

head of the sphinx, whose features, though more feminine, have a family likeness with those of the two other figures.

The sculpture is, I venture to think, Greco-Egyptian in character. The Greek element is indicated by the animated drawing of the figures, and especially of the sphinx. We are told by the writer of the article "Sphinx," in "Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology,"¹ that "The Egyptian Sphinx is the figure of an unwinged lion *in a lying attitude*" (the italics are mine), "but the upper part of the body is human. . . . The common idea of a Greek Sphinx, on the other hand, is that of a *winged* body of a lion, having the breast and upper part of a woman. Greek Sphinxes, moreover, *are not always* represented in a lying attitude, but appear in different positions, as it might suit the fancy of the sculptor or poet."

If so, then the Mejdél Sphinx, being neither *winged* nor *recumbent*, may possibly be assigned to a middle position between Egyptian and Greek Sphinxes. This, however, is a question which I must leave to others to determine.

A JOURNEY TO PETRA—1896.

By GRAY HILL, Esq.

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In the *Quarterly Statement* for January, 1896, I gave an account of an unsuccessful attempt (the fourth) made by my wife and myself in the spring of 1895 to reach Petra from the north. In our fifth attempt, made in the spring of 1896, we were completely successful; but the difficulties had faded away. Perhaps we may claim the merit of perseverance, but if there had not been a change in the condition of the country lying between Jerusalem and Petra I am afraid that perseverance would not have been sufficient for the purpose. Our attempts made in 1890, 1891, and 1893 were foiled because of the dangerous state of the country in those years, and the fighting going on amongst the tribes on the road; and that in 1895 because the Mutesserif of Kerák stopped our progress at that place for want of an order from Constantinople allowing us to visit Petra.

The military posts now established by the Turkish Government at Mádeba, Kerák, Shobek, and Ma'an, and the military escort granted to travellers, greatly facilitate the journey from Jerusalem to Petra, which was made by several Europeans in the spring of 1896; and indeed, Mr. Fordér, the English missionary of Kerák, made the journey from Kerák to Petra, *viâ* Shobek, in September, 1895, being the first, I believe, to reach Petra, either from north or south, for about 12 years. He

¹ Volume iii, p. 895.

travelled, however, under the protection of the Mutesserif of Kerák. But we had no intention of revisiting Kerák after the experiences which we had had of the Mujélli Sheikhs, seeing that they have never been punished, either for their robbery and detention of us in 1890, narrated in my book, "With the Beduins," or the attack made on us by their followers in 1895. Besides, we desired, if possible, before proceeding to Petra, to reach Azrak and Toupdelrudduf, places of which we have often heard from the Beni Sakhr, and which lie many miles to the east of the Haj road, and are said to be of great interest. Azrak is described to us as containing abundant springs, a large pool, many palm trees, and a very large building. Mr. Wilfrid and Lady Ann Blunt passed to the east of it in charge of the 'Anazeh, on their journey to the Nejd, and in their map it is described as a ruined fort, but they did not visit it. We desired also to visit Ma'an, of which Mr. Doughty gives an interesting account in his "Arabia Petraea," and to see the Haj pilgrimage encamp there.

We started from our house on Mount Scopus, near Jerusalem, on March 30th, 1896. In addition to the usual number of men for our camp we had with us our trusty friend and dragoman, George Mabbedy, and Sheik Mohammed, of the Beni Sakhr. We had sent a messenger some days previously to the camp of that tribe, which was then at Kústúl, to request Jerauh, the brother of Mohammed, in whom, as a man of tried courage and skill, we had more confidence than in Mohammed, to come, but Jerauh, having gone on a ghazú against the 'Anazeh, Mohammed came in his stead, accompanied by a negro slave of his family.

Descending the steep slope behind our house, and crossing over hill and dale, we reached the modern road between Jerusalem and Jericho, somewhat to the west of the "Inn of the Good Samaritan," and in the afternoon were comfortably settled in our camp pitched near the "Brook Cherith." The vegetation was in all its spring beauty, and seated before our tents we enjoyed the sweet air and lovely evening light, and saw the stately moon rise over the mountains of Moab, silvering all the valley, while the fire-flies darted hither and thither in their rapid flight.

The next day we crossed by the wooden bridge over the Jordan, then full and "overflowing all his banks," and rode through the valley on its eastern side through masses of wild flowers, amongst which were great patches of scarlet anemones and yellow marguerite daisies, tall enough to reach to the bellies of our horses, and under great flights of storks wheeling round and round in the air. Mohammed showed us with pride his sword, given, he said, to the Faiz family by Jezzar (the "Butcher"), some time tyrant of Acre, by whom it was used as a sword of execution. On the way we met several of the Adwan tribe, and could not prevent two of them from coming with us across their territory in pursuit of baksheesh. We pitched our camp for the night at Tell Rameh.

On the third day we mounted for several hours up the western slopes of the mountains of Moab, grassy and rich with wild flowers, and on reaching the table-land on the top, had much difficulty in getting the baggage mules over some very slippery ground and much thick mud

formed by the recent rains. We passed Umm el Amad, where our old friend Sheikh Hazáh, of the Beni Sakhr, killed last spring by his nephew in a family quarrel, lies buried on the hill-top, and reached Kústúl, which we now visited for the fourth time. Here we stayed for a day to rest the mules, and whilst my wife made sketches from the ruins, I revisited Kálát Zizah (pronounced by our guides Ziziah), which, like Kústúl, was discovered and described by Canon Tristram. The great reservoir at Zizah struck me with greater admiration on this my second visit than on my first. It is in a more perfect state than any other that I know in this part of the country, but for want of repair contained no water. The stone entrances or sluice gates for admitting water to it stand almost complete, but the arrangements for penning back the rainfall to drive it through them have broken down, so that the main supply has failed. Besides the Khan near the pool there are considerable ruins at and near Zizah, and the land for many miles round that place and Kústúl is well fitted for cultivation, the soil being deep and good. Evidently it supported many inhabitants in former times. Taking advantage of the delay at Kústúl we sent a messenger to seek for our friend Abu Seyne, of the Adwan, who has so often travelled with us, but he had gone to Jerusalem to look for us. Finding that we had left he sought for us near the Haj road for some days, but never succeeded in coming up with us.

We left Kústúl in charge of Mohammed and several of his tribe, one of them a man possessed of the most ruthless expression of countenance that I ever saw. He gave us no trouble, but looked as if he would have cut our throats for an exceedingly moderate remuneration, or even merely for the pleasure of the job. In 45 minutes we crossed the Haj road, and picked up a well-defined track going due east, which Mohammed told us led to Azrak. One hour further brought us to the remains of a strong wall formed of large and carefully-cut stones, which had evidently served to keep the water coming down a seyl from escaping over a slope in a wrong direction. Soon afterwards we reached a small pool of muddy water and rested while our animals drank. A Bedawy woman and her daughters, whom we found here drawing water in their skins, examined my wife with great curiosity, and, having looked slightly at me also, candidly confessed that they did not like the looks of either of us, and went off jeering at both. At the end of three hours from Kústúl Mohammed made us pitch our camp near another dirty pool, and amongst flocks of sheep and herds of camels belonging to the Beni Sakhr. As he said this place, called El Matubbeh (the camping ground), was two days' journey from Azrak, and that it was not safe to camp further east and so nearer to the latter, we began to fear that we should not get to that place, and longed for poor Hazáh, who had taken us to the Castle of Khauranee the year before, when his brethren hesitated. Umm Moghr (described in my last narrative) bears south-east from El Matubbeh, distant, I judged, from 6 to 8 miles. The country all round is absolutely treeless and uncultivated, but there was much camel herb about it. The

landscape is like a bit of the Sussex downs. There was great talk amongst our guides and the shepherds tending the flocks here of the 'Anazeh being at Azrak, and of Druses who had come down there from the Hauran, owing to the disturbances in their own country, and our hopes fell lower and lower.

In the afternoon, Mohammed, who had ridden off to the nearest important Beni Sakhr encampment, came back with news that his brother Jeruah, with 500 of the Beni Sakhr, who had gone on a ghazú against the 'Anazeh, had captured many camels, and were returning westward pursued by the enemy, and that it would be quite impossible to go to Azrak. This was particularly annoying, as, owing to the unusually large amount of rain which had fallen, there was no difficulty this time arising from want of grass or water for the animals. We asked to be taken to Amr, or Amrah, a ruin lying, it is said, between Khauranee and Azrak (*see* my last narrative), but Mohammed declined on account of danger, and we were powerless. He offered, however, to take us to Toupdelrudduf. We have heard very varying accounts of the last-named place. When the Beni Sakhr wish us to go a journey into their country they tell us that it is a ruin with sculpture, like Umm Shetta (Masheta), only larger, and when they apprehend danger in reaching it they tell us it is only a little heap of burnt brick and smells of dead men, meaning that it is a place where homicides are frequent in the quarrels of the tribes. It is, perhaps, this same place that Doughty heard of as two days' journey south-east of Kúlát Belka.¹ We thought that Mohammed would probably lead us a little way towards this place and then hurry us back again, and were so vexed that we determined to go next day south-west to Kúlát el Belka, on the Haj road, and proceed along that road to Ma'an. In the night two messengers passed our camp dispatched by the Beni Sakhr to summon their fighting men, and in the morning all the flocks and herds were moving westward, so we supposed the news about the approach of the 'Anazeh to be true.

Proceeding in a south-westerly direction we came, in little over an hour, to a spot where the table-land descended sharply 200 or 300 feet to a lower plain. Here, before descending, we noticed, in a shallow pit under the crest of a small hill, four dome-shaped flint stones, each about 6 feet in diameter, which looked as if they must have been shaped by the hand of man, but for what purpose we could not surmise; two were entirely above ground and two half buried. Descending to the lower level by a gully we proceeded due west about 3 miles to a place called Kuneitran, to which we deviated, to examine what looked at a distance like ruins, but we found nothing there but mounds, caves, Arab graves, and a few upright stones that might be dolmens. There were, however, remains of a wall in the valley below to the west, apparently intended to pen back water. Es Sámik bore about south-west. A wide belt of splendid red poppies, winding like a stream in

¹ "Arabia Petrea," vol. i, p. 13.

a hollow near the wall, no doubt indicated that water had been lying here recently. We passed many camps and flocks and herds of the Beni Sakhr as we proceeded to the west. While we sat upon the ground to rest, five out of our eight horses broke loose from their tethers, and made off careering over the plain, and as they all soon disappeared from view the prospect did not look cheerful. Some of our guides rode off, on the three horses which remained, to seek for the five, and we began to feel a little anxious. But after an hour all returned, and a little later we reached Kùlât el Belka. Here there is a Khan for the Haj pilgrimage, with stone-built pools full of water, and several muddy hollows holding water after the recent rains, but which would, no doubt, dry up soon after they should cease. Here Mohammed said we were nearer to Toupdelrudduf than at our last camping place, and we, beginning to hope again, begged him to take us there, to which he consented with difficulty. The next day, therefore, after proceeding three hours along the Haj road to the south in heavy rain, we diverged from it to the south-east. We passed an old battle-field, where 'Anazeh and Beni Sakhr had, as Mohammed told us, often contended, and he pointed out some of the numerous little heaps of stones placed over the dead, as indicating the place where such and such a mighty man of valour belonging to the one tribe or the other had fallen. Another two and a half hours and a halt was called, and we pitched our camp in a valley by a muddy pool, the place being called Atara. We were to ride from here to Toupdelrudduf and back in one long day. Mohammed said that Atara was a dangerous place for us to be in. There was much reconnoitring, scouts were posted on the hills, and no fire or light was to be allowed at night. On our way here we passed a great number of beautifully marked Frankolin, called by the natives "Katta," some of which were shot for food. These birds are larger than pigeons, and great flocks of them were visible. We saw a large wolf pretty near. The Beni Sakhr seemed to get very anxious as night approached, and one of our servants came to report that he had overheard them arranging that if any enemy appeared they would escape on their mares and leave us, and it was observed that they had made certain preparations with this view. We were kept all night in an agitation—some fires being seen in a valley near—and were made by George, who had satisfied himself that there were real grounds for anxiety and that the servant's report was true, to lie down in our clothes, with everything prepared for a rush, and the abandonment of camp and baggage in case of necessity. The heavy rain poured down on the tents, one report after another came, and sleep was not to be had. It was of no use, we had to consent to give up Toupdelrudduf also; Mohammed said, "Thank God," and we started off south-west again very early the next morning. Having ascended the day before amongst hills several hundred feet high, we redescended until we came to a wide plain, at the end of which, under other hills rising to the west, in the direction of Kerák, we saw the Khan and pool forming the Haj station of Kutrâneh. On the way we

passed large numbers of wild rhubarb plants, which Mohammed said the Bedawin use medicinally.

Seeing a Bedawy with a dromedary in a valley, Mohammed and one of his spearmen rode after him, and they presently returned, both riding on the dromedary, and drawing their mares after them, the Bedawy running by the side. The latter called his fellow, who was in hiding near, and, he coming forth, we asked both to eat with us. They were willing enough, and we sat down and lunched in a hollow under a rocky slope, and making a fire of some dry scrub enjoyed the fragrant coffee.

The men said that they belonged to the Sherarat, and they had no shadow of shame in stating that they gained their living entirely by robbery. They said that Atara, where we had slept, was a very dangerous place. Their plan was to hide their dromedary in a retired spot amongst the hills, and when they had secured some booty to run to her, and, mounting, escape. No doubt they had stolen her, but they were poor and almost naked, and George asked Mohammed to let them have her back. The latter and his spearman rode on the dromedary to Kutráneh, the owners running beside her, and there the animal was restored to them. But we soon afterwards regretted this act of clemency, for that night, just after we had gone to bed, George came to tell us that a poor Bedawy had arrived at our camp with nothing on but a ragged shirt, having been robbed of the rest of his clothing and his gun by these very Shararat, who were now fully equipped for their business. Until they got this gun they had only one sword and two daggers between them. The Bedawy was one of the Hajii, and so a thief himself, but George felt bound to give him a little hospitality and a little clothing, and, being thus refreshed, in the morning he pursued his way to a camp of his tribe which was not far distant.

At Kutráneh we sent Mohammed and one of our men to Kerák with a letter from myself to the Mutesserif, enclosing one from the Pasha of Jerusalem, in which the latter stated that he had received an order from Constantinople to enable us to visit Petra, and asked that a military escort should be given to us. We went to see the Khan of Kutráneh. The keeper of it said that his father and grandfather had held the post before him. The Khan does not look very old. There are three small cannon in it, said to have been placed there by Ibrahim Pasha. We bought a sheep and a lamb from some Hajii for the equivalent in Turkish money of 7s. At Kutráneh there is a very large and well-built ancient reservoir 84 paces square, above it a small one, 46 by 8, overflowing into the big one. The earth is embanked round the pools so as to supply water to them. Above the smaller pool a stone wall arrests water descending to a hollow and turns it to the pools; but they contained nothing but mud for want of a little repair.

The next day we rode to the ruins described by Dr. Bliss in the number for July, 1895, and called by him Kusr Bshêr. They are nearly due north of Kutráneh. After one hour's ride up into the hills we

reached an eminence from which we could see both Kusr Bshêr and Kutráneh at the same time. The former bore 330° , the latter 170° . Three-quarters of an hour more brought us to Kusr Bshêr. From this Jebel Shihan bore 286° , and a large square reddish-coloured tower on the top of an eminence distant about 10 miles, and apparently on the north side of Mojib, bore 340° . I took the latter to be the tower of Umm Resas. A smaller ruin about 2 miles off, apparently a plain square reddish-coloured building, which we did not visit, bore 295° .

The pool below Kusr Bshêr, and about a quarter of a mile west of it, is well built with solid masonry, like that in the pools of Ziza and Kutráneh. Some Hajji, who were encamped near, politely expressed the hope that we would come to live in the Kusr, while Mohammed's negro slave asked if all the English people were as mad as we, roaming about in wild places.

In the afternoon Mohammed returned from Kerák with a polite letter from the Mutesserif, and five horse soldiers, and letters of recommendation to the Kamaikâm of Ma'an, and the chief officer of the gendarmerie stationed at Shobek. Our servant, who had accompanied Mohammed, told us that the journey from Kutráneh to Kerák took seven hours of steady riding, and that the road was good. We were glad to learn here that the report which we received last year of the death of Arar, Sheikh of the Howeytat, who has great power in Petra and its neighbourhood, was false. Having got into trouble with the Government he had been imprisoned at Damascus, but was now released.

The next day we parted with the Beni Sakhr, who went off happy with their baksheesh, and making their horses dance, while they flourished guns and spears, until they disappeared over the rising ground going north, while we, with our military escort, followed the Haj road southward. It was desolate enough, but enlivened now and again with small quantities of white broom, and patches of grass, and great flights of frankolin. The soldiers, who were Circassians, proved very obliging, and chanted sweet melancholy songs together as they rode. The Choweesh (sergeant) was the same who accompanied us last year from Kerák to Jerusalem *via* the south end of the Dead Sea. We passed five Hajji, one of whom carried a Remington rifle. This the soldiers took from him, it being contrary to Government orders for the Bedawin to have rifles. The man had such an evil cast of countenance that it was no doubt for the benefit of the very few passers by that he should be relieved of his weapon. After several hours we entered a defile, and issuing from the further end of it mounted a hill, from which we had a very extensive view of a mountainous country to the west, and of a plain and distant hills to the east. A remarkable sugar-loaf mountain was visible to the east, standing solitary in the plain. From this point there was a considerable descent to a valley, where we found many small hills of dried mud, shaped like those near the Jordan. At the end of this descent we came to the Wâdy el Hesy, which east of this, according to Doughty, contains a brook (perhaps, he says, the brook Zared of Moses) running out

to the Dead Sea. Doughty appears to have rejoined the Haj road at this point, having branched off from it to the west at Kûlât el Belka in order to visit Kerâk. At the bottom of this wady we found a dilapidated old bridge of three arches, and a paved causeway, made, Doughty says, for the camels' passage over the slippery loam, but no water was in the hollow. Just beyond this was the Haj Station, which we reached, having ridden for seven and a half hours. The Kûlât, which is near the bridge, is called Hesy, after the wâdy. It is in style like that at Kutraneh, but in a state of greater decay. The north-east corner has given way from the top half-way down, and it looks as if half of the north and east walls would soon fall. The cistern here mentioned by Doughty as being new when he passed, contained water of a very uninviting appearance overgrown with weeds, but inside the Khan was a cistern of good drinking water. The keeper of the Kûlât objected to sell us any barley, of which we were in want for our horses, but the soldiers overcame the difficulty very summarily.

The mules were very late in coming in, having lost their way, and George, riding back, was pursued by two hostile Bedawîn, who called on him to stop, and fired two shots at him, but he outrode them on his fleet Arab mare, and got safe into camp. The Choweesh told us that from here to Ma'an was a very dangerous country, and that unless we could hear that there was water at the next station (Anêzy) we must go from here to Tafîleh, and so to Petra. In the night, however, some Bedawîn passed who reported that there was water at Anêzy, so we continued the next day along the Haj road. The weather became bitterly cold with rain, and we were glad of our warmest clothes, and all the wraps we could carry on our backs. The first part of the journey was varied somewhat by hill and dale, and we skirted some hills to the west where we had some little excitement, owing to our discovering some nine or ten Bedawîn on camels and horses, watching us from above, and who moved down towards us, and then retreated.

Resting and making a little fire and coffee in a hollow, we mounted to the Ard Suwwan, or flint-strewn country, which extends as far as Ma'an, and, as travellers report, much farther, "a stony nakedness blackened by the weather," as Doughty well calls it. He reports the elevation of this plateau above the sea as 4,000 feet. We were glad to reach the Kûlât at Anêzy, and to enjoy the warmth of a great bonfire of scrub gathered by our men. At a little distance to the west of this station is a fine black-looking volcanic mountain, and in the same direction a few miles off Doughty found a ruined town, which I judge from his description to resemble Kusr Bshêr, but we did not visit it. From here to Ma'an was about five hours' ride, over a country more desolate and more thickly strewn with flint and basalt stones than before. A mirage showed in front—the sun feeling very hot after the cold wind, which had ceased.

Ma'an has a most curious and interesting appearance from the desert. It is a small town built of dried mud surrounded with a wall and placed upon a little hill in the waste of clean yellow sand all around it. Below

us, as we stopped to look at it from the top of a slope, we saw a valley with gardens enclosed by mud walls, in which was the exquisite green of spring appearing in the foliage of figs and pomegranates, and the flower of peach trees, and tall tufted palms, and white-stemmed poplars springing high into the air, and slung poles attached to water skins for raising water. As we passed along the valley under the town we saw the elders sitting outside the gate, and watching us from above, and came upon running water, clear and cool, which gladdened the hearts of our poor beasts. We rode past Ma'an with every eye upon us, and found our camp pitched at the village of Shemmia, half a mile west of Ma'an, where there was also much foliage and abundant water. Indeed we were told that the latter is found everywhere in the neighbourhood at a few yards depth, although the sand is so dry above the water level that dead bodies are preserved from decay for many years after burial in it. We found the air most pure, dry, and pleasant at this place.

A little crowd soon gathered round our tents, and officers arrived to summon me to the Kaimakâm. Accompanied by George I passed through the narrow streets of Shemmia, between mud-built walls and unfriendly glances, to a large stone house, which is well built apparently out of older materials and recently restored, and is used as a Serai. The Kaimakâm remembered us. We had met him twice before when he was Kaimakâm at es Salt. I presented my letter, and he promised to facilitate our visit to Petra. He told us that we could spend three whole days in Wady Musa and return to Ma'an in time to see the Haj pilgrimage arrive there. Later in the day the Kaimakâm, accompanied by the Kadi, returned my call. The former promised to send his Chowesh with us, and also arranged with the Sheikh of Shemmia to accompany us. Indeed we were treated with the greatest courtesy by the officials at Ma'an.

The next morning we rose very early, full of the thought that at last we were to visit the rock-cut city of Edom, which we had so long desired to see, but still with an apprehension, derived from our previous disappointments, that some untoward event would yet prevent our getting there. After a few miles ride to the west, we passed out of the pure yellow sand which surrounds Ma'an, and entered upon hill and dale covered with scrub and aromatic plants, gradually ascending to a ridge. From this the descent was almost continuous until we reached the village of Eljy, and later the entrance to the Sik. For over an hour before getting to Eljy we followed a small stream down a wild, winding valley, where were abundance of partridges and blue pigeons, and where the water brought a rich crop of grass and wild flowers to the narrow bottom. The valley opened out wide, and the well-cultivated fields and gardens which surround the village of Eljy appeared brilliant with the blossoming almond and peach trees and all the green of spring. Through this we passed amidst the wonderment and scowling looks of the inhabitants, and down a very rough and stony path crossed by low stone walls of enclosure, then through the brook which flows down from 'Ain Mûsa, where, according to Arab tradition, Moses struck the rock. The strange

rugged purple-coloured mountains, in the midst of which Petra stands, were now open to our view, placed between the great white hills which lie to the south and east of it, and terminate in bulbous-shaped rocks like those at Philæ, as of an ungraceful antediluvian world. We did not linger long amongst the imposing rock-cut tombs found here, as we were eager to enter the Sik, which was now at hand.

(*To be continued.*)

THE VISIT OF DAVID THE REUBENITE TO HEBRON AND JERUSALEM IN A.D. 1523.

By THOMAS CHAPLIN, M.D.

THE recent publication of the text of the "Diary of David the Reubenite," by the Clarendon Press, under the editorship of Professor Ad. Neubauer,¹ draws attention to the visit of that most singular man to the holy places of Hebron and Jerusalem in the year 1523. What amount of credit should be given to David's account of his wanderings is perhaps doubtful. Professor Neubauer in his preface (p. xii) remarks: "It is not my object to take off the mask of Reubeni and declare him a falsificator, or, on the other hand, to accept his facts without scrutiny. My task at present is to make this diary accessible to historians"; and Graetz, in his "History of the Jews," speaks of Reubeni as "a man come out of thick darkness from the far East, of whom one does not know whether he was a deceiver or a daring enthusiast." There is, however, in that part of the diary

¹ "Anecdota Oxoniensia," *Mediæval Jewish Chronicles*, Ad. Neubauer, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1895, vol. ii.

² "Geschichte der Juden," Leipzig, 1865, Band ix, s. 244. The English translation, Bella Löwy, Nutt, 1892, vol. iv, p. 523, has the following:—"From obscurity and out of the far East appeared a man, of whom no one rightly knew whether he was an imposter or a foolish fanatic, or whether he intended to play the rôle of a Messianic or political adventurer, but he caused a great stir among the Jews, which even affected the Marranos in the extreme West. David, an Oriental by descent, who had been for a long time in Arabia and Nubia, suddenly came to Europe on a particular mission, and started the wildest hopes, both by his imaginative discourses and by his reports of actual occurrences"

David Reubeni's appearance and manner were such as to inspire alike fear and confidence. In both there was something strange, mysterious, and eccentric. He was of dark complexion, and dwarfish in stature, and so excessively thin, that continuous fasts had almost reduced him to a skeleton. Possessed of courage and intrepidity, he had at the same time a harsh manner that admitted of no familiarity. He only spoke Hebrew, and that in so corrupt a jargon that neither Asiatic nor European Jews understood him."