

uncertainty attaching to the different sites here, and emphasized the spiritual character of Christianity. In the evening the sermon was by the Bishop of North Dakota, who had made a most stormy landing at Jaffa that morning.

Monday dawned with the fine weather which had become proverbial with the pilgrims. A small section left by land for Damascus, and the rest returned to Jaffa to embark that night. At Athens they are to hear lectures from Professor Mahaffy, who also spoke to them in Cairo. The lecturer at Rome was Archdeacon Farrar.

JERUSALEM, *March 7th*, 1894.

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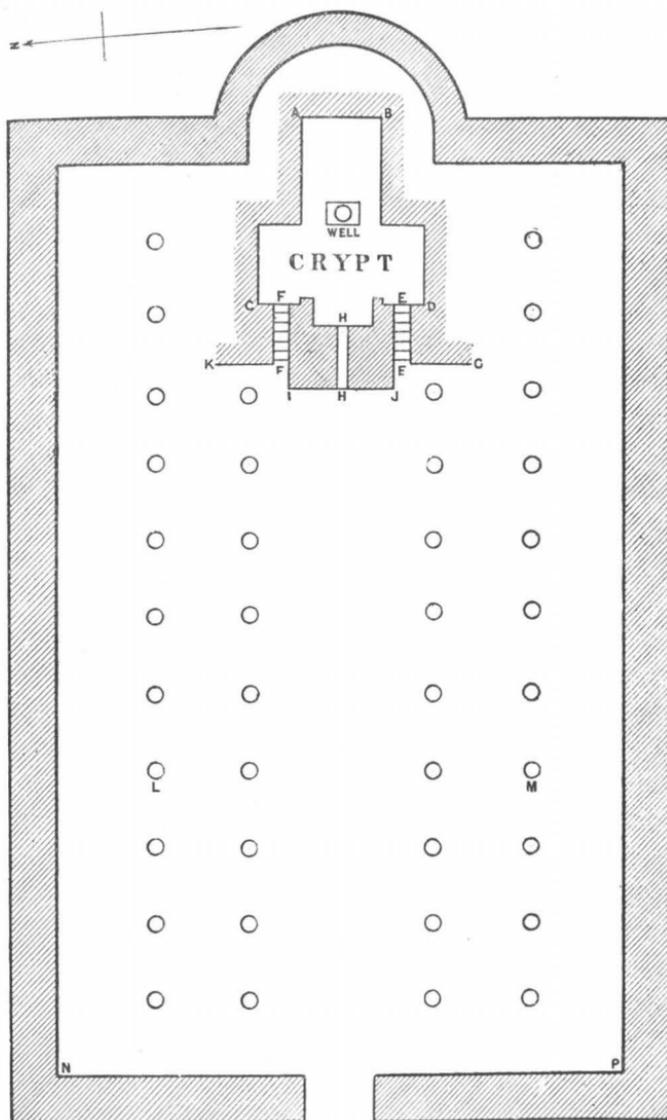
## THE CHURCH AT JACOB'S WELL.

By F. J. BLISS, M.A.

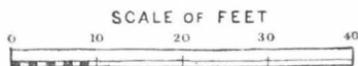
IN December last I travelled by land from Jerusalem to Haifa, *via* Nâblus. The thorough work of the survey of Western Palestine has left very little to be done above ground, and the principal way to help the Fund now is to be on the alert to watch operations in places that are being dug up. One of the most interesting places in Palestine, because one of the least disputed, is Jacob's Well. It is a link between the histories of the Old and the New Testaments. It is the spot where the universality of the Christian religion was proclaimed in definite terms. The site has been greatly neglected, and I am glad to announce (what has been known to recent travellers) that at last proper care is being taken of the place.

For some years the property about the spot has been in the hands of the Greek Monastery, and has been enclosed by a wall. Visitors of former years will remember that to see the well they were obliged to descend by a hole at the surface of the ground into a small vault, choked with *debris*, but apparently some 20 feet by 10 feet. The discovery of the well-stone itself is described in the *Statement* for 1881, p. 212. The present Abbot is a Greek of genuine archæological tastes and enthusiasm. During the past year he has done some excavating with valuable results, which I shall now describe.

He began by clearing out the vault entirely, showing it to be a perfectly preserved cruciform crypt (*see* A, B, C, D on plan). The eastern arm is 13 feet by 9 feet 6 inches, but the western arm is only 3 feet 6 inches deep. The east and west axis of the crypt is 25 feet 6 inches, and the north and south axis 20 feet. At the point E he found a doorway with a stair, leading up out of the crypt to a pavement some 6 feet above the floor of the crypt, but several feet lower than the top of its vault. The walls between which the stairway passes are plastered. At F he found a similar door, but he has not yet cleared away the rubbish under which corresponding steps are doubtless hidden. At the point H



RESTORATION OF  
CHURCH OVER JACOB'S WELL



in the western wall of the crypt, about 6 feet above the floor, is an opening of a passage, which leads out on to the pavement. A section of the passage measures somewhat under 2 feet square. The well is at the western end of the eastern arm. The walls are plastered, and on the floor, near the well, are signs of a mosaic pavement. The crypt is not lighted except by the passage just mentioned. The Abbot has placed an altar at the eastern end. He has also fitted a wooden door at the doorway at *e*, so that the crypt is now approached by ten steps.

The pavement (stone-flagging) at the top of the stairway *EE* has not been traced further than the point *II*, but it may be assumed to occupy the place around the crypt. It is, as I have said, several feet lower than the top of the vault, hence the walls *EG*, *IHI*, and the inferred wall *KF*, will be seen to rise from it. The wall *EG* has not been traced far enough for us to tell whether it continued southwards, or took a bend to the east.

So much for the crypt and its immediate surroundings, but the Abbot has done further work in excavating. Eighty-one feet west from the westward opening of the passage *HH*, he has cleared away the rubbish long the upper part of the inside of a thick wall (*NP*), exactly parallel to the wall *IJ*, and hence also to the north and south axis of the crypt. As proved by comparison with other places, at least 10 feet of this wall must lie buried under the rubbish. It is 66 feet long from *N* to *P*, and its central point (in the middle of the doorway) falls in a continuation of the line *HH*; hence it is exactly opposite the well, at *N* and at *P* the wall turns to the east, and was traced for some 50 or 60 feet only. The wall, as seen from the inside, is built of roughly hewn stones, with small chippings let in between the joints, which, however, are well plastered over. It is difficult to determine the real thickness, as a rude modern wall has been built upon it and outside of it, making the entire present breadth over 12 feet. Accordingly, I have not seen the outside face.

At the point *M*, 35 feet from the west wall and 11 feet from the south wall, there sticks quite perpendicularly out of the rubbish a broken column of syenite granite. At the point *L*, 35 feet from the western wall and 11 feet from the north wall, there is a similar column (measuring 6 feet round), evidently *in situ*. Leaning against it there is another column, which I have not drawn; the first of these adjoining columns is slightly shaved off at the point of contact. The Abbot cleared the rubbish from about these two columns, and tells me that the place where they rest on the ground was found to be on a level with the pavement at the top of the stairway from the crypt. I was very sorry not to visit the spot with the Abbot, but he was away, returning only at night, when I saw him at the Monastery, but as his Arabic is not perfect I could not get out of him all I wished, although he was most cordial in furnishing information. However, he was clear on this point of levels, which is important in deciding the identity of the work about the crypt with the other discoveries. The rubbish near the columns was 12 or 15 feet deep, at the bottom he found ashes as from the falling of a roof.

On the basis of the facts above presented, I have ventured to restore

the church as in the plan. The door shown in the west wall was found in the ruin ; the width of the wall I assume to be about 5 feet ; the north and south walls (rising now only a foot or two above the rubbish and extending only 50 or 60 feet east) I continue to points directly north and south of the end of the crypt ; the east wall I draw with an apse as a termination of the nave—as I remember the ground above the east end of the vault, it falls away in a sort of rounded hillock, suggesting a buried apse ; the altar, usually just west of the apse, would thus come just above the well, or the sacred spot of the church. I do not venture to draw transepts with apses, as there is no indication of them.

I draw double aisles for the following reason :—The north and south axis of the church is 66 feet ; the column *m* is 11 feet from the south wall and the column *l* 11 feet from the north wall, leaving 44 feet between the two columns, obviously too great a distance for the span of the arch of the nave. I thus assume another column 11 feet to the south of *l*, and one the same distance to the north of *m*, giving 22 feet as the span of the nave. We thus have four rows of columns. As *l* and *m* are each 35 feet from the west wall, I divide the space by four, giving spans of about 9 feet. This division also brings columns in a line with *III*.

As the pavement found at the top of the stairway *EE* is several feet below the top of the vault, the choir of the church must have been necessarily elevated above the nave. Whether this elevation extended across the width of the church depends on the unknown continuation of the wall *EG*, and of the inferred wall *KF*. If *EG* extended to the south wall of the church, then the choir would have been ascended by steps from the west ; if *EG* turned and joined the east wall, then the choir steps would have ascended from the south. The pillar found leaning against *l* I have not indicated in the plan, as it may have been placed in some later time. It is possible, however, that all the columns were in pairs.

This restoration has been attempted on the assumption that the remains about the vault belonged to the same construction as the west wall with the columns *l* and *m*. That the vault was merely the crypt of some superimposed edifice is made probable by the steps leading up to the pavement, and it is natural to assume that the west wall with the columns belong to that edifice, as they follow exactly the orientation of the crypt. The correctness of my plan could be tested by a few days' excavation in search for answers to the following questions : (1) Can traces of the pavement about the crypt be found as far as the western wall ? (2) Are the bases of the columns *l* and *m* actually on a level with the pavement ? (3) Are other columns to be found under the rubbish at any of the places indicated ? (4) What is the further direction of the wall *EG* ? (5) May traces of an eastern apse be found ? (6) Were there transept apses as in the Church of St. Mary's at Bethlehem ? (7) What is the breadth of the western wall ? (8) Has it at any point a facing of well cut stone ? This last question is important. The stone of the walls *HJ* and *EG* is well dressed, and it is hard to

reconcile with it the rough western wall. But this wall was very thick : I have drawn it at 5 feet, but it may have been 8, or even 10. The inside of the wall was plastered, hence a smoothly dressed surface was not of importance there. We would, however, expect a well-dressed outer facing, and such an one may exist under the rough wall built on the ancient one.

The question arises : who built this church? The only indications of date lie in the dressing that resembles crusading work noticed by Major Conder on the well-stone, which I also recognised on the newly-excavated stone work outside the crypt, with the pointed arches of the vault which support the same date. We know that a church existed here before 383. In 700 Arculf, Bishop of Gaul, describes a cruciform church with a well in the centre of the cross. This was seen by St. Willibald in 722. In 1322 Sir John Maundeville finds a church here beaten down.

The following theory I would advance somewhat tentatively. At or after the time of Constantine a large basilica, as figured in my plan, was built here with a cruciform crypt over the well. This church was destroyed by Omar, but the crypt preserved. It was this crypt that was seen by Arculf. In his plan (*see Statement* for 1877, p. 73) the arms of his cross are in different proportion to each other from those in the present crypt, but we must remember that Arculf was not a very critical observer. More serious is the objection that in his plan the well comes at the intersection of the arms of the cross, whereas in the present crypt, while it is in the centre of the crypt, it is at the end of the eastern arm. It may be that the crypt was rebuilt by the first Crusaders (whose stone cutting seems recognisable), and that the form of the cross was altered, while the general idea was preserved. While rebuilding the crypt they may have not attempted to restore the surrounding church. It may be that Jaladin made breaches in this repaired vault, so that Sir John Maundeville in 1322, seeing the damaged crypt and the ruined church, would naturally write of Jacob's Well as having a "church beaten down" around it.

We may well congratulate ourselves upon the fact that the crypt, whoever may have built it, has now not only been cleared out, but is carefully guarded. The custodian, under the Abbot, is an obliging Moslem, called Daúd, living in the village of Belata, seven minutes' off. The breaches in the vault have been repaired, and the approach is now by steps, at first from the present level of the ground by steps constructed by the Abbot, and then by the ancient excavated stairway. The Abbot has placed an altar in the vault with a double purpose : first, out of reverence for the sacred spot ; and second, to secure it against molestation, as all sects respect a place consecrated by an altar. It was interesting to find on my visit to the Abbot after my measurements had been made at the well, that he also had seen a likeness between the ruined church and the basilica of St. Mary at Bethlehem.

While at Náblius I was pleasantly received by the Samaritan High Priest, a man in middle life. As males so preponderate in this small

community, the matter of finding wives continues to be one of great difficulty. The High Priest's son, however, though only 17, has been married some time. A marriage was recently arranged between a young Samaritan and a rich Joppa Jewess, but it fell through, the difficulty, I understand, being the question as to who should perform the ceremony.

At Sebastieh (Samaria) I found that extensive repairs were going on in the mosque at the east end of the Church of St. John. I noticed an interesting stone fragment, perhaps recently turned up: a bust of a man in coat of mail, arms raised to level of head, supporting three small columns, one in each hand and one on his head. The summit of the hill of Samaria is crowned by a tell. The *tell-slope* is unmistakable; the top fairly flat coming to a distinct edge, and dropping at a sudden angle. At the west and north I should estimate the accumulation at about 40 feet. The flat top continues to the east where a terrace occurs, like a platform on the tell, indicating the ruin of some later building that did not cover as much ground as the earlier ruins.

Between Jenin and Haifa we passed the two great tells of Ta'anuk and Mutesellim, near Lejjûn. The latter is somewhat circular in shape, and its north and south axis at the summit measures about 1,000 feet. The accumulation at its southern end is 50 feet, while at the northern end over 80 feet. As I paced up and down this magnificent site, commanding such a wide outlook over the plain of Esdraelon, and remembered a similar outlook from the smaller Tell el Hesy, which yielded up its story to us, I confess I felt a burning desire, which returns upon me as I write, to put the spade into the larger tell also, and see if it would not settle the much discussed site of Megiddo. Whatever Mutesellim may represent, the site was one of the most important in the whole country. The pottery on the summit is not very distinctive, but the absence from it of the Roman ware, so prevalent in the fields between the tell and Lejjûn, suggests that the earlier occupations were at the tell and the later near the mills. The tell at Ta'anuk is smaller than that of Mutesellim, but very similar in appearance. They are less than 5 miles apart, which is suggestive when we remember how often Taanach and Megiddo are mentioned in lists, the one after the other, as well as the phrase "Taanach by the waters of Megiddo."

BEYROUT, SYRIA, *February 7th, 1894.*

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## A LEBANON CLIFF CASTLE.

By F. J. BLISS, M.A.

THE River Auwaly flowing westwards from the Lebanon enters the sea about two miles north of Sidon. Some eight miles from its mouth, at Merj Bisry where the narrow bed widens into a small fertile plain, it is joined by the river of Jezzîn coming down from the south. The