

THE BOARDS OF THE TABERNACLE.

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IN some very interesting remarks on the Tabernacle in the last *Quarterly Statement* the venerable Dr. Schick said that the boards have "nothing similar in any regular Oriental tent," p. 244. May I be allowed to criticise this position, which is, of course, that of Tabernacle students in general? The boards formed three sides, as all agree, standing upright in their sockets, and so joined by the bars and at the corners that they formed firm walls. Now, Oriental tents in general, except those of the poorest and least comfortable sort, have something in the way of walls, and must have something for comfort and decency. Indeed, this want, which was supplied in the Tabernacle by the boards, is supplied in the ordinary tent by three devices:—

1. A wall of goat's-hair.—In his "Notes on the Bedouins," London, 1830, J. L. Burckhardt very fully describes the tent, and says: "The back part of the tent is closed by the *rowak*, a piece of goat's-hair stuff from 3 to 4 feet high, to which a portion of old cloak or *abba* is stitched, and hangs down to the ground: the *rowak* and *sefale* keep out the wind; the *rowak* is fastened to the tent-covering by the three hind posts, and in winter is carried likewise round the side posts."

2. A wall of stones.—In Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine," Section 85 of the Appendix, he treats of the *chatzer* as an enclosure "formed of tent-cloths spread over stone walls." Some traveller—but the reference has not yet been found—speaks of the low stone walls rudely raised and used by the Bedouins as backing for their tents in their usual camping places.

3. A wall of reeds.—Almost every traveller will recall a neatly-made wall of reeds used by the Bedouins in the neighbourhood of Merom. I remember passing along on the west or rear side of a village having all its tents in a straight line, and every one backed by a wall of reeds standing about 4 feet high, and fastened up as a straw matting might be. In his book on the "Temple and Tabernacle," Boston, 1885, Professor T. O. Paine has inserted a photograph of such a tent, showing how perfectly it is closed by these reeds from wind and observation.

If we may conclude that the tents were and are generally protected in this manner, then we may assume that the boards of the Tabernacle were simply an appropriate way of securing the same end in the construction of that tent.

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