

man who can creep between the wall and the columns will have remission of sins." (Bohn's "Early Travels in Palestine," p. 19.)¹ In the fifteenth century these pillars were still standing and "smooth," and it was believed that if any one was able to embrace them, so that the ends of the fingers (or only the middle fingers) could touch, it was a proof that he was a good man. They were still standing in Mejer Ed Din's time, and I should think the pillar in the centre of the Greek altar, described above under heading A, might be one of them, but removed and brought to this place, as it is now a good distance from the wall.

(J.)—*The Cisterns.*

The two cisterns in the present court are not deep nor cut in rock, but *built* at the time when the level of the floor of the church was made higher by the Crusaders. But their lower part may be still older; for as the rotunda had no roof the rain water had to be led into some reservoir. Other cisterns I have not found in the ruins, or in the village, except one in the court of the mosque, made from an old Crusaders' vault when the mosque was built. There is a good number of other cisterns outside round the village and the other buildings, even near the road crossing the mount south of the village, chapel, and place of Pelagia. They are all deep and cut in the rock.

Conclusion.

I could have said much more on all these matters, but was careful not to become too long; and yet the reader has a great task before him, for which I beg excuse, and wish the reader may enjoy it, as much as I have enjoyed writing down these lines and making the plans.

KERAK IN 1896.

By REV. THEODORE E. DOWLING.

THERE is no necessity to attempt to write the history of Kerak, the ancient capital of Moab, down to the siege of Saladin, A.D. 1188. Canon Tristram has told the story in "The Land of Moab."² But the Old Testament references may be mentioned:—

Kir-Haraseth (Isaiah xvi, 7);
 Kir-Hareseth (2 Kings iii, 25, R.V.);
 Kir-Hareseth (Isaiah xvi, 11);
 Kir-Heres (Jeremiah xlviii, 31, 36); and
 Kir of Moab (Isaiah xv, 1);

¹ "Hodæporicon of St. Willibald," p. 22, Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society.

² Chapters v, vi.

are the six Scriptural allusions to Kerak, the fortified town to the east of the southern end of the "Salt Sea."¹

Jehoram, son of Ahab, King of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, and the King of Edom, invaded the kingdom of Moab, under Mesha, from the south, destroyed all its cities, sparing only Kir-Haraseth, *circa* 872 B.C. (2 Kings iii, 25; and the Moabite Stone.)

Being detained eleven days in Kerak last May during the absence of the Mutasarif, whilst waiting for permission to visit Petra, opportunities occurred for observing the improved state of things. Page 180 in Murray's "Handbook for Travellers in Syria and Palestine, 1892," is now out of date, owing to the changes caused by the Turkish occupation; and Bædeker's "Palestine and Syria," 1894, pp. 191-193, on el-Kerak, also requires revision.

I propose, therefore, to limit my remarks—

- (1) To the period immediately preceding 1893; and
- (2) To the present Turkish rule in 1896.

The large, partially-ruined castle, built about A.D. 1131, on ancient Moabite foundations of rough flint, at the south end of the city, was only used in Mujely² times by thieves for hiding stolen cattle and goods. The Kerâki used to find saltpetre there in large quantities from a particular kind of stone in the ruins, with which they manufactured their gunpowder.

The ignorance of the Kerâki is illustrated by their mode of reckoning time. Years and months were unfamiliar terms. If asked when such and such an event took place, they would reply, "when" or "before," or "just after, so and so (perhaps one of their Sheikhs) died, or was killed"; or perhaps, "in the year of famine"; or may be, "when Ibrahim Pasha³ came here." More recent events, especially in cases of illness, were dated from "last year's ploughing," or "the barley" or "wheat harvest."

The Kerâki women are unveiled, and I was surprised to find less opthalmia in Moab than is usual in the villages of Judæa, flies, sand, and dust being less prevalent.

¹ "Names and Places in the Old and New Testament and Apocrypha," 2nd edition, p. 111. Kerak (*Khel Kerak*) the ancient Tarichæe, on the south-west side of the Sea of Galilee is, of course, distinct from Kerak of Moab.

² Before the Mujely conquest of Kerak, Moab was under the rule of a tribe (still found in Kerak) called the Sarateh; and again, before their time, the tribe of El-'Ahmer was dominant. These El-'Ahmer only lived in tents, and ruled over many neighbouring tribes, including the Beni Sokhr, as well as the Kerâki. They were cunning and cruel, and thought little of running a spear or sword into a man or woman through sheer wantonness.

³ Ibrahim Pasha visited Moab in A.D. 1844 to subdue the lawless Bedouin. After occupying the castle (not the town) his troops were starved out, many of them being slaughtered outside. "The Land of Moab," pp. 77, 78.

In Jerusalem it is noticeable how few tourist dragomans have ever visited Kerak. [Messrs. Jamal and Domian are exceptions.] This is not, however, altogether surprising. The Mujély tribe were unreasonable in their treatment of Messrs. Irby and Mangies in 1817, De Saulcy in 1851, Canon Tristram in 1872, and Mr. and Mrs. Gray Hill in 1893.

But the road is open to Kerak from Jerusalem, and the Hebron merchants who used in old times to travel along the familiar track, south of the Dead Sea, now invariably cross the new wooden bridge at the ford of the Jordan, passing through Mâdeba, and returning by the same route.

On a clear day Jerusalem, and the Russian tower on the Mount of Olives, can be seen from Kerak.

Kerak is apparently about 700 feet higher than Jerusalem, and 3,400 feet higher than the Mediterranean Sea. In October, 1895, the Rev. C. T. Wilson found that the readings of his barometer during four days at Kerak gave 700 feet as the mean height of the C.M.S. Mission House at Kerak above the C.M.S. Mission House in Jerusalem. This calculation exactly tallies with observations made with the same barometer in November, 1894. The road to the north of the town, at the point where the ridge dividing the Wady Kerak from the long slope down to Rabaá is crossed, is about 200 feet higher than the town end is, according to Mr. Wilson's aneroid, and exactly the same height as the top of Jebel Shihân. As confirmation of the correctness of these readings it may be mentioned that this aneroid has on four separate occasions given the same measurements as in Bædeker's "Palestine and Syria" (1894), p. 191, for the depth of the Mójib, viz. :—2,000 feet from the edge of the plateau on the north, and 2,200 feet on the south.

His Excellency Hussein Helmy Bey Effendi (formerly Turkish Secretary at Damascus) is the Mutasarif. He is a strict and devout Mohammedan. On no consideration will he receive any presents. He also discourages travellers from giving backshêsh to the soldiers he sends for their protection between Kerak and Wâdy Musa. Considering his difficulties he has already accomplished much. The disarming of the Kerâki; the regulation of the coinage, weights and measures; the establishment of a weekly post to Jerusalem, Damascus, and Maân (east of Petra); the opening of a military hospital; the importation of a Jewish doctor; the continuous construction of extensive Government buildings; and the compulsory planting of fruit trees at Mâdeba,¹ all bespeak energy and determination.

The Mutasarif is anxious for telegraphic communication with Es-Salt, and for a steamer on the Dead Sea, running from Erîha (Jericho) to the nearest point for Kerak, about 30 miles. Kerak is (say) 10 miles from the mouth of the Wâdy Kerak, near the Shawârineh Camp.

There is a population of about 10,000, of whom 2,000 are Orthodox

¹ 5,000 grape vines, as well as mulberries and vegetables, have been planted this spring in Mâdeba. A feeling of security encourages this action.

Christians, including two Christian and four Keráki encampments in the district.

The Military Governor has 1,200 Turkish troops, consisting of three regiments of 400 men. They inhabit the castle, the numerous underground passages of which, as they are gradually cleared from the *débris* of centuries, soon become occupied by men and horses. All the Turkish soldiers are from the western side of the Jordan, three years' service being required of them. There are also 200 Circassian mounted soldiers, mostly from Ammán (Rabbath of the Ammonites) and Jerash (Gerasa); and splendid horsemen they are! Kerak (unlike Jerusalem) has no military band, but the familiar bugles are seldom silent.

A new mosque (the only one) has been lately built. The Mufti is a kindly-disposed and intelligent man. He was educated at Hebron and the University of Cairo (El Azhar).

The Orthodox Christians worship in the Church of St. George, built and endowed in 1849 by the late generous Metropolitan of Petra, out of his private means.¹ It will shortly be enlarged and improved. The Archimandrite Sopronius, in charge, is a Greek, and has lately been sent from the Convent of St. Constantine, Jerusalem. He represents the Patriarch. Sâleh is the Arab parish priest (married), and has the cure of souls. There seems to have been among Greek and Latin ecclesiastics a confusion between Petra and Kerak, and Burchard of Mount Zion, the German Dominican, A.D. 1280, mistook Shôbek (Montreal) for Kerak.

Robinson, in his "Biblical Researches in Palestine," vol. ii, p. 577, refers to Kerak as being sometimes held to be a "second Petra." There is a curious confusion in "The Book of the Wanderings of Brother Felix Fabri" (*circa* A.D. 1480-1483), vol. ii, Part I, p. 184. "This noble castle is called by the Latins Petra of the Wilderness, by the Saracens Krach, and by the Greeks Schabat. Now, when we had gazed our fill thereon, we kneeled towards the place, praising GOD, Who from Petra in the Wilderness sent to us through Ruth CHRIST the LORD of the World, and we prayed to GOD that this Castle might come into the hands of the Christians, and that Jerusalem might not any longer be a captive."

The titular Greek Bishop of Kerak is entitled "*Metropolitan of Petra, Most Honourable Exarch of Third Palestine and Second Arabia.*" The present occupant is Nicephôrus, an aged man, who has never visited Kir of Moab. There are 120 boys and 60 girls in the Orthodox Church Schools, and the schoolmaster speaks a little English. Daniel, a Cypriote, is the titular Archbishop of Kiriakopolis (Madeba); Damian, from Samos—in charge of Bethlehem—is Archbishop of Philadelphia (Ammân); and Epiphanius, a Cypriote, is the learned Archbishop of the Jordan.

The Latins have also their titular Archbishop of "Petra." Mgr. Duval, a French Dominican, lately appointed Apostolic Delegate—represents the Pope at Beîrût with this title. In this portion of the country there

¹ Meletius also gathered together the scattered congregation which had been driven from Kerak by Ibrahim Pasha.

are five Latin mission stations, under the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, which are now being worked mainly by native priests.¹ This mission was founded in 1874.

In 1886, Mohammed-el-Mujêly, the Moab Sheikh, gave a written permission for English mission work to be undertaken in Kerak. Mr. Lethaby, first of all, bravely faced the difficulties and hardships of the place, and in 1894 the Church Missionary Society became responsible for this mission in connection with Es-Salt.

At present there are only three Jews in Kerak. Previous to 1893 there were none. The Mutasarif has lately been asked to allow a Jewish colony to be established at el-Lejjûn (five hours east), but this request was not granted. The city is well supplied with water. There is no hotel, and up to this date the few European visitors have been accommodated at the Greek and Latin and C.M.S. mission houses. As several residents in Jerusalem, and tourists, are contemplating the tour through Moab and Edom, the opening of hotels at Mâdeba and Kerak would probably be remunerative. The Greek shopkeepers are hospitable, and the Damascus merchants, who visit Kerak twice a year, have no reason to complain of their reception.

The objects of interest include a Roman bath, with mosaic pavement; two ancient churches, one dedicated to St. George, which is venerated by Greeks and Moslems; the other has on the outside a long Arabic inscription which was translated in March, 1895, by Dr. F. J. Bliss.² The Mutasarif is willing to give visitors permission to visit the castle with its crypt chapel, and it is necessary to make all local arrangements for visiting Petra through him, as soldiers are required. In order that there may be no disappointment about proceeding south to Wâdy Musa, an order from Constantinople, or at least a letter from the British or American consuls in Jerusalem, is recommended.

Murray's "Handbook for Travellers in Syria and Palestine" (1892) assigns four days for the Itinerary from Kerak to Petra. The journey is now accomplished, with Circassian soldiers, in two and a half days:—

<i>First Day.</i>					
Miles.				H.	M.
20	Wâdy el Ahsa ..	..	..	5	0
20	Tâfileh ..	..	..	6	0
<i>Second Day.</i>					
33	Shôbek ..	..	..	9	15
<i>Third Day.</i>					
20	Eljy-Wâdy Musa ..	..	..	5	0
93				25	15

¹ Es-Salt; Fheis (about two hours south-east of Salt); Rummanêh, north-east of Salt; Mâdeba; Kerak.

² *Quarterly Statement*, July, 1895, p. 220.

This Schedule includes rest for lunch on the first and second days only.

I was disappointed at not being able to procure several ancient coins in Moab. As a matter of fact, only one coin was forthcoming in Moab, and another in Edom,¹ during a tour of 25 days. The Arab school-master of the Greek School, and his boys, were actively interested, but the specimens brought to me generally bore Arab inscriptions. The only coin of any interest was the well-known State umbrella, and three ears of barley, springing from one stalk, year 6 (A.D. 43), of Herod Agrippa I. The natives now dispose of coins to the Turkish soldiers, who sell them to Jews in Damascus and Jerusalem. They eventually find markets in Hamburg and the United States.

About one hour's ride from Kerak (in Wady el-Yabis) are interesting hermit cells, which, in 1884, were reoccupied by four Orthodox "Religious." One came from Jerusalem, two from Mar Saba, and one from the Convent of St. George, Wady el Kelt (Brook Cherith).

All have been driven back again to their parent convents, owing to the robberies and cruelties of the Kerakî. One of their number, the Caloyer Onuphrios, is now an occupant of the Convent of St. Constantine, Jerusalem.

The military authorities at the castle are digging bravely at excavations, but apparently with no working plans. May we not hope that the Palestine Exploration Fund will obtain a Firman from Constantinople for a thorough investigation of the Castles of Kerak and Shôbek, and the Rock City of Edom?

JERUSALEM, *July 13th, 1896.*

TWO ROMAN MILESTONES AT WADY MÔJIB (RIVER ARNON).

By Rev. THEODORE E. DOWLING.

WHEN in Kerak last May I was told that the Mutasarif had lately ordered soldiers to turn over the prostrate milestones in the southern valley of the Môjib, when they were repairing the precipitous descent. And I was also informed that the inscriptions had not been copied. So I went prepared with a note-book. After consulting a friend in Jerusalem about the rendering of obscure words and letters, I heard that Père Germer Durand, of Notre Dame de France, had made a walking tour last Easter-tide with several students of the Augustinian Convent (Jerusalem), and between them had succeeded in turning over three stones in the valley, copying the inscriptions, and taking a squeeze

¹ Copper Petra coin of Hadrian. "Numismatique de la Terre Sainte," M. de Saulcy, *Planche XX, 1.*