

## LETTERS FROM HERR SCHICK.

## I.

## THE DISCOVERIES AT THE NICOPHORIEH.

*February 23rd, 1892.*

IN one of my last reports I promised to send you the result of measurements, &c., of the newly discovered tombs at "Awairiyeh." Mr. Lees (and others) wished to go with me, and, if possible, to make photographs of the sarcophagi, and as there was such rainy and cold weather, we did not go before last week. Mr. Lees now sends two copies of his photograph, representing the front side of the large sarcophagus, and two pieces of its broken lid, which were put on it by us for the purpose, and also the lid of the other, put upon it in order to show the mouldings, which are its only ornament,

At the same time I made a drawing of the ornaments, and wished to send a copy of it to you, but my paper failed. However, I send it on as it is. I also give plan, section, and end view of this larger sarcophagus and its lid, on scale  $\frac{1}{10}$  of the real size.

I sent my men once more there, with paper, &c., to make squeezes of the lid. They made two, and I send two copies of each.

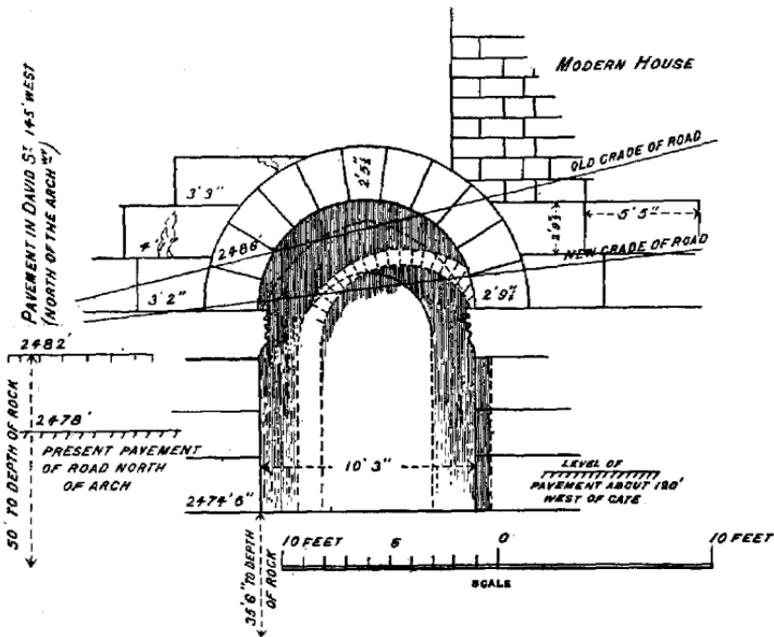
Also I send exact plans of the chambers and environs, one on scale  $\frac{1}{20}$ , and one smaller,  $\frac{1}{40}$ , to which a section is added. I consider the fine sarcophagus as that of Mariamne, the beloved wife of Herod the Great. The Russian professors and the Archimandrite Antonius here think this place was the mausoleum of the high priest Ananus, and refer to Josephus, Bell v, 12, 2, and just on this passage I ground my idea that it was the "Monument of Herod." The tomb of Ananus follows, soon after the Siloah Valley, and after it is mentioned "Pompey's Camp," which was on Abu Tor (the hill opposite Bishop Gobat's School), where the line bent northwards, and came to "Erebinthi," then to "Herod's Monuments," and then to the beginning of Titus' Camp, on the north-western corner of the town. These two sarcophagi are made with great skill, from native stone, or Jerusalem marble, such as is quarried near the Convent of the Cross. Herod himself is buried at Herodion—Frank Mountain—so I think this mausoleum here was for his wives.

II.

THE GATE GENNATH, &c.

April 16th, 1892.

1. *Gate Gennath* (so-called).—In the year 1867, Sir Charles Warren made some excavations on this interesting spot, inside the town, and on the northern brow of the so-called Zion Hill, on the supposition that this ancient gateway may have been in ancient times the Gate Gennath of Josephus (Wars, v, 4, 2). Of the said excavations there is a report in "The Recovery of Jerusalem," page 274, and also a front view, as far as it



THE GATE GENNATH (so called).

could be ascertained. Now, some months ago, the street became altered there, and the ground lowered, so that a large piece of the gate came into full view. As there seemed to me a few things notable, not mentioned in Sir Charles Warren's report, I examined the matter, and from what I found, together with what I know from other occasions, have furnished the enclosed drawing to which I give the following explanatory notes:—The pointed arch or the casing inside of the old doorposts, and shown in the drawing in pointed lines, has fallen out at its upper part. There is no more casing there, but an opening, and another arch of unhewn stones is seen further in (about 2 feet from the face inside) and not in the centre, but a good deal towards the south (as the drawing shows), going a little

behind the southern old doorpost—forming now a kind of sink, people casting there all sorts of fluid refuse.

Further, the voussoir stones have not all the same breadth, but the two resting on the posts are wider, the others, in accordance with their rising, becoming narrower. The key-stone has no projection, but what was more interesting to me is, that south of the arch there appeared large stones, and also on the northern side there were originally large ones, now broken in pieces by weathering. It is quite clear there was once here a strong wall, either of the town, or, more probably, of a special building.

Near the sill of this gate (2,474½ feet above the sea), Sir Charles Warren discovered "no pavement," but 120 feet west of it I found a pavement at a level of about 2,476 feet, the same level as the bottom of the two towers 80 feet more west or 200 from the arch (see Lewis's "Siege of Jerusalem," London, 1863, page 216).

2. *Inscription in the Muristan.*—A Greek inscription has been discovered in the Muristan, at the situation marked with a cross on the enclosed



INSCRIPTION FROM THE MURISTAN.

plan. It is on the wall of a pier, in one of the old rooms, on a smooth stone, only a few inches above the flooring. The pier is 6 feet 4 inches broad, of which the inscription stone (being 3 feet 4 inches long, and 1 foot 7 inches high) takes the greater half. It is not in the middle, but forms the corner, so that one receives the impression that the stone was used the second time, and is very likely a tombstone. But on account of its thickness, I think it was originally in an upright or standing position. The inscription is apparently Greek, greatly abbreviated, and with some of the letters joined together. The inscription is distinct, and the copy as good as I could make. If it be wished, I can make a squeeze. The stone is not marble, but ordinary Jerusalem stone.

3. *Christian Burial-grounds at Jerusalem.*—The Christian burial-grounds are on Mount Zion (so-called) outside the wall, and hitherto nearly all of them open places, without enclosing walls, the boundary of each being marked simply by a few stones, which sometimes caused unpleasant scenes, and as everyone, and even cattle, could walk over

them, the monuments were without any protection. The ground of the Latins being too small, and the Armenians having more space than they needed, an agreement was made by the parties, and boundary walls erected round about the portion belonging to each. As each wanted also a road for access, and the people of Neby Daüd wanted roads to their houses and to the Sheikh's tomb, it was agreed to make them, and under the oversight of the local authorities the boundary walls were quickly built. I send a plan of the new arrangement.

As these new walls were simply built on earth, nothing of importance was found in digging foundations.

4. The so-called "Skull Hill" being supposed by many to be the real Calvary, not only is a controversy going on respecting the matter, but English travellers go to the place, visiting and venerating it as the real Calvary. An English lady visited it and stayed one night in it, who could not understand that I had so little interest for it. Sunday, April 18th, Mr. Moody, the American revival preacher, had an assembly there on the top of the hill, and addressed a great number of people. I fear the Muhammadan authorities will forbid such things, their burial-ground being there. Major Conder's Holy Sepulchre becomes quite forgotten, and General Gordon's is now the favourite.

### III.

#### DISCOVERY IN SOLOMON'S STABLES, &c.

*March 28th, 1892.*

1. The Dominican Brethren have made some discoveries at their ground, west of the "Skull Hill," of which I enclose a drawing, with the necessary notes and explanation. The drawing is simply a plan; I have not made a section, fearing it would, for one who has not seen the place, only confuse.

2. The clearings and levellings in the so-called "Solomon's Stables" are now ended. All the joints of the masonry have been pointed, so the whole now looks like new. From the place in the south-eastern corner, generally called the "Cradle of Christ," a flight of broad steps now leads down to the general level, which is in this part somewhat higher than before. The holes in the piers were formerly about three feet from the ground; now they are only a few inches, and some have disappeared under the ground.

At the south wall, between the "Cradle of Christ" and the "Single gate," a heap of rubbish lying there was removed, and by this some interesting stones came to light, about sixty-five feet west of the south-east corner, measured outside. One is about 7 feet long, and fully 3 feet high, having its surface covered with a rich decoration of leaves, scrolls, &c., carved in relief. It looks as if it was the side of a sarcophagus. I thought first it might be the lintel of a door, but, observing that there

is a similar but shorter stone just over it, with ornaments of another kind, it was clear to me that these stones are not *in situ*, but have been brought from another place, and used here simply as building stones. I had not time to make a copy of the ornaments, and, if I had, it might have come out imperfect. It would be much better to take a photograph.

3. The work at the "Golden Gate" is nearly finished; the building, with its two new supports, now stands quite free on three sides, with a space of twelve feet between it and the new enclosing walls, built to keep up the rubbish. On the western side a flight of wide steps leads from the upper level down to the foot of the building. It is less agreeable to the eye than formerly, looking confined and enclosed, and standing in a pit. The space behind the enclosing walls has been filled up with earth, and raised to the general level of the ground.

4. The heavy rains have destroyed a good deal of the new railway, and also one of the bridges. In the neighbourhood of Jerusalem nothing is done yet. The ground for the station at Jerusalem has been bought. It is to be near the German colony, west of the "hill of evil counsel," and close to the Bethlehem road.

As the cholera several months ago ceased at Damascus and elsewhere, the quarantine has been removed, and business is going on again, and pilgrims and travellers coming. We have had a good deal of rain, so that a prosperous harvest is hoped for. But in the Jordan Valley are locusts, and the Government has required a good many people (from every village twenty or more men) to go down and destroy them before they are able to fly. Petroleum was sent down, to pour on them when swept into heaps, to burn them.

Count Ziethen-Schwerin, of Germany, has been here, in reference to the German institutions, and especially the "Muristan" and the rebuilding of the old church there. The Count is a member of the Council in Berlin, appointed by the Emperor for these affairs—so very likely the work of building will begin in a few months.

A large hotel has been built by the Armenian Convent, and is already open. It is situated on the Jaffa road. Just opposite the sharp turning of the town wall, and on the southern side of the Jaffa road, where the ascent is greatest, a *new road* has been made, which is a continuation in a straight line of the Jaffa road starting from Jaffa gate. This prolongation will meet the Jaffa road again, a little west of the large gate in the Russian wall. It will be level, not going up and down again as the present road in this place does.

Jewish houses are now being built along the Jaffa road as far west as the third watch-tower. Others are designed still further out, at the place where the road to Deir Yesin and Ain Karim branches off. A large building is to be erected as an institution or boarding house for fifty old Jews, single men, having no one to provide for them. I am just now about to make the plan for the building. So you see, that if in future things go on as in the few last years, the City of Jerusalem will be extended to the brow of the large valley of Lifta and Kolonia, and

towards the south half way to Mar Elias, where a settlement for one hundred families will be made, for which I have already made the plan, and permission has come from Constantinople.

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IV.

DISCOVERY OF MOSAIC PAVEMENT NEAR THE (SO-CALLED) CHURCH OF  
ST. STEPHEN.

March 29th, 1892.

The Dominican Brethren have built a new school on their ground, situated at the western foot of the Jeremiah grotto hill, south and west of the traces of the ancient Church of St. Stephen (see *Quarterly Statement*, 1891, page 211), just in the north-eastern corner of the piece of ground with many trees. In digging the foundation for this new building, they had to clear the place to some degree, by which they found a *mosaic pavement*, very well preserved, and some other things of interest. The things are preserved and a shed built over them. It is east of the new building, south of the word "Cistern," on the map which is found at the page quoted in the said *Quarterly Statement*.

If one goes southward from the traces of St. Stephen's Church he comes to a few steps, situated in a former wall, and leading about 2 feet 6 inches downwards to a level pavement or kind of court. This pavement consists for the greater part of rock, the rest of flag stones. In this pavement, or flooring of the court, are three openings or holes made into the rock. In the first are steps cut in the rock, leading about eleven feet downwards to a chamber, also cut in the rock, which has two large graves, of Christian origin, 6 feet long, 1 foot 9 inches wide, and more than 2 feet deep.

The northern one is regular in every direction, the southern not so, and situated a little higher. Towards the passage *between* them, the sides are formed of large stone slabs, put upright into grooves cut in the rock. The opening, which exists in the roof of the chamber, over the southern tomb, did not exist originally, but has been broken in later by some accident. The third hole is near the south end of the court, of an irregular shape, narrowing downwards and leading to a rock cave, its flooring twelve feet under the level of the court; it was apparently to some extent natural, and afterwards enlarged and more rounded out. The opening was originally simply a cleft in the rock, and was then rounded to a hole, through which one can go down, first to a projecting part of the rock, or kind of shoulder, and from it down into the cave. Under the so-called "shoulder," and a little south, is a projection resembling a small *altar*, opposite which, on the wall near the ground, a *cross* is found chiselled into the rock. At the first look one thinks this cave, with its hole, to have been a cistern. But no cementing is found, and other indications give the idea that it was once the lodge of an

Eremita. East of it, and higher than the bottom of the cave, is a chamber  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet long by nearly 4 feet wide and about 6 feet high, cut in the rock. The top of its roof is 3 feet higher than the level of the court. Five steps lead down into it, of which the lowest has a semi-circular form. The monks think it was a "bone house," as there were many human bones found in it. The wall forming the court runs in a slanting direction over it, as the plan shows.

There is in the north-eastern corner of the court another short flight of steps leading to a similar but somewhat larger chamber, of which the walls are rock, but the roofing is arched, and at the highest point 7 feet



MOSAIC PAVEMENT.

high. But the most interesting part is the mosaic pavement mentioned above. A kind of passage leads from the court between the holes in the flooring westward to another small court, surrounded by a low wall of a regular shape, 18 feet long and 11 feet wide. The flooring round about is of flag stones, and in the centre is a piece of fine *mosaic* formed of small cubical stones of various colours. The mosaic is 14 feet 6 inches long and 7 feet 3 inches wide. It has a framework formed of two rows of *black*, then two rows of *white*, one row of *red*, and one row of *black*

cubes. Inside this frame, and in a diagonal direction, are straight lines, of one black, one white, and one red stone forming quadrangular spaces, whose sides are about 8 inches long, not with regular angles but so that they are longer than wide. In the middle of each space is a kind of rosette or star. And in the middle of the whole is a circular band of black, red, and white stones, with four rosettes at equal distances. Inside this round band is an animal, some thinking it to represent a gazelle, on account of its long feet, others call it a lamb on account of its full body and the full long tail. I myself think it represents a lamb. It certainly had an allegorical meaning, as well as the two branches of some plant joined to it, as the drawing shows. I have the impression that this place was once a Christian chapel.

The monks have reported on these things to Paris, and their report was published in the *Revue Biblique*, No. 9, 1892.

The Superior was kind enough to give me a photograph of this pavement, which I enclose. It is certainly more exact than my drawing, but I made the latter in order to give the colours, and the situation, as it is connected with the other things described.

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## NOTES FROM TELL EL HESY.

By F. J. BLISS, B.A.

May, 1892.

THE month of siroccos is on us, and Friday is our unlucky day. May is a windy month, but the west and south winds do us but little harm, for the high walls formed by the part of the Tell at south and west still left standing protect the place of the excavations. However, when the north and east winds blow the interruption to work is sometimes serious. Imagine great slopes of lately-thrown earth to north and east, add to this the dust and earth thrown by fifty or sixty girls in the teeth of a fierce gale, and then gather some idea of the blinding dust which envelops the whole field of excavation when the sirocco is at its worst. Twice we have had to suspend work for some hours, following the double dictates of prudence and humanity. Noon is a crucial hour when the east wind usually shifts to the south. On these hot days the jar is on its way constantly to and from the stream, and we have to follow a military discipline of turns in watching the multitude, or the girls would fall upon the jar with much fighting.

Readers of Mr. Petrie's "Tell el Hesy" will remember his reference to the bed of ashes over five feet thick occurring in the stratification of the Tell. The lack of results this season is due to the fact that we have had to remove this awful, unprofitable layer in order to get at the Amorite town below. I cannot picture the tediousness of the job we have had in removing almost 100,000 cubic feet of this wretched stuff. Our finds are few, but include a small statue of a man in bronze, a few inches high, and a tiny bronze goat with two kids sucking. A full list of all finds