large stone, and overhangs a niche cut into the northern face of the rock. The niche has a height of 1·30 metres, a width of 1·15 metres, and a depth of 0·50 metres (about 4 ft. 3 in. by 3 ft. 8 in. by 19¾ in.). The great block, which attracts one already from the distance, is said to have been a place of worship, "of the days of el-Kuffär" (the un-believers, the idolaters), as its name signifies. It seems to me to have been an altar, the niche probably containing an idol, or being left empty to receive offerings; it may also represent an Israelite boundary stone.

A CAUSEWAY ACROSS THE DEAD SEA, AND A MOABITE MONOLITH.

By A. FORDER, Jerusalem.

It is not long since that I returned from a tour among the Arabs of Moab and the eastern shores of the Dead Sea, and probably some of the things I saw and learned will be of interest to the readers of the Quarterly Statement.

Whilst in the Ghôr eṣ-Sâfîeh, I made enquiries about the causeway that once connected the Lisân with the western shore of the sea. I was assured that such a thing had really existed, and was remembered by many of the men to whom I talked. One old man said he was willing to take me to the spot from which this causeway once started, and, as he assured me that he had many times traversed the road himself, I agreed to accompany him and see for myself what there was to substantiate such a report.

Leaving the camp one morning at nine o'clock, mounted on mules, we made off due west across the Lisân, and in exactly two hours reached the water's edge at the narrowest point. On the way we passed the remains of what my guide told me were once guardhouses for the protection of the caravans that traversed and traded between Moab and Hebron. All the way from the camp to the water's edge was a well defined road consisting of many tracks, well preserved, because of the little rainfall and the non-use of the track in these days.
From observations made whilst on the way, and from what the old man pointed out and told me, it is safe to say that this ancient road and causeway ran almost direct from the outlet of the Wady Kerak across to the Wady Imbughugh; this is what might be expected, for an abundant supply of cold clear water is found in both these valleys, and, in such a region, both man and beast would need such provision.

There was no trace of anything that suggested an old-time crossing, and on questioning my Arab guide as to why there was nothing to be seen, he told me that the water had increased to such an extent that the stone crossing was submerged deeper than a man, and he assured me, in his way of putting it, "that when the hair first appeared on his face, it was so narrow that the people of his tribe used to sit on the edge of the Lisan and parley with Arabs from the west as to the return of cattle that had been stolen by one or other of the parties."

He also assured me that, when he was young, the water was so shallow at this place that large caravans of camels and mules used to be driven from side to side through the water, whilst sheep, goats, and men used to cross on the bridge. I tried to get from him some idea as to how long ago the causeway was submerged, and the best I could gather was, about forty-five or fifty years ago. It might almost be inferred from the writings of De Saulcy, who explored the Dead Sea in 1853, and Lynch in 1848, that, before their expeditions, the causeway had been submerged, but that there was such, at one time, is certain, for I have met and know many Arabs who have a distinct memory of it, and who, like my guide, had frequently crossed it.

I asked the old man if he could find the road now, and his reply was, "give me a boat and I will stand over it within an arm's length."

The shore at this point was piled up with driftwood, and pieces of sulphur were plentiful, as also were good sized lumps of bitumen.

The place where the crossing was is called by the Arabs of the district im-gayta, which is equivalent to "the cut across."

On our return I was taken off the road to several points, and had shown me several tracks of land, now submerged, which the family of my guide used to cultivate. He showed me visible proof of what he said by pointing to numerous good-sized trees that still grew, although deep in the water of that mysterious lake, and he assured
us that when he was a young man, he, and his companions, used to hunt wild boar among the trees and undergrowth now covered with water. These facts prove conclusively that the sea has made tremendous rises landward, and it would be very interesting to find out the exact depth under the water the causeway is. Fig. 1 shows the inroad of the water at Ghôr el-Mezra‘a.

Whilst on the uplands of Moab, east of Kerak, I was able to examine minutely something, the existence of which I had known for several years. It is a huge monolith, not far removed from the extensive ruins of El-Hudr. As seen from the reproduced photograph (Fig. 2) the stone is wider at the bottom than at the top, its widest measure being about 64 inches, tapering to about 28 inches. It is about 16 inches thick all through, and as near as I could judge, some 17 or 18 feet high. It faces due east, and is on a small eminence, and is visible for miles around.

On the north side, only a few yards away, is a similar stone which has fallen on its side, and points due north; in dimensions it
is just about the same as its companion, and no doubt at one time stood erect.

The stone is called by the Arabs hajr serbát, which, in trans-

![Image of a stone and a person standing nearby.](image)

**Fig. 2—Hajr Serbát.**

Jordanic Arabic means, an erection or stander up. I tried to get some tradition or local history from the people about the stone, but they had no information to give concerning it.
Might this not be an ancient object of worship, similar to those found at Petra and Gezer, and connected with the religious life of the Moabites some three thousand years ago? It would be interesting to know what others think about this lonely sentinel of the Moab plains, so I have ventured to send its picture and these few facts about it. I was assured that there were others in the vicinity, but was unable to give time to turn aside and investigate. There was nothing in the way of inscription on the stone, only the usual shepherd and tribal marks. Truly Moab is a land waiting for the excavator and student of research. How much longer must such an inviting field remain untouched?

GLEANINGS FROM THE MINUTE-BOOKS OF THE JERUSALEM LITERARY SOCIETY.

By Prof. R. A. Stewart Macalister, M.A., F.S.A.

(Continued from Q.S., January, p. 31.)

XIX.

At the meeting of 3rd May, 1850, J. Finn, Esq., read a Paper on "Agriculture in Palestine."

[After describing at length the fertility of the country the paper proceeds.]

Riding one day, two years ago, eastwards of 'Anâta, and perceiving stalks of maize remaining in the ground, my guide (a man of 'Anâta) explained that in that district they do sow corn occasionally, taking care to do so in partnership with some tent-living Arabs, and then watching the crop at night, a few on either side conjointly; but that very frequently before the crops are quite ripe quarrels are created by the wilder party, who in one night cut as much as they can and decamp towards the Jordan, destroying the rest by fire.

I have been informed that even in the best and safest corn regions of Palestine, instead of the land being appropriated to owners and a rotation of crops being in use, the sowers (i.e., any persons who may take the trouble to do it) sow a patch of ground,