

As this point of junction, an important one as a landmark, is not mentioned by Nehemiah, I can only account for its omission by supposing that the Sepulchres of David were opposite this point, or at any rate sufficiently near to render unnecessary the mention of any other landmark.

From Neh. iii, 16, it seems clear (1886, 34) that the Sepulchres of David were within Nehemiah's Wall, and I am more and more inclined to think that they were also *within* and not merely *near* the City of David. On measuring up my plan I cannot make the part of my wall to be *over against* these sepulchres, until a point is reached at least 350 feet distant from Siloam. When a further distance of 150 feet has been struck off from the wall running south from near the Jebusite Pool, there only remains a length of wall amounting to 230 feet, *over against* which the sepulchres could have been situated, while the breadth of the area available for the sepulchres of David, cannot, it would seem, exceed 130 feet. Further, this breadth, for searching purposes, may, as aforesaid, be reduced to 80 or 50 feet, in case the wall is not found to pass close to the Jebusite pool.

I do not at present see any prospect of fixing the position of the Sepulchres of David more precisely than I have attempted above, and therefore, after twelve years' hunt, I must leave to some enterprising explorer the task of bringing matters to a successful termination by actually discovering the long-lost tomb of David.

Any reader observing any defect in my theory will oblige me by pointing it out.

P.S.—The only reason I can suggest why the 148-foot tunnel (*Quarterly Statement* 1889, 48) was made almost on a level with aqueduct leading southwards from the grotto, is that the waters from that grotto, *i.e.*, from En-rogel, might thus be conducted to some point within the wall of Jerusalem. If this work had only been finished, then (1) by walling up in part the southern entrance to the grotto the waters of En-rogel could have been drawn from within the city by means of a shaft or staircase leading to the northern end of the tunnel; and (2) the tunnel would have afforded a secret way of exit from the city and so afterwards have helped Zedekiah in his flight from the Chaldæans.

W. F. B.

---

### THE SILOAM INSCRIPTION.

THE commonly accepted version of the fifth line in the Siloam Inscription is not entirely satisfactory, inasmuch as it is inconsistent with Scriptural Hebrew usage.

It stands thus in the Jerusalem Memoirs, 347, and *Quarterly Statement*, 1883, 210: "And there flowed (5) the waters from their outlet (or the spring) to the pool for a thousand two hundred cubits." Professor Sayce gives it again, as follows, in his "Fresh Light from the Ancient Monu-

ments" (87), "The waters flowed from the spring to the Pool for a distance of 1,200 cubits."

Professor Sayce (88) says, "The language of the inscription is *the purest Biblical Hebrew*. If this be the case, the translations given above need correction, since the words, as deciphered in the inscription, stand literally as *two hundred (and) a thousand*. Dr. Neubauer, in the "Athenæum" (1881, 112), remarked that such an expression "is not Hebrew. The thousands are always before the hundreds." We have, indeed, in 1 Sam. vi, 19 (R. V.), the words, "He smote of the people *seventy men (and) fifty thousand men*," but some explanation is obviously required, since there could not be 50,000 men at (or even near) Beth-shemesh. Consequently this passage virtually supports the above-named rule.

The letters in the inscription rendered *two hundred* are **במאתים**. On this Major Conder observes (1882, 124), "There is no doubt room for the disputed letters . . . . but I have not been able to find any trace of the **ם** on either squeeze, cast, or stone." He adds (Jerusalem Mem. 352), "The *Tau* in **במאתי** seems to us to be very doubtful, though strokes exist which may have belonged to such a letter."

Professor Sayce was content at first with *a thousand cubits* and interpreted the letters **במאתי** to mean *for a distance of*, but he practically abandons this translation and accepts the other, by "formally retracting" (1883, 210) his objection to the reading (translated) *two hundred*." Accordingly there is no need to deal with his earlier translation.

The question now is, what is the original word that has been metamorphosed into this inadmissible *two hundred*?

We seem to have some six letters of which the first from the left appears to be utterly illegible (really a space and nothing more remaining), and the third from the left is very doubtful, though some strokes exist.

Seven years ago when the true solution of the Shiloah difficulty first presented itself, I wrote in *Quarterly Statement*, 1883, 106, as follows:— "Without question, then, the canal seems to me to be the work of Hezekiah, and to be referred to in two passages in the Bible, 2 Kings xx, 20, and 2 Chron. xxxii, 30. I anticipate that the wording of the inscription will finally be allowed to confirm the identity of this canal with these works of Hezekiah.

On page 148 (1881) apparently,

**המציא** (5) represents **פוצא** in 2 Chron. xxxii, 30.

**מאתי** (5) represents **למטה** in 2 Chron. xxxii, 30."

Mr. Schick's discovery (1889, 35) proves that this passage in the Chronicles refers to the Siloam tunnel. Thus the Bible account (R. V.), "Hezekiah stopped the upper *spring* of the waters of Gihon and brought them *straight down* on (rather with A. V. *to*) the west side of the city of David," really answers to the record in the inscription, "The waters flowed from the *spring* to the pool (....**במא**....) a thousand cubits."

Now as the *spring* named in the inscription coincides with the *spring*

named in Chronicles, so I believed and now maintain (no other suggestion, so far as I know, having been made) that the required Hebrew word, of which some letters survive, corresponds to *straight down* in the Biblical account. We are told *whence*, and *whither*, and *the distance* the waters flowed. The mutilated word (obviously not referring to the pool) most naturally would and (it seems to me) *must* describe *how* they flowed.

In 2 Chron. xxxii, 30, this *how* is described as *lemattah* and is translated in the Authorised and Revised Versions as *straight down*; but I am glad to find that at least fifty years ago the word was explained to mean *by a subterraneous course*; while *subterranean passage* is the very term applied to the tunnel by Professor Sayce in *Quarterly Statement* 1881, 141.

I need not attempt to show how *lemattah* in Chronicles can have assumed the particular combination of letters professedly found in the inscription. It must, however, be assumed that in the inscription, the first three Hebrew letters, viz., במא are *correctly* deciphered by the experts. All that remains for me is to complete in the *purest Biblical Hebrew*, the word thus beginning (and to complete it) in such a way that it may suitably describe the course of the waters through the tunnel.

The only word I can recommend is במאורה (as written in Isaiah xi, 8), meaning *in the hole or cavern*. Genesius says, "Root עור Arab..... to be deep, to be *excavated*." Accordingly I translate the fifth line thus, "The waters flowed from the spring to the pool *in the cavern* (hole or subterraneous passage) a thousand cubits."

Let me frankly admit that *mearah* is not quite the word I should have expected to meet with in this inscription. A monotonous repetition of נקבה (excavation) would have been more in keeping with the stonemason's style or the composer's meagre vocabulary.

One, however, who has not seen squeeze, cast, or stone, cannot (where there is obviously no collusion) challenge the unanimous decision of independent inspectors unbiassed, at least, in regard to the first three letters of the mysterious word.

W. F. BIRCH.

## SUTEKH, CHIEF GOD OF THE HITTITES.

THE more we learn of the gods of the Hittites, the more we shall know of the Hittites themselves, for the ideal aim of nations and tribes is to become like their own gods. Sutekh was clearly the principal deity of the Hittites, for his name occurs the oftenest, and on the Karnac copy of the Egypto-Hittite treaty he is invoked as the deity of many places.

What was his form and representation? And what was his precise place in the astro-religious system of the ancients? On the engraved silver plate which contained the Hittite text of the treaty, the god was figured in the centre. The silver plate has not come down to us. Yet who knows but that the figure of Sutekh may one day be found surviving among the hieroglyphs of some Hittite inscription! The name is probably