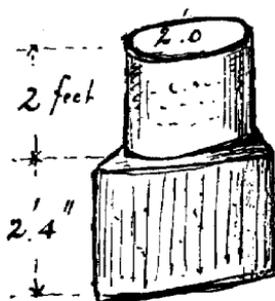


REPORTS FROM GALILEE.

By Dr. G. SCHUMACHER.

Syria Ottoman Railway Company.—The works of this important undertaking have been resumed, after nearly a four years' pause, by A. F. Hills, Esq., of the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company, London. Up to this date 24 kilometres of earthworks have been completed in the plains of the Kishon and Esdraelon, and 8 kilometres of rails are laid.

At kilometre 14·490 from Haifa we struck the spring 'Ain el Ghũfr, situate three-quarters of a mile south of the village of el Hârithîyeh, at the foot of Tell el 'Aly, on the main road leading from Acca to Jenin and Nâblus. Close to the north of this spring and on the western edge of the high road we discovered an ancient

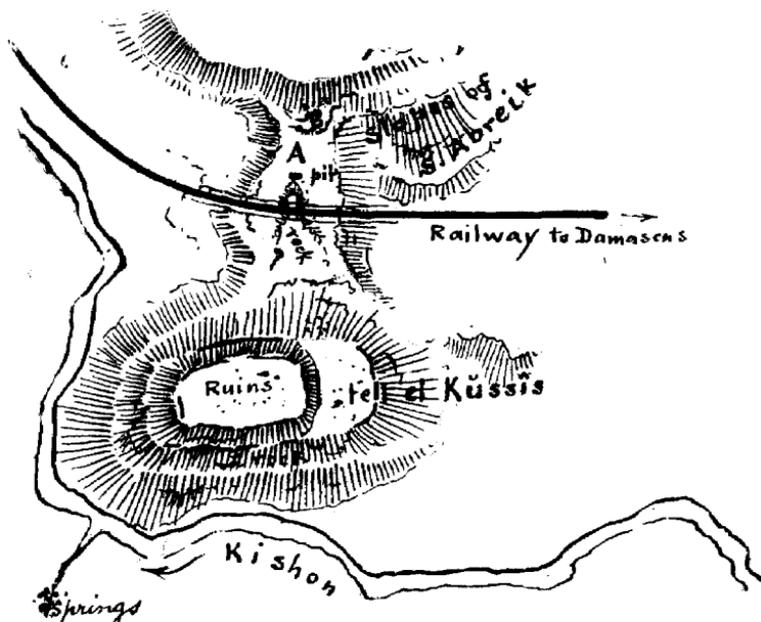


monolith of limestone partly buried in the ground, probably a Roman milestone or a boundary mark; the top part consists of an oval shaped shaft, 2 feet in diameter, and the square base measures 2 feet 4 inches in height. On the shaft we can yet trace something like an inscription, but owing to the softness of the stone it is so entirely illegible that I could not make out any of the characters.

'Ain el Ghũfr means the "Spring of the Guard." Was there a watch tower on this probable boundary of Harosheth—Hârithîyeh? The spring marked 'Ain el Ghũfr on Sheet V of the large Palestine Exploration Fund map, west of the village, is generally called 'Ain el Hârithîyeh.

At kilometre 17·400 to 17·900 (from Haifa) we have a cutting through the neck connecting Tell el Kũssis with the south-western.

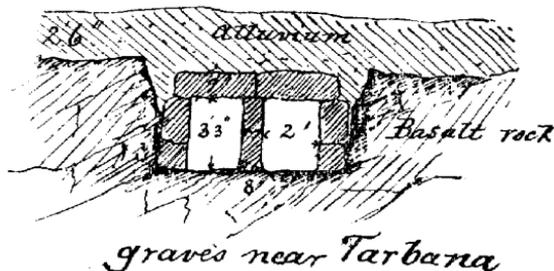
slopes of Sheikh Abreik. The cutting has a maximum depth of 17 feet, and shows on the top a thin layer of humus (earth) of 1 to 3 feet thickness, followed by white clay, which gradually subsides into crumbling Meleki limestone, in which perfectly circular nodula, from 3 to 18 inches diameter, are found. No traces of ruins have been discovered, although the cutting is only 200 yards distant from the ancient site of Tell el Küssis. This Tell shows on its surface an extraordinarily large number of fragments of ancient pottery strewed about, and a wall can be traced around the edge of the small plateau; two Eyubite, Arab copper coins, were collected from among the *débris*. Proceeding northward 16 yards from the present cutting the trial pit, A, struck no rock to a depth of 15 feet, whereas 30 yards further north near B, the rock is again visible on the surface of the earth; it occurred to me,



therefore, that a line drawn through pit A may mark an old bed of the Kishon River, leaving Tell el Küssis south instead of north of its course. The strata of the rock near B and in the cutting are very steep, the beds of the limestone are contorted and irregular. The shrine of Sheikh Abreik [or Bureik] بريق is still highly venerated by the Bedawin of the Merj ibn 'Âmir. According to

their tradition the Sheikh lived previously to the Prophet; it is a fact, that if you take an oath from a Bedawy, and make him swear by Sheikh Abreik, he will not deceive you. Does Bureik allude to the history of Barak and Sisera and Deborah, which developed between Debûrieh on the foot of Mount Tabor and Hârithiyeh or Harosheth of the Gentiles (Judges iv), or may we venture to find the Hebrew form for lightning (Barak, בָּרַק), in the Arabic Bureik, بريق; and would this allude to Elijah's sacrifice on the near summit of Mount Carmel and the slaughter of the Baal priests near Tell el Küssis, "the Mount of the Priest"? Bureik is the diminutive of *bark*, بريق, lightning. In this connection I may also state that I could not arrive at any local tradition as to the origin of the name Merj ibn 'Âmir, مرج ابن عامر, "meadow, plain of the son of 'Âmir," for the plain of Esdraelon, unless it alludes to "Ahab the son of Omri" (1 Kings xvi, 29).

Between kilometres 31·071 and 31·840 the railway cuts through a spur in the plain called Tell en Nahla, نَحْلَة, 3½ miles south of the village el-Mujeidil, and 3 miles north-west of el 'Afûleh, close to the ruins and springs of Tarbaneh. In this cutting we struck a considerable number of human bones and graves. The surface of Tell en Nahla is a reddish brown, rich soil, varying from 2 feet to 3 feet in depth, deposited on *basalt* rock. This basalt is on its surface crumbling, and can be worked to a depth of 23 feet with a pickaxe; the volcanic mass contains quantities of volcanic sand and is rich in silicates. On the slope facing the ruin of Tarbaneh we found, in a depth of 2 feet 6 inches



to 3 feet, single and twin graves cut out of the rock and built up in limestone (nâri) masonry. The grave chambers have a width of 2 feet, a height of up to 3 feet 3 inches, and are 5 feet 10 inches

long. The twin graves have a stone wall 8 inches thick between the chambers; they are generally not oriented, most of them run north-south, some S.E.-N.W. In the interior were found fragments of Roman pottery, glass and lachrimatories, iron nails, pieces of lead and crushed lead cups with little or no ornaments, one copper coffee spoon, and in one grave a copper Hadrian coin, of which I enclose an impression. The bones that lay scattered or in heaps 2 feet below the surface may be of much later origin than the actual graves, in which no bones were found. The bones I consider to be of Arabian origin, probably of the time of the Napoleon battle at Fûleh (1799); the graves, to judge from the Hadrian coin, date back as far as the second Christian century.

It was an unexpected discovery to find lava on the Tell en Nahla, therefore I carefully traced the volcanic region as far as it occurs in the plain of Esdraelon. Following the northern border of the plain, we first discover a lava bed of dolerite at the foot of Semûnieh, near 'Ain el 'Aleik, and following the old Nazareth road we here and there perceive isolated basalt blocks; continuing



COPPER SPOON FROM TELL EN NAHLA (half size).

towards Mujeidel we cross a depression half-way between Mujeidel and Mälûl, in the bed of which the dark dolerite stones occur. Approaching the springs of Tarbaneh, few of the ancient building stones consist of lava, but the whole hill to the west is composed of it as above described. The lava region begins on the east end of the plain between Zer'in and Sôlam, on the edge of Wady Hüfyîr, near the 'Ayûn eth Th'aleb, and continues down the Jâlûd plain to Beisân and the first Jordan terrace. Taking the southern border of the plain of Esdraelon we noticed no traces of lava until we reached the village of Abu Shûsheh on the high road Jenîn-Haifa, and near and in the adjacent Wâd el Kusab compact lava masses occur on the surface of the ground. In following the course of the Kishon River I discovered in its bed and slopes, from Tell Thôrah eastwards to across Ludd, basaltic *débris* and volcanic sands. It therefore seems evident that the central part of the Merj ibn 'Âmir was filled up by a lava stream which may have spread across the entire width of the plain, and

may be the consequence of a local outburst or upheaval, as I cannot trace any distinct volcano near Semûnieh, or anywhere near the borders of said plain.

A trial pit 10 feet deep, sunk into the elevated ground, 900 yards north of the village Warakány (west of Tarbaneh), shows 8 feet of reddish-brown humus, and 2 feet of soft limestone, same as in the Tell el Küssis cutting.

The cuttings and banks of the railway at kilometres 48 and 50 near Shutta are worked in basaltic formation. At Beisân we built dwellings for the engineer's staff, but no discoveries have been made yet at this important site. The heat is very intense already, and we have many cases of fever in the plains.

HAIFA, June 5th, 1899.

NOTES ON THE ANTIQUITIES OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL.

By Colonel C. R. CONDER, LL.D.

Ramathaim Zophim.—It has been supposed that the native place of Samuel was not the same as Ramah of Benjamin mentioned as his home (1 Samuel ii, 11 ; vii, 17), because it was in "Mount Ephraim." But Bethel and Ramah, though in Benjamin, were in Mount Ephraim (Judges iv, 5), a term perhaps extended beyond the tribe border—the lot of Benjamin having been taken out of country conquered originally by Ephraim (see Joshua xviii, 5, 11). The term Ramathaim Zophim means "People of Ramah of the family of Zuph." Samuel was of the tribe of Levi (1 Chron. vi, 26), and Zuph a Levite of Mount Ephraim (an Ephrathite being an Ephraimite, see Judges xii, 5). There is, therefore, no reason to doubt that Samuel's home was Ramah.

Ahimelech, or Ahiah.—In the margin of the A.V. (1 Sam. xxi, 1, and xiv, 3) these priests are identified, but as there was a lapse of time between the two events they may have been brothers. It is remarkable, however, that if the name was written in Cuneiform it could have been read either way.

Stone Ezel.—This was near Gibeah (1 Sam. xx, 19), and apparently means "stone of departure," or "of starting." As Gibeah was a priestly city it is conceivable that this stone marked the Levitical boundary (Num. xxxv, 4), whence the Sabbath day's journey was measured, as it still is by the Jews of Safed.

Cherethites.—It has been proposed to render Cherethites and Pelethites "executioners and couriers"; but it is clear that the first of these words,