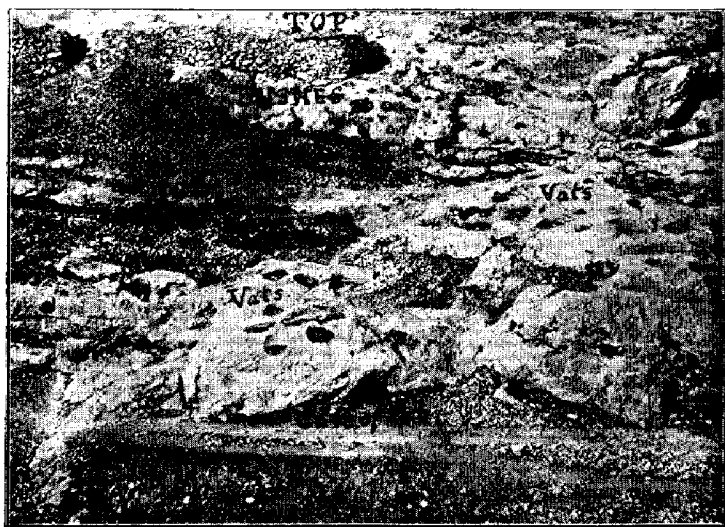


ROCK-HEWN VATS NEAR BÎR EYÛB.

By the Rev. J. E. HANAUER.

ABOUT ten days ago I wrote to announce the unexpected and accidental discovery of a large number of very ancient rock-hewn vats cut into terraces or rock-ledges, distant about 30 yards, certainly not more, from Bîr Eyûb. Mr. Charles Hornstein has very kindly furnished me with the accompanying photograph of some of these, and I have written the words "TOP BUSHES" and "VATS," &c., in order to enable you to distinguish between



VIEW OF THE VATS.

them. The remains cover a large extent of rock, over 100 feet long, as ascertained by Dr. Selah Merrill. In my last letter I remarked that I believed these vestiges to mark the site of the ancient fulling works which, as far back as the time of Joshua, gave a name to the old well-fountain close by, which Jewish and also Christian traditions consider to be En Rogel. I am the more convinced that this is the case by finding that one at least of these vats is exactly of the same shape as are the Egyptian

fullers' vats drawn in profile in Smith's "Bible Dictionary" (vol. i, edition 1863, p. 637, article "Fuller"). As I have not succeeded in finding any reference to these remains in any work I have access to, and as even Professor Clermont-Ganneau does not speak of them in his "Archæological Researches," I venture to think that hitherto they have remained unnoticed. In the middle of the photograph and near its lower edge, on the pathway leading along the valley, is seen the entrance to what the peasantry say is a large cave now full of "red" earth, though it was in former times the dwelling-place of "our lord Job, who suffered from boils and sat upon a dung-hill." Amongst other native legends concerning him is that which makes, *not the patriarch, but his wife*, the model of patient suffering:—"Job's good-wife, whose name was Rahmeh (*i.e.*, 'mercy'), went about begging from door to door for seven long years, all the while carrying her ulcer-covered, evil-smelling, moaning and groaning husband on her back in an 'abba. One day Iblis tried to persuade her to worship him, and promised that if she did so he would cure her husband and restore all the property they had lost. On being told of the fiend's suggestion, Job became so angry that he vowed that, in case he recovered, he would give his wife a hundred lashes because she had mentioned so wicked a proposal to him. Allah hereupon restored the patriarch to health and wealth, and made his wife so young and beautiful again that after his recovery she bore him 26 sons. Job was very sorry because of his rash vow, and did not like the idea of rewarding his loving and patient spouse by giving her the beating he had sworn to inflict. Allah, however, showed him a way out of the difficulty by bidding him give Rahmeh a single stroke (which we trust was a light one) with a palm-leaf containing 100 fronds."

But to return to the subject of En Rogel. We are told in Smith's "Dictionary," and also by Rabbi Schwarz ("Das Heilige Land," p. 190, Frankfort, 1852) and others, that the name is commonly given in the Targumim and the Arabic and Syrian versions as "the spring of the fuller," Rogel being derived from *Ragal*, to tread, because in ancient times washing and fulling clothes, &c., were generally done by treading with the feet (*see* also article "Fullo" in Smith's "Dictionary of Roman and Greek Antiquities"). The tradition identifying Bir Eyûb with En Rogel is, in Smith's "Bible Dictionary," attributed to Brocardus, whose

work dates from about A.D. 1283, though, as a matter of fact, Saâdiah Gaon (died A.D. 942) gives in his Arabic translation the name "Bir Yuab" as the equivalent for En Rogel. I have already referred to the agreement of Jewish and Christian tradition on this point. The date of the "Itinerary of Uri of Biel" (see Smith's "Bible Dictionary") I do not know. He is asserted also to mention "the Well of Joab." The first, apparently, to cast doubts upon the generally-accepted tradition was Dr. Bonar, who visited Jerusalem half a century ago, long before Professor Clermont-Ganneau made his brilliant discovery of the stone Zoheleth at the rock still called "Ez Zahweileh," and also before it had been ascertained that Gihon and the present "Virgin's Fount" are identical. Bonar's objections are stated at length in Smith's "Bible Dictionary," and are ably refuted, point by point, by the Rev. Professor Wolcott, D.D., in the American edition (Hurd and Houghton, New York, 1872), which is much more valuable than the English one of 1863. The only one of Bonar's arguments which seems to me to have any force is the statement that "the Bîr Eyûb is a well (Bir), and not a spring (En) = 'Ain. The fact is, as Dr. Wolcott points out, that it is both an 'Ain and a Bir." In this it resembles Hagar's Fountain (Gen. xvi, 7, 14). This fact, coupled with another, viz., that "the Well of Sirah" (2 Sam. iii, 26), is in reality an 'Ain, and not a Bir or Bor, proves that Bonar laid too much emphasis on the different significations of "well" and "spring."

I would further take the liberty of pointing out that if we consider Adonijah's sacrifice to have taken place *quite close* to Ez Zahweileh, the whole narrative becomes difficult to understand, for Ez Zahweileh is little over 100 yards distant from, and in full view of, the Virgin's Fount or Gihon, and if Adonijah and his guests were at Ez Zahweileh it is incomprehensible that he should need to be told the cause of the noise heard coming from Gihon. Josephus and the Revised English Version of the Bible lead us to infer that the conspirators were not at the stone Zoheleth itself, but in the royal gardens "beside"—that is, *towards* En Rogel or Bîr Eyûb (Josephus, "Antiq.," VII, xiv, 4, Whiston, compared with 1 Kings, i, 9, &c.). It will be noticed that Josephus is very careful to distinguish between "*the fountain called Gihon*" and "*the fountain that was in the king's paradise.*" He places the scene of Adonijah's feast not at but "*near*" the

latter—that is, En Rogel or Bîr Eyûb. But it was also “near” the stone Zohelêth or Ez Zahweileh, which is from 1,600 to 1,700 feet distant from Bîr Eyûb, and therefore, if we consider it to have been about midway between the two sites, we find a location perfectly adapted to the story, near enough to Gihon for the sound of the rejoicings to be distinctly heard, and yet just out of sight because of the turn of the valley.

I would, in conclusion, suggest that the recent find of rock-cut vats, which a native told me were old مغاسل or “lavatories,” differing altogether in shape and arrangement, as well as size, from those found in connection with ancient oil and wine presses in this country, and in close proximity to Bîr Eyûb, vindicates the correctness of the tradition identifying that ancient well with En Rogel.

JERUSALEM, *June 9th*, 1900.

NOTE BY THE HON. DR. SELAH MERRILL.

(1) If this was an old find it has certainly escaped the knowledge of any person now in Jerusalem, and the credit of its recovery is due to Mr. Hanauer. If it is a new find it only illustrates what has long been known—that Mr. Hanauer is a keen observer and always on the alert for facts of interest in the field of Biblical discovery.

(2) There were a large number of vats, and we are still able to count between 30 and 50.

(3) The rock was not hewn for the purpose, but its natural shape was such that it was easily divided into two rough platforms, the lowest being reached by six, or possibly ten, rock-cut steps from the path along the valley. The second platform was higher and somewhat to the right (looking from Bîr Eyûb) of the other, reached by five or six steps from the first platform. These two short flights of stairs or steps went up sidewise or parallel to the platforms, and should be so represented, since traces of them remain. The two platforms are distinctly traceable, although the rock has been broken or worn away and many of the vats destroyed. The vats do not appear to have been confined to the platforms. Above the second or highest platform there was a short flight of rock-cut steps, leading up the hill. This

third flight may have often been observed, they are well seen in the picture, and it may have been thought that they led from the hill down to the well or Bir Eyûb, and no further notice been taken of them.

(4) In my judgment the supply of water has much to do with the question whether this was a fuller's "plant" or not. No doubt the supply of water at the Virgin's Fountain was always limited and the demand great; but was there sufficient for the ordinary demands and for the needs of an extensive fuller's establishment besides? In Bir Eyûb the fuller had within 100 feet of his vats a supply of water that was ample and never failing.

If I wished to go into the fulling business in Jerusalem in the old style, I should not go *north* of the city, where there is no water, or *west* of the city at "Upper Gihon," where the water disappears after May, but I should go south-east of the city and buy up Bir Eyûb and the rock adjacent, clean out these old vats, and go to work. Abundance of water, rock-hewn vats, a large rock surface where cloth could be spread for drying—all grouped together.

THE DEAD SEA.

By Major-General Sir CHARLES WILSON, K.C.B., &c.

IN the last *Quarterly Statement* Mr. Gray Hill has raised an interesting question with regard to the surface level of the Dead Sea. In May last the level was higher than it has been for several years, and Mr. Gray Hill asks whether it is "possible that there is some volcanic action at work raising the bed of the lake?"

There are no traces of recent volcanic action in the vicinity of the lake, nor of any terrestrial movement of elevation or depression that would affect the level of its waters. It is, however, well known that the surface level of the lake rises and falls during the course of each year, and the difference of level has been estimated at from 6 to 15 feet. It is also probable that there are prolonged periods of high and low level following a succession of wet and dry years. The phenomena noticed by Mr. Gray Hill are apparently due to the excessive rainfall of the last 10 years.