

*April 26th, 1902.*—*Rise or fall of Dead Sea since March 21st, nil.*

*Rise of 'Ain el-Feshkhah since March 21st, 0.5 inch.*

*Rainfall at Jerusalem since March 21st, 1.69 inches.*

*Temperature, 6.30 A.M.—Air, 77°; 'Ain el-Mabneyeh, 80.5°.*

*Weather.*—Fine; sky clear above; misty over sea to east, and specially south-east, where mountains were gradually obscured in mist. Very gentle breeze north-west and west-north-west.

*State of Dead Sea.*—Smooth. From a distance of about a mile the sea west of the white line looked clear and glassy, reflecting brightness of the sky; east of the white line there was a dull colour through tiny waves. About 8.15 a.m. the mist to east had cleared, and both sea and mountains showed lovely shades of blue.

*White Line.*—Visible, but faint and irregular. At 6.30 it appeared to end a little north-east of 'Ain el-Feshkhah district; about half a mile from the shore opposite Râs el-Feshkhah it disappeared into distance down the lake. At 8 a.m. it was nearer shore: the north end had come in shore: had flattened out so as to look like a broad line of white scum on the surface, within a stone's throw of the shore, along most of the 'Ain el-Feshkhah district. Further along the north shore, between the 'Ain el-Feshkhah district and the mouth of Jordan, but much nearer the former, was another irregular line of foam disposed in an irregular circle—ill defined.

*Remarks.*—Not a soul was seen from Jericho to the 'Ain and back again. No flocks seen. Many storks; a jackal; half a dozen ibex on Jericho plain, near Wady Dabr; a coney, seen at "Observation Rock."

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## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES MADE DURING A JOURNEY EAST AND WEST OF JORDAN.

By Dr. E. W. G. MASTERMAN.

1. I made a squeeze of a Greek inscription at Nâblus, which Mr. Macalister is sending with some notes (*see pp. 240, et seq.*).

2. The harvest—barley and wheat—promises to be unusually good this year. Wherever we went through the highland west of the Jordan and down through the Haurân and Jebel 'Ajlân the crops were wonderful. I never saw such fertility. Wildflowers, too, are unusually plentiful. The rainfall, though not great, has been well distributed. I do not know whether it is directly connected with this, but all over the land *storks* are extraordinarily common. On the Jericho road they could be seen all the way down from "The Apostles' Fountain." We were seldom out of sight of them east of Jordan. At Damascus it was mentioned to me that their numbers were most unusual.

3. The dryness of this and the last season is shown in many directions. For many weeks past there has not been a drop of water in "Jacob's Well;" when I visited it at the same time of year in 1893 there was quite a quantity. The *Merj el-Ghuruk* near *Sânâr*, which was a small lake in 1893 and several succeeding spring seasons, is now almost dry, and much of it covered with corn. I could only see in the distance two small, marshy pools, where I had previously seen some miles of water.

The "Kishon," where the main road from Jenin to Nazareth crosses it in the Plain of Esdrallon, is *quite* dry. I have known its crossing in previous springs as quite a business; in 1893 we were afraid to let the ladies of the party venture across on donkeys.

The usually marshy enclosed plain of *Kefr Kâk*, near Rasheiyâ, was quite dry, and the lake at Mezeirîb is much below its usual level, so that the old town is no longer on a peninsula almost surrounded by water, as described by Schumacher, and as I saw it some five years ago, but is now on the mainland, simply projecting slightly into a much reduced lake. The lake must, by comparing the plan given by Schumacher (*Across the Jordan*, p. 157), be less than half its former size, and that the water is lower by 5 feet or more is evidenced by the marks on the basaltic rocks that strew the shore. The stream leaving the lake is now a very small one.

4. *Means of Communication.*—The road which was carried last year to *Bireh* is now being pushed northwards; we found some two or three miles either already metalled or being metalled.

The work on the *Haifa-Damascus Railway* is now quite suspended.

The carriage road to *Tiberias*, though improved greatly from what it was 10 years ago, is in a terrible state near *Kefr Kenna*. This, however, does not prevent its use, for at *Tiberias* we found no less than 53 carriages, which had brought a party of Spanish pilgrims from *Haifa*.

5. The passenger traffic on the *Damascus to Mezeirîb Railway* is so small that now trains are run only four days a week—on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays—and not, as at first, daily.

There is much activity at Mezeirîb connected with the *Damascus to Mecca Railway*. This line is now run as a direct continuation of the French line to Mezeirîb, but I understand the Turkish authorities have not been able yet to come to terms with the French Company for the purchase of their line, and so are making an independent line from *Damascus*. The new line is complete for several miles, we saw it sweeping away to the east of us as we followed the Haj road on our way to *el-Husn*. A friend of mine from 'Ammân told me when I was at *Jerash* that the line is fast nearing completion near that place. For tourists, &c., this line will open up a most interesting part of the country, bringing the wonderful ruins of *M'shitta* and 'Ammân within a few hours of *Damascus*.

The east of the *Jordan* seems likely before long to be ahead of the west in the matter of roads. The *Circassians* of *Kuneitra*, *Jerash*, and 'Ammân have connected their colonies by means of cart roads which in dry

weather, at any rate, are, over the greater part, very fair. As we approached Jerash we came across a cart, much like an ambulance wagon, accompanied by over a dozen well-mounted Circassians, which was bringing a Circassian bride all the way from Kūnieitra, through Jerash to 'Ammān. Over a considerable part of the way the horses were able to make quite a rapid progress, primitive though the cart wheels were. From Jerash to es-Salt we followed the greater part of the way a quite respectable road, made partly by the Circassians and partly by their neighbours, the Turkmans, of the village of er-Rummān. We passed at one place near this village no less than eighteen of their carts, each with a yoke of splendid oxen, loaded high with hay. I have never before seen hay carefully collected and stored away for the summer in this country. Although we left the road on approaching es-Salt, the Church Missionary Society teacher there told me that carts do from time to time come to that place; and the last few months I have seen several of them, loaded with tree trunks, wending their way to Jerusalem. These colonists to the east, and the Jewish colonists to the west, of the Jordan are doing much to open up means of communication.

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## RECENT DISCOVERIES NEAR GALILEE.

By Dr. G. SCHUMACHER, Haifa.

By the kindness of Professor Sellin I am permitted to give the following brief report on *Archæological Excavations on Tell Ta'anek*:—

In March, Professor Dr. Sellin, of the Vienna University, commenced archæological excavations, under an Imperial firman, on the site of the old biblical Taanach, the present *Khirbet* and *Tell Ta'anek* (Ta'anuk). Both sites are situated some six miles to the north-west of the town of Jenin, on the high road leading from that place to Haifa, on the southern borders of the plain of Esdraelon. The tell rises from 120 to 140 feet above the surrounding plain. It has distinctly terraced slopes, and on its summit is a large pear-shaped plateau of a maximum length of 1,050 feet and a greatest width of about 450 feet. Its culminating point reaches nearly 800 feet above sea level. The summit showed heaps of scattered building stones and fallen walls, and a sharp edge bordering the plateau. The stones are of the soft Nāri limestones of the local formation. At the southern foot of the tell a small village of 22 huts is built, a few gardens containing figs, pomegranates, apples, and olive trees are planted, and on the north-east of the village, about 100 yards distant, we find a small mosque which, according to Guérin (in *Memoirs of the Palestine Exploration Fund*, vol. ii, p. 68), "passes for an ancient Christian church." The jambs of the northern door show very peculiar ornaments, the interior is vaulted and modern,