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JOURNAL OF  
THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF  
The Victoria Institute,  
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Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

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SECRETARY: E. WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S.

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1913.

47TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,  
HELD (BY KIND PERMISSION) IN THE ROOMS OF THE  
ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS, ON MONDAY,  
JUNE 16TH, 1913, AT 4.30 P.M.

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF HALSBURY, F.R.S., PRESIDENT  
OF THE INSTITUTE, OCCUPIED THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the preceding meeting were read and signed and the Secretary announced the elections of Captain M. McNeile, R.N., Mr. Harry G. Munt, and Mr. T. Isaac Tambyah as Associates.

The PRESIDENT then called upon Mr. Arthur W. Sutton to deliver a lecture on his journey from Suez to Sinai.

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## ANNUAL ADDRESS.

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### *FROM SUEZ TO SINAI.\**

(WITH 100 LANTERN ILLUSTRATIONS.)

By ARTHUR W. SUTTON, ESQ., J.P., F.L.S.,

*Honorary Treasurer of the Institute.*

**M**Y camel ride from Suez to Mount Sinai came within the dates March 7th to 23rd, 1912. I was accompanied by my friend Dr. Mackinnon, of Damascus, who was also with me when visiting Petra in Arabia in 1907. As this latter tour had thrown so much light upon the later wanderings of the Israelites, I had a particular desire to make the desert journey to Sinai itself, and thus follow the earlier journeying of the people as they left Egypt under the leadership of Moses.

In the month of February, through my friend Mr. Bolland of the Sudan Agency War Office, Cairo, I met in that city Naum

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\* The address was based upon a *Journal of Travel*, which has been issued in book form, sumptuously illustrated, by Messrs. J. and J. Bennett, Ltd., The Century Press, 8, Henrietta Street, W.C., with the title "My Camel Ride from Suez to Mount Sinai." From that volume a number of illustrations are here reproduced, by permission of the publishers.

Bey Shoucair, who has charge over the Sinai Peninsula, and knows the country intimately. His description made me wish more than ever to accomplish the journey. Finding our former dragoman, Andrew Iesa, I resolved, at short notice, upon making a start on Thursday, March 7th, providing Cook's would guarantee camp being ready in time. There were difficulties and disappointments, but at length the permit for Sinai was secured from Naum Bey, and arrangements for the necessary camels and Bedouins were made (according to custom) with the Archbishop of Sinai in Cairo.

We left Mena House at 9.15 on the day named; we had fifty minutes to wait at Ismailia—time wherein to admire the place, with its modern residences and lovely gardens; and at 4.25 we reached Suez-town, where Iesa was awaiting us. All was not in order, however: after the manner of his kind, Iesa had neglected matters that required urgent attention. Hence, though in other circumstances we might have been in camp by 6.30 or 7 o'clock, we were detained several hours at Suez docks.

Our way was clear shortly after 10 o'clock, when the moon rose superbly grand, as it only can do in the East; and though only half-full, it appeared of immense size, and of a rich orange-golden colour. Embarking on a steam launch, we made a long detour into the open channel of the Gulf, and shortly before midnight we reached the shore. Through our being late, things had become dislocated; and the camels which were to have taken us to Ayûn Mûsa ("Wells of Moses") had left. There was nothing for it but, taking a guide, we should tramp over the sand for some three miles. The moonlight was glorious, and we reached our camp at Ayûn Mûsa a little after 1 o'clock. On arriving at this spot in the spring of 1853, Dean Stanley wrote—

"The wind drove us to shore: and on the shore—the shore of Arabia and Asia—we landed in a driving sand-storm, and reached this place, Ayûn Mûsa, 'the Wells of Moses.' It is a strange spot—this plot of tamarisks with its seventeen wells—literally an island in the Desert. It is not mentioned in the Bible, but coming so close as it does upon any probable scene of the Passage, one may fairly connect it with the song of Miriam.

"From the beach, the shore commands a view across the Gulf into the wide opening of the two ranges of mountains, the opening of the valley through which the traditional Exodus took place, and consequently the broad blue sea of the traditional passage. This, therefore, is the traditional spot of the landing, and this, with the whole view of the sea as far as Suez, I saw to-night; both at



ALONE ON THE DESERT  
SKELETON OF CAMEL IN THE FOREGROUND

*see page 251*

sunset, as the stars came out ; and later still by the full moon—the white sandy desert on which I stood, the deep black river-like sea, and the dim silvery mountains of Atâka on the other side.”

The next day (March 8th) we mounted our camels—not without some apprehension, but happily all went well. Nothing could well exceed the monotony of the ride for the first day and a-half, except that on our left was the magnificent tableland of the Tih desert, and on our right—to the west—were the mountains of Egypt (Atâka) across the Gulf of Suez. The “road” was simply a series of about a dozen parallel camel tracks stretching away into apparent infinity on an absolutely flat desert of firm sand, quite smooth except for stones strewn everywhere, more or less. Occasionally we passed the skeleton of a camel by the wayside, and sometimes a heap of stones indicating the spot where a Bedouin had died and been buried. But for occasionally meeting Bedouins going to Suez, there was no sign of life, either human, animal, or plant life.

A delightful breeze from the north followed us in our march. If, on the other hand, as Dean Stanley and many other travellers have found, there had been a Khamseen, blowing with oven-like heat and a dust-storm of blinding fury, then words would fail to describe the situation. All day long Stanley tramped on against a dust-storm, and he wrote—

“The clearing up of the sand the next morning revealed a low range of hills on the eastern horizon, the first step to the vast plain of Northern Arabia. The day after leaving Ayûn Mûsa was at first within sight of the blue channel of the Red Sea. But soon Red Sea and all were lost in a sand-storm, which lasted the whole day. Imagine all distant objects entirely lost to view—the sheets of sand fleeting along the surface of the Desert like streams of water ; the whole air filled, though invisibly, with a tempest of sand, driving in your face like sleet. Imagine the caravan toiling against this—the Bedouins each with his shawl thrown completely over his head, half of the riders sitting backwards—the camels, meantime, thus virtually left without guidance, though, from time to time, throwing their long necks sideways to avoid the blast, yet moving straight onwards with a painful sense of duty truly edifying to behold. I had thought that with the Nile our troubles of wind were over ; but (another analogy for the *ships* of the Desert) the great saddlebags act like sails to the camels, and therefore, with a contrary wind, are serious impediments to their progress. And accordingly Mohammed opened our tents this morning just as he used to open our cabin doors, with the joyful intelligence that the wind was changed—‘good wind, master.’ Through the tempest, this roaring and

driving tempest, which sometimes made me think that this must be the real meaning of a 'howling wilderness,' we rode on the whole day."

From time to time on subsequent days we came across evidences of sand-storms—the sand being piled up like snow-drifts as we know them. We were glad, however, not to have any actual experience of such storms, except for two or three hours the first Sunday afternoon, when every object was obliterated in a dense cloud of yellow sand. Thus far in our journey we had been continually crossing wâdis, or riding through them—generally the latter. A wâdi is a hollow between hills; all valleys are wâdis, but all wâdis are not valleys; for instance, Wâdi Sudûr (which we reached on the second day) is a shallow, dry bed of a watercourse, perhaps three feet deep, and always dry, except during occasional floods caused by very rare storms. At other times, wâdis are the valleys between the mountains, but never by any chance is there water except at an oasis, or during one of the very rare storms.

It was on the precipices of the slopes of the Tih range opposite our camp at Wâdi Sudûr that Professor Palmer, the eminent Arabic scholar, Captain Gill, R.E., and Lieutenant Charrington, R.A., were murdered by Arabs in August, 1882. They had gone into the Desert with the object of buying camels for the British expedition, and of getting the Bedouins of the Desert to join the English against Arabi Pasha. They were taken prisoners at Wâdi Sudûr on August 10th, and murdered on the following day. Colonel Warren subsequently obtained full particulars of the murder, and the money stolen from Professor Palmer was returned by the Arabs, about £9,000; and five of the ringleaders were hanged on March 1st, 1883, at Zagazig, and others at Suez and elsewhere. At the present time, the country is so quiet that probably a defenceless woman might travel safely alone from Suez to Sinai and Tor! One of the results of English rule in Egypt, as is universally and gratefully admitted.

On the third day we passed Ayûn Hawara, generally considered to be the site of Marah. It is a small spring on a sandy hill with a few wild palms; but the only evidence of water (which, like nearly all desert waters, is bitter) is the damp sand around. Later in the day we reached Hajar or-Rekkâb ("the Stone of the Rider"), a heap of stone in a vast sloping basin, enclosed by limestone hills and sand hills. We were still impressed by the monotony of our march; but we were following the wanderings of the Israelites, and our faces were toward Sinai.



PROBABLE SITE OF "MARAH"

*see page 252*



THE PROBABLE SITE OF ELIM. WĀDI USĒT

*see page 253*

The greater part of Sunday (March 10th) was spent quietly in camp in the Wâdi Gharandel, and here our Bedouin servants refilled the water barrels. Although there were signs that a powerful river sometimes ran through the wâdi, the only means we found of obtaining water was by digging small wells, and then the water was very brackish.

On the next day we reached Wâdi Usêt, one of the three traditional sites of Elim. The other two sites that have been claimed are Ayûn Mûsa and Wâdi Gharandel. As to the last-named place, the absence of tall palm trees (though it abounds in stunted palms and tamarisks) makes it unlike anything we had pictured in our minds for Elim; and Ayûn Mûsa may be dismissed as too near the passage of the Red Sea. The other spot, Wâdi Usêt, though smaller, has several fine tall palms, and is altogether more what we expected, and is truly a lovely spot.

Passing Wâdi et-Tal, we turn south-west down the Wâdi Tayyibeh ("Pleasant Valley"—or "Fruitful"), between limestone cliffs which throw out a terrible glare of heat. Here we came upon an oasis of palms with water running for a short distance and then disappearing in the sand, but brackish and unpleasant. It was to us a grateful change from the glare of our desert marches. Green caper bushes cling to the face of the vertical cliffs, and the scenery is very wild and grand.

We see on our left a fine bluff of lava and conglomerate, interspersed with bright bands of black, red, and brown, and in four miles come to the mouth of Wâdi Tayyibeh, where it opens on the seashore, on the plain Er-Markha. Here, somewhere on this plain, was the "Encampment by the Sea" of the Israelites. We walked down to the sea, which looked so near but, as a fact, was one and a-half miles off. It was perhaps necessary that the Israelites should thus be brought down to the sea again after many days' wandering on the desert plains with only bitter and brackish water, to be reminded of the mighty works which God had so lately done for them in delivering them from the hosts of Pharaoh.

The absence of all signs of animal life was very striking. We had thus far seen only about six black "ravens" or hawks, and a very few, perhaps six, small birds, in three and a-half days' journey. And the only plant life, except in the Oasis Gharandel consisted of stunted, scrubby, greyish-white plants which camels eat for want of anything better.

As our journey proceeded, so the landscape became more interesting. Thus, on Tuesday, March 12th, in the early morning,

the mountains across the Gulf of Suez took on a lovely tint, indistinct pale pink, while the sky above the mountains was of a slaty blue; and then came an exquisite deep broad band of rich salmon pink, while above that yellowish green fading into blue. Our route lay along the desert by the sea for several hours, passing two or three points where the mountains run into the sea at high tide. The camels are very surefooted; they never stumble on level ground as the Syrian horses constantly do, but on muddy ground or slippery rocks they slide about terribly. We had some experience of this. After passing the last promontory, the desert plain of Er-Markha opened out before us, taking two and a-quarter hours to cross. Murray's description of this plain is well worth quoting, as to this writer it appeared a veritable Inferno of scorching heat—

“For about two hours the road traverses this plain in a south-easterly direction, and a weary trudge it is. The sun is scorchingly hot, and blazes down upon the traveller from a sky whose blue expanse is unchequered by a single cloud. On the right the waters of the gulf, of an even deeper azure, seem to shimmer in a mirror-like motionless expanse, that is hardly broken by a ripple even where they reach the shore. The soil around is dry, baked and glowing. Fortunate is he who does not have to encounter a Khamseen to add to the exhausting heat, but meets rather with the fresh sea-breeze, which generally rises in the afternoon, and changes the character of the scene.”

This plain of Er-Markha must undoubtedly be identified as the “Wilderness of Sin” where the Israelites murmured for food, and quails and manna were first given. Although we covered the distance from Suez to this place in five days, it was not until the fifteenth day of the second month after leaving Egypt that the Israelites reached this spot; and more than ever before we felt able to appreciate the privations which they had to endure.

Here it was that we saw the first signs of population, even though of a wandering character, there being a Bedouin encampment in the distance and several flocks of goats wandering in search of scanty herbage, tended by Bedouin girls. The flocks are *always* tended by girls and not by men or boys; and so it was when Moses fled from Egypt and came to Jethro, whose seven daughters he found watering their father's flock near Horeb, *i.e.*, Mount Horeb in Wâdi Feiran.

Before us to the east a wâdi opened, and the mountains, to the east, south-east and south, were marvellously beautiful, and the colours extraordinary. On the left, yellow limestone brilliant in the sunshine, and then a *black* mountain (Jebel



OUR LUNCHEON TENT  
UNDER "THE SHADOW OF A GREAT ROCK IN A WEARY LAND"  
WĀDI HANAK EL LAKAM

*see page 255*

er-Markha), and then another yellow mountain, and behind all a magnificent range of dull crimson or red sandstone mountains and a broad band of crimson where the first yellow joined the black mountains; but no attempt at description can give any adequate idea of the mountain scenery and colours. Already our luncheon hour was long past, but we could not pitch our tent on the plain. So we pushed on, hoping to find shade somewhere up the Wâdi Hanak el-Lakam. Half-a-mile from the mouth of the wâdi we saw the first shade we had been conscious of all day, and there, under "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," we gratefully pitched our luncheon tent.

Now, as a fact, we were at the entrance to the mountains of Sinai proper, and limestone and sandstone soon gave place to granite. The ground rose gradually amidst increasingly fine scenery, and at length we came to the top of the pass Nakb el-Budera ("Pass of the Sword's Point"). A very steep and difficult pathway brought us over the crest, and looking back we had a glorious panorama of granite mountains, which reminded me of pictures I had seen somewhere in childhood, marvellous peaks and ranges of red granite, and here and there *black* mountains again.

On the way up the wâdi in the afternoon we met an old Bedouin whose two donkeys were grazing, also a few goats in charge of a woman, but no other signs of life. The Bedouin's name was Aaron, and I photographed him and one of our men "saluting by the way," first shaking hands, then gracefully bowing and leaning forward three times until forehead touched forehead, and then they generally kiss on both cheeks.

Up till this point it would almost have been possible to drive a motor car all the way from Ayûn Mûsa (except where our way was cut off by the sea) as the wâdis are broad, and there is always some smooth sandy surface to be found. From the summit of the pass we had a lovely view down various broad wâdis with the sea away to the west. The formation of the mountains is extraordinary, sometimes all red granite, at other times limestone of various colours (often brilliant whitish yellow) and sometimes absolutely black; probably limestone calcined till it looks like the refuse from a coal mine, also heaps of black volcanic slag, like refuse from iron-smelting works, indeed almost every shade of colour, though nowhere of the same brilliancy as Petra, unless we except the marvellous range of red granite seen from the Nakb el-Budera to the north and east when turned to a brilliant crimson by the setting sun.

Every wâdi since we left the plain and entered the mountain

region of Sinai is bounded on both sides by an indescribable scene of desolation. For unknown ages earthquakes and the action of the scorching sun have been splitting the limestone and granite mountain slopes, and then huge blocks of stone have been poured down towards the wâdi, and the wâdi sides consist of nothing but these heaps of refuse; some blocks of stone being hundreds of tons in weight.

At the end of Wâdi Q'ena (on Wednesday, March 13th) we passed the Wâdi Maghara on the left, down which at a short distance lie the ancient mines quarried for turquoises, from the earliest Egyptian dynasties. From here we follow the Wâdi Sidr, until we enter the Wâdi Mukatteb ("Wâdi of the Inscriptions"). The inscriptions in question long baffled all attempts to decipher, but are now known to be Nabathean and to have been executed by the inhabitants of Petra and other passers-by, including Greeks, one of whom, a Greek soldier, wrote, "A bad set of people these. I, the soldier, have written this with my own hand."

At the summit of the Wâdi Mukatteb we reach another narrow rocky pass, and obtain a magnificent view of Mount Serbal right before us. At length, we strike the apparently interminable Wâdi Feiran at its northern bend as it comes up from the sea and here turns south-east. As guide books are full of the beauties of the Oasis of Feiran, we expected almost every turn to reveal, not only Serbal in all its grandeur, but also the oasis itself. On and on, however, we went for at least six hours, and the sun set before we touched the first oasis or any water.

The most impressive fact of the day's ride, apart from the almost oppressive silence, was the absence of any human or other form of life; scarcely even a lizard was seen moving. At last we touch damp sand in the dry river-bed, and soon come to running water. About a mile before touching the water we pass a huge rock with piles of stones before it, also stones on the top. Professor Palmer was told by Bedouins that this was the rock that Moses struck and water came forth, when the Israelites were cut off from the waters of the oasis by the Amalekites, who were about to fight against Israel in order to prevent their access to these waters.

A truly wonderful feature of the wâdis we passed on our journey was that every one of them was a dry watercourse, many showing signs of tremendously powerful rivers in stormy weather; and on either side we passed immense widely-spread-out heaps of rubble and stones which had been swept down the smaller lateral wâdis, and these again cut through as by a knife by the central torrent



SINAITIC INSCRIPTIONS. WĀDI MURKATEB

*see page 256*



IN THE WĀDI FEIRAN  
THE ROCK WHICH MOSES STRUCK, ACCORDING  
TO ARAB TRADITION

of the main wâdi. One traveller speaks of an irresistible river he met in this wâdi, eight feet deep, carrying all before it: and though our track lay up these dry watercourses or over the banks of former river beds, *nowhere was a drop of water to be found!* Yet the waters of Feiran, which disappear suddenly in the sand at this end of the oasis, are amply sufficient, if carefully stored and conveyed in aqueducts, to irrigate the whole wâdi as far as the sea, and to turn it into a fertile valley.

From here onwards we could hear the occasional chirp of a bird, a very strange sound in this wilderness. At length we came upon a running brook, where the camels drank and the men too, and then patches of wheat and palms. After refreshment we wandered through the oasis of palms and tamarisks, and as it was already dark we were constantly in the water crossing and recrossing the stream. From time to time Iesa lighted up the wâdi with magnesium wire, revealing the palm trees and silvery feathery tamarisks in wonderful relief against the rocks and sky. After an hour, or perhaps less, we saw the welcome sight of Bedouins from camp coming to meet us with two Chinese lanterns, and the last half mile we were escorted to camp by them. We arrived at a quarter past seven—thirteen and a-half hours from our start in the morning.

I spent the following day (Thursday, March 14th) in camp, writing up my diary, while Mackinnon made the ascent of Mount Horeb (Serbal). From any point of view the ascent seems impossible, but to mountain climbers it is possible. Mackinnon enjoyed his day immensely, and made perhaps a record in reaching the summit in four and a-half hours, including two or three rests, whereas Baedeker allows six hours for the task.

In the course of the day I had a visit from the sheikh of the district. He had two sons with him, about ten years of age, of whom he was very proud. Iesa had discovered that the sheikh had some turquoises, from the ancient mines of the Pbaraohs, and these he was willing for me to have at what he said was a very low price, "out of consideration for me and for Naum Bey Shoucair," of the War Office, Cairo, for whom he had a great admiration. I was very glad to have these stones, and found later the price was very reasonable.

Towards the evening I came across another camp, with a party making the journey northward. There were two ladies, three divinity professors, and a doctor, all of them French. We accepted an invitation to their camp in the evening, and spent a pleasant time with them comparing experiences.

In this region, quite naturally, we endeavoured to recall the

sacred events connected with Mount Horeb, but it is only by very carefully comparing the several passages of Scripture relating to Mount Horeb and Mount Sinai that any very clear idea can be formed as to the events which occurred at each place. The name Horeb is undoubtedly used sometimes in the Bible to denote the whole district, rather than Mount Serbal alone.

Mount Horeb is known to have been a sacred spot before the Exodus, and Josephus speaks of the Divine Presence dwelling in these awful cliffs, "unapproachable by man." Moreover, the mount was associated by the early Church with events recorded in Scripture as having taken place at Sinai; and it was only after the founding of the Monastery of St. Catherine under Jebel Mûsa and Jebel Sufsâfa that the monks and anchorites of Horeb migrated to the monastery and its vicinity.

Assuming that Jebel Sufsâfa may be accepted as Sinai, with the vast plain of Er-Raha before it for the encampment of the Israelites, we can be satisfied that here in the Wâdi Feiran, under Mount Horeb (Jebel Serbal) Moses was feeding the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law; that here God spokè to Moses out of the Burning Bush and commissioned him to return to Egypt, and lead the children of Israel out of captivity. Here also Elijah came after his long journey from Jezreel and Beersheba, and heard God speaking to him after the earthquake in the "still small voice;" and some also think that St. Paul may have come here when, as he tells us, he "went into Arabia."

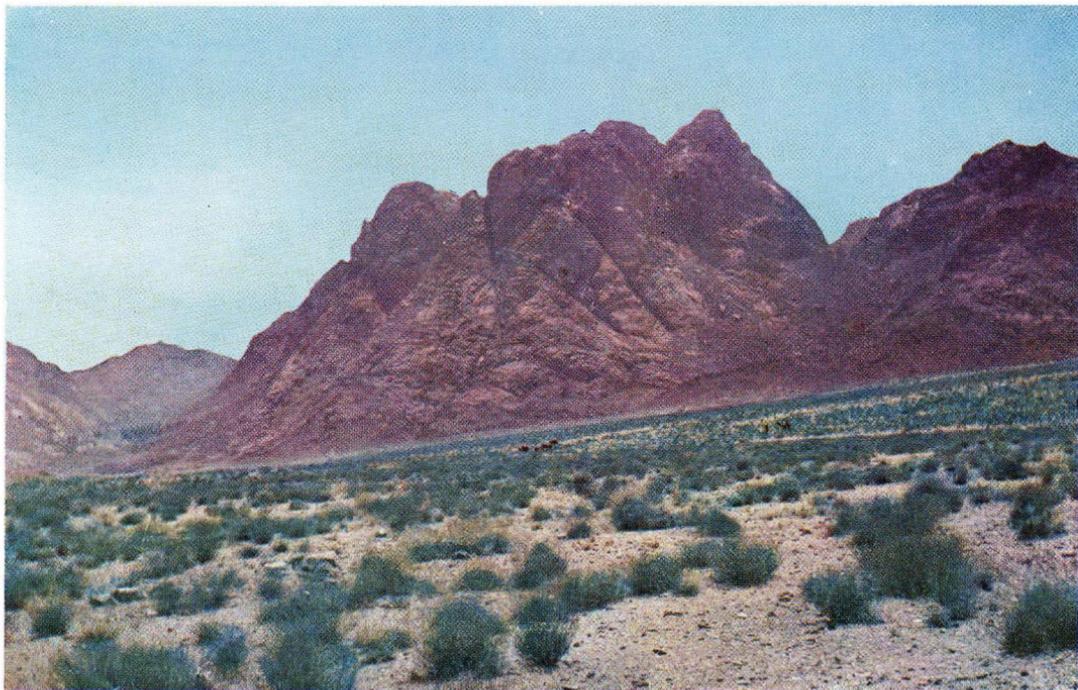
Our course on Friday, March 15th, lay up the valley toward the Upper Oasis. This extended about four miles, and beside palm trees there was a dense jungle of papyrus and other reeds, twelve to fourteen feet high. Through this we had to force our way, of course, on the camels; but how the baggage camels got through I do not know. At length we made our way up the Wâdi Feiran, passing the "Mountain of Conversation," which, by Arab tradition, is the mountain where God conversed with Moses. The Arabs still sacrifice here to Moses, singing: "O Mountain of the Conversation of Moses, we seek thy favour! preserve thy good people, and we will visit thee every year."

Passing El-Baweb, or "Little Gate," we reach the immense Wâdi es-Sheikh; for three miles or thereabouts most extraordinary cliffs of light yellow sandy mud bounded the wâdi on each side, to a height of about sixty feet, and above these were granite slopes and mountains. The explanation seems to be that these "basins" in pre-historic times were lakes; and as the lower ends were opened up by earthquake the water coursed through the sedimentary deposit, leaving the wonderful walls, with their



LOOKING BACK AT MOUNT HOREB

*(see page 258)*



MOUNT SINAI (JEBEL SUFSÂFA)  
FROM THE PLAIN ER RAHA  
(OUR CAMELS IN THE DISTANCE)

*level* horizontal strata as now seen. In due time we struck Wâdi Sahah, which is by far the best route from Feiran to Nakb el-Howa ("Gap of the Wind") and the monastery. Our route now presented an entirely new aspect of Sinaitic scenery, for instead of traversing never-ending wâdis, often very hot indeed, we were on a vast open plateau, always rising to a higher level, and often with scarcely the sign of any track.

About three hours after lunch we reached the highest point in a hollow opening in the ridge before us, and then, in full view, lay the finest panorama of the Sinai mountains to be seen from any point in the peninsula, except from a mountain top, and yet apparently unknown to Baedeker, and probably to Murray also. If we had taken the route which both guide books recommend, the Wâdi Salaf, we should have reached our camp below Nakb el-Howa without one glimpse of Jebel Sufsâfa or Jebel Mûsa, whereas here we see Sufsâfa right before us, and behind this lies the other peak of the same mountain range, Jebel Mûsa, the traditional Sinai of the Greek Orthodox Church.

After dinner we read together in Exodus xx of the Giving of the Law, also in Exodus xxxii of the idolatry of the Children of Israel in the worship of the golden calf, likewise of the breaking of the tables of the Law as Moses came down and saw the wickedness of the people. We were now within four and a-half hours of the monastery of Sinai; and the following day would bring us to the place where these great scenes were witnessed.

On the morning of Saturday (March 16th) we got off in good time, and in about two hours and a-half we were at the top of Nakb el-Howa. From the summit we had the finest view of Mount Sinai (Jebel Sufsâfa) itself to be obtained from any spot. Below us was a rather deep hollow, beyond which lay open before us the great plain of Er-Raha, "the Wilderness of Sinai," and this reached right up to the foot of the mountain. At first the plain rose gradually for two miles, and then sloped gently down for three miles or so to the mountain, being about a mile wide where it touched the mountain. A more perfect spot for the encampment of the Israelites could not be conceived. Many times their number could encamp here, and all in full view of the summit of the mountain.

In addition to Jebel Sufsâfa, now the dominating feature of the landscape, with Jebel Mûsa lying behind it to the south, we see on our right the western peak of the group, Jebel Catarina. Why Jebel Mûsa should have been chosen as the traditional Sinai rather than Sufsâfa one cannot

conceive, as the latter has this wonderful plain before it for the encampment of the Israelites, but Jebel Mûsa has nothing of the kind at all comparable. So close does the plain Er-Raha come to Mount Sufsâfa that one can at once understand the need of "setting bounds about the mountain" to prevent the people from touching it.

To be at last, after nearly nine days' weary (though very enjoyable) travelling, on such historic and sacred ground was an experience we can never forget nor give any adequate idea of. We dismounted and lingered for some time on the plain, trying to grasp the great facts upon which Christianity is based: such as the impossibility of severing the Old Testament from the New; the certainty that Jesus Christ himself accepted what Moses wrote; and that all the details of the Old Covenant given on Mount Sinai were but types of the New Covenant given by God in Christ. After taking many photographs we walked on to the foot of the mountain where the plain joins the Wâdi es-Sheikhî; and then we mounted our camels for the last two miles up the wâdi, on the eastern side of the mountain, and so came to the monastery. Here one of the monks met us, and very courteously led us into the convent and up to the guest chamber, where two other monks joined us. After some time spent in conversation, during which coffee and the liqueur of the monastery was served, we returned to the courtyard, and pitched our luncheon tent in a spot as sheltered from the wind as we could find.

After lunch we went back to the convent, and were shown the chapel, when we had time to take photographs, also to see the "Chapel of the Burning Bush" (where we had to take off our boots because Moses was told to do so), before the afternoon service began. We chose a delightful spot for our camp in the convent olive-yard, and then started for a walk up the "road" which we were afterwards to take for Tor, to a ridge near the "Mountain of Conversation" of Catholic tradition, passing on the way the path leading up to Jebel Mûsa. The view from the ridge was very fine.

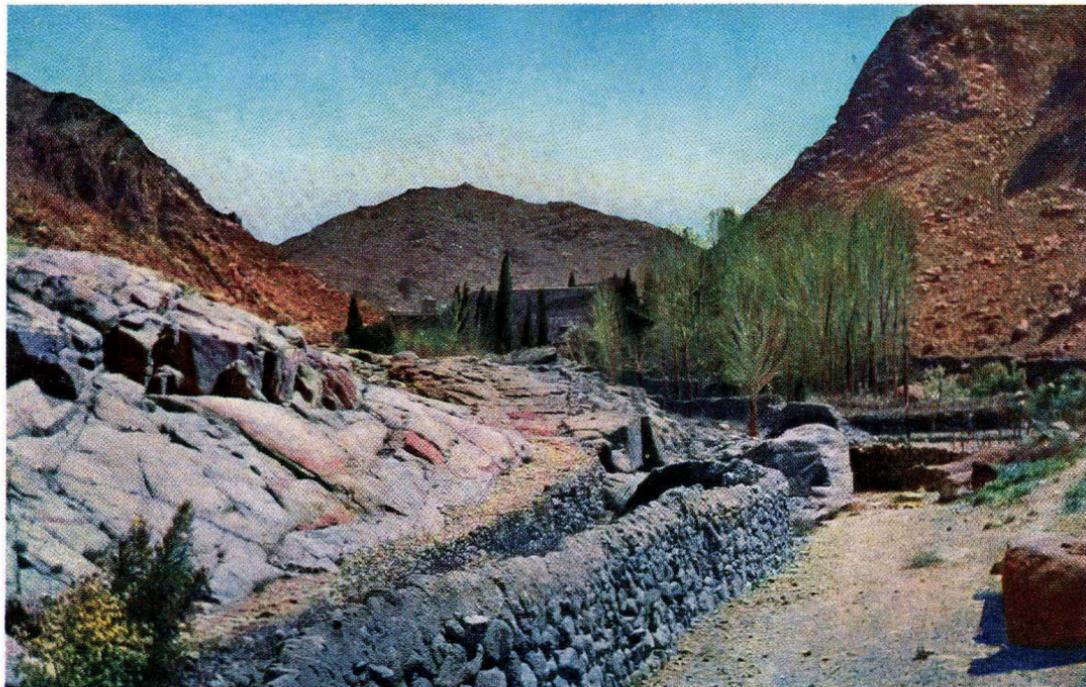
As at Jerusalem, the Greek monks want to have all the sacred sites in one place, and hence the Chapel of the Burning Bush and the Mountain of Conversation, and other traditional sites, are located by them here, though the Arabs locate them at Feiran by Mount Serbal (or Horeb).

On the Sunday we reviewed the library at the monastery, spending some time over the manuscripts. Among these we were shown the now famous Syriac text of the Gospels, found in



THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT  
(THE NEW COVENANT)

*(see page 260)*



APPROACH TO THE MONASTERY

*(see page 260)*

1892 by Mrs. Lewis and her sister, Mrs. Gibson, and called the Codex Syrsin, or Codex Suræ Veteris Palimpsestus Sinaiticus, the most valuable manuscript the library now contains. This is the oldest Syriac translation of the Gospels, but unfortunately it is far from complete. The parchment is a palimpsest, *i.e.*, it has been twice used for writing. This is easily explained. As we know, the material employed for ancient manuscripts had a commercial value which led to its repeated use: the vellum was rubbed down and cleaned, and then used again. Beneath writing that was comparatively modern, relating stories about some "holy" women, Mrs. Lewis detected traces of ancient characters. By the application of chemicals the original writing was brought out, with the happy result that she had found a Gospel text of profound interest and great value. Then each page was photographed by Mrs. Lewis and the fruits of the discovery given to the world.

The chief treasure the monastery library contained in former days was the Bible manuscript found there by Tischendorf, the Codex Sinaiticus. This dates from the fourth century A.D., and is regarded as the oldest and most authoritative text next to the Codex Vaticanus at Rome. Several leaves of this codex are now preserved at the University of Leipzig, but the greater part was purchased by the Emperor Alexander II. in 1869, for the absurdly small sum of eight thousand francs. The library now contains only a copy of this codex.

In the afternoon we "assisted" at the convent service: most of the monks were present, the Archimandrite occupying an important stall near the Archbishop's throne. The number of monks is now only twenty-five, but formerly there were as many as four hundred. The service (in Modern Greek) seemed an interminable repetition of prayers, interspersed with excessive censuring of everybody and everything. I have never witnessed in any Latin church a service which seemed so degrading and debased.

The monks as they entered passed by a long series of pictures of saints; they crossed themselves before favourites and kissed the faces on the pictures. At certain points in the service the cantor would repeat *Kyrie Eleison* (pronounced "guerison") as fast as he could, and until he was breathless, once about forty times, and often twelve or twenty times. At the close, the monks bowed to the ground, as a Moslem does at prayer, some for a score of times, and one of the priests approached the Archimandrite, bowed three times to the ground and retired. We were told that this form of service has continued unchanged

since the fifth century, and if so we cannot wonder that the thirty-three bishoprics which formerly existed in Arabia are now extinct.

The monks showed us the Charnel House. As the monks die they are buried in a garden, and after some time the bones are dug up and placed in this charnel house, the skulls by themselves and the other bones apart. Here lie, carefully piled up, the bones of the monks from the sixth century!!! The bishops' bones are in boxes apart. The whole place savours of "death unto death."

When standing before *Jebel Sufsâfa*, we could understand how Moses, coming down the eastern side of the mount, and before he reached the hill on which, according to tradition, Aaron watched the idolatrous worship of the golden calf, would hear the shouts of the people before the scene itself came into view. As Moses came round the north-east shoulder of the mount, everything would be clearly visible, and then it was that the tables of the law were broken in pieces "beneath the mountain," and the fragments of the idol strewn on the surface of the brook which descends from a spring on the western slopes of the *Sufsâfa*. Upon that mountain, and before it, everything recorded in Holy Scripture could take place, as the physical features show; but the same could not be said of any other spot in all the world.

From the Scripture records we find that the Israelites arrived on the plain of *Er-Raha*—"the Wilderness of Sinai"—in the third month of the first year of their wanderings: that the Tabernacle was set up before the Holy Mount on the first day of the first month in the second year, and that the numbering of the host took place on the first day of the second month of the second year, the number being recorded as 603,550, besides women and children.\* Also that the Israelites removed from Sinai, when the cloud was first taken up from off the Tabernacle, on the twentieth day of the second month of the second year—so that they were encamped eleven months before the mount.

I had not fully realized before the merciful providence of God in so ordering events that the giving of the Law—the First or Old Covenant—should at once be followed, and in the same place, by the institution of sacrifices for the pardon of transgressions against that Law which no human being has ever yet been known to keep perfectly. The institution of the Passover,

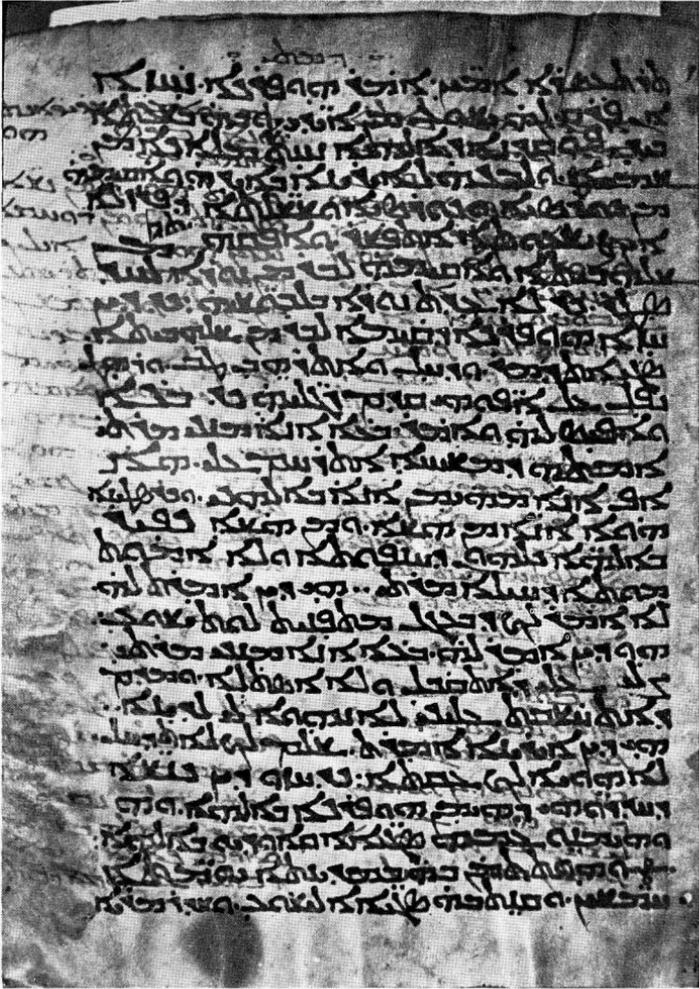
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\* See "Notes on the Census Numbers," pp. 265-8.



IN THE MONASTERY CHAPEL, SINAI

*see page 261*



A SHEET OF THE "CODEx SYRSIN,"  
BY KIND PERMISSION OF MRS. LEWIS, LL.D.

*see page 261*

and the sprinkling of the blood of the lamb upon their doorposts, before they left Egypt, may have prepared the Israelites for the fuller revelation of God's remedy for sin; and if, as may have been the case, it was the Second Person in the Trinity who spoke with Moses on the mount, then we have our Saviour Himself instituting the sacrifices which were the types and shadows of the New Covenant, of His own great sacrifice on Calvary. The memories of our stay in this region can never be effaced, and we can only hope that the lessons of Sinai may never grow dim.

Having said good-bye to the monks, we started on our way to Tor on Tuesday (March 19th). We had a new set of Bedouins and fresh camels. The beast provided for myself was an immense *white* camel, very easy in its movements. My first camel from Suez made, or caused me to make, 5,000 movements to and fro each hour. The next one I changed to, after the first fell with me, made 4,700 each hour; and this last camel, being still larger, made only 4,120. All depends on the height of the animal. This white animal was so big that it was quite impossible to get into the saddle, while it was lying down, without much assistance.

We had a magnificent view of Jebel Mûsa from the Wâdi Sabaiyeh. If this mountain had a plain in front of it like the Wâdi er-Raha before Jebel Sufsâfa, it would be difficult to decide which eminence most corresponded to the Sinai of the Bible, but this wâdi or plain below Jebel Mûsa does *not* compare for a moment with Er-Raha as a camping-place for the Israelites—nor is there any sign of water here.

On the following day (Wednesday) the scenery was marvelously grand, the climax being reached at the point where the granite mountains closed in and formed a gorge or cañon very much like those seen in parts of the Sik at Petra. The mountains are either red, brown, or grey granite, each colour beginning and ending suddenly, with frequent veins of black, or dark green, porphyry or diorite. These veins generally run vertically or nearly so, sometimes six feet wide, sometimes twenty or thirty feet wide, or even more, but the line of division between the porphyry and granite is clean-cut and generally absolutely straight. The effect is most wonderful, and the fact that the mountains are granite, and that the colours begin and end suddenly, differentiates these rocks from those of Petra, where all is sandstone and where the colours are so marvellously intermingled.

On our way we often met travelling Bedouins. There seems,

in fact, to be a continuous passage of Bedouins who make Tor their market up and down the wâdi to the convent and other resorts of the Arabs on the mountains. We had a splendid view of Jebel es-Shomar, the highest mountain of the Sinai range, towards the west. Tamarisks abound in this wâdi, and we often came to palms and dense thickets of reeds fifteen to twenty feet high, and frequently to a running stream of water a few inches wide, which disappeared again in the sand almost immediately. Towards evening we suddenly emerged from the mountain gorge and found our camp pitched on the desert plain. The next morning I made the six hours' ride across the desert of Tor in five hours and three-quarters. The plain descends gradually all the way, and as we proceeded we could make out with increasing plainness the Gulf of Suez, then Tor itself, and then the harbour.

A little after noon on Thursday I reached the Greek monastery at Tor, where a monk courteously received me, and I had lunch in the guest chamber. Mackinnon spent some hours on a shooting expedition in search of gazelles and ibex. On Friday afternoon (March 22nd) the steamer for Suez arrived, and as we made our way north we greatly enjoyed the lovely sunset effects on the Sinai mountains. On Saturday morning we anchored off the port, and while Mackinnon stayed the night at Suez in order to go straight to Beyrout, I took train to Cairo, and fulfilled an engagement to lecture at the Y.W.C.A., on my travels in Palestine.

At the close of the lecture the PRESIDENT proposed, and Professor HULL seconded, a hearty vote of thanks to the Lecturer, who replied.

General HALLIDAY proposed, and Mr. SUTTON seconded, a vote of thanks to the Chair, and the meeting separated.

## THE EXODUS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

## NOTES ON THE CENSUS NUMBERS.

The numbers mentioned in the census which was taken before Mount Sinai have presented a difficulty to many students of the history of the Exodus and the Wanderings of the Children of Israel, as described in the early Books of the Bible. The total seems to be out of harmony with certain well-known incidents in the narrative as a whole; and, moreover, it is a serious question with many reverent inquirers how so large a number as that given could have been led, in the orderly and disciplined manner described, through such a barren, wild, inhospitable, and mountainous region as the Sinai Peninsula, where, except in a few localities, lack of pasturage for flocks and herds is (and probably was at that time) so conspicuous a feature.

According to the Sacred Record there were two censuses—the first before Sinai (Num. i, ii), where the total is given as 603,550; and the second, after an interval of from thirty to forty years, in the Plains of Moab (Num. xxvi), where the total is given as 601,730. In each case the census was concerned with those who were "able to go forth to war," that is, males of twenty years old and upward. This means that if, as is generally agreed, FIVE may be taken as the average of a family—in other words, that for every male of twenty years old "able to go forth to war," there were five others, women, children, and old men—the community as a whole reached a total of at least THREE MILLION SOULS. If, therefore, we find difficulty in the thought of 600,000 people being conducted through the Wilderness with their flocks and herds, and maintained there for a period of forty years, how much greater is the difficulty when, as a fact, the multitude is represented as numbering three million souls!

To those who have gone over the ground with eyes wide open, the question now before us is of more than academic interest and importance. Among recent investigators who have followed up their travels with a suggested solution of the problem. I may name (1) Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie, D.C.L., F.R.S., &c., the eminent Egyptologist and author of numerous works on archaeological research; and (2) the Rev. F. E. Hoskins, D.D., of the American Mission, Beyrout, widely known for his writings on Oriental travel and antiquities.

Professor Petrie's views have been given to the world with a confident reiteration which divests them of novelty—first in a paper read before the Church Congress in 1906; then, in greater detail, in a volume, *Researches in Sinai*, in 1906; and again, in a smaller work,

*Egypt and Israel*, in 1911. The *Expository Times*, a monthly organ which takes account of all such matters, has from time to time made explicit reference to the views propounded, and so far no serious or considered answer seems to have been published. Dr. Hoskins, again, has written a singularly instructive work, entitled *From the Nile to Nebo*, wherein he describes a journey, taken in 1909, with the express design of following the route of the Exodus from Egypt into the Promised Land. His large acquaintance with Eastern life and thought invests his volume with profound interest.

In brief, it is suggested that the Hebrew word ALF or ALAF had, in ancient times, the meaning of "clan" or "family," though later (as in the Massoretic text, *eleph*) it more generally signifies "thousand." There are, indeed, traces of the former sense of the word in the Old Testament as we have it. For instance, in the first census chapter (Num. i), where we read of the "thousands of Israel" (*v.* 16), the Revised Version gives the marginal rendering "FAMILIES." Again, in Judges vi, 15, we find Gideon speaking of his "thousand" or "FAMILY"; the possessive pronoun makes it clear that a mere number cannot have been meant. Further, observe that in I Sam. x the words "tribes and THOUSANDS" in *v.* 19, find explanatory response in "tribes and FAMILIES" in *v.* 21. In like manner, in I Sam. xxiii, 23, and Micah v. 2, where we read of the "thousands of Judah," the Revised Version in the margin gives "FAMILIES of Judah" as the alternative. From these passages the observant English reader sees how one word may be used to represent two ideas. It is suggested by Professor Petrie and Dr. Hoskins that in other places also the word ALF was intended to convey the meaning of "clan" or "family," and among these the census chapters which now concern us. Possibly at one time the two meanings were distinguished by difference of pronunciation; but no clue to this has come down to us. The so-called "pointed" Hebrew text, as we have it, gives one word for both senses.

In a word, it is argued that, in each census, there was more than a numbering of heads: the reckonings gave totals of tents, families, or clans as well. The two-fold calculation shows—at the first census, 598 families or clans, consisting of 5,550 men of twenty years of age and upward; and at the second census, 596 families or clans, consisting of 5,730 able-bodied men. These totals are presented INSTEAD OF the large single numbers with which we are familiar—603,550 and 601,730 respectively. See the Tables on p. 268 for details in full.

Professor Petrie, in his statement of the case, presents the reduced figures, 5,550 and 5,730, as the probable numbers of the Hebrews at the beginning and end of their wanderings. He seems to have overlooked the fact that the censuses were confined to the males of twenty years old and upward. Dr. Hoskins, however, makes a point of the fact that the numberings were designed to show how

many of the people were “ABLE TO GO FORTH TO WAR.” Then, accepting the modern average of one man in every fourteen of the total population being liable to military service, he makes a calculation which yields a total of 77,000 people. To this number we must add the Levites, “from one month old and upward,” as given in Num. iii, 39, some 22,000—where the details are expressed in a way that makes it impossible to find “clan” beneath the ALAF. Hence a grand total of a hundred thousand souls. Dr. Hoskins adds: “This number, I am convinced, from a large number of subsidiary lines of argument, will be found substantially correct.” In case, however, as some would prefer, one in ten of the population should be accepted as the proportion of those who were “able to go forth to war,” then the total would be 77,500 instead of 100,000.

The theory so recently propounded having been thus outlined, it remains for me to remark that, so far, Oriental scholars in general have not given adhesion thereto. In his Commentary on “Exodus” (*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*), issued in 1911, Dr. Driver declares the view “improbable”; and I have reason to believe that his mature judgment is against the theory. Moreover, Dr. McNeile, in his Commentary on “Numbers” (same series), also issued in 1911, holds that the theory raises new difficulties, both in relation to the text of Scripture and Israelitish history. For myself, though in some senses the view seems very attractive, I note one passage in the Pentateuch which seems impossible of reconciliation with the suggestion. In Exodus xxxviii, details are given (on the basis of the first census) of the tax of a *bekah* (half a shekel) a head levied upon the people for gold and silver work in connection with the Tabernacle. Whereas we find (in *vv.* 25, 26) the product of 1,775 shekels, in respect of 3,550 men, there is also, in the same passage, mention of a hundred talents, the application of which is described with equal plainness (*vv.* 25, 27). In case a talent represents 3,000 shekels, which I find to be the case, this means an additional body of 600,000 men contributing the *bekah*—in other words, a total of 603,550 men, thus (apparently) excluding the rendering of “family” or “clan” in regard to the census total, when the same is viewed in the light of its yield in taxes.

Notwithstanding this bar to the theory, as I conceive it, having regard to the wide-ranging importance of the subject, I have deemed a summary of the most recent suggestions worthy of presentation in this connection. The proposal is, at least, ingenious; and the issue may prove to be of profound significance. While unwilling to tamper with the text of Scripture, or in any degree to call in question its Divine inspiration, I am deeply concerned to *understand* it—to understand it, on the one hand in the light of the language in which it has come down to us, and on the other hand in the light of the conditions and circumstances of the region in which the events took place, as described in the Sacred Records.

## ANALYSIS OF CENSUS NUMBERS.

## I.

The First Census taken before Mount Sinai. Numbers i, ii.

Reuben ... ..	46,500	Manasseh ... ..	32,200
Simeon ... ..	59,300	Benjamin ... ..	35,400
Gad ... ..	45,650	Dan ... ..	62,700
Judah ... ..	74,600	Asher ... ..	41,500
Issachar ... ..	54,400	Naphtali ... ..	53,400
Zebulun ... ..	57,400		
Ephraim ... ..	40,500	Total ... ..	603,560

## II.

The same Census when the Hebrew word ALAF is translated "Clans" instead of "Thousands."

	Number of Clans.	Number of Men in Clans.	Number of Men per Clan.		Number of Clans.	Number of Men in Clans.	Number of Men per Clan.
Reuben ...	46	500	9	Manasseh ...	32	200	6
Simeon ...	59	300	5	Benjamin ...	35	400	11
Gad ...	45	650	14	Dan ...	62	700	11
Judah ...	74	600	8	Asher ...	41	500	12
Issachar ...	54	400	7	Naphtali ...	53	400	8
Zebulun ...	57	400	7				
Ephraim ...	40	500	12	Total ...	598	5,500	9.3

## III.

Second Census taken near Jericho. Numbers xxvi.

Reuben ... ..	43,730	Manasseh ... ..	52,700
Simeon ... ..	22,200	Benjamin ... ..	45,600
Gad ... ..	40,500	Dan ... ..	64,400
Judah ... ..	76,500	Asher ... ..	53,400
Issachar ... ..	64,300	Naphtali ... ..	45,400
Zebulun ... ..	60,500		
Ephraim ... ..	32,500	Total ... ..	601,730

## IV.

The same Census when the Hebrew word ALAF is translated "Clans" instead of "Thousands."

	Number of Clans.	Number of Men in Clans.	Number of Men per Clan.		Number of Clans.	Number of Men in Clans.	Number of Men per Clan.
Reuben ...	43	730	17	Manasseh ...	52	700	13
Simeon ...	22	200	7	Benjamin ...	45	600	13
Gad ...	40	500	12	Dan ...	64	400	6
Judah ...	76	500	7	Asher ...	53	400	8
Issachar ...	64	300	5	Naphtali ...	45	400	9
Zebulun ...	60	500	8				
Ephraim ...	32	500	16	Total ...	596	5,730	9.6

DEATH OF MR. F. S. BISHOP,  
SECRETARY OF THE INSTITUTE.

THE Victoria Institute has sustained a severe loss in the unexpected death, on the 17th July last, of its Secretary, Mr. Frederic Sillery Bishop, M.A., J.P. Joining the Institute as a Member as long ago as 1879, he lived at a distance, and for many years was unable to attend the meetings. When at length he came to reside near London, in 1906, he became a constant attendant; five years ago he joined the Council, and two years later he was unanimously elected Secretary.

Mr. Bishop's period of office has been marked by the steady progress of the Institute; the papers read have been full of interest, and the numbers attending the meetings have increased so much of late, that at times no room could be found for late arrivals. Mr. Bishop brought to bear upon his important work great enthusiasm, steady business-like habits, a bright courteous manner, and a charming winning personality. His organising power was great, the accounts were simplified, and kept with scrupulous precision. He compiled a most useful double Index of all the papers read before the Institute from its foundation; on the one hand, according to subjects, and on the other hand, according to authors. He bravely continued his secretarial work almost up to the very end, though often in great pain.

Born in 1848, Mr. Bishop was educated at Cheltenham and at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he graduated as twenty-first Wrangler. He afterwards obtained a fellowship at St. John's College, Oxford. Entering upon a business career, he accepted an appointment as manager of the Copper Works of Pascoe, Grenfell, and Sons, at Swansea, and he lived in that neighbourhood for twenty-five years. During that time, as an earnest

Churchman, he engaged in Sunday School work; and for twenty years he was President of the Y.M.C.A., in connection with which he conducted Bible classes.

Being a life-long abstainer, he helped forward the work of the C.E.T.S. and Gospel Temperance Mission. Later on he resided for short periods in Reigate and in Chester. All his life long he was engaged in Christian work; and while he had brilliant gifts he shrank from no drudgery in service, but was painstaking and thorough in all he undertook. As an active member of the Committees of the Bible Society and of the Church Missionary Society, he was known and esteemed by a large circle.

He married a daughter of the late Captain Trotter, 2nd Life Guards; and by her he is survived, also by two sons and three daughters. His life was a many-sided one, well employed, happy, and useful; and those of us who had the privilege of knowing him personally cherish most happy memories of him.

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APPOINTMENT OF MR. E. WALTER MAUNDER,  
F.R.A.S.

At a well-attended meeting of the Council, held on the 7th October, Mr. E. Walter Maunder, F.R.A.S., was elected Secretary of the Institute.

The Council gladly avail themselves of his services, and heartily welcome him to his responsible post.

G. MACKINLAY, Lt.-Col.,  
*Chairman of Council.*