required us to wash two forks, three spoons, two cups, two plates, and a dish-pan! That only took three minutes, and who wanted anything more? Sometimes I ate with a case knife, but generally used my pen-knife when it was my day to wash the dishes. As for a bread-plate, that is all nonsense—what was the table made for?

The only thing that disappointed me in Mr. Petrie was his luxurious tastes. Actually, he insisted on eating every day on a mahogany table, and would always use solid silver spoons with his dessert. I always looked with some awe at that table after I learned that it was mahogany. I examined the boxes that I laid on every night, hoping that I could report that I slept nightly on a sandal-wood bedstead; but unfortunately the cracker factory that sent them out were not putting on much style just then. After all, it might have sounded almost as well if I had only thought to say that my bedroom furniture was made of *pinus resinosa*. That is the way I shall report it in the United States. All the bedroom furnishings we had were those three boxes and a tin basin. One thing I know, I got good sleep every night.

One evening we were greatly puzzled to know what to do. Some aristocratic visitors came all the way from Egypt to see us. At any rate, the last we had seen of them had been in Egypt until they suddenly rode in upon us. One was a Prussian nobleman, the Count d'Hulst, and the other an American nobleman, Dr. Goddard, of the Egyptian Exploration Fund. At first I thought the mahogany table would have to be used as a bed, but presently I found that our visitors had brought a tent with them, and everything with which to make themselves comfortable.

To be sure they had to sleep on blankets thrown on the ground instead of reposing on a couch of sandal-wood or *pinus resinosa*, but I only went so far as to pity them. I did not propose to give up my privileges as a prior guest, even to such distinguished gentlemen.

What an evening we had together, though! As we sipped our tea and drank each others' health in delicious draughts of raspberry vinegar, and talked over all our mutual acquaintances and their virtues, and

settled all Egyptian affairs, archæological and political, I am thinking that no more contented group of mortals could have been found inside the continent of Asia.

That is saying a good deal too, for there are few such happy-go-lucky sort of people to be found in England or America as are these Arabs. They have nothing, and they need nothing, and they want nothing. To have a turban and a shirt, and to be able to lie down during the greater part of the day in the shade of a great rock, in a weary land, is the *summum bonum*. What a fool the pushing, struggling, perspiring European appears to him! Why get excited? Why work? Will not Allah provide what is best? If you can afford a knife and a gun you are well to do. If you have a goat and a camel, and a wife or two to take care of them, you are rich. Take thy comfort, thou son of a day, and enjoy the smell of the ground while thy nose is young!

That is good Bedawin philosophy. Nevertheless, while they seem to be convinced that Allah will take care of them without work, they seem to think that it would be tempting providence not to steal. This, together with their warlike disposition, makes them anything but agreeable neighbours. Every little while the news would come to us of some traveller who had been waylaid and kept for ransom, or who had been robbed and beaten, and left half dead in the desert; and one day the noise of a battle between two hostile tribes disturbed the camp all day long. It was reported afterwards that eight men were killed in the fight. A few days before I arrived a number of leading sheikhs had been arrested and sent under a heavy escort to Jerusalem. The fact that our camp was never molested was due, I think, much more largely to Mr. Petrie's exceptional skill in managing the Arabs than to the fact of the *Effendi* being on the ground.

He was very just in his dealings with them, and very careful of their rights. An illustrative case is seen in his treatment of the barley-patch on the top and sides of the tell. The Arabs would race over this according to the primitive law that one "can come into the standing corn" and "pluck the ears," providing only he puts no sickle in the grain (Deut. xxiii), but the director of affairs would not put so much as his foot over the path.

That leads me to say that the best thing I saw at Tell el Hesy was Mr. Petrie himself. All day long he would go from group to group of his workmen, critically examining the colour and character of the clay and any scraps of pottery that had been found. It was a constant surprise to me, as we went prospecting together, to see how accurately he could determine, even at a distance, the meaning of some peculiar formation. It was an equal surprise to notice how swiftly and certainly he would expose any of the impostures which are so frequently attempted by the *fellaheen*. I think he scarcely needs to do more than walk over a mound covered with pottery to tell the age of the latest town to be found underneath, while, because of his long experience and minute observation, from a chip of tool or scrap of vase

he can reconstruct the original as infallibly as a zoologist can draw the picture of an animal upon being shown a bit of his skeleton.

May he stick his spado deep into Philistia and bring up great spoil!

CAMDEN COBERN.

Detroit, Michigan,

June 16th, 1890.

THE DEAD SEA VISIBLE FROM JERUSALEM.

JOSEPHUS ("Wars" v, iv, 3) seems to imply that the Mediterranean was visible from the Tower Psephinus. Some, however, take his words to refer to the Dead Sea. The Russian buildings can hardly be high enough to command a view of the former, so that as to that sea one suspects Josephus of inaccuracy. In 1875, my brother and I believed we saw the Dead Sea from the battlements of the (so-called) Zion Gate. In my diary for April 12th, I find noted, "We next entered by the Zion Gate, climbed the tower from which we had a most glorious view of the Moab Mountains (with just two strips of *the Dead Sea visible*), through the most pellucid atmosphere, as the slanting rays of the sun shone upon the country from behind us."

After searching many books, questioning a native of Jerusalem, as well as an English resident of 20 years, and others, I find now no corroboration from them of my belief, but rather the suggestion that we mistook the haze for the sea. One is reluctant, however, to accept this explanation as final.

W. F. BIRCH.

THE DEAD SEA VISIBLE FROM JERUSALEM.

THE Dead Sea *can* be seen from the roof of the London Jews' Society's Boys' School, and also from that of Christ Church, but only at a certain hour of the day during the summer months. I have often noticed it about 8 a.m., shining like a small speck of molten silver through a small gap amongst the bare hills towards Mar Saba. This was all that, *till a few years ago*, could be seen of it. However, since the erection of the large church of St. Salvador in the Franciscan convent in the north-west part of the city, several large portions of it may be seen at all hours of the day (unless the weather be hazy), if one will take the trouble of climbing into the clock-tower.

J. E. HANAUER.
