

These remains correspond to the line of Agrippa's Wall, as laid down by Dr. Robinson from extensive sections of it then in existence. When I first visited Jerusalem one of the first things to do was to visit Agrippa's Wall, of which 40 or 50 yards were visible. This was in 1869. Much of the wall had previously been broken up to supply stones for the new Austrian hospice. Many people now living in Jerusalem remember this wall perfectly well. It is not more than 20 years since the last massive blocks of it that remained above ground, to the north-west of the city, were broken up. In this connection I will mention a fact with which I have become acquainted during the past few years—namely, that certain persons ignore this wall, and declare that it never existed. This is dishonest, and in those who have the means in their hands of knowing better, is extremely reprehensible.

NOTES TAKEN ON A TOUR IN PALESTINE, IN THE SPRING OF 1901.

By HERBERT RIX, B.A.

1. *Bethlehem of Galilee*.—Among the places I visited was Beit Lahm, seven miles north-west of Nazareth, the Bethlehem of Josh. xix, 15. Some attention has been directed to it of late years by the suggestion, hazarded by certain writers, that this was in reality the Bethlehem at which our Lord was born;¹ but it is so seldom visited by travellers that my dragoman, although he was an old hand at his work, declared that he had never heard of it. The description of it, often quoted—"a miserable village among oak-woods"—is quite inadequate. It is approached through a beautiful countryside consisting of rich arable land, and we passed on our way some of the largest herds of cattle and flocks of sheep which I saw in Palestine. Crossing a stream, we found ourselves surrounded by wide stretches of luxuriant oak-woods, and soon afterwards came to the spring which supplies the villagers with water, and which is nearly half a mile from the village. Some of the women were

¹ By Professor Stapfer in *La Palestine au temps de Jésus Christ* (4^e Édit.), p. 44, footnote; and by Canon Cheyne in the *Encycl. Biblica*, art. "Nazareth."

washing clothes there as we passed. Beit Lahm itself is a wretched collection of hovels, only one or two being built of stone, the rest of mud.

The view from the place is charming. The land slopes gently to the south. On the W.S.W. is Carmel, with the "Place of Sacrifice" standing up prominently. From south-west to south-east, beyond the Plain of Esdraelon, extend the blue hills of Samaria. Between the village and the great plain is a strip of slightly-undulating ground, clothed with extensive woods. From E.S.E. to E.N.E. are the hills of Galilee, but Nazareth is not in sight.

Robinson, who discovered Beit Lahm, speaks of it as being "without a trace of antiquity except the name." This, however, is a mistake. Guérin (*Galilée*, t. I, p. 393) mentions the remains of two ancient buildings. One, "almost entirely destroyed," he believed to be a synagogue, the other a Christian church. The scanty remains of what I suppose to be the former lie on the east of the present village, and consist merely of the bases of five round pillars set in a row, the section of each column measuring 2 feet, and the pillars being 7 feet apart.

Between this remnant and the village is a square pit, the sides lined with large, squared stones, and at the bottom of it is seen the opening of a passage, which the Sheikh said extended underground for a long distance. Nearer still to the village is a vaulted structure, built of stones, many of which measured 2' x 1' 3" x 1'. Numbers of squared stones and prostrate columns lay around the village, covering a considerable area.

2. *A Spring near 'Ain et-Tâbigha.*—A man who was fishing in the lake with a casting-net told us of a fresh-water spring called 'Ain el-Hasel, which I could not find marked upon the survey map, and we went to see it. It issues from the base of a round-topped knoll less than a quarter of a mile north of 'Ain et-Tâbigha. I tasted the water and found it quite sweet, while 'Ain et-Tâbigha is brackish. The fisherman told a not very intelligible story about it, to the effect that it was formerly covered by a round stone with a hole in it, through which the water forced itself up in a fountain, and that at one time it was carried by an aqueduct to Khân Minyeh, where it turned a mill, the ruins of which remain. He said that the Bedawin have broken the stone, but the pieces of it still exist.

3. *Bethabara*.—We camped at Tubaket Fahil (the ancient Pella), travelled thence up the Ghôr to the ford identified by Colonel Conder with Bethabara, and crossed by it to Beisan. The Sheikh of Fahil, who acted as our guide, declared that he had never heard the ford called Abârah; the Fellahin simply called it Makhâda, and none of them ever used the name Abârah. I also questioned the Bedawin on both sides of the ford, but they all denied that the term Abârah was ever used by them; they called it Hammud.

Negative evidence of this kind does not, of course, carry very much weight; but I afterwards found some reason for inclining to the view that another ford much lower down the Jordan might be the Bethabara of Scripture. This was during an excursion which I made from Jericho to Tell Nimrîn. The theory of Sir George Grove, that Beth Nimrah (Tell Nimrîn) was the true Bethabara, is well known.¹ It rests mainly upon etymological grounds, and I wished to see for myself whether it appeared to be borne out topographically. I found the Nahr Nimrîn near the Tell a mere dribblet of water, slowly filtering its way through a mass of sub-tropical vegetation, which completely choked the channel, and was not easy to penetrate. It was difficult on the face of it to imagine a public baptising taking place at such a spot.

However, it has to be allowed that when Beth-Nimrah was an inhabited town the vegetation would be kept within bounds; also that the spring of 1901 was exceptionally dry, and that nearly all the water had been taken off for purposes of irrigation. Moreover, much might be done here with a small stream (and small it must have been at best) by means of damming. So that no one can say that it is impossible for the baptising to have taken place in this Nahr.

The point, however, which I wish to note is that the name Nimrîn is applied not only to the Tell, but to the whole district along the Wady Nimrîn. After we had crossed the Jordan and travelled for some distance towards the Tell, which lies over five miles to the east of the river, I asked the Bedawi who guided me when we should get to Nimrîn, and he immediately replied, "We are in Nimrîn now." Upon being closely questioned he emphatically maintained that the whole country from the Tell down to the very bank of the Jordan is called Nimrîn. May not the philological

¹ See Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. "Beth-Nimrah"; and *Encycl. Bibl.*, arts. "Bethabara" and "Bethany (2)."

view, therefore, that Bethabara was Beth Nimrîn, be harmonised with the traditional view that the Baptism took place in Jordan, by supposing it to have taken place at the ford which crosses the Jordan near the junction of the Wady Nimrîn with that river. This ford, which is near the old wooden bridge, would be, then as now, the one used by all who passed to and fro between Jericho and Beth-Nimrah, and the town would probably give the ford its name—the Ford of Beth-Nimrah or Bethanabra.

THE IMMOVABLE EAST.

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(Continued from p. 77.)

(l) THE tailor, or “sewer” (*khayyât*), as he is called, is seen in every town squatting on his elevated bench, and stitching garments together, or embroidering in black, silver, or gold upon the jackets and waistcoats, or about the pockets of the broad, native trousers (*libâs*). The last-mentioned articles of clothing are also called *sirwâl*, which is taken by some to answer to the *sarbêlîn* of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan. iii, 21) when they were thrown into the fiery furnace with all their clothes. The Authorised Version has “coats” or “mantles,” but the Revised Version “hosen.” The waistcoat (*şideriyet*) is not mentioned in the Bible, nor is the short jacket (*jubbât*), on which is sewed the greater part of the embroidery, called *kaşab* in the vulgar speech. Clothes are generally made to order, not prepared beforehand for sale, as they are very costly, and the tailor cannot afford to invest money in goods that may never be asked for.

(m) The shoemaker, *skâfi* (سكافي), does not make the European black boots and shoes, but only the soft red and yellow shoes of tanned sheep-skins, dyed red for the men and yellow for the women, and, in days now gone by, black for the Christians and Jews. These shoes are called *şurmâyet*, and are to be kept distinct from the coarser shoes worn by the fellahîn (وطا, *watta* or *madâs*). The *şurmâyet* are generally made with the traditional point in front turning up, whilst the fellahîn shoes are without this ornament, and