

is taken from inside the sepulchre. It was M. Clermont Ganneau that first called attention to the importance of the fact that the tombs at the west of the Holy Sepulchre were *Kokim* tombs, and from that he pointed out that the spot was in all probability an old Jewish place of sepulchre. The sketch given with this, shows that the Holy Sepulchre itself was also a *Kok*, for the doorway still retains the form of the opening of one of these Jewish tombs. As it is only lately that the distinction between *loculus* and *Kok* has been arrived at, its value as an indication of antiquity was not likely to have occurred since the time of Constantine, hence the unlikelihood that anyone at a later date has imitated the older form. I have read statements that the original rock of the tomb can still be seen in some part of the entrance; but these affirmations always appeared as if they required to be authenticated. Surely some one on the spot could do this. The *Kokim* tombs on the west of the Holy Sepulchre have no ledges in them; this would tend to the suggestion that the ledge in the Holy Sepulchre may have been excavated, and perhaps this was done to form it into an altar, for Mass was at one time celebrated upon it. Some have supposed that there is a trough, under the marble slab, which formed the real tomb.

IRRIGATION AND WATER SUPPLY IN PALESTINE.

By WILLIAM SIMPSON, M.R.A.S.

From what I have learned regarding the pits in the Vale of Siddim, the conclusion appears to be, that whatever they may have originally been, they were no part of a *Karaize*. From calling attention to them some important information has, as a result, been brought forward. Mr. Gray Hill's letter describes what is almost certain to be a *Karaize* at El Beda, near Palmyra, which is also described in his book, "With the Beduins," p. 159; and his account of the newly discovered source of water in Palmyra is also most probably an aqueduct of the same kind. In the Wady Byâr, south of Solomon's Pools, there is a rock-cut conduit which is several feet below the surface, and in its construction shafts were sunk at a number of places, thus realising the exact idea of a *Karaize*. These shafts are marked on the large map, and the description of them will be found in Sir Charles Wilson's paper on "The Water Supply of Jerusalem." It is seldom that these conduits were cut through the rock, but in my former communication I mentioned one at Hada, near Jellalabad. My attention has also been called to some very ancient conduits at Lake Copais in Bœotia. Operations have been going on there for some years back to drain the lake, but it would seem that attempts of the same kind had been made before the time of Alexander the Great. It is said that there are natural channels under

the hills to which the name *Katavôthra* had been given, but as these were not sufficient a number of *emissarii*, or tunnels, were made to carry off the water, one of which is nearly 4 miles long, and it has about 20 vertical shafts, which are now choked up, but they are supposed to be about 100 or 150 feet deep. Crates attempted to clear out these conduits in the time of Alexander the Great, so that they must be of considerable antiquity. Perhaps other explorers may be able to supply further details, but the data seems already sufficient to establish the point, that the *Karaise* as a means of water supply has existed from a remote period over the wide space from Afghanistan to the Mediterranean.

PITS IN THE SHITTIM PLAIN.

By REV. JAMES NEIL, M.A.

FOR Dr. Selah Merrill's information, let me say that the journey on which I discovered these pits was arranged by a representative of the German Consulate at Jerusalem and the German Chaplain, Pastor Weser, to investigate the claims of the Shapira pottery, and to carry on excavations for this purpose on the highlands of Moab. Pastor Weser begged me, as the English Chaplain at Jerusalem, to accompany the expedition to see fair play, because the English savans from the first regarded the Shapira pottery as spurious. I had, indeed—very fortunately, as I now know—to “go far out” of my “way.” The ferry in the neighbourhood of Jericho was broken, and we were compelled to ride some 18 miles up the west of the Jordan Valley to the ferry opposite *Tell Damieh*, and the same distance down the east of the Valley to Ali Diab's camp, then in the Plain of Shittim, near *Tell Keferein*. Later on we had to return the same way, so that I rode twice past these lines of pits. On my return I mentioned my discovery to Major Conder and Mr. Drake, and they told me that they had just found similar pits in the neighbourhood of *Ain Fusail*, but it now appears that they were rock-cut cisterns, or *beers*.

I did not take special and accurate measurements of the pits, nor have I said that I did. In my descriptions I have very naturally adopted those published by the “American Palestine Exploration Society's Fourth Statement,” January, 1877. Let me again refer the readers of the “Quarterly” to my careful treatment of the whole subject in an article on “The Site of the Cities of the Plain and the ‘Pits’ of the Vale of Siddim,” in the “Theological Monthly,” May, 1890 (Messrs. J. Nisbet and Co.), in which I have given Dr. Selah Merrill credit for his very interesting and valuable identification of the probable sites of the Cities of the Plain, now so remarkably confirmed by my discovery of the