

LIEUTENANT CONDER'S REPORTS.

V.

THE LAND OF BENJAMIN.

GIBEON, 1st July, 1881.

TAKING advantage of the delay occasioned by circumstances already referred to, we have revisited one of the first districts surveyed by the party employed in 1872, while under care of Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake, before my arrival in Palestine.

The chief points of interest include the questions of Rimmon and Ai ; the vicinity of Gibeon and the battle of Ajalon ; and the ruins of Tellilia, and Deir esh Shebâb, with some traditions connected with Tell 'Asûr, and el Jîb, &c. The general result of our re-examination is satisfactory, inasmuch as the nomenclature of the Map has been tested in many places, and found correct ; while scarcely any ruins of even the least importance are found to be omitted ; all the really ancient sites and buildings having been plotted and described. This is specially satisfactory, inasmuch as the district is one of the most difficult to survey, on account of the ruggedness of the hills and the great depth of the valleys, while it was also one which was undertaken while the party were still new to the work, and unfamiliar with the archæology of the country.

The Rock Rimmon.—Until the year 1879, it was generally agreed that this site, in the wilderness (Judg. xx, 47) where the six hundred Benjamites lived for four months after their defeat at Geba of Benjamin (Judg. xx, 10 and 33) was to be recognised at the ancient village of Rummôn, on the edge of the cultivated hill-country, overlooking the desert ranges, above the Jordan valley. It has now, however, been proposed to recognise a connection between this Rimmon rock (which may most properly be rendered "high rock" on the authority of Gesenius, and on other authorities) with the "pomegranate tree which is by Migron" (1 Sam. xiv, 2), *Ha Rimmon asher bi Migron* in the Hebrew, a site which it is unnecessary to say cannot be expected still to exist if the rendering "pomegranate tree" be correct, but which is to be sought in the vicinity of Wâdy Suweinît (the valley of Michmash), to the cliffs of which the term Migron "precipice" appears from another passage to apply (Isaiah x, 28).

Those who support this view point to the large cave in Wâdy Suweinît called Mughâret el Jaî as the possible refuge of the Benjamites, and consequently to the precipice in which it occurs as the true Rock Rimmon. Having now revisited and carefully examined both this cave and the village of Rummôn, I send you the following results.

Before describing the sites, however, it is necessary to take note of the word *Sel'α*, rendered "rock" in the English version. It is a term of

frequent occurrence in the Bible, and is rendered almost invariably rock. The Rev. W. F. Birch, in writing on Rimmon (*Quarterly Statement*), 1879, p. 127) states that the term "always means a precipitous rock, *i.e.*, a cliff," and this has been urged as an objection to the identification of Rummôn with Sela Rimmon. The quotations which he gives (p. 129) are, however, scarcely sufficient to prove that *Sel'a* should be rendered precipice. Gesenius gives its radical meaning as signifying "High place or place of refuge," and the Septuagint translators, who may be supposed to have known the contemporary use of the word, render it by the Greek *πετρα* a stone or rock.

There are also passages in Scripture where the term can scarcely be understood as meaning a precipice, as in Psalm xvii, 2, "The Lord is my rock" or Psalm xl, 2, "Set my feet upon a rock," for David cannot be supposed to mean "set my feet upon a precipice"—a position hardly to be considered as one of safety and comfort.

The arguments in favour of the site proposed by Mr. Birch (Mughâret el Jaî and the south cliff of the Michmash valley) are the following: 1st, the identity with the pomegranate tree, supposed to have existed at or near this spot, but no longer to be found; while the name Rimmon no longer occurs in the vicinity; 2nd, the existence of a cave reputed to hold 600 men, which cave, however, is not mentioned in the Bible; 3rd, the existence of precipices, which may represent the Rock, or *Sel'a*, although, as shown above, the Hebrew word has not the meaning of precipice.

The present village *Rummôn* stands in a conspicuous position, at the end of a high narrow ridge which runs out south from the village of Taiyibeh. The houses stand on a rounded knoll of hard rock, very similar to that on which Beit 'Atâb (the Rock Etam according to my view) is built. On the west the rock is specially steep, with low cliffs or steps, some 10 feet high in places. On the south are several rude caves used as cattle stables, and called Shukâf Jiljâl; there are other small caves under the houses on the east. The village consists of straggling cottages of stone, supplied by ancient cisterns. There is a ruined tank on the flat top of the knoll. On the north is a small plateau with olive groves, on the west are some caves and rock-cut tombs. The site is evidently ancient, and is of great strength, as deep, narrow valleys occur on three sides, so that it is only easily reached from the north. On the east are the gorges and inaccessible precipices of the great ravine which runs from Taiyibeh to the Jordan valley. From the rocky hill top a fine view is obtained southwards, extending to Jebel Fureidîs, south of Jerusalem, and including Tell el Fûl, Jeba' (Geba of Benjamin) and er Râm, and on the north Taiyibeh and Tell 'Asûr are visible. This site I afterwards induced Dr. Chaplin to visit, and he agreed with me that it could not be more correctly described than by the term *Sel'a*, a rock, a high place, a stronghold, or place of refuge. Here, then, on a rock close to the edge of the *Midbar* or pastoral desert which extended east of Bethel (Josh. xviii, 12) we find the name Rimmon preserved unchanged, in a form which has no meaning in Arabic, but which in Hebrew properly describes the site as "high."

We must now turn to the question whether the cave called Jâi, is likely to have any connection with the rock called Rimmon. The position and character of the cave have been very carefully described in a former paper by Mr. H. B. Rawnsley, and I can only add the results of a careful survey of the interior (*see Quarterly Statement*, 1879, pp. 118-129 and 170-171). Mr. Rawnsley's plan, though rough, agrees fairly with the Survey now made, which was executed on main lines laid down with magnetic directions, with numerous offsets. This Survey enables us to calculate very closely the area of the cave.

Mughâret el Jâi is excavated in a precipice some 40 feet high, on the south bank of Wâdy Suweint, east of Jeba' (Sheet XVII) and about a quarter of a mile east of the small hidden spring (Ain Suweint) which is on the top of the precipices, but accessible by a path down a steep slope, which occurs west of the two bluffs, one called *el Mek'aur* ("the place of holes") in which is the cave, the other *el Koba'* (apparently "the helmet") immediately west of the former. The cavern is entered from the north-east, and is hidden from the west by the projecting bluffs. Beyond it is a second cave, to which I obtained the name *Abu Jemâl*, the entrance to which, partly closed by a rude wall, is quite inaccessible, being some 20 feet from the foot of the cliff. This second cave faces north-west, a recess occurring in the precipice between the two caverns.

The rocky slope at the foot of the cliffs is polished by the bare feet of shepherds and the hoofs of goats, and an explorer shod with boots is in great danger of sliding down towards the stiff slope which falls perhaps 300 feet to the rocky bed of the ravine. On the north rise cliffs and bluffs equally barren, and also burrowed with caves.

The gorge is as solitary and desolate as the well known kelt valley, which it joins further east; and is inhabited by the black grackles, the rock-doves, and desert partridges; while the sage-bushes, the thorny *bellân*, and a few scattered *Kharrâbah* trees form the only vegetation. The guide who accompanied us seemed much impressed by the awful silence and desolation of the great valley. He muttered constant prayers to the Moslem saints for aid, and sat in the great entrance-hall of the cave, and refused to come further. He became much alarmed when we disappeared in the dark; and afterwards, when the light of a magnesium torch shone in the distance, we could hear him calling to us as we penetrated yet further into the darkness, and he gravely stated that the great passage led to Jerusalem, and that if we walked from dawn till eve we should not come to the end.

But although the site is impressive, the cave itself was disappointing. It is not like the famous Khureitûn cavern, a network of halls and passages, but simply a large cavern, with a narrower gallery leading upwards and returning with a stiff descent to a second entrance visible in the cliff, west of that now accessible. Why the advocates of a Rock Rimmon in this vicinity should have pitched on this particular cave it would be difficult to understand, seeing that there are many other caves along both sides of the valley, were it not that they appear to rely on the statement of the fellahin that this cave will contain 600 men, and that 16 flocks of 100

sheep have been folded at one time in its main chamber. The Survey shows that the total area of the cave and its branches does not exceed 970 square yards, while the main chamber is about 500 square yards. Thus if 1,600 sheep were ever crowded into this chamber they must have stood half of them on the backs of the rest, as more than 3 sheep could scarcely be packed into 2 square yards.

In the same way, allowing 6 feet by 3 feet for a man, if the 600 Benjamites lived and slept in this cave (even including the branches which are low and pitch dark) 120 of them must have lain above the rest (which is improbable). I am therefore unable to agree with Mr. Rawnsley that "three hundred could perhaps find ample accommodation," as even this smaller number would necessitate the supposition that for four months they were packed twice as thick in this dark cavern (without ventilation) as soldiers in barrack rooms, which, however carefully ventilated, are still unpleasantly crowded at night.

Thus the only remaining argument in favour of this site—that it is a cave capable of containing 600 men, vanishes before the results of careful survey, and we are left to choose between a rock where the name Rimmon still exists, and a cave in a cliff which will not hold the number of fugitives mentioned in the story, and has not any connection by name with the topography of the episode, and is not mentioned in the Bible.

The cave appears to be mainly natural, formed probably by the action of water, and possibly enlarged by man. The floor is covered with the dung of sheep and bats, a few of the latter being encountered, while a goat's skull lay at the end of the passage which once communicated with the second entrance. The roof of the main chamber is blackened with smoke. The branches have lower roofs and are quite dark. There is nothing remarkable in this cavern, which resembles many others visited by the Survey-party, some being much larger. Both sides of the valley have many similar caves of various dimensions, mostly inaccessible. In almost every case they appear to be traditionally connected with the Christians, and a comparison with similar caves near Mâr Sâba, in Wâdy Kelt, and on Jebel Kûrüntîl, seems to show that whether or no they were originally natural, they have been enlarged by the hermits who, in the 5th and 12th centuries, retired to these fastnesses and lived and died in the caves.

In searching for the name Rimmon at this spot, Mr. Rawnsley collected many titles applied to surrounding features, some of which were new. These local names are specially numerous in the desert districts, where the Arabs have no landmarks other than those formed by natural features, and we recovered no less than thirty similar names in one valley near Taiyibeh.* They do not, however, as a rule, appear to be very ancient or of

* The same peculiarity of the much greater number of names applied to natural objects in pastoral districts, as compared with those in the settled or agricultural districts, is observable in the British Ordnance Survey. The surveyors, I am told, in the highlands find among the Gaelic shepherds that every feature has a well known name, and the number thus collected is much

any special value, but can easily be recognised as describing the peculiarities of the features to which they apply in the present case ; while some of the names are evidently genuine and well known, others are differently given by different guides and are extremely doubtful. The following are the names collected in a length of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles along the course of Wâdy Suweint.

I.—*North side of Valley going East.*

1. *El Aleilyât*, "the upper chambers," hermits' caves. See Sheet XVII.
2. *El Hosn*, "the fortress," hermits' caves with windows in cliff.
3. *El Hosn*, "the fortress," another group in same cliff $\frac{1}{2}$ mile E. It seems that the name must apply to the whole cliff.
4. *'Arâk esh Shinnâr*, "Partridges' Cave," above No. 1.
5. *El Merjâmeh*, "place of the Cairn," above No. 3.
6. *Sh'ab el Hâtî* "the walled spur," a narrow spur of rock like a wall with ravine behind.
7. *Khallet er Râhîb*, "monks' dell," above this ravine.
8. *Kurnet el Falkeint*, "peak of two clefts," a cliff.
9. *'Arâk el War*, "cave of rough rocks," above No. 8.
10. *'Arak (or Shakif) el Akhdeish*, "Cliff of the Scratch."

II.—*South side of Valley going East.*

11. *Kal'at Abu Dâmûs*, "Castle of Damas," a large cave opposite No. 1. See Survey, Sheet XVII.
12. *Khallet el Haiyeh*, "dell of the snake," from a ruin of same name south-east of it.
13. *Ain Suweint*, "spring of the little Acacia."

larger than in the Lowlands, where the country is divided into fields, and the roads, villages, and buildings form landmarks which do not exist in the moors. I believe that the same rule applies in Palestine, as we have always collected more names (though fewer of value) among the Bedawin than among the Fellahin. In the vicinity of Shechem, Jerusalem, and Hebron, there are, however, unquestionably a great number of names, applying to hills and valleys, although for the most part they appear to be of little value to the archæologist, and are often indisputably modern.

In connection with this question I may mention a very interesting conversation with Mr. S. Bergheim, of Abu Shushah. He quoted to me several instances in which, within the last ten years, the peasantry in the above village had changed the names of various plots of ground, and small valleys, in consequence of local events. Thus a hill formerly known by another name is now called by that of an Arab found murdered on the spot. This fully accords with the survey experience, and it appears necessary to distinguish between the true nomenclature attaching to villages, ruins, springs, and spring wells, and the secondary local nomenclature of small natural features which appears to be of modern and varying character.

14. *El Kob'a*, from a root meaning "domed," a cliff.
15. *El Mek'ar*, "the place of holes," cliff with caves.
16. *Mughâret el Jâi*. The meaning is unknown to the Fellâhîn.
17. *Mughâret Abu Jemâl*, "Cave of Camels."

The only names of any interest in this long list seem to be Nos. 1, 2, 7, 11, 13, 16, of which only 7 and 13 are omitted on the Survey, Sheet XVII.

The name Jâi (16) appears to come from the same root as the Hebrew Gai, and the Arabic *Jeiye*, has the same meaning as the Hebrew Gai, viz., "a place where water collects." It has been suggested above that it was by the action of water that the cavern was originally formed, but it is perhaps more probable that it should simply be rendered "cave of the ravine," in allusion to the side ravine which runs into the gorge immediately east of the cave or to the main valley itself.

In consequence of the assumption that the 600 Benjamites lived in a cave, and that this cave was Mujhâret el Jâi, the cavern has been awarded an undue amount of importance, for there are many other caves of greater interest in Wâdy Suweint (especially Nos. 1, 2, and 11), though unfortunately they are for the most part inaccessible.

In these, perhaps, the mysterious Essenes dwelt long before the Christian hermits, and probably among them we may recognise the "Caves and rocks, and high places ('Alâli) and pits" (1 Sam. xiii. 6) in which the Israelites hid from the Philistine garrison of Geba.

The most important in appearance of these is the cave in the great cliff called el Hosn, "the stronghold," which cliff appears to be the Biblical Bozez as mentioned in "Tent-Work in Palestine." After visiting the Mughâret el Jâi I attempted, in company with Mr. Armstrong, to reach this other cave, climbing down about 600 feet and ascending some 200 feet on the north side of the gorge. Here we found ourselves at the foot of a cliff at least 100 feet high and seemingly inaccessible. Near the top were the little windows which seem to belong to a chapel, but the caves at the foot of the cliff which we had hoped to find connected with this upper story proved to be only shallow excavations blackened by smoke.

We now attempted to reach the windows by climbing the precipice, and for this purpose I took off my boots and clambered over a high ledge slippery from the naked feet of former climbers, and found myself on a broad platform extending to the Aleiliyât caves on the west. Above this was another cliff some 20 feet high, which I was able to climb without great difficulty, reaching a second narrower terrace. The next cliff was apparently quite inaccessible, but I found in it a fissure half filled by a bush, and using my shoulders against the sides of the crevice I succeeded in gaining a yet higher and narrower ledge. Walking eastwards along this I endeavoured to reach the windows, which were hidden by an intervening buttress of rock. I found, however, that the ledge terminated in a vertical cliff, and that I was now higher than the windows, although not yet at the very top of the cliff. Descending again to the next terrace, I joined my companion, and we again tried to reach the cave, but found that there was no foot-hold on the cliff. We were thus obliged to abandon the

attempt when within a few yards of our object, and after a very fatiguing climb. We marked the spot which we reached with a sheet of white paper, and descending to the bottom of the ravine climbed up the south side, visiting another small cave in a cliff. On gaining the top of the southern precipice, much exhausted by our efforts, we looked back at the white sheet of paper, and I was surprised to find that I had climbed the whole cliff with exception of the highest ledge, which did not appear to be more difficult than those surmounted.

The interest of this escalade lies in the fact that the cliff of el Hosn is probably the rock Bozez, up which Jonathan climbed "upon his hands, and upon his feet, and his armour-bearer after him" (1 Sam. xiv, 13).

The position of the Philistine camp near Michmash is carefully described by Josephus, in a manner which strikingly recalls the cliff of el Hosn, and it seems possible that in the name *Hosn*, or "Stronghold," may linger some reminiscence of the ancient history of the spot. The descent of the cliff Seneh is not mentioned as specially difficult in the history of Jonathan's adventure, and the fact that the Survey party once brought their horses down this side of the gorge shows that though apparently impassable, a comparatively easy descent can be found. I had always, however, supposed that it would be impossible to climb up the northern precipice, and Mr. Rawnsley has recently suggested that Jonathan reached the top by the *Shâb et Hâti*, a steep but quite practicable ascent.

The objections to this view seem to be that this approach would no doubt have been specially guarded by the Philistines, and, moreover, that Jonathan would not have been obliged to climb on his hands and feet, as stated in the Biblical account. It was no doubt the audacity of the attempt, and the appearance of the enemy at an apparently impregnable point, that spread such panic among the Philistines, and in searching for an entrance to the hermits' caves, I unconsciously proved the possibility of scaling the cliffs, perhaps at the very point where Jonathan himself ascended. Above the precipices a stiff slope of perhaps 200 feet or more leads to the flatter ground near the summit, and if the Hebrew champion at all approached the modern Arab in his powers of endurance, there appears to be nothing impossible in his being fit to fight when he reached the top of the mountain.

In riding from our camp at el Jîb to the valley of Michmash, we passed through Jeb'a, and as questions have at various times arisen respecting the view from this village, I carefully recorded the places visible. There is high ground immediately north of the houses, almost level with the top of the central tower, and the view is here the same obtained by Dr. Chaplin when standing on the tower itself, but as the position of the village is not high compared with the surrounding ridges, the panorama is much less extensive than seems to have been supposed. From Jeb'a (2,220 above the sea) are seen on the north, Rummôn, Mukhmâs (Taiyibeh being hidden), Tell 'Asûr (3,300), et Tell, Deir Diwân (2,570), Burkah and Kefr 'Akâb : both Beitîn and Bîreh are hidden by intervening hills, though the gardens of the latter can be seen.

On the west, er Râm is completely shut out by the crest of its own hill, although 400 feet higher than Jeb'a, on the south-west Tell el Fûl (2,754) stands up against the sky-line, and the ridge near it entirely conceals every part of the Jerusalem plateau; as a section along this line would show to be necessarily the case. Hizmeh (2,020), and 'Anâta (2,225) are visible, but the ridge of Râs el Meshârif (2,900) conceals the buildings on Olwet (2,700). A portion of the Dead Sea is visible on the east, but the view from er Râm is much more extensive than that from Jeb'a.

41.—From our Taiyibeh camp in company with Dr. Chaplin and Lieutenant Mantell, I made a thorough investigation of the vicinity of Bethel and Michmash. It has been advanced by other writers in the *Quarterly Statement* that the term *beside* (Josh. xii, 9), intimates that Aî was close to Bethel, while the same may be deduced from the description of Abraham's altar, "having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east" (Gen. xii, 8). For this reason the site proposed by Lieutenant Kitchener (Khûrbet el Hâi, south-east of Michmash) appears unsuitable, being at a distance of six miles south-east of Bethel, and therefore not likely to be mentioned as defining the situation of the mountain east of Bethel, and not properly describable as "beside" that city.

It is curious to note how many places there are in this district to which the name *Haiyeh* ("living animal" or "serpent," according to the termination) is applied; 1st, Khûrbet el Haiyeh, south of Wâdy Suweint; 2nd, Khûrbet el Hâi, north of the same; 3rd, Khûrbet Haiyan; 4th, Khûrbet, Dâr, Haiyeh, further north; 5th, Wâdy Abu Haiyât, east of the latter. None of these have, however, the exact form of the Hebrew Ai (אֵי), though the *He* may perhaps take the place of the Hebrew guttural *Ain*.

Khûrbet Hâi is an insignificant ruin, apparently a shepherd's hamlet, with caves and foundations of ruined cottages. It has a large cistern on the hill above it, and enclosures walled in with large rude blocks, which are often found round the village threshing floors. The natives of Mukhmâs say that this was formerly a village belonging to them, and inhabited by Moslems.

The site which appears most probably to represent Aî, is the important ruin of Haiyân, immediately south of the curious hillock called et Tell. The vicinity has long been recognized as the approximate locality, but the ruins were first described by the Survey party.

The mound of et Tell with its terrace walls of rude stones, and its conspicuous group of olives, is a natural feature modified by the construction of the terraces. It does not appear to have been the site of a city, and only a single cistern has been found there. It is, however, only half-a-mile distant from Khûrbet Haiyân, and the arguments which were brought forward by Vandavelde, Colonel Wilson, and others, apply with even greater force to the site at Haiyân. There is a deep valley to the north (Josh. viii, 11), such as would be called *Gai*; there is an open plateau on the east, which may perhaps be intended by the "plain" (Arabab, Josh. xii, 14); and there is a valley on the

west (Wâdy el Medînet), which may have afforded concealment to the ambush sent by Joshua from Gilgal (Josh. viii, 3) before he marched up to Aî himself (verse 10), supposing that this force of 30,000 men advanced by the only really practicable route, which leads from Jericho to the vicinity of Michmash, and reaches Haiyân on the south-east.

The ruins of Haiyân will be found fully described in the memoir to Sheet XVII; they include several large tombs on the south, three fine rock-cut tanks (the largest in the district), and a number of rock-cut tombs on the north. The site is now covered with olive gardens, but the name is well known to the villagers of Deir Diwân, a Moslem village immediately north of the site.

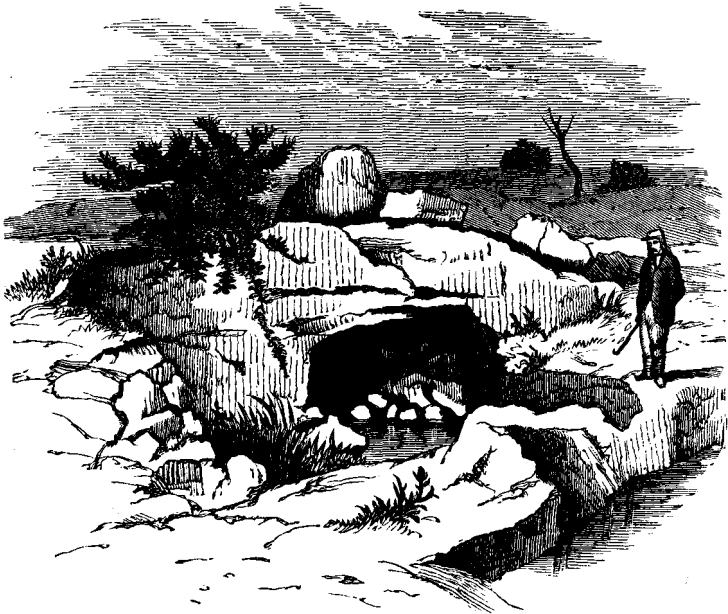
From Haiyân we followed the old road westwards to Bethel. On this road there is a curious construction of rude stones on the ridge some 300 yards west of et Tell; it resembles one or two other similar foundations to be found near Bethel, being apparently solid, about 10 feet square, of rude unshaped blocks 2 to 4 feet in length. There are three courses standing, and the building might be taken for an altar (which would be of the highest interest in such a situation); but its position by the roadside more probably indicates that it is a small watch-tower, such as are frequently found on Roman roads.

We paid three visits to the vicinity of Bethel with the view of examining the supposed circle of stones said to exist near it. We were, however, unable to arrive at any other conclusion than that the curious rocks photographed by Colonel Wilson are natural features; and although Dr. Sepp speaks (I believe) of a rude stone circle, I was unable to find any such monument after searching the entire vicinity. The rocks called *el Kûlâh* are very remarkable features, and might at a distance easily be mistaken for remains of an ancient monument, but they are not detached from the mass of the mountain, and are not arranged in any particular form.

It is worthy of notice in this connection that the plains of Jordan and the north end of the Dead Sea are clearly visible from the ridge between Beitîn and Haiyân, where Abraham's altar would probably have stood (Gen. xiii, 10). Thus the crusading monastery of Burj Beitîn, and the neighbouring chapel of el Mukâtîr, no doubt represent the traditional sites of this famous altar in the 12th and 5th centuries respectively.

Gibeon.—Our camp has been fixed at this famous city for ten days, and we have carefully examined the site of the ancient town. *El Jîb*, the modern village, occupies the north end of a detached hill some 200 feet high, surrounded by broad flat corn valleys on every side. The inhabitants state that the old city stood on the south part of the hill, and here in the sides of the natural scarps which fortify the site we have visited and explored some 20 rock-cut tombs. There are eight springs on the hill, the largest, on the last, being one of the finest supplies of water in this part of Palestine. One of the springs is called *el Birkeh*, and flows out into a rock-cut tank measuring 11 feet by 7 feet, the

water issuing from a small cave. This place is south-west of the village, and close to the main east and west road through Gibeon. The pool is cut in the face of a cliff, and has a wall of rock about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet high on the west. Above it grows a pomegranate tree, and near it are ancient tombs in the cliff.



THE POOL IN GIBEON.

The reader will remember the dramatic account of the meeting between Joab with David's followers, and Abner with the clansmen of the house of Saul (2 Sam. ii, 13); how they sat one on one side, the other on the other at "the pool in Gibeon," and arranged the fatal duel between the young men who were bid to "arise, and play before us." The Hebrew word describing the pool is the same as the modern Arabic Birkeh, and the apparent antiquity of the ancient tank fed partly by rain water, partly by the little spring in the cave, seems to countenance the idea that we here find preserved one of the lesser sites of the Biblical narrative, the recovery of which lends so much force and reality to the ancient narration.

It is possible, however, that the great spring ('Ain el Belled) is the place intended in this episode, as it wells up in a chamber some 30 feet long and 7 feet wide, reached by a descent of several steps. This cave resembles very closely that of the Gibeon spring (Virgin's Fountain) at Jerusalem, for there is said to be a passage with steps leading up from

the back of the cave to the surface above. As the water is some 5 feet deep, and the passage is now stopped up, we did not attempt to enter it. It is, however, clear that a door of some kind once existed at the present entrance to the cave, and it would appear that the inhabitants of Gibeon were thus able to close their spring below, and to obtain access to it from above within the city.

The spring in question, like many of the famous fountains in Palestine, is held sacred by the Fellâhin. An earthenware lamp is occasionally lighted in the chamber, but at other times the peasantry say that supernatural lights and smoke are seen within, and that a *Neby* or Prophet inhabits the cave. Close by is a little rock chamber with a rude masonry wall. It is plastered inside, and in one of the niches of its rock sides we found some sardine tins containing offerings of pomegranate flowers and young figs, while pottery lamps are placed in others. This Mukâm is called Jâmîa' el Burîdeh, and near it above the spring is a small platform for prayer. The villagers may often be seen praying here, and great consternation fell upon the women who drew water when they found the sacred grotto of the spring full of dense white smoke some few days since. It was not, however, in this instance the action of the presiding genius, descending to punish the peasants for allowing Franks to enter the sacred cave, for the smoke was the result of burning a magnesium torch for the better investigation of the dark interior.

It is worthy of remark that the older the site of a village in Palestine, the more numerous and venerable are the sacred places now recognized by the Fellâhin of the spot. At Gibeon we have but one instance of that reverence for living water, which is so marked and so natural a feature of the ancient Asiatic religions, from the Ganges to the Nile. The niches which once held perhaps statues of the genii of the springs, are still to be found at Baniâs, Jericho, Shechem, Yasûf, and in other places where five fountains occur. Springs, trees, stones, and mountain tops, form the central objects of the Fellâh cultus not less than of that of the ancient Canaanites.

From Gibeon we visited among other places the Nether Beth Horon, where a treasure trove was reported some little time since, which proved, however, as in so many other cases, to be an exaggerated version of the discovery of a small rock tomb. We ascertained the correctness of the position of Khûrbet Dâriah, which I have proposed to identify with Ataroth Adar (Josh. xviii, 13), and although scarcely a trace of a ruin exists we found the name to be well known among the peasantry.

In returning I was reminded of the eloquent description given by Dean Stanley of the defeat of the Canaanites by Joshua, and the pursuit from Gibeon to Ajalon. If, however, we are to apply strictly the words of the book, we must seek a place north of Gibeon, and in sight of the Valley of Ajalon (Josh. x, 12). In such a position we should imagine Joshua to have stood when he spoke the words, "sun stand thou still on Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon." If the sun stood still "in the midst of heaven," it was of necessity visible in the south,

while the moon cannot have been (as picturesquely described by Dean Stanley) a crescent, but must have been in the third quarter on account of its relative position to the sun.

It may be noted that there is a position on the ancient road from Gibeon to Bethoron, which fulfils these requisites, for on the hill east of Khürbet el Lattâtin, a view is obtained down the ravine of Wâdy Selmân, while Gibeon and the high place of Gibeon (if at Neby Samwîl) are visible on the south.

Within the village of el Jîb, Lieutenant Mantell has recently discovered the remains of a small crusading church. The place is called *el Kentseh* by the natives, but the building is now converted into a house, and the plan is scarcely traceable. The nave appears to have been 22 feet wide by 40 feet long. No apse is now visible, but the west wall, with an orial window, exactly resembles that of the crusading church at Taiyibeh.

Ebenezer.—We have also taken this opportunity to visit Khürbet Samwîl, which Mr. Birch proposes to identify with the stone erected by Samuel (1 Sam. vii, 12). Some foundations, caves, and rock-cut cisterns exist here, and near it on a high knoll is the ruined fort called *el Burj*, which seems to be not earlier than crusading times, even if as early. No monument of the kind required now exists on this spot, and it appears probable that the name is derived from the proximity of *Neby Samwîl*. The identity of the latter with Mizpeh, as proposed by Dr. Robinson, has been disputed mainly on account of a passage which appears to place Mizpeh on the road from Shiloh to Jerusalem (Jer. xli, 5-7). The topographical notices of this important place are otherwise so vague, that it seems impossible to decide between the two high places of Nob and Gibeon, to one of which the name Mizpeh appears to have applied. The identification of Shen with Deir Yasîn was mentioned to me in 1874, by Dr. Chaplin. As regards Ebenezer, the only point which is clear is that the early Christians believed Deir Abân to mark the site. This I found in 1876 in reading the "Onomasticon." It appears to have been also independently recognised by M. Clermont Ganneau, although I have been unable to find any publication earlier than 1877, in which he announces his discovery. No doubt other readers of Jerome's works must have formed the same conclusion, although Robinson appears to have overlooked it.

Roman Camp at Tellûia.—The hill east of Wâdy Beit Hannîna, which is a spur of the Neby Samwîl ridge, terminates in a rather steep slope, and on the end of the spur is seen what appears to be a gigantic cairn of stones; a careful examination, however, proves that this is a quadrangular enclosure built of unhewn stones without mortar.

The area measures 190 feet north and south, by 130 feet east and west, and the labour entailed in its construction must have been enormous. The interior is subdivided into three by two walls, running north and south, while cross walls form side chambers about 37 feet by 40 feet along the sides of the enclosure. On the outside is a slope formed of loose stones,

which though partly due, perhaps, to the falling down of the walls, seems to have been intended to strengthen the fortification with an outer scarp. No well or cistern is visible inside, but there is a large cistern on the hill 200 or 300 yards to the west. The walls are still standing some 15 feet above the ground outside the structure, and 6 or 8 feet above the interior.

Such rude stone buildings are generally considered among the oldest remains to be found in Palestine. The stones used are, indeed, not much larger than those employed in building terrace walls, but the work seems too important to have been executed by the Fellâhin for a cattle fold, and the position commands the junction of two important roads, both showing signs of antiquity. That on the west comes down from Neby Samwîl, and that on the east follows the valley from el Jîb; the two join on the south and ascend thence to Jerusalem.

The conclusion which seems most natural is that Tellîlia ("the little Tell") represents a camp constructed by one of the Roman armies (either of Titus or Severus) in advancing on Jerusalem. The whole structure resembles the Roman Camps which exist almost untouched at Masada; and in a mountain district where earth was not to be found in sufficient quantity it seems that the Romans were obliged to use stone.

This discovery at Tellîlia serves to confirm a conjecture which has often occurred to me, that the great stone heaps north of Jerusalem, and west of the Nâblus road, represent the remains of the camp which Titus constructed on Scopus. The plan of a camp can in this case no longer be traced, but the long line of stone-heaps called *Rujm el Kehakir* has an appearance very similar to the rude scarp at Tellîlia—a work which must have entailed the labour of a large body of men, and the collection of materials from a considerable area.

'*Aldî el Bendî* ("the towers of the maidens"), east of Kîlia (Sheet XV), in the great gorge of Wâdy Sâmîeh. Mr. Black has recently explored a curious hermits' cave with three cisterns. It is reached by a narrow stair of rock in the face of the precipice, and it presents the same peculiarity found in several of the caves of Wâdy Suweînit, &c., namely a little gallery leading to a window in the rock at a higher level than the cave-mouth, from which the anchorites were able to reconnoitre any one approaching their abode.

Deir esh Shebâb.—Although this site, representing a mediæval monastery north of Bethel, has been more than once visited, it is curious that the front has never been noticed. It is hewn out of a single block, and is of the usual form,—a cylinder hollowed within, in form of a cross composed of four semicircles on four sides of a central square. Other examples occur at Jufna, Tekoa, Khûrbet, Zakariya, and near Beit Jibrîn.

Deir esh Shebâb, "Monastery of youths," possibly represents a traditional site of the "School of the Prophets" near Bethel. The ruins are described in full in the memoir.

Tell 'Asâr.—This mountain (which is generally called *el 'Asâr* or *el Aser* by the natives) has been identified in an apparently satisfactory

manner with the ancient Baal Hazor, or Baal of the "Enclosure;" and it now appears that the mountain is still a sacred place. There is no building on the summit, but a fine group of oaks; the remains perhaps of a sacred grove, such as is still to be found venerated among the Nuseireh Pagans. During our recent visit to the cairn constructed on this hill (one of the highest points in Palestine) in 1872, and which we found still standing, Dr. Chaplin, who accompanied the party, was informed that there was a cave, sacred to Sheikh Haderah, at the place. This name preserves the Hebrew Hazor in the usual Arabic form with the *Dād*. I am also informed that the Moslems of the vicinity are in the habit of making vows to the Rijāl el 'Asawir, or "Men of 'Asūr," whom they now call Companions of the Prophet. It seems, therefore, that, although no modern shrine or ancient stone temple now exists (the vineyards having crept to the very top of the hill), yet traces of the old Canaanite worship are still recognisable on the spot among the modern Fellâhin.

Fellah traditions.—The collector of such traditions has to contend with many difficulties. In 1874 a good many stories, which were rude imitations of the Biblical narrative, were collected at Sūr'ah, in connection with the tomb of Neby Samit, who is variously represented as having been identical with, or brother of *Shemshân el Jebbâr*. We have only just returned from a three days' visit to this village. We were told the stories of the defeat of infidels by this hero, armed with a camel's jaw-bone instead of a sword, of his death under a great building, of his being betrayed by a woman, but we also found that the village for many years has been owned by a Christian from Beit Jâla, and the peasants at once confessed that they knew nothing of Neby Sâmit before the new owner told them who he was. In the same way at Taiyibeh, we were told that the old name was 'Afrâ, and that it was the city of Gideon. This tradition is derived from the Latin priest, who has thus instilled erroneous ideas into the Fellah mind, as, even if it were certain that Taiyibeh represents Ophrah of Benjamin, it certainly could not represent Gideon's city Ophrah of Abiezer, which belonged to Manasseh (Judg. vi, 11-15), and was probably the Samaritan Ophrah, now called Fer'ata, not far from Shechem.

It is, moreover, another cause of difficulty that the traditions of the peasantry are rapidly being forgotten, as are those of the Samaritans. The young men do not know the stories which can occasionally be extracted from an old man or woman. At Abu Shûsheh, Mr. Bergheim, in the winter's evenings, has had many such stories related to him by an old Sheikh, now dead, including the plot of the "Merchant of Venice," and that of "Pericles, Prince of Tyre," both slightly altered and orientalised. In the first story it was a father-in-law, who exacted the pound of flesh in case of the husband quarrelling with his wife, and the wife who invented the limitation that no blood should be drawn. This tale the Sheikh had heard from his father. Possibly it may have come down from the twelfth century, but when we consider how modern research has traced the fairy tales of Europe to the East, and found

Cinderella's glass slipper in India, there seems no very great improbability in thus recovering in Syria the stories—much older than the time of Shakespeare, on which he founded the plots of two of his plays.

VI.

'AIN KARIM, 14th July, 1881.

Kirjath Jearim.—WE have just returned from a long ride to Khürbet 'Erma, which, in 1878, I indicated as possibly representing the important town of Kirjath Jearim, and our observations at this spot, which I had not previously visited in person, seem so materially to confirm the identification, that it may be of interest to recapitulate the arguments published on various occasions in the *Quarterly Statement*, and to describe in full the existing remains.

Kirjath Jearim is first mentioned in the Book of Joshua as identical with Kirjath Baal, a town of Judah (Josh. xv, 60). It was on the boundary between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (verse 9), and from the peculiar expressions used in the description of the border line (Josh. xviii, 15; xv, 10), it appears that the town must have stood at an angle, from which the line ran in two directions, one being eastwards towards Nephtoah, the other northwards towards Kesla, which is Chesalon, on the north side.

The next appearance of the city is in the Book of Judges, when the men of Dan, who had no inheritance (Judges xviii, 1), went up to the Mahaneh Dan, which was "behind" (or more correctly *west of*) Kirjath Jearim. Of the position of this Mahaneh Dan, or "Camp of Dan," we have a further indication in the history of Samson, in which it is mentioned as "between Zorah (*Sûrah*) and Eshtaol" (*Eshû'a*) (Judges xiii, 25). The term Mahaneh is identical with *Mukhnah*, "camp," a title now applied to the plain east of Shechem, and it seems to be properly indicative of a plain fit for camping ground. We can therefore have little hesitation in placing the Mahaneh Dan in the broad Wâdy Surâr, near the recognized sites of Zorah and Eshtaol; and the site of Kirjath Jearim should thus apparently be sought east of this natural camping ground.

Kirjath Jearim is again mentioned as the place where the Ark remained for twenty years after the destruction of the men of Beth Shemesh (1 Sam. vi, 19; vii, 1). From this passage it appears that Kirjath Jearim was in the mountains above Beth Shemesh; yet Josephus, who may be supposed to have known the real site, states that the two cities were near one another (6 "Ant.," i, 4).

At a late period David went down to Baale (or Kirjath Jearim) to bring up the Ark to Jerusalem. It was found in the house of Abinadab "in Gibeah" (the hill or knoll), but this place would appear to have been in or part of the city of Baalah. This is the last mention of the city

except its enumeration in the lists of Ezra, where the name appears under the abbreviated form Kirjath Arim (Ezra ii, 25).

From these various notices we may sum up the apparent requisites which should be satisfied in any site proposed as identical with this important town.

1. The name Arim or Jearim ("thickets") should be recovered, and the site should present such thickets.

2. It must be east of the Mahaneh Dan, which lay between Zorah and Eshtaol.

3. It must be south of Chesalon, identified with the modern Kesla.

4. It must be near Beth Shemesh (now 'Ain Shems), which agrees with the second indication.

5. It must be in the mountains above the last-mentioned site.

6. It must be at the south-west angle of the border line of Benjamin.

7. Its position must agree with that of Nephthoah and Rachel's tomb (cf. Josh. xv, 9; and, 1 Sam. x, 2), so as to allow of an intelligible line being drawn for the south border of Benjamin.

8. The name Baalah indicates either that a high place of Baal existed at the city, or else that the position was elevated (taking Baal in a wider geographical sense, as some authorities are inclined to do).

9. A rounded hillock or humped knoll of some kind seems indicated by the term Gibeah, occurring in connection with the site of the city.

The usual site shewn as representing Kirjath Jearim is the village of Kuryet el 'Anab ("Town of Grapes"), better known as Abu Ghosh, on the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem. This town is called simply el Kuryeh by the Fellâhin, and appears to be the ancient Kirjath of Benjamin (Josh. xviii, 28), a place apparently distinct from Kirjath Jearim, and situated in the Lot of Benjamin, whereas the latter belonged to Judah. There is no doubt that in the fifth century Abu Ghosh was believed to be Kirjath Jearim, and the only argument which Dr. Robinson has adduced in favour of this identification appears to be founded on the early Christian tradition, which he too often quotes in favour of his own views, even against his own canon of criticism condemning such traditions as of no value. The site thus commonly pointed out to travellers does not, however, fulfil the requisites enumerated. The name Arim is not found at Abu Ghosh, the site of which lies 9 miles north-west of 'Ain Shems, and 3½ miles north-west of Chesalon. The border line of Benjamin cannot be drawn through Abu Ghosh and also through Rachel's tomb, without being so twisted as to be practically improbable, while no special features occur which would serve to explain the names Gibeah and Baalah, connected with that of Kirjath Jearim.

These objections have been so far recognized by various writers as to induce some archaeologists to prefer the conspicuous village of Sôba, as proposed by Dr. Chaplin, a site answering better to the requirements of the name Baalah or Gibeah. Sôba is the Bel Mont of the Crusaders, and is undoubtedly an ancient Jewish site. In the Septuagint of Josh. xv (verse inserted after 60) it seems to be mentioned, according to some

MSS., under the form Thobea. It lies, however, 4 miles east of Chesalon, and is separated by 10 miles of rugged mountains from Beth Shemesh. No trace of the name Kirjath Jearim has been found in its vicinity, and the difficulties with regard to the boundary of Judah and Benjamin are not removed by the choice of this site.

The ruin discovered by the Survey Party in 1873, seems in every respect to answer better than any previously proposed to the nine requirements enumerated above.

1st. The three principal letters (עירם) of the name Jearim, or of the later abbreviated form Arim, occur in the proper order in the modern Arabic 'Erma (spelt with the guttural Ain); the site is moreover surrounded and concealed by the thickets of lentisk, oak, hawthorn, and other shrubs, which properly represent the Hebrew word tarim (תרם) from a root signifying to be "tangled" or confused.

2nd. The ruin is due east of the open plain formed by the junction of Wâdy Ismâîn with Wâdy el Mutluk, extending from Beth Shemesh on the south-west, to Eshtaol on the north-east, and to the hill of Zorah on the north-west, representing the ancient Mahaneh Dan.

3rd. It is $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles south of Chesalon or Kesla.

4th. It is only 4 miles from Beth Shemesh, and an ancient road descends north of the ruin into Wâdy Ismâîn, and thus leads to Beth Shemesh direct along the valley banks.

5th. The site of 'Erma is nevertheless in the mountain proper, and about 1,000 feet higher than that of Beth Shemesh.

6th. The identification of the sites of Ataroth Adar (ed Dârieh), Gibeah (Jebâ), and Kirjath (Kuryet el 'Anab), belonging to Benjamin; of Jethlah (Beit Tul) and Eltekeh (Beit Likia) belonging to Dan, as proposed by the survey party, all agree with the supposition that the west border of Benjamin ran south, from near the Nether Beth-horon, along the crests of the spurs which sink so suddenly from the level of the mountains proper (Har) to the distinct region of the Shephelah. This natural boundary, excluding on the west the Vale of Ajalon, which belonged to Dan, cannot be reconciled with the proposed identifications of Kirjath Jearim at Abu Ghosh or at Sôba, but agrees perfectly with the wording of the biblical description: "The border was drawn thence, and compassed the western side southwards, and the goings out thereof were at Kirjath Baal which is Kirjath Jearim, a city of the children of Judah. This was the west quarter. And the south quarter was from the end of Kirjath Jearim (*i.e.*, the end of the spur on which the city stood), and the border went out on the west (*i.e.*, west side), and went out (eastwards) to the Springs of Nesshtoah" (Josh. xviii, 14-15).

Again, it agrees also with the other description, "And the border compassed from Baalah on the west (or looking west) unto Mount Seir, and passed along unto the shoulder of Mount Jearim, which is Chesalon, on the north side, and went down unto Beth Shemesh" (Josh. xv, 10).

If the reader will compare this paper with Sheet XVII of the Survey, he will at once see the line which appears to be indicated. 'Erma is on the

south or Judah side of the great valley, with a spur (perhaps "the end of Kirjath Jearim") running out northwards. Here, on the north side, are the precipices of a remarkably rocky hill burrowed with hermits' caves, to which the word seir ("rough") might very well apply.

On the same northern ridge, moreover, the name *Saghir*, which is radically the same as seir, may be found marked rather further east. The line running due north along Mount Jearim (which appears from the text to have been on the opposite side of the valley to Kirjath Jearim, as the expression עבר rendered "passed along," means strictly "crossed over," as of a river or valley) arrives at Kesla or Chesalon, and thence follows the important valley called Wady Ghurâb, which joins Wady Ismâîn and flows past Beth Shemesh. The position of 'Erma is thus naturally placed at the south-west angle of the border of Benjamin.

7th. The common boundary of Judah and Benjamin may be drawn from the new site of Kirjath Jearim in a direction which agrees with various other indications. It would follow the crest of a long spur to the watershed at 'Ain 'Atân (near Solomon's pools), the en Etam which, according to the Talmudists, was the same as Nephtoah (Tal. Bab Yoma, 31, a). Thence it would pass along a watershed northwards by Rachel's Tomb (1 Sam. x, 2) to the Emek Rephaim, which, according to Josephus, extended from Jerusalem towards Bethlehem (7 "Ant.," xii, 4).

Lifta is thus left to be identified with Eleph of Benjamin (Josh. xviii, 28) rather than with Nephtoah. The identification of Lifta and Nephtoah has always seemed unsatisfactory, not only on account of the difficulties which result in drawing the boundary line, but also because no great spring or group of springs such as seems to be implied by the expression מעין, *M'ain* occurs at the spot. The modern Arabic name is moreover deficient in the guttural of the Hebrew.

8th. The expression Baalah would refer very properly to the situation of 'Erma, overlooking the great valley, while, as will be explained immediately, the traces of what may have been an ancient "high place" (Bamah) still remain.

9th. A central knoll such as would account for the name Gibeah occurs at the ruin of 'Erma.

Although the indications of identity thus appear very strong, they could not be considered as conclusive if the site proved to be insignificant, with modern ruins in an inconspicuous situation. I was therefore anxious to revisit the spot, and was much pleased to find that an evidently ancient and important ruin exists still in this position. Riding down the great gorge which, under various names, runs down from near Gibeon to Beth Shemesh, we gradually ascended the southern slopes in the vicinity of the little ruined village of Deir esh Sheikh. Before us was the notable peaked knoll of Khûrbet Sammûnieh, a conspicuous feature of the view up the valley from Surâh, and leaving this on the right we followed an ancient road along the slope of the mountain. Here and there remains of side walls are visible, and there can be little doubt that this is a branch of

the Roman road from the vicinity of Bethlehem leading to Beth Shemesh.

In front of us, far beneath, we saw the white bed of the torrent twisting in bold bends between the steep slopes which rise fully 1,000 feet to the hill tops. Both slopes were rocky and rugged, both, but especially that to the south, were clothed with a dense brushwood of lentisk, arbutus, oak, hawthorn, cornel, kharûb, and other shrubs, while in the open glades the thyme, sage, citrus, and *bellân* carpetted the ledges with a thick fragrant undergrowth.

A bold spur running northwards from the southern ridge was characterised by a small natural turret or platform of rock, rising from a knoll which stood covered with fallen masonry above a group of olives, beneath which again the thickets clothed the mountain. This knoll represented the ruin of 'Erma, which on closer inspection proved to be a site undoubtedly ancient, and presenting the aspect of an old ruined town. Some of the walls, rudely built in mortar, may belong to the Arab period, but the rude blocks built up against scarps natural or artificial which occur in various directions, resemble the old masonry of the vineyard towers, which date back to a very early period.

On the east is a fine rock-cut wine press; on the south a great cistern covered by a huge hollowed stone, which forms the well-mouth, and which from its size and its weather-beaten appearance, must evidently be very ancient.

Rude caves also occur, and the ground is strewn with fragments of ancient pottery. But the most curious feature of the site is the platform of rock, which has all the appearance of an ancient high-place or central shrine. The area is about 50 feet north and south by 30 feet east and west, the surface, which appears to be artificially levelled, being some 10 feet above the ground outside. The scarping of the sides seems mainly natural, but a foundation has been sunk on three sides, in which rudely squared blocks of stone have been fitted as the base of a wall. On the east this wall consisted of rock to a height of $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet with a thickness of 7 feet. There is an outer platform, about 10 feet wide, traceable on the south and south-east, and a flight of steps 3 feet wide, each step being 1 foot high and 1 foot broad, leads up to this lower level at the south-east angles. There is a small cave under the platform, and the ruined houses extend along the spur principally north and south of this remarkable rocky tower.

The view from the ruin on the west is also worthy of notice. The valley is seen winding 600 or 700 feet beneath, and the cliffs and caves of the northern ridge form unusually accentuated features. Beyond these the broad corn vale of Sorek (the Mahaneh Dan) is seen extending beneath the rounded hill on which gleams the white dome of Neby Samit, close to Zoreah. The actual site of Beth Shemesh is hidden by the southern ridge, but the valley-bed north of the ruin is visible.

On the hill to the south stand the houses of Deir el Hawa, and to the east the peak of Sammûnieh hides the further course of the valley.

Standing on the rocky tower we saw clearly how well the Mahaneh Dan might be described as "west" of Kirjath Jearim. How naturally the Ark might have been sent from the lowlands of Beth Shemesh to this neighbouring city, so strongly posted in the rude hills of Judah.

In the central platform we might perhaps recognize the high place of Baal, whence the city took its name, or the Gibeah where the Ark was kept; for Kirjath Jearim is not the only sacred city of Palestine in which the altars of Jehovah and of Baal once stood side by side. The instances of Carmel and of Bethel will recur to the reader's mind, with other indications of a similar kind.

Here then at 'Erma we seem to find in a remarkable manner the numerous requisites of the site of Kirjath Jearim fulfilled. The name, the position, the character of the ruin, the view thence, the surrounding thickets which half cover the site, the situation close to the edge of the higher hills and to the mouth of the great gorge, the proximity to Beth Shemesh, and the relative positions of Chesalon and the Mahaneh Dan, all seem to agree in fixing 'Erma as the true site of the important boundary town where the Ark was kept for twenty years.

Having studied the question carefully on the spot, and having ascertained the importance and antiquity of the site, I cannot but look upon this identification as one of the most valuable which has yet resulted from the Survey of Western Palestine.

VII.

HEBRON, 31st July, 1881.

SINCE last report the camp has been moved to Hebron, with a view of clearing up various questions of minor interest in connection with the nomenclature of the vicinity. This is almost the only piece of revision which remains to be done in connection with the Survey west of Jordan. The great change which has occurred in Palestine since Hebron was surveyed, has enabled us to examine even the vicinity of the Haram, without any danger of insults such as I had to endure on the occasion of our previous visit, during the great storm of the spring of 1875, which drove us to take shelter in the Jews' quarter of the town.

The Haram.—As regards the Haram we were able to make one interesting observation. The great stones of the outer wall are, as we have now ascertained, dressed in a precisely similar manner to those of the Jerusalem Haram. The drafts vary from 2 to 4 inches in width, and are about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch deep. The draft and the margin of the boss for a width of about 2 inches, have been dressed with a toothed instrument—an adze like that now used by native masons, but more carefully employed,—thus giving the peculiar *crisscross* appearance observable in the Jerusalem stones. The rest of the boss has been dressed with a point, as at Jerusalem. The interest of this observation lies in its bearing on the

probable date of the masonry. It would appear that the Hebron Haram is of the same date as that at Jerusalem, which it resembles so closely not only as regards the size, the dressing, and the drafting of the stones, but also in the existence of piers projecting from the wall, of which there are 54 at Hebron, while their former existence at Jerusalem seems to be shown by the discovery I was fortunate enough to make, in 1873, of two such piers still *in situ* at the north-west angle of the Haram wall.

We visited the eastern side of the enclosure, and found ourselves on the housetops almost level with the cornice of the old wall. We here found a mosque, called el Jâwalfyeh, with a large dome. There is also a third entrance to the enclosure on this side, and the old wall appears to be almost as high here as on the west, although the mountain called el Jâ'abireh rises very suddenly behind the Haram on the east. It would appear therefore that the rock beneath the Haram platform, in which the great cave is said to exist, must be a detached knoll : since on all sides there is lower ground, and a retaining wall some 40 feet in height.

As a religious centre Hebron may be said to rival Shechem, and far surpasses Jerusalem. The old name, Kirjath Arba, "City of Four," was said by the Talmudists to refer to the four prophets, Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is curious that the Moslems still invoke four prophets in their prayers at Hebron, but instead of Adam they repeat the name of Joseph, whose tomb is shown just outside the Haram at the north-west angle. The tomb of Joseph at Hebron is mentioned also by Josephus. According, however, to the Book of Joshua, the name Kirjath Arba was derived from one of the Anakim (xiv, 15 ; xv, 13).

In addition to the sepulchres of these four patriarchs and their four wives, we find the curious rock-cut tomb west of the town, known to the natives as Kabr Habrûn, "the Grave of Hebron," possibly, however, a corruption of the name Ephron ; by the Jews this is known as the tomb of Othniel, and they show the graves of Jesse and Ruth higher on the same hill, at the mediæval monastery of el Arb'aîn. The tradition of the cave in which Adam and Eve lived for 100 years near Hebron is now unknown, though the probable site—as described by mediæval writers—is the present subterranean spring called 'Ain el Jedîdeh. The site of the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, which used to be shown south-west of the town, has now been removed to Neby Yûkîn (the Cain of Josh. xv, 57), about 3 miles south-east of Hebron. In addition to these traditions we have the tomb of Noah, west of Hebron ; of Lot, on the east ; of Esau, on the north-east (at Sî'air, which must at one time have been identified with Seir), and of Jonah, on the north ; the early Christian tomb of Gad the Seer. The tomb of Abner is shown in Hebron, north-west of the Haram, but it is a modern cenotaph in a Moslem house, and of no particular interest. Abraham's well and Jacob's well are shown also, towards the north, but no well of Isaac appears to exist, and the inhabitants say that his wells are to be found at Beersheba and Tell el Milh.

Another very curious tradition we found during our recent revision work. There is on the north-west of the town—south of the present site

of Abraham's Oak—a hill called Kuff en Neby, "the prophet's palm" (of the hands), and below this is a cave called Mughâret edh Dhukkâ'ah, with a narrow entrance. There is a bench of large stones running round the walls, and this was found covered with the usual rude offerings of pottery, lamps, &c. The cave is a very sacred place, where the prophets Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are said to appear every Friday. Mr. Black entered it, however, on that day, without reporting any appearance of either of the Patriarchs, but his guide did not enter, and was roundly abused by the inhabitants of the place, who warned him that the local divinities would be sure to take vengeance on him for bringing a Christian into their sanctuary.

This is not the only instance we have heard in which prophets are said to relieve the monotony of residing in one sanctuary by paying occasional visits to other places.

There are several interesting problems in connection with Hebron which may be considered more important than the traditions above noticed. Where was the plain (or oak) of Mamre? where was Kirjath Arba? where Eshcol? where the place in which Abraham "stood before Jehovah"? (Gen. xix, 27). To each of these questions I have now been able to devote some attention.

In respect to Mamre, we may be allowed to lay aside the traditions which have placed Abraham's oak in various sites, ranging from Râmet el Khulfl on the north to Sebta on the north-west, and to the *Drus Ogyges* of Josephus ("Ant.," I, ix, 4), apparently yet nearer to Hebron.

Mamre, we learn from the Bible, was *in* or *by* Hebron (Gen. xiii, 18), and Machpelah was before or in face of Mamre (Gen. xxiii, 17, 19), "the same is Hebron." It seems, therefore, most natural to identify the plain of Mamre with the flat open vale facing Machpelah (or the Haram of Hebron) on the west. In this vale, the threshing-floors and the chief Moslem cemetery of Hebron are now to be found. It does not, however, appear quite clearly whether the original Kirjath Arba was on the western or the eastern hill, as the expressions used are somewhat ambiguous. We examined the western hill carefully, but found no traces of any ancient town, although a Jewish cemetery of considerable antiquity exists there, near the four rock-cut Jewish tombs, of which the largest is called Kabr Habrîn. It might not be unreasonable to identify the Cave of Machpelah with this double tomb, or with the newly-discovered sacred cave above noticed; but the consent of Jewish, Moslem, and Christian evidence in favour of the traditional site of the Haram, is too strong an argument in its favour to be lightly set aside.

As regards Eshcol, which is mentioned in connection with Hebron (Num. xiii, 23), and took its name from one of the Anakim of the same place (Gen. xiv, 13-24), the identification proposed by Vandeveldt with 'Ain Keshkaleh appears somewhat doubtful, as the Hebrew *Caph* is supposed to be represented by the Arabic *Quaf* instead of *Kaf*. It is, however, noticeable, that the first K is always dropped in ordinary speaking, and the word is pronounced *Ashkali*. We have not found

any nearer equivalent to Eshcol; and the position of this fine spring among the vineyards, is well adapted for that of the famous "brook," whence the grapes of Hebron were brought down by the spies.

The Biblical passage just quoted includes the curious topographical note, "Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt." The site of Zoan (Sân) has produced monuments attributed to the 6th Egyptian dynasty (a thousand years before Abraham), but the real building of the city is attributed to Rameses II, the famous conqueror of the Hittites (circa 1365 B.C.) If it be to this building that the Scripture refers, the translation of the name Hebron, "friendship," might be thought to refer to Abraham's friendship with the Hittites, and the name may have superseded the earlier title of Kirjath Arba at the later period of the conquest of Palestine by Joshua. This is one of the few instances in the Holy Land where the *meaning* of an old name is preserved instead of the sound: *el Khulil*, "the friend," having superseded Hebron, "friendship," in the mouths of the modern inhabitants.

The traditional site of the place where Abraham "stood before Jehovah," and whence he is said to have perceived, after the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, that "the smoke of the country went up as a furnace" (Gen. xix, 28), has been placed at the village of Beni N'aim, three miles east of Hebron, where the Tomb of Lot is now shown.

It has often, however, been suggested by recent travellers that the site should be sought nearer to the Plain of Mamre, and we therefore visited all the highest points immediately east of Hebron, to observe the view towards the Dead Sea. We found that the long spurs which run out above the Desert of Judah are so high as to shut out entirely all the eastern view, except the very highest portion of the Moabite ridge. At Beni Naim, on the other hand, the traveller stands on the very edge of the desert, which is spread out beneath him. The cliffs of Engedi are clearly seen, and the eastern slopes from Kerak to Nebo, although the waters of the Dead Sea and the Valley of the Jordan are hidden by the western precipices.

Beni N'aim is mentioned by St. Jerome and other early Christian authorities, under the name Caphar Bareca, "the village of blessing," and I was much interested to find, on recently visiting the village (where are remains of a basilica, now a mosque), that this name was still known to the Sheikh. Without any prompting he asked me if I knew the old name of the place in the time of the Beni Israil. On my professing ignorance, he said it was Kefr Bareka, and volunteered the information that *Suddâm* was east of it by the Dead Sea—pointing towards Engedi. This name, "village of blessing," is no doubt ancient and genuine, and must have had its origin in the original sanctity of the spot, which is a natural site for a high-place on account of its magnificent view. It is to be noted that the three angels are said to have "looked towards Sodom," and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way (Gen. xviii, 16), and the destruction of the cities is said to have taken place after sunrise (Gen. xix, 23), but Abraham "gat up early in the morning to the place

where he stood before the Lord" (verse 27). These details do not seem to require that the place in question should have been very close to Hebron, and it seems quite comprehensible that the site intended should have been the ancient "Village of Blessing," now called Beni N'aim.

It cannot, however, be said that this throws any very clear light on the position of the Cities of the Plain, as the north and south ends of the sea are about equidistant and equally invisible; and we are forced to rely on other arguments in discussing the situation of Sodom, which Josephus, no less than the modern Moslem, believed to lie beneath the waters of the "Vale of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea" (Gen. xiv, 2).

In the year 1856, Dr. G. Rosen devoted some time to the investigation of the vicinity of Hebron, and made various interesting discoveries. I have now been able to compare his map, embracing an area of about 25 square miles, with our own, and the result is curious, as showing the difficulties of collecting names in Palestine.

Dr. Rosen collected, in all, 116 names within the area of five miles either way, the town of Hebron being near the south-east corner of his map. Out of these, 34 are to be found on our map, and six are merely re-duplications of names on the map with slight variations, giving 40 as the total collected by ourselves against 116 collected by Dr. Rosen. By devoting a week to the vicinity of the city we have collected 90 new names, giving 124 in all. Of these, no less than 26 are not noticed by Dr. Rosen, and these include the important sites of Mughâret edh Dhukkâ'ah, Ain Ibrahim, and 'Ain esh Shems. We found 80 names given by Dr. Rosen to be correct, and 12 to be given with very serious errors; while 18 names which he shows on his map or notices in the text were entirely unknown to any of the natives. Out of these 18, five are unimportant, but the rest are for the most part unlike Arabic in form. One deserves special notice, namely, Jebel Elâni, which Dr. Rosen renders "Mount Helena." The name is certainly not now known in Hebron, and is applied by Dr. Rosen to the vicinity of Râmet el Khulîl—the early traditional site of Mamre. It seems therefore to be probably a corruption of the Hebrew Elon ("oak" or "plain"), and may have been obtained from the Jewish inhabitants of the city.

With exception of the sacred cavern of edh Dhukka'ah we have not found any important site omitted from the 1-inch map. Of the 124 names now recorded, only two, namely *Kashkaleh* (Eshkol) and 'Ain *Sâra* (en Sirah) are of Biblical interest, but the examination seems to show that the nomenclature of the district is gradually changing, and that names which may have existed in Dr. Rosen's time are now forgotten.

This agrees with some facts as to nomenclature which I have noted in a previous report, and with others which I observed at Hebron. Thus 'Ain Mezrûk (which Dr. Rosen calls Mezrû'a, but which is clearly spelt with a *Quaf*) is known to others as 'Ain Merzûk. The valley east of Hebron is called Wâdy el Besâtîn by some, and el Mesâtîn by others, and I overheard a group of ladies sitting by a tombstone, who were holding a lively dispute as to whether a certain place west of the

town should be called *Zerzir* or *Shelshtr*. This was unusually interesting, as they were quite unaware of my presence or of my interest in nomenclature.

The more carefully we study the nomenclature, the more do we seem forced to the conclusion that the only really permanent and ancient names are those of villages, ruins, and springs, and that the *Secondary Nomenclature*, as it may be called, applying to small natural features, is of fleeting and modern character, while the ancient names of hills and valleys have, as a rule, been utterly lost.

Aceldama.—While speaking of names I may mention a curious survival of a Latin name near Jerusalem. *Aceldama*, south of the city (the possible site of Tophet), was known in the 12th century as *Carnarium*, "The Charnel," being indeed used for that purpose. This name is still known to the inhabitants (according to Mr. P. Berghein) under the corrupted form, *Shernei*, attached to this rock-cut cemetery. Among Christians the place is also sometimes called *Hakk ed Duimm*—a transliteration of *Aceldama*, the Aramaic name rendered "field of blood" in English.

Beth Haccereem.—From Hebron we have returned—while awaiting a final decision as to our *Firman*—to 'Ain Yals in the Valley of Roses, south-west of Jerusalem. We are here close to the curious cairns above *Malhah*. The object of their construction is not clear, but they may have been used as ancient beacons, and in connection with them we may recall the passage in which the prophet exclaims, "Blow the trumpet in *Tekoa* and set up a sign of fire in *Beth Haccereem*" (*Jer.* vi, 1). Christian tradition fixes on the so-called Frank Mountain as representing the site of this beacon; but the name *Beth Haccereem* ("house of the vineyard") has not been recovered in that direction, while, on the other hand, we find the present 'Ain Kârim ("spring of vineyards") close under the slope of the ridge on which the great cairns in question are now found. This identification would not clash with the very probable supposition that 'Ain Kârim is *Beth Car* (*1 Sam.* vii, 11). *Beth Haccereem* may have been the later form, intermediate between the old *Beth Car* and the modern 'Ain Kârim, and the name occurs again in the lists of *Nehemiah* (iii, 14), in connection with that of other places near Jerusalem. So far as I am aware, this identification has not previously been indicated as probable.

The cairns above noted are among the most interesting remains in Western Palestine, and seem more probably to belong to pre-historic times than any monuments as yet discovered. The largest is that nearest 'Ain Kârim, known as *Rujm et Târûd*, which is 40 feet high and 130 feet in diameter, with a flat top about 40 feet across. It is composed entirely of stones some 4 to 6 inches long, quite unshaped, and the sides, which slope at an angle of about 45°, are covered with a thin layer of earth. The next largest is *Rujm 'Afâneh*, more than 30 feet high and 96 feet in diameter. The smallest is *Rujm 'Ateiyeh*, some 9 feet high and 40 feet in diameter. The cairns are seven in number, without counting one very

small heap, and another which seems of different character. Rujm et Târûd stands highest on the ridge, the others are irregularly disposed on the spurs, and one is in a hollow at the head of a ravine. They seem too numerous and too irregularly-disposed to have been originally intended for beacons, though the Târûd cairn is well suited for such a purpose. It seems highly probable that they may have been originally seven high-places, consecrated to the seven planetary deities. As is usual with such high-places, they command an extensive view from the Mediterranean on the west to the Moab Mountains on the east; Neby Samwil (the high-place of Gibeon), Tell 'Asur (Baal Hazor), the Summit of Olivet (the old high-place of Chemosh), Abu Thor (father of the Bull, possibly the old sanctuary of Moloch), and Neby Samat (possibly Samson's Tomb), are all in sight from one or other, as well as Soba, Kustul, Râs Sherifeh, &c. Excavations have been attempted but apparently abandoned before any result of interest was obtained. It is possible that a *Kist* or tomb of some kind may exist under the centre of each cairn.

The only similar monuments are the Jordan Valley Tells, and we are thus led to conjecture whether these latter may not have been originally "high-places" of the Canaanites. They occur generally close to springs, which would agree with such an hypothesis, and in many cases they are still consecrated by a Mukâm standing on the Tell. The idea seems worthy of some consideration.

Jerusalem.—On receipt of Professor Sayce's pamphlet I compared his copy of the Siloam Inscription with ours. I see various differences of importance, especially in the form of some of the letters, and we shall consequently revisit the tunnel, and endeavour to make sure as to the doubtful points.

I have also received from Herr Konrad Schick a copy of an inscribed slab, which was found some time ago lying inside the tomb described in the last *Quarterly Statement*. It measured 3 feet 11 inches by 2 feet 7½ inches, and near the top was an inscription with a cross, the letters being about 2½ inches high, and 6 inches below the top edge of the slab. The text reads—

† ΘΗΚΗΔΙΑΦΕΡΘΣ.

This inscription, *θηκη Διαφερους*, has been found in several other instances in early Christian tombs near Jerusalem. The occurrence of the slab cannot, however, be considered conclusive evidence of late date in the tomb, because the arrangement of the *loculi*, as previously explained, is exactly that found in the so-called "Tombs of the Kings," and other monuments near Jerusalem, dating from a period earlier than the Byzantine. The tomb may have been re-used, or the slab may have been originally placed in the neighbouring Church of St. Stephen.

While speaking of inscriptions, I may also note that the inscription from the town-walls contains the name John *Ιωαννου* in the third and fourth lines, and that there are several misprints in the text (page 197).

I believe the word *θεσικου* may be read in the third line, but it is very indistinct.

About 100 yards south of the tomb above noticed is another sepulchre, which was excavated in 1875, and described in the *Quarterly Statement* (p. 190, and 1876, p. 9). I have now obtained a plan and a detailed account of this tomb from Herr Schick.

In digging for a cistern, the proprietor of the ground hit upon two flat slabs covering shafts which led to the tomb. The depth of rubbish was 10 feet 6 inches, and the tomb was entirely cut in rock. The shaft was about 4 feet deep, and the chamber beneath $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet high and $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet square, with three *loculi* on north, south, and west, and an entrance on the east from the face of the rock. The *loculi* are sunk beneath the level of the tomb floor, and were covered originally with flat slabs. A narrow opening in the north-west angle led into a second chamber about 10 feet square and $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, but of trapezoid form.

This second chamber had also three *loculi* and an eastern entrance with six steps. The *loculi* in this case were, however, under arcossolia, and with the bottom of the coffin level with the chamber floor. The entrance now built up is well formed, as in the better specimens of *loculi* tombs. It was in this chamber that the great stone sarcophagus was found which has been conjectured to have held the coffin of the Empress Eudoxia. The sarcophagus measured nearly 8 feet in length and 3 feet 3 inches in height, including the four legs; the width was about 3 feet, and the stone sides were only about 3 inches thick and the bottom 5 inches. It had a cover with rudely-arched cross section, and its size was such that it could evidently not have been brought in through the door. It was found indeed that a shaft, carefully blocked up with masonry, existed in the roof of the chamber, through which it appears to have been lowered. The sarcophagus was broken in trying to raise it through this same shaft.

A third chamber was found to exist beneath the first described, and it was only to be reached by removing slabs which pave the northern *loculus* of the first chamber. Three *loculi* covered with slabs, and placed side by side with their length direction east and west, were here found. They were sunk 9 feet below the floor of the upper chamber, the *loculi* themselves being 2 feet deep.

The tomb thus described is very curious and puzzling. It seems probably to have been enlarged and altered at various periods, and has, it will be observed, two methods of access, namely, from doors in the face of the cliff, and by shafts from above. The use of the *loculus* tomb by the early Christians is proved by the examples at Shefa 'Amr (Sheet V), and other instances; the use of tombs reached by shafts and of *loculi* sunk in the chamber-floor is also observable in Christian tombs. It appears on the whole probable that an early Christian tomb was here found at a later period, and re-used at the time when the great sarcophagus was lowered into it. The arrangement of the *loculi* would seem to show that the sepulchre is later than the northern tomb, which

was described in the last *Quarterly Statement*, and it may perhaps be best ascribed to the early Byzantine period, although the larger chamber may belong to the Jewish times.

Emmaus.—The suggestion that *Ham Motzah* may represent Emmaus is very interesting, and from a philological point of view no objection can be raised to it. The distance does not appear, however, to agree, as Kolonia is only $4\frac{1}{2}$ English miles from Jerusalem, and Beit Mizzeh not much more, which is under 40 furlongs, whereas the distance given by the third Gospel and by Josephus is 50 furlongs. The distance of Khamesa is $8\frac{1}{2}$ English miles (some 70 stadia) in a straight line, and 10 by road.

The fact that a Motzah mentioned in the Talmud was called "Colonia" is in favour of Mr. Birch's view. Kolonia has often before been proposed as the site of Emmaus, by Canon Williams and others. The identification of the Motzah of the Bible with the ruin called *Beit Mizzeh* (not Muzza as spelt in the *Quarterly Statement*) was proposed by Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake, nine years ago, and I have accepted it in my "Bible Handbook," although there is an objection that the Arabic *Zain* rarely takes the place of the Hebrew *Tzadi*. Mr. Birch does not appear to have been aware of this previous identification of Motzah.

Kolônia was—and still is—a place to which the inhabitants of Jerusalem went out for recreation (cf. Mishna Yoma and Tal. Jer. Succah, IV, 5); possibly the expression "went into the country" (*êis áγρον*, Mark xvi, 12) may be taken in the sense of a similar retreat for rest and refreshment from the city, and, in spite of the distance, Mr. Birch's proposal may be considered considerably to strengthen the case in favour of Kolônia.

Muristan.—The eastern half of the great enclosure which once belonged to the Knights Hospitallers of Jerusalem is now German property, and excavations have been carried on in these precincts since 1872.

The Hospital proper and the Church of St. John still lie buried beneath at least 30 feet of rubbish, but the Church of St. Marie la Grande and the monastic establishment south of it have been cleared out, and a complete plan has been made for me by Herr K. Schick. The rock, varying in level from 2,445 to 2,425 feet, and forming the bottom of the Tyropœon Valley, has been traced throughout, and it appears that the mediæval buildings were founded on *débris* varying from 20 to 50 feet in depth. The only structures which rise from the rock are the walls of two magnificent reservoirs, which I visited in 1872, beneath the monastery. Here, at a depth of 50 feet below ground, we were able to walk along the very bed of the Tyropœon, treading on rock for a distance of 100 feet or more.

The buildings, though all attributable to the Crusaders, are of various dates, as shown by the straight joints and the varying finish of the masonry. Even the narrow street to the east (the old *Malcuisiriat*) appears to belong to the 12th century, as mentioned in a recent report.

Part of the old masonry has been destroyed in opening a new street

on the west of the property, but the buildings are shown on the plan just obtained, which I am sending home to Colonel Warren for his volume of the "Memoirs."

VIII.

MOUNT NEBO.

'AIN HESBAN, *25th August, 1881.*

It is with great satisfaction that I pen the first report from beyond Jordan, more especially as some points of interest have already rewarded our exploration of the country round this camp.

I seized the first favourable opportunity which has presented itself since we landed in Palestine, to push across the river. When we took the field in May, the country was in a very excited state, the Druzes were almost in open rebellion: the French seizure of Tunis, the non-settlement of the Greek affair, and the visit of various princes and political agents to Palestine, raised a very general feeling that some sort of crisis was approaching. The great tribes of the Adwân and the Beni Sakhr were at war, and the governor of the Belka had proceeded from Nâblus to es Salt and was travelling over the whole country which we intended first to survey.

It appeared, therefore, prudent to await a more favourable opportunity, while employing the party in the south of Palestine as detailed in preceding reports. We were thus able to watch for the proper moment for commencing our real work, and found that our presence was tolerated by the government so long as we avoided asking for any official assistance or protection.

On the 16th August Lieutenant Mantell and I left our camp at 'Ain Yâlo with six of the native staff, and marched down to Jericho, where we had arranged to meet Sheikh Goblân en Nimr of the Adwân Arabs. My principal object was to secure a satisfactory agreement with the Adwân Arabs before committing the whole of our heavy expedition and of our valuable property beyond the river. On the 17th Goblân appeared with two spearmen and two swordsmen, and we marched over the valley, crossing the river at the Ghorantyeħ ford, and camping in Goblân's own property at Kefrein. The stream of Jordan was easily fordable, being only up to the horses' shoulders, and thus before we had time almost to realise it we crossed the barrier beyond which I had for nearly three months so much longed to penetrate. The heat in the valley was very great, rising to 100° F. in the shade by day, and remaining at about 90° all night. On the 18th we reached the beautiful stream of 'Ain Hesbân, which flows rapidly down the steep mountain sides to the Jordan valley, rising about 2 miles N.W. of the ruins of Heshbon. Here on the 19th we made our arrangements with Sheikh Goblân; and on the 20th, having arranged these preliminaries, we despatched mules to Jerusalem to bring over the rest of the party.

During the week we have been employed in visiting the country surrounding the camp, arranging the trigonometrical stations, and collecting the names of the principal ruins. It becomes necessary, in consequence of our change of plan, to measure a new base-line between Heshbon and Madeba, on the flat plateau called the Mishor in the Bible. The site for this base has been chosen, and I hope soon to report that it has been measured and the triangulation extended thence for about 100 square miles.

Our operations have been considerably facilitated by the work of preceding explorers, for the Arabs are accustomed to see cairns erected, and lines measured, theodolites set up and aneroids consulted, and we are, moreover, able to make use of the cairns built by Lieut. Steever's party in 1873. On the other hand, the liberality of our predecessors has raised the market so that it is not possible for us—unrecognised by the government, and thus dependent entirely on the Bedawin—to work as cheaply as we were able to do in other Arab districts—notably in the Judæan desert and the Jordan valley. It is, however, very satisfactory to feel some sense of security due to our present agreement, instead of having night and day the anxiety of expecting constant attempts to steal horses or other valuable belongings. The Adwân impress me very favourably, and among all Arabs an agreement may be considered as binding as it would be among men of honour in Europe.

Our first ride was along the western slopes of the great plateau, to visit the famous site of Jebel Neba, supposed to represent the Biblical Nebo or Pisgah, whence Moses surveyed the Land of Promise, and where Balaam is recorded to have been brought by Balak to curse the children of Israel. Crossing Wâdy Heshbân we rode south to the beautiful 'Ayûn Mûsa, where two streams issue from the cliffs and flow in a succession of cascades down the mountain sides. This is one of the most picturesque spots I have yet seen in Syria (excepting in Lebanon), and the magnificent water supply of the district we are now exploring—every gorge having its stream even as late as the autumn—contrasts with the scantier and more diffused character of the water supply west of Jordan in a remarkable manner. The northern spring at 'Ayûn Mûsa falls over a cliff 40 or 50 feet high, the southern wells out at the base of a precipice forming a beautiful clear pool flanked by two aged wild figs; and here in the face of the cliff a rude cottage is built up and inhabited by a family of Christians of the Greek Church from Taiyibeh, north of Jerusalem.

From these springs we climbed up 700 feet to the spur which runs out west from the summit of Nebo, and which takes the name Siâghah from a ruin so called on the crest. We examined the site, and found remains of a small Byzantine village with a church, fallen columns, rude capitals of the 5th century style, and vaults supported on round arches, such as are common in early Christian ruins throughout Palestine. The name Siâghah has already been collected by the American Survey party, but I am not aware whether its identity with the Aramaic *Seath* (סיעת) has been pointed out. *Seath*, "the burial place of Moses," is the paraphrase

for Nebo given by the Targum of Onkelos in Num. xxxii, 3, and the name forms therefore a link in the identification of Nebo with the ridge of Jebel Nebo where *Siâghah* still exists.

So far as I can judge by the map, it is to this ruin that Canon Tristram gives the name *Zi'ara*, and which he identifies with Zoar. No other ruin appears to exist on the way from 'Ayûn Musa to the ridge south of these springs, and with great deference to so experienced an explorer I cannot but think that an error has arisen, due to the great similarity in sound (to an European ear) between the *Re* and the *Ghein* in Arabic. The name *Zi'ara* was quite unknown to Sheikh Goblân, although he has shown himself thoroughly acquainted with the nomenclature of the district, which has as yet been imperfectly collected. Whoever is responsible for the Arabic spelling of the name *Zi'ara* as given in Dr. Tristram's "Land of Moab," I feel convinced that the form *Siâghah* given by the American party is the correct one, and it is evident that this form has no connection with the Hebrew Zoar, which in Arabic would appear most probably as *S'areh* or *Saghâr*.

Other objections to Canon Tristram's proposal have been pointed out by various writers, the main difficulty being that *Siâghah* is situated almost on the level of the great plateau 3,000 feet above the Jordan valley, which appears hardly to agree with the plea put forth by Lot in asking permission to flee to Zoar, that the mountains were too far from him. We shall have, I hope, further opportunities of searching for Zoar near the foot of the mountains, where Tell Shaghûr has been pointed out by the Rev. W. F. Birch as a possible site; but if Zoar should be sought higher up the slopes we may perhaps have an indication in the names Rujm S'aûr and Tal'at S'aûr, which we discovered yesterday north of our present camp.

The hot haze rising from the Jordan valley rendered it impossible to obtain a very accurate idea of the extreme limits of the view commanded by the *Siâghah* ridge, but the Arabs assured us that in clear weather Kaukab el-Hawa, Tabor, and Neby Duhy could be seen on the north-west, and Beni N'aim and Yekin (the city Cain of the Kenites) on the south-west. Bethlehem, Beit Jâla, Jebel Fureidis, Olivet, Taiyibeh, Tell Asur, Gerizim, Ebal, Neby Belân, Jebel Hazkin, and Gilboa can be seen, and the Jordan valley from Jericho to Kaukab; the Kurn Sartaba, the northern part of the Dead Sea, Jebel Osha above es Salt, Heshbon, and Elealah are also in view. The most striking peculiarity of the scene seems, however, to be that the valley east of the river is plainly seen, Kefrein, Nimrin, Râmeh, and other places close to the foot of the Moab hills being in view. Thus the prospect seems to agree well with the account in the book of Deuteronomy (xxxiv, 1-3), although Dan (if Bâniâs be intended) and the "utmost sea" cannot, I think, be seen, as high mountains appear to intervene. Perhaps we should read "all Judah towards the utmost sea." Gilead with its oak woods, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh west of Jordan, Naphthali (in the vicinity of Tabor, which formed, as the survey of Western Palestine shows, the border between that tribe and Issachar), the hills of Judah, and the Negeb, or country south of Hebron, are all seen as

described in the Bible narrative ; while no description could be more exact than that of the "plain of Jericho unto Zoar," if Zoar is to be sought at the edge of the Ghor es Seisebân, near Kefrein or Râneh.

The name *Neba* appears to apply to the highest part of the ridge at the very edge of the great plateau. The name *Siâghah* applies to the spur further west near the ruin of that name ; but as is usual with natural features these titles are not very strictly applied, and the whole ridge appears occasionally to be called *Dhahret Neba*.

A very startling discovery awaited us at *Neba*, which, while making every deduction which prudence suggests, seems more likely to give a direct connection with the Bible narrative than anything we have yet come across. Immediately north-west of the highest summit, near the ancient road which here descends from the plateau, we found a distinct and well preserved specimen of those rude stone monuments, called by some "cromlechs," and by others (though, according to Max Muller incorrectly) "dolmens." Their existence in this district has already been noticed by Canon Tristram, though, so far as I know, he has not described the specimen in question. It is distinct and well preserved, consisting of one large covering stone supported by two others.

The monument stands on the bare rock, and cannot apparently have been erected over a grave. Large scattered blocks near it appear to have belonged to other monuments of the same kind, and, as in Galilee, they seem more probably to have been ancient altars than anything else—an explanation which has, I believe, been accepted by many archæologists, as best accounting for the purpose for which similar cromlechs were erected in our own country, and in other parts of the world.

There is nothing to give a date to the cromlechs on *Nebo*, unless it be found in the Bible, where we are informed that *Balak* erected seven altars—one no doubt to each of the great planetary divinities—at this spot. The position of these altars was evidently not on the extreme summit of the hill, as *Balaam* went aside to the high place leaving the king standing by his sacrifices. It may, perhaps, be considered a bold suggestion, but there appears nothing extravagant in the idea that one of those ancient altars, so hastily erected to summon the deities of *Moab* to war against *Israel*, my yet be standing, unharmed by more than 3,000 winters, on the bleak slopes of *Nebo*, beneath the summit where, according to the dramatic story of the Book of Numbers, the prophet from *Euphrates* went up to meet with *Jehovah*.

That similar monuments are alluded to in the Bible in the opinion of many modern authorities, who recognize in the "gilgal" or "circle" of the book of *Joshua*, where the twelve stones taken from *Jordan* were set up, a circular monument not unlike *Stonehenge*. Such a *gilgal* still exists east of *Dhibân*, as recently described by *Herr Schick*, consisting of stones of great size, and of this as well as of all the most perfect cromlechs, *Lieutenant Mantell* will now endeavour to obtain photographs. Caution is, however, very necessary, as some of the supposed monuments may turn out to be merely natural features, for the hill-sides here, as in

Western Palestine, are strewn with fallen blocks. In two instances west of Jordan we came across groups of stones, which may have belonged respectively to a cromlech, and to a stone circle; but we were unable to make sure that they were not natural features, and they are consequently not marked on the map.

It is striking to find that the unmistakable cromlechs exist only beyond Jordan and in Upper Galilee, at a distance from the influence of Jewish faith in Jerusalem, and this serves to strengthen the conjecture that the ancient Baal worshippers made use of rude cromlechs, similar to those of the Druids of a later period, for altars.

In connection with this subject the form of the *Makams*, or places now held sacred by the Arabs, is very interesting.

During the present week we have visited some six or eight of these shrines, consisting of circles some 20 feet in diameter, built up of stones about a foot long. In each case there was a sort of doorway or small cromlech on the west, formed by two stones—generally well hewn and taken from a neighbouring ruin, supporting a third stone or lintel. The jambs were generally about 2 feet high, and the width of the entrance about the same. The remainder of the circle was composed of unhewn blocks about a foot long piled up into a wall some 2 feet in height. The lintel stone of the cromlech or western entrance serves as an altar on which are laid offerings, consisting of blue beads, fragments of pottery or of purple basalt, bits of china, the locks of guns, rags, etc. The ploughs of the Arabs are left inside the charmed circle for protection, and a rude grave of stones occupies the centre, while in three cases sacred trees grow close by. The names of some of these *Makams* are modern, others are said to date from "ancient times," but whatever be the age of the existing structures, it is probable that the custom of thus constructing "gilgals" has been derived by the Arabs from their forefathers, from a remote period, while many of the sites (especially that of Neby Bal'ath), may be supposed to preserve ancient centres of Baal worship on the high places of Moab.

The field we have at length entered promises to be one of great interest. It may be said to stand to Western Palestine something in the relation of the highlands to the lowlands of Scotland—a wilder region; inhabited by clans of pastoral habits; distinguished by its gushing springs, its uncultivated moors, and its more ancient archæological remains.

The ruins appear to be more important, though less numerous than west of the river, but with the exception of cromlechs all those we have as yet visited appear to belong to the Byzantine period. The ruin of *Sâmieh* in Wâdy Hesbân has not apparently been previously noted, and its position seems to fit well with that of the Biblical Sibmah of Moab. The great tower of *Sâmik* may prove to be the *Samega* of Josephus, and *Sîfa* may have some connection with the field of *Zophin*, but without books of reference it is impossible to follow up these indications very closely.

Most of the sites which we have visited are marked on the excellent

maps of Bædeker's Handbook, though the names are often incorrectly spelt.

At Umm el Burak we found a mutilated Greek inscription, which appears to record the erection of a building by a certain Antonius Rufus, and is evidently not older than the Byzantine period. Three other inscriptions from Madeba have been removed to Jerusalem; where I hope to see them in the winter, and no doubt many others as yet uncopied remain to be found, but the Adwân say that they know of no other stone like the Moabite stone anywhere in their country.

It may be interesting here to note the present condition of the more important tribes east of Jordan. The Adwân are at present perhaps the strongest, being allied with one section of the Beni Sakhr. Their country is bounded by Jordan and the Zerka Ma'in, Jebel 'Ajlûn, and Jerash, 'Ammân and the ridge on which stands the ruin of Sâmik, embracing some 1,000 square miles of very good country, including the best part of the Ghor, and the hill slopes and part of the Heshbon plateau.

On the south-east is the country of the Beni Sakhr, or "sons of the rock," including the plateau east of Madeba and Sâmik, as far as the country of the 'Anezeh. The famous Sheikh Fendi el Faiz has died within the last few years, and his sons quarrelled among themselves. Ibn el Fiaz and Zutum allied themselves with their old enemies the 'Anezeh, while another section made peace with the Adwân, who during the present year (about the middle of May) slew Zutum in fair fight. Peace has since been made, and blood money paid, but the Beni Sakhr have lost much of their power, and the Hameidi tribes who inhabit the district south of the Zerka Ma'in as far as Kerak are now their own masters. The establishment of a colony of fifty Christian families in the caves of Madeba, under protection of Padre Paulo, the priest appointed by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, has also made a great change in the condition of the country. On the 22nd we paid a visit to this worthy priest in his cave, and I had a long conversation with him in Italian, which served to throw much light on the best method of proceeding. He offered us all the assistance in his power, and will send our letters for us to Jerusalem. His assistance ought to be a great help to us in making arrangements with the Hameidi, who have a wholesome fear of him, as he has caused some of their number to be imprisoned. So far, indeed, as the country south of the Jabbok is concerned, our way is now clear, with the exception of possible interference; and as the district has the reputation of being healthy, we may hope to reap a good harvest before the winter sets in.

From day to day our store of notes increases rapidly. Every evening Sheikh Goblân comes to our tent for a cup of tea, and over this our conversation is often considerably prolonged. The Arabs being a freer and nobler people than the peasantry, are less suspicious of Europeans, and more willing to give information. They are also much less fanatical and, indeed, have very little religion. We have not yet seen Sheikh Goblân at his prayers, and his foresight politically seems to be shown by his having sent his younger sons to the English School in Jeru-

salem. Yet, although in constant communication with travellers, although he has even been on board an English man-of-war, and has acquired a truly civilised love of money, he has not lost the native dignity of the Arab, nor acquired the detestably familiar and impertinent manner of the Dragomans of Western Palestine, whose treatment of travellers seems to become more insufferably contemptuous every year. It is impossible in a short report to give any account of the fund of traditions, notes of customs and manners, of scenery and archæology, which we are now gathering day by day, while the more intelligent among the natives, including our new Protestant scribe, and our old major domo (Habib el Jemâil), appear to enter thoroughly into the spirit of the work, and fill their note books with traditions and other scraps of information diligently collected from the Arabs.

My present plan is to proceed southwards by Dibon to the Arnon, and thence north-east by Ziza to 'Ammân, visiting the palace of Mashitta, and completing the survey of the mountains, if possible, from the Arnon to the vicinity of es Salt. For however interesting the district round Kerak may be, it is properly speaking no part of the Holy Land, and this, together with the south-end of the Dead Sea, the Harrah, and the Negeb, south of Beersheba, might with advantage be undertaken at one time, with an expedition rather differently organised, and by a more rapid method of work. The region to the north, including mount Gilead and the Hauran, appears, however, to present more immediate interest, and we may perhaps hope if all goes well to complete the survey of the Ghor to the Sea of Galilee next spring, and before autumn to extend the work as far as the river Hieromax on the north, and eastwards to Remtheh and the Haj road.

The country south of Heshbon is absolutely bare of trees, and we are therefore liable to suffer from extremes of temperature. On the day of writing this report the thermometer stands at 108° F. in the shade of the tent, the wind from the east being hotter and stronger than I have almost ever experienced it in Palestine.

A few days ago the mists covered the hills in the morning, and the temperature at night was quite chilly. North of our present camp there are, however, hills covered with oaks, and here we shall hope to find refuge before the equinoctial gales commence. The attached sketch-map will serve to show the proposed field of our immediate operations, and I hope that before the *January Quarterly* is issued we may be able to send further interesting particulars of our work in Moab.

Mr. Black and Mr. Armstrong, with the remainder of the expedition, arrived here on August 26th, after three days' march. They encountered a fearful scirocco in the Jordan valley, the thermometer reading 118° F. in the shade by day and over 90° F. by night. Fortunately all members of the party arrived safely, except our trusty watch-dog Barûd ("gunpowder"), who succumbed to the heat near Jericho.

CLAUDE R. CONDER, *Lieut. R.E.*