

NOTES ON THE ANTIQUITIES OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

By Lieut.-Colonel CONDER, LL.D., R.E.

Gilgal.—It has been argued that there is a double narrative in the account of the passage of Jordan and of the erection of a monument of twelve stones. One such monument was erected at Gilgal ("the circle"), the other is supposed to have been erected in the bed of the Jordan, the two accounts being thought by some critics to be distinct stories. It is not very evident what would be the object of putting up a monument which would never be seen, under the Jordan. The Septuagint and the Vulgate understood it so, and added the word "other," making "twelve other stones," but it seems probable that the references are all to one monument at Gilgal as follows:—

"And the children of Israel . . . took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan . . . and carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and set them (ינחום) there. And twelve stones Joshua raised (הקים) amid Jordan (from) beneath (תחת), the standing place of the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant, and they are there (שם) unto this day" (Joshua iv, 8, 9). "And the twelve stones that they took out of Jordan Joshua raised (הקים) in a Gilgal" (verse 20).

There is no mention of "other" stones in the Hebrew, and, if they were set up in the place where the priests stood in Jordan, we should have expected to read "raised over (על) the place," not "under" (תחת), the "station of the feet" (מצב רגלי). Nor is it clear how such stones could be known to be under Jordan "unto this day," whereas they long remained visible at Gilgal.

Ai.—It is worthy of remark that Joshua made Ai a "heap" for ever (viii, 28), but that in 702 B.C. it was an inhabited town (Isa. x, 28). It is not enumerated as such in the geography of Joshua (xviii, 23), and it would be natural to suppose that this passage was written earlier than the time of rebuilding this town. The great "heap of stones" (viii, 29) where the King of Ai was buried, near the gate of the town, may be the existing great stone heap called *et Tell* immediately north of *Harayán*, the ruin which exactly fits the minute description of Ai, as a city east of Bethel, with a deep valley to its north, and another (viii, 12) apparently on its west, near the desert of Bethaven (vii, 2).

The Battle of Gibeon.—The extract from the Book of Jasher (Joshua x, 13) is in the form of a couplet. The word used for the "standing still" of the sun (דום) means, according to the margin, "dumbness" of the sun, but it may be rendered (like the Assyrian *damu*) "obscurity," in which case an eclipse would be intended:—

"Sun be dark on Gibeon,
And moon on Vale of Ajalon."

The writer continues:—"And the sun was (dark?) and the moon remained." "So the sun was (dark?) in mid-heaven and hasted not to come out nearly all day" (verse 13).

The Hivites.—There is no account of the conquest of Central Palestine. The cities that submitted (Joshua ix, 17) were Hivite cities (v. 7), and the inhabitants of Shechem were Hivites (Gen. xxxiv, 2). Perhaps, therefore, the submission of the Hivite league led to that of the country round Shechem.

NOTES ON ANTIQUITIES OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

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Bochim.—Nothing is known of this site, except that it was above Gilgal, and a place of sacrifice (Judges ii, 1, 5); the word means "weepers," and may be connected with Allon Bachuth (Gen. xxxv, 8), "the oak of weeping." The latter was at Bethel, and Bethel was the place of religious meeting in the time of the Judges (Judges xx, 27).

The Levites.—It has been said that the Levites are represented as being members of other tribes (Judges xvii, 7), but the term *Gur*, applied to the Levite in this case, proves the contrary. The *Gur* (Arabic *Jār*, A.V. "sojourner") means properly the man of any tribe living in another tribe. In the present case the Levite lived "among the family" (מִשְׁפַּחַת) of Judah, and sought (verse 9) to become a *gur* anywhere else where he might be accepted. The Levite, who was *gur* in Ephraim, might, however, be connected by marriage with the tribe of Judah (Judges xix, 1). In the first-mentioned case the Levite was a grandson of Moses (Judges xviii, 30), though a later scribe introduced confusion by writing the letter *V* over the name of Moses (as it still stands in the St. Petersburg MS.), and so made him a descendant, not of Levi, but of Manasseh. In the same verse the "captivity of the land" is a corruption for "captivity of the Ark" (according to the same MS.), which earlier reading agrees with the words that follow: "all the time there was a House of God in Shiloh."

In this connection it is to be noticed that, although the Levites were thus scattered in other cities, not always assigned to them, they yet were accustomed, in the time of the Judges, to go up to the central shrine at Shiloh (Judges xix, 18), or "House of Jehovah," where a yearly feast was observed (Judges xxi, 19). Gibeah was probably chosen as a resting-place by the Levite (xix, 15), because it was a Levitical city (Joshua xxi, 17), and his host, who was not a Benjamite, may have been a Levite. The fact that Levites resided in other than Levitical cities does not prove that such special cities had not been allotted, for Levites might sell or pawn their houses (Levit. xxv, 33).