

very narrow cleft in the rock, which may have served David as a refuge. I think it is 'Arâk Ibrahim, but forgot to ask the name of the cave when I went to see it. The spring and its overflow are below the surface, and the growth of grass above it after heavy rain led to its discovery. The almost entire absence of springs in the hill country between Jerusalem and the Ghor makes this discovery of some interest.

---

## NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY EAST OF JEBEL ED-DRUSE.

By MARK SYKES, Esq.

ON Thursday, 10th March, 1898, I left Jericho, accompanied by my English servant, five muleteers, a dragoman, a native servant, a cook, an Armenian photographer, who was to come one day's journey to photograph the Bedawin camp, and by Sheikh Fellah, of the Adwân tribe, a nephew of the celebrated Sheikh Goblân, who was formerly a lieutenant under Ibrahim Pasha, when that worthy held Syria. Sheikh Fellah took me to his camp, then situated at El Hammam. The people were wild and interesting. The Arabs, every man of whom carried a weapon of some sort, struck terror into the heart of the Armenian. They dug him in the ribs with a pistol, whereat he wept, upset his camera, and remembered he had pressing business at Jericho. He wanted to return at once, but I persuaded him to take four photographs, from which you may judge the general appearance of Bedawin and their camp. I was told of the ruins of a bath, to which I was taken; it turned out to be a hot spring bubbling from the midst of weeds. There was a powerful stench of sulphur and of other things even more disagreeable. I was told the following legend about it. The spring has always been here. It was here when our fathers' fathers came here, and the people who were here before told them there was a spirit in the spring, and that no one must bathe in it or take water from it without giving a present to the spirit. There are plenty of traces of rice and eggs round about it. When a Bedawy is sick, he kills a lamb, throws some of it into the spring and, with the assistance of his friends, eats what is left. His friends then force him into the water, clothed as he may be, and he comes out cured. The pool is about 7 feet deep.

There are traces of masonry in the neighbourhood of this spring, but as it was now almost sunset I returned to my camp. I found that one of the muleteers was what my dragoman called "plenty sore with one fever," and gave him some quinine, which cured him in three hours. On the following morning I returned to the spring to examine the masonry. I found some pottery and part of a glass bracelet, which

may be of use in determining the date of the building which stood there. On returning to the camp I found Sheikh 'Ali, Sheikh Fellah's nephew, who invited me to lunch with the tribe, an invitation which I accepted. The food consisted of a huge bowl of meat and rice, into which I and another guest, who was a holy derwish, first dipped our hands. The holy man showed no dislike to eating with so ill-omened a kafir as myself, but told my dragoman that he had known an Englishman with a long beard who spoke Arabic, had read all Arabic books, and wrote night and day without eating or sleeping, and whom he had nursed at Salt during an illness. His name was Richard Burton. In return that evening I invited the two Sheikhs, 'Ali and Fellah, to dine with me. Fellah is a great friend of the Franciscans, having a room of his own in their convent at Jerusalem, and so had learnt the use of knife and fork, but 'Ali, true son of the desert, was much puzzled by the Frankish eating tools, and invariably took the spoon from the dish for his own use.

Next day I said good-bye to the Bedawin and their camp; and after an interesting ride arrived at 'Arâk-el-Emir, which is the palace of Hyrcanus, whose history is unknown to the Arabs. The following legend is told of some ruins a little higher up, named Aser el Abid. A certain emir once lived at 'Arâk-el-Emir. He had a beautiful daughter and a huge black slave. Wanting to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, he left his child in charge of the slave. When he had been gone some weeks the slave thought he would marry the daughter, and build a large tower to keep her safe. But his master had one night been roused by an angel, who said: "Go back to your home, for your daughter will be taken by Säid the slave as a wife." The emir turned homewards and when he reached a crest of the hill on the eastern side of the valley, he saw the tower nearly finished. He cried out: "Oh! slave, oh! Säid," in a loud and fearful voice, and again: "Oh! slave, why hast thou done this thing?" The slave heard his master, and being seized with horrible fear fell from the top of the tower and died, and the emir going to the tower found his child safe and sound, and took her to his own home.

About two miles from 'Arâk-el-Emir lies Wady es Sir, which is a gorge about a mile and a half long, with a Circassian village at its head. On the right hand side, as one rides from 'Arâk, and about 150 feet from the ground, is an extraordinary house cut in the rock. This house, which is three storeys high, has four rooms, two in each upper storey, seven windows, and one door. The inside is covered with row upon row of equilateral triangular holes, the side of each triangle being about 6 inches, and the depth the same. Roughly speaking, there must be nearly 600 on each floor.<sup>1</sup> As nearly as I could judge, the house measured about 24 feet in length, 36 in height, and 27 in depth.

On March 13th I arrived at Amman, where is a flourishing Circassian colony. It was here that my troubles began. Just after luncheon two

<sup>1</sup> See "Survey of Eastern Palestine," vol. i, p. 94.

Circassian soldiers came and demanded my teskeries (passports for the interior), which, as neither of them could read, were not much use. However, they went away apparently satisfied; but about half an hour later two military officers, both Circassians, appeared on the scene. The elder was the rudest Oriental I have ever met; he clattered about with his sword, cursed the Bedawin, smoked my narghileh, and drank my coffee. After a time he strode away with his subaltern, a most gorgeously dressed young gentleman, who presently returned and remarked that it was raining, and that it would most probably continue to rain. He went on to say that rain induced fever and made the roads very bad, so that I had better stay at Amman for some days, and not leave my tent while I was there.

Wishing to leave my tent after he had gone, I knocked up against an evil-looking sentry standing at the door, who pointed inside, saying, "Hone! hone!" meaning "Here! here!" I called my dragoman, who said that my papers were not satisfactory, and that I must wait until a soldier had gone to es-Salt (a day's journey) to telegraph to the Vali of Damascus for a fresh permission. The following day I spent in my tent, and in the afternoon sent Sheikh Fellah back to Jerusalem with a letter to the British Consul. Mustapha Aghah, the senior officer, told me I might go on to Jerash if I took with me the sentry, who affirmed that he knew the way.

On the following morning I started for Jerash, accompanied by a couple of soldiers. Before leaving I told the Sheikh of the village that I should like to see Mustapha Aghah, to ask him who was in charge of the police at Jerash. I was told that Mustapha had started early that morning for es-Salt, and had expressed his great regret at not being able to say good-bye. But as I rode out of the village I saw Mustapha Aghah sitting in his verandah! He jumped up, rushed out, and asked how it was that I had not already started, as the Sheikh had told him that I had left very early in the morning. This fact remains a mystery never yet explained. As I had read in Mr. Haskett Smith's Handbook that there were some interesting caves at Jazuz, I prevailed on my sentry to take me there, the other soldier remaining with the baggage. After seeing the caves, an interesting Roman burial-ground, we had luncheon, and then the sentry suddenly declared he had lost the way. The dragoman swore, the soldier blasphemed, my native servant was on the point of tears. After three hours' aimless wandering, we came across an Arab woman ploughing: she did not know the way, however. Luckily, we next met a stalwart gentleman with a club, who pointed out the way, but was ignorant of time or space, and said it was a long way off, and we should get there some time after sundown. Eventually, after a fatiguing ride of 12 hours, we arrived at Jerash, another Circassian colony, the sentry and the dragoman making the night hideous with their cries and oaths.

I immediately went to the Sheikh (Hamid Bey), who was most hospitable. I had met him five years before when at Jerash, and he

remembered me. Hamid gave me a dinner, as the mules had not yet appeared. Presently it began pouring with rain, and it was not until 9.30 that we heard the mules' bells. My dragoman darted out; I followed him; half the village woke up; every dog in the place, some 500 or 600, began barking, baying, and howling; every man shrieked and cursed at the top of his voice. Never did I hear so hideous a row. At last a lantern was brought, and then was revealed the sad spectacle of two lame mules, a smashed canteen-box, and five miserable muleteers shivering and yelling in the rain, like men possessed. In time their story was told:—"That son of a pig, the soldier, had lost his way; the god of the mules was wicked, for two mules had fallen down and broken their boxes." At this juncture my Mohammedan cook commenced saying his prayers, and, constantly repeating "Alhamdo illah!" called on God to witness that he at least was thankful for having arrived. Hamid Bey kindly asked me to sleep in his house that night, and about 11 o'clock, with singing ears, I crept into bed, but . . . . .

The next three days I was allowed to remain in peace, and enjoyed myself in spite of the rain. I spent the time in going over the ruins, and took some photographs, and copied a number of inscriptions. But on March 18th, just as I was commencing a fresh inscription, I was promptly stopped, sent back to camp, and told to remain there, as military police had come from es-Salt to arrest me. I remained under guard in my camp all that day. Hamid Bey again proved himself very useful and obliging. He said he had known me for six years, which was true, and that I was doing no harm. He dined with me that evening. The next day the rain became absolutely torrential, and, availing myself of the kind offer, I slept in Hamid's house; but such is Oriental hospitality, that everyone is entitled to a free bed and a free meal in the Sheikh's guest-house. That evening a dinner and bed were provided for a military orderly, a native Christian, my dragoman, my English servant, two police officials, and myself. Of course, the meal was much richer than the simple Bedawin fare. It consisted of rice, mutton, olives, several native condiments in saucers, sour milk, and a large flap of brown bread for each person, which was also used as a plate. As I was present, each person was provided with a spoon! When we had finished dinner and drunk the sour milk, it provided a meal for at least 20 men waiting outside. Next day Sheikh Fellah arrived with the permissions. This hardy old man, who is 83 years of age, had ridden about 150 miles in the pouring rain in four days. Of course, he was cold and drenched to the skin. Fearing he might catch fever, I gave him a glass of boiling water and two ginger tabloids. The effect was marvellous. At first he thought it might be a forbidden liquor, but I showed him that it was a medicine. He liked them so much that he took 10 away with him. These tabloids seem to have an extraordinary effect upon the natives. If ever any of them showed signs of cold or cholera, ginger invariably put them straight and made them cheerful, as two or three glasses of wine would an Englishman.

As I had now done all I could at Jerash, I started the next morning for ed-Der'aah. By great luck I met the Haj pilgrimage on its way to Mecca. It was, indeed, an extraordinary sight, and came on me suddenly. Miles it seemed to be of tents of every shape and form: military bell-tents; black Bedawin tents; enormous square tabernacles of green, red, and white cloth; tiny *tentes d'abris*, some only being cotton sheets on poles 3 feet high. The gathering of people would be almost impossible to describe. In one place I saw a family of wealthy Turks in frock coats, all talking French; close by, a green-turbaned derwish reading the Koran; a little further on, the Pasha of the Haj, in a fur-trimmed overcoat, giving orders to a dapper young Turkish subaltern; here, two men who owned a most gorgeous palanquin, which they were in hopes of letting to some rich lady from Cairo, were fighting over the fodder of the two splendid camels that carried it; there, Arab stallions were squealing and kicking at the mules of the mounted infantry contingent. Indeed, an account of the variety and strangeness of the whole concourse would fill a volume. Not the least extraordinary part of the show was the sight of a great part of the pilgrimage encamped in a graveyard, tombstones being used for picketing horses, whilst here and there a skull or bone stuck out of the ground.

There were at least 10,000 civilians in the pilgrimage. Among them were many whole families of hajis, children and women being almost in as great numbers as men. The whole was under an escort of 500 mounted infantry, and a mountain battery. At five the next morning the gun was fired, and an hour and a half later the rearguard were mounting their mules, and the second gun was fired to signal that all had started. The enormous procession, at least four miles long, glittering with red, green, and gold saddles and ornaments, was an impressive sight that I shall never forget; for every animal had at least four bells on its saddle or neck. I could hear it like the sound of the sea, quite half an hour after the last of the procession had started. It is extraordinary that a mass of people such as I have described, who have had hitherto no notion of discipline or obedience, who are drawn from every class in the Turkish Empire, should be able to take down their tents and be packed and *gone* in an hour and a half. Subsequently I saw and had experience of Mr. Whiteley's transport at the manœuvres on Salisbury Plain, and I think that the next time the authorities wish to repeat the experiment that the Pasha of the Haj should be applied to for a few hints on civilian transport. Mr. Haskett Smith's Revised Handbook repeats Mr. Porter's statement made in 1858, that the "Haj is decreasing in numbers and importance every year." If it is now four miles long, what was it like in 1858?

Bosrah was the next place I camped at. There are now a battalion of infantry and a regiment of cavalry quartered there; the latter has a number of the most beautiful grey stallions I ever saw. The Commander of the garrison, accompanied by the Mudir of the village and the latter's son, called upon me, and wishing to be civil I offered cigarettes to all

three. But in doing this I made a mistake, for among the Druses it is not etiquette to offer a son tobacco in his father's presence without first asking the latter's permission. On this occasion the Mudir's son declined, but his father at once gave him permission, so that we were all happy together. A curious incident occurred while I was talking to the officer, who spoke a little French. A Druse came forward, salaamed, pulled out a little packet, and said "Antika." I opened the packet and found three small cartridges, which I recognised as belonging to a little rook rifle which I brought with me the last time I was there. I had given the man those cartridges five years before. This seems incredible, but it is a fact.

As I suspected that an attempt might be made to stop my going to the east of the Jebel ed-Druse, I roused the escort at three next morning, greatly to their annoyance, and rode away to Sweda to see if I could get my permanent escort for that journey. I ordered my dragoman to start the baggage at 9 o'clock, the baggage going to Salchad. The Turkish officer and Mudir both arrived at 8 o'clock with some papers, to stop my departure, and showed great annoyance at finding me gone. When I arrived at Sweda, about five hours' journey from Bosrah, I was received with great state, the guard being turned out with "Salaam dur," which signifies "present arms." I was ushered into the presence of Djevad Pasha, an exceedingly nice man, but as he could only speak Turkish, and I had only brought the Arab servant with me, I had to speak French to the servant, who had to speak Arabic to an interpreter, who in turn had to translate the Arabic into Turkish. After I had had some coffee, and received from Djevad Pasha a very acceptable present in the shape of 50 cigarettes and his photograph, I started off with a Kurdish officer and three soldiers. The officer, whose name was Ahued Aghah, was an excellent man, as I had afterwards good reason to know. On the way to Salchad we came across a good many traces of the late insurrection. In one place we passed there was a quantity of bones, buttons, rags, &c., and I was told by Ahmed that about 1,000 Turks were entrapped in this place, and only 200 escaped. He also showed me the bones of a colonel, with a tattered epaulette sticking out of the ribs; the skull had been knocked to pieces by a bullet. We arrived at Salchad after a ride of 14 hours. I called on the Mudir that evening, and was surprised to see a little boy of about 10 years of age sitting in the place of honour. It seems he is the son of a great Sheikh who was taken prisoner by the Turks and made to serve as a private soldier in Damascus. He died of grief shortly after his release.

Concerning the castle of Salchad, which for so many years defied first the freebooting Templar and then the plundering Bedawin, I will only say that nothing could give a better idea of a Saracen castle. Mr. Missionary Porter (as Sir Richard Burton calls him) proposed that Salchad should be restored as a fortress for a Turkish garrison, which shows that he most probably never saw the place, as once inside the wall it is now simply a heap of treacherous rocks. I have seen tons of masonry suddenly slip

and fall; an avalanche would be easier to restore than the interior of Salchad Castle. Mr. Haskett Smith, in his edition of Murray's Handbook, gives a vivid account of an engine for raising great weights which he says has been discovered at Salchad. I asked every man in the place from the Mudir and schoolmaster down to the Zaptiehs (police) quartered there, and the little children. Not one had even heard of such a thing. It would seem that the thing which is not has been said, although I did see in use at Damascus a machine similar to the one described. It may be that some enterprising Druse has seen the machine at Damascus, and palmed off the story on the Editor of the Handbook, or it may have been that three Sheikhs, a schoolmaster, 10 children (who practically live among the ruins), three soldiers, and several other inhabitants banded together to tell me an unnecessary lie. I leave it to others to judge.

After three days' stay at Salchad I left for the east of the Jebel. On the road there were many traces of the late fighting, and that evening I had good reason to know that all was not as calm as it seemed. On my arrival at Saleh I met with a reception very different from what I was accustomed to. The villagers crowded up angrily, and tried to drive away the mules, but Ahmed Aghah drove them off with his whip—a bold thing to do for Druses, who are quite as independent, and nearly as handy with their weapons as Texas cowboys. Meanwhile, I noticed that one of my escort had retired to the kitchen tent, and, having muffled up his face, stood facing the wall of the tent. Presently the Druses sent a messenger to say that one of my escort was a native of the village, who had decoyed away and murdered the Sheikh during the fighting, and that they wished to kill him. The officer said they might kill him if they could, and seemed absolutely indifferent, sitting on the wall smoking a cigarette with an enormous Colt in his hand. Assim, the murderer, took the hint, jumped on his horse and rode away as hard as he could. No sooner did the people see him than their Martinis began to speak. But he got 700 yards start, and made good his escape, having had about as narrow a shave as a man could have. The currish nature of my muleteers soon appeared, as at the first shot they burst into tears and crept away to hide. When it was clear that Assim had got away dead silence fell over the village, and we had a most unpleasant twenty minutes, not having the least idea of what was going to happen. However, when Ahmed Aghah had finished his cigarette, he took off his sword and revolver and strode down to the village alone, leaving the two soldiers with me. Another unpleasant interval ensued, for it must be remembered that Ahmed Aghah had been in charge of some irregulars who had raided this village about six months before. However, at the end of twenty minutes he returned with the Sheikh, who passed off what had happened with a remark to the effect that "boys will be boys." I took coffee with the Sheikh and Ahmed Aghah, sleeping in his house. So what might have been a very unpleasant affair turned out all right.

At the village I passed the following day I was told no European had

been there for 40 years. All the Druses I met after Saleh were excessively obliging, going so far in one place as to pull down the walls of a house to show me an inscription, and always refusing bakshesh. When I arrived at Umm Rawak it was intensely cold, and snowing a little; there were enormous drifts in every direction, showing that it must have been a hard winter. While I was at Umm Rawak a good many people came for medicine, among them a couple of lepers.

I now come to the most interesting part of my trip. When I arrived at Radeimeh the Sheikh was particularly hospitable, not only giving me dinner, but feeding all my muleteers and servants. The sight of McKeon sitting between two Druse Sheikhs and being solemnly crammed by them with rice and bread dipped in oil and pieces of mutton was, to say the least, quaint. After the meal, which we had eaten in the courtyard by moonlight, we retired to the guest house where the village bard sang to the people a letter in verse from a former Sheikh who was a prisoner at Smyrna. It was a pathetic sight to see all those sad and solemn faces gathered round listening to the wailing chant of the young poet. He played on the usual Bedawin violin with its horsehair bow and strings. When he played his voice gave out a sound exactly similar to that of the violin, and at the end of a long drawn note it was impossible to tell which was making the sound, so perfectly did he strike the note. Yet strange to say the same man could neither whistle nor hum a simple English tune which I tried to teach him the next day. After the singing was over the Sheikh took my dragoman aside and told him that there was a certain place in the desert, named Heberieh, where there were many arms, legs, and fingers sticking in the stones. It was a strange place, but no other European had ever been to it. It was a long ride and would require an escort of at least 15 men, although they were now at peace with the Bedawin. I decided to visit the place the next day, visions of some ancient quarry or isolated sculpture rising before me, and as there was no mention of anything of the sort in Murray's Handbook, I had great hopes of making a discovery.

I started at four the next morning with an escort of 15 men, including my host of the night before and his two sons, for Heberieh. The first two hours of the journey were spent in going over rough sand and through scrub, but suddenly huge black walls of lava appeared before us, and we entered on the most extraordinary country I have ever seen in the course of somewhat extensive travels in four continents. The only comparison which suggests itself to me is a fireless hell; nothing else could look so horrible as that place. Enormous blocks of black shining stones were lying in every direction; in places we passed great ridges some 20 feet high and split down the centre. One of these stretched over a mile and looked like a gigantic railway cutting. There was neither a living thing in sight, nor the least scrub to relieve the eye from the monotony of the slippery black rocks. My dragoman said to me, "What sort of country this? Whyfor are they all the same colour from the slave? Beforetime I never see one place like this. I tink one



devil he live here." It was really appalling. My horse, surefooted animal as he was, came down twice, and I believe several of the escort had the same luck; indeed, it is a mystery to me how the horses got along at all. Eventually after four hours' ride through this *inferno* we reached an open space in the centre of which was a hill, and the Druses cried out that we had arrived at our destination. At first I thought the hill was only a mass of lava and sand, but on closer examination I found that it was a huge mass of bones and lava caked with bones. It was infested with snakes; I myself saw four gliding through the bones. When I had taken some photographs and secured some specimens of the rock and bones we started on our return at once, the latter part of the journey being enlivened by one of the Sheikh's sons trying to shoot a soldier of my escort because his horse had kicked him. The old Sheikh dodged in to keep them apart and rode between them all the way home. When we got back to camp the 16 horses that started had three shoes left between them, which gives some idea of the badness of the road. The old Sheikh refused to receive any money for the trouble he had taken, but asked me to bring him a pair of field glasses on my next visit, I can say on excellent authority that I am the first European who has visited this place.

The following day I made an easy stage to Shaabah, where I took photographs of some Druses sitting in the theatre. After four more days, riding through various villages a description of which would not interest the reader, I arrived at the Turkish barracks of Musmieh. The colonel and half the regiment were absent, being the escort of the Haj pilgrimage. I called on the adjutant and was received with great hospitality. A fatigue party was told off to pitch my tents, and when they had been pitched five sentries were posted round them. These sentries stood at attention the whole time like statues, never moving a muscle; they were relieved every two hours. I saw the evening parade. The men were well armed and drilled and had good boots, but the rest of their uniform was in rags. They had three belts, one round the waist and one over each shoulder filled with cartridges, and these belts are never removed. They seemed very good-tempered fellows, and when some gypsies appeared with musical instruments the garrison turned out and joining hands with the "down-trodden" peasantry (this is a Christian village) proceeded to dance for three-quarters of an hour. About 7 o'clock some 20 women and children came to the barracks with buckets which were filled with rice, which is voluntarily kept back from the men's rations for the poor. I am told this is a common custom, and I may add that everywhere Druses, Bedawin, Circassians, Fellahin, Christians, alike praised the Sultan as the best and most charitable of men. Some of the Druses added that when they revolted they did not know how good a governor they were attacking, and that now they blessed the Sultan every hour of the day.

This practically brought my travels to an end, for two days later I reached Damascus, now troubled by a railway and other European

abominations, and thence, as quickly as railways and boats could take me, back to London, determined to revisit my Bedawy, Druse, and Circassian friends at the earliest opportunity.

---

NOTE ON BONES BROUGHT FROM EASTERN  
HAURAN, SYRIA, BY MR. MARK SYKES.

By E. T. NEWTON, Esq., F.R.S.

AMONG the bones submitted to me from east of Hauran, near Damascus, are several "horn-cores" belonging to a form of goat with spiral horns, and the limb bones accompanying these very probably belonged to the same species, which, it would seem, was of larger size than the common European goat, and may be a Syrian domestic animal.

Many of the bones have evidently been subjected to great heat, and some masses of them are surrounded by a vesicular slaggy substance, but there is not sufficient evidence to show whether the heat and the vesicular material are the result of artificial burning or volcanic action.

It may be that the mound from which these bones were derived was of human origin, perhaps a kitchen midden or the refuse from long-continued sacrifices. In either of these cases the burning would be accounted for. But it is quite possible that the accumulation of bones has been encroached upon by the lava, which is said to be close at hand; and, if so, the vesicular matter and the burning may be both entirely due to this natural cause.

It would be interesting to know if bones of any other animal, or perhaps of man, occur in this mound; search might be made with this intent, and also to find, if possible, any human handiwork, such as flint implements or, perhaps, pottery or metal ornaments.

It would likewise be of interest to know whether the deposit of bones extends for any distance under the volcanic rocks which are said to occur around the spot.

It seems probable from the nature of the bones that the accumulation is of comparatively recent origin; but possibly it may be prehistoric. If, therefore, it could be shown that the volcanic lava was subsequent to the deposition of the bones it would indicate a very recent date for the volcanic eruption.

---