

NOTE ON PRE-HISTORIC REMAINS IN WESTERN PALESTINE.

THE reason which I have suggested in a former report for the absence of dolmens in Judæa, was the reiterated injunctions to the Jews to overthrow the pagan altars and pillars. Since the discovery of so many splendid specimens, most of which have not been previously seen (especially at Heshbon), we have been anxious to re-examine Western Palestine with a view to ascertain whether some hidden examples might not exist of dolmens or menhirs. Visits to likely spots have, however, as yet produced no results.

My attention has now been called to a site immediately north of Kastal and of the Jaffa-Jerusalem road, where a small monument has been found much resembling a dolmen. It is a flat stone measuring 6 feet by 3 feet, supported on one side by a block 3 feet by 6 feet and 3 feet high, and on the other by small stones. On the other side of the hill are two smaller monuments with stones 3 feet long. The site is one not unlike those places where dolmens are found beyond Jordan, namely, a hill looking down on an open valley with springs (Ain Dilbeh); and there are traces of a large enclosure on the flat hill top. I am not, however, able to satisfy myself that the stones in question have been really piled up as dolmens: their upper surfaces are rough, and there are no channels or cup-shaped hollows; they are, in fact, of the same tantalising character as some of the similar structures which Mr. Drake and I used to examine, without ever feeling satisfied that they were more than accidental on natural productions.

In addition, however, to the "stone of blood" and other interesting dolmens found by Lieutenant Kitchener in Galilee, there are one or two others mentioned in the Memoirs. The monument occurring east of the plain of Esdraelon (of Deir Ghazâleh, Sheet viii, Sect. B, "Memoirs of West Palestine Survey") appears to me clearly to be cognate to the Minyeh enclosures (see Report X). It has a dolmen altar, and traces of an oval with a central cippus—although not of great size. The dolmen itself is fully equal to the average size of those beyond Jordan.

In surveying the site of Gezer I also found a monument which seems probably to be a dolmen. It has two Hebrew letters (or what appear to be such) cut on the top stone. I obtained a sketch and measurements in 1875, and the structure is briefly described in the Memoirs.

The cup-shaped hollows in flat rocks, which are found beyond Jordan close to dolmens, are also often found in Palestine. They may, perhaps, mark the sites of former dolmen altars which have been purposely destroyed by the Jews. Three such hollows, each about six inches in diameter, were noticed by Lieutenant Mantell on the hill at Kastal about 250 yards north of the doubtful cromlech.