

was the sweetest. In corroboration of his statement, he said that he had accompanied the mosquito on his travels, and many of the animals present, who had come from different remote regions, respectively testified that they had seen the mosquito and swallow at the same time in their special country of residence—one animal in such and such a month, and another at a different time of year. Sentence was therefore given that frogs, and not men, should constitute the serpent's nourishment. In its rage and disappointment, the deadly creature darted forward in order to seize and destroy the swallow. The latter, however, was on the alert, and so the serpent only succeeded in biting a bit out of its tail feathers, and ever since that time the philanthropic bird has had its tail forked. Baffled in this manner, the serpent, which was at that time a four-legged creature, and could in one hour travel as far as a man could walk in seven days, though it might neither devour men nor suck their blood, yet sought every opportunity for stinging and slaying men, and did no end of harm till the time of Suleiman (Solomon), the king and sage, who cursed the reptile so effectually that its legs fell off and it has had to crawl on its belly ever since."

NOTES ON BIBLICAL ANTIQUITIES.

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

1. *Naaman and Elisha* (2 Kings v).—The narrative suggests that there was no great distance between the city where the King of Israel was living, the place where Elisha lived, and the Jordan; but no names of places occur, though the house of Elisha was on an *Ophel* or "knoll" (verse 24). Coming from Damascus, Naaman would cross the upper part of the Jordan Valley, probably by the Bethabara (*Abarah*) ford, and the king may have been at Jezreel. North of Jezreel are the two villages *Fûleh* and *Afûleh*, which appear to be the two Ophels, mentioned in the list of conquests by Thothmes III, in this part of Lower Galilee. These places are all so near comparatively to the Jordan, that Naaman's journey, to and fro, in this narrative, and the communication between Elisha and the king, are easily explained, if the prophet was living at *Afûleh*—a place close to Shunem—which latter he was in the habit of visiting. (See 2 Kings iv).

2. *Uzziah and Azariah*.—The name of this king is thus variously given (2 Kings xiv, 21 ; xv, 1, 6, 7, 8, Azariah ; 2 Kings xv, 13, 32, 34 ; 2 Chron. xxvi, 1, 3, 9, 11, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23 ; xxvii, 2 ; Isaiah i, 1 ; vi, 1 ; vii, 1, Uzziah). One reading occurs five times, and the other 16 times, so that a clerical error seems impossible. In the Assyrian chronicles this king is called *Az-ri-ya-a-u*, or Azariah, though this is the less frequent rendering in the Hebrew. The second syllable has, however, the sound *sa* as well as *ri* in cuneiform. If the original document, used by the author of Kings, was written in cuneiform, these discrepancies might, perhaps, thus be explicable.

3. *Writing with Lead*.—A passage in Job (xix, 23, 24) as to monumental writing has always been difficult to understand. He speaks of writing “with an iron graver, and lead, for witness on a rock.”

It is usually supposed that letters filled in with lead are intended ; but not only are there no known instances, as far as I can find, of letters carved on stone being so filled in, but there would be great difficulty in doing so, and the result would not be legible.

It seems to me that “red lead” must be meant, namely, letters painted in red, after being incised. Now in the new texts of Bod-Ashtoreth found at Sidon (third century B.C.), we have an actual case of this being done. The inscribed tomb which I found on Carmel (*Memoirs*, vol. ii) also had its letters redded in, in the same way—probably about the second century A.D.

4. *Oboth* is a term used (Isaiah viii, 19 ; 1 Sam. xxviii, 7, 9) for “familiar spirits” (*’ôb*, plural *’ôbôth*, which, as a Semitic word, has been rendered “bottles.” In Akkadian, however, we find the word *ubi* (rendered *ubatu* in Assyrian) with the meaning of a “charm.” It is, perhaps, the Turkish *boi* “charm ;” and the “master of the *ôb*” was thus an “enchanter.”

Parah.—In Jeremiah (xiii, 5), the prophet hides his girdle, according to the A. V., by “Euphrates” (פַּרְתַּי) in a rock. As he was at the time in Palestine, and as no long journey is mentioned, it has been proposed to read Ephrath instead ; but a more likely site would be Parah in his own tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii, 23), especially as this site is remarkable for its cliffs.

The Tapsar.—This term is rendered in Jeremiah (li, 27) and Nahum (iii, 17) “captain,” and has been compared with the Akkadian *Dubsar* ; “scribe,” by Lenormant. It is evidently a

foreign word, but the rendering "scribe" does not appear suitable. In both cases the reference is to some foreign official, and the first passage reads:—

"Call together against her (Babylon) the Kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz, appoint a captain against her, cause the horses to come up as the rough (סמר) caterpillars."

The reference is to the various tribes of Armenia combining against Babylon, these tribes being of Mongol and Aryan race (including the Medes, verse 28). Possibly the word "rough" may be rendered *Sumir* (סמר), a people originally speaking Akkadian—"cause the horses to come up like caterpillars O Sumir." The rendering of the word מַפְסֵר by "Captain" is evidently more appropriate than "scribe," and the original word may be TAP-SAR, "Lord of the Host," the first element TAP being in Assyrian *šabatu*, "hosts." This explanation will, I believe, be found to be confirmed by the title used of a tributary chief, in the Tell Amarna letters from Ascalon. In this case, the mention of Sumir in the same connection is natural, as they were a people speaking the language in question. Babylon is thus represented as surrounded by the Minni on the north, the Medes on the east, and Sumir on the south.

Iscariot.—Judas Iscariot is generally supposed to have been a native of Corea, apparently on account of the reading *Cariot* in the Codex Bezae (John xii, 4); but this can hardly be preferred to the numerous readings which point to a place called *Ischar*. The latter (according to the Samaritan chronicle) was the old name of the present *Askar*, near Jacob's Well—the Sychar of the Gospel (John iv, 5). In this case Judas was apparently a Samaritan.

The Seven Steps.—The Codex Bezae is remarkable for interpolations not found in other MSS. of the New Testament. Among these it reads, in Acts xii, 10, "They went out, and went down the seven steps." The writer apparently was referring to steps leading from the Prætorium (in Antonia), where he supposes Peter to have been imprisoned, down to the street. No doubt such steps existed, as they still do. In the middle ages (*see* Zuallardo, &c.) the site of these was shown, and they were supposed to have been transferred to Rome to form the Scala Santa.

5. *Hittite Gods*.—The Hittite gods, known from Egyptian monuments, included Set, Istar, and probably, as Dr. Sayce has noted,

Tarku. The people called *SU* (in Assyrian, *ḫissatu*, or "multitude," probably the same as the Turkish word *soi*, "race"), who spoke the Akkadian language, also adored Istar, and in the enumeration of their gods we find mentioned the names of *Tartakhanu* and *Taraku*, in the great enumeration of gods worshipped in Assyria—both native and foreign—in the seventh century B.C. The first of these names appears to be in Akkadian "Lord of Justice;" the second may be connected with the common Turkish *Tar* for "deity." In Akkadian, the great god Ea is called *Dura* and *Tarakhu*. These names thus appear to connect the Hittites with the Akkadians. The symbolism of Hittite statues representing deities is also the same found among the Akkadians.

DEAD SEA OBSERVATIONS.

(Continued from "Quarterly Statement," 1904, p. 281.)

By Dr. E. W. GURNEY MASTERMAN.

THE visits paid to the Dead Sea in the latter half of 1904 show a continued fall of level, and the lowest level of the season is $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches lower than the lowest of last season, and $23\frac{1}{2}$ inches lower than the level in April (1904). I have here to record two visits, one paid in August by Mr. Hornstein and myself together—an extra visit in anticipation of my departure to England—and the regular autumn one made by Mr. Hornstein alone in October.

SECOND VISIT TO 'AIN FESHKHAH, 1904.

Visit made from our school-boys' camp in *Wādy Kelt* on afternoon of August 24th. After emerging from the *wādy* we crossed the Jericho road and descended to the Jericho plain by the *Akbat esh-Sharīf*, an ancient route still used by some native travellers. On our whole route we encountered no human being.

Weather.—Early in the afternoon there was an east wind; this gradually became south-east; about 5.30 it dropped altogether, and soon after a strong, cool, north-west wind arose, which greatly moderated the sultry heat.

The atmosphere was far from clear. On our way to the Dead Sea the mountains to the east were very indistinct, especially where they stretched northwards. There was a large fire somewhere near the Jordan, to the north—probably due to some of the inhabitants consuming their superfluous *vibn*—and the smoke from this, together with that from the fire at *'Ain Feshkhaḥ* (see below) hung like a long brownish