

on either side, and there were no traces of an aqueduct being continued beyond the cutting. I should rather think that this so-called aqueduct was of old neither more nor less than it is now, a portion of the paved road from 'Ain Tâbghah to Khân Miûfa, cut deep into the rock at this point to avoid the inconvenience and danger of the natural surface of this shoulder of rock which here slopes down to a precipice; "resembling more the great rock-cutting of the Roman road at Abila, than any of the rock-cut aqueducts of the country." (Conder, "Tent Work," ii, 185.)

I picked up tessaræ in the ploughed fields between 'Ain Tâbghah (the probable site of Bethsaida) and the wooden house just built by German settlers in the middle of the little bay. The inmates told me they had found several while digging their garden.

II

THE CAVE OF ADULLAM.

May I put in a plea for the traditional site of this Cave in the Wâdy Khureitun near Bethlehem, as possessing superior claims in everything but similarity of name to the ones recently discovered at 'Aid-el-Mâ.

Without for a moment questioning the fact that there was a city called Adullam in or near the Wâdy es-Sünt in the *Shephelah*, there may have been more than one city or cave known by that name; ¹ indeed Josephus, though he says it was "a cave near the city of Adullam," yet immediately afterwards implies that it was in "the desert," or wilderness of Judæa.

The objections to 'Aid-el-Mâ are as follows :—

(1) Neither the caves nor the hill in which they are situated are places of very great strength, and are no more entitled to be called "the hold" (1 Sam. xxii, 5; 1 Chron. xi, 16) than scores of others similarly situated. They are far too much exposed to be resorted to as hiding places.

(2) 'Aid-el-Mâ is only 10 miles (as the crow flies) from Gath (Tel es Sâfia), and it is hardly likely that the Philistines would tolerate the presence of such a foe as David so close to their chief city.

(3) In their expedition to Rephaim and Bethlehem (1 Chron. xi, 16), the Philistines would probably pass within sight of David, and it is exceedingly improbable that they would leave such an enemy in their rear to harass them and cut off their communications.

(4) Bethlehem is too far away, and out of sight on the other slope of the watershed. It would take the best part of a day for the three men

¹ There was more than one Kadesh, Carmel, Gibeah, Gilgal, Bethsaida, Ramah, &c.

to get to Bethlehem and back. Besides, why should David so long for water from the well of Bethlehem, when he had a much more copious spring of better water at his feet at 'Aid-el-Mâ?

(5) David in taking his family to Moab would have to pass again by or near Bethlehem, which does not so well fit in with the narrative as would a place in the wilderness of Judæa.

In favour of the traditional site :—

(1) It is one of the most remarkably situated caves in the side of one of the grandest and wildest gorges in Palestine, the narrow path to it blocked by a fallen rock, so that a few resolute men could defend it against a host. Moreover, the existence of such a stronghold would not be suspected. Our local guide from Bethlehem even was at fault and had to get the assistance of a shepherd to find out the entrance. There are three caves opening one into the other, of which the first is lofty and of considerable size, and could easily accommodate 400 men. We found the floor dry and dusty even towards the end of the rainy season.

(2) It was in David's own country, "the wilderness of Judæa," where he had been accustomed to feed his sheep (1 Sam. xvii, 28). Such a cave would naturally suggest itself to him as a safe and almost inaccessible hiding place.

(3) It was only three or four miles from Bethlehem (as the crow flies), and from the hills above it Bethlehem could be easily seen encompassed by the Philistines. In that "dry and thirsty land" we can appreciate David's longing for "water from the well of Bethlehem," as his eye rested on his beloved city.

(4) It falls in most naturally with David's bringing his parents from Bethlehem, and then for further security taking them on to Moab (1 Sam. xxii, 1, 3, 4) for this cave lies between Bethlehem and Moab; whereas 'Aid-el-Mâ is on the wrong side of Bethlehem.

(5) In short it is impossible to conceive of a site, which in every particular (except the modern name) agrees with all that Scripture tells us about the Cave of Adullam.

Would that all traditions were equally fortunate !

I shall not easily forget our visit to this cave. Our guide had provided lights and a ball of string so that we should not lose our way. But when we were in the largest cave we forgot all about our guide, and explored on our own account.

On our return, in the low and narrow passage connecting the first and second caves, we heard groans and cries for help, and were amused to find our guide, who had attempted to *follow* us, lying on the ground with light extinguished, holding on to the end of the string, and "trembling like an aspen leaf"—probably from fear of the ghosts that might haunt the cave.