

inside that channel there were records inscribed on nearly ten thousand tablets. These tablets are all coming to England, but we cannot of course as yet say what they contain. They may contain something of even greater value than anything that has hitherto been discovered in the course of our Eastern researches. It may be, indeed, that we shall really find on them the antediluvian records of which I have spoken. After I have been out there again I shall be happy to give you further information as to this interesting discovery on my return. I hope to be going out in another month, and then I trust I shall be able to make still further advances on what we have already discovered."

CROMLECHS ON THE EAST OF JORDAN.

CAPTAIN CONDER, in his interesting account of survey work done by him and his companions East of Jordan, speaks of having found some 400 cromlechs. This agrees with the statements made to my husband by his Arab escort when he visited that country in 1855, "our guides told us that they abound all over the hills." In his "Byways in Palestine," 1st Edition, p. 64, he gives a drawing of one of several which he saw after leaving Sûf, going northwards through Bashan. They were constructed of four huge slabs of brown flinty looking stone forming a chamber; two for sides, one for back, and a cover over all which measured eleven feet by six and about four feet high. Mr. Finn considered them to be of Pagan origin, and that they were altars.* This view has been adopted by Captain Conder, who finds that they are connected with sacred centres and with stone circles, and he shows how, in placing an offering on the top slab or lintel, the offerer must face east, as most of the cromlechs occur on the west of the circle. Some have supposed the last half of the word cromlech to be identical with the Hebrew לִרְוּחַ *l'rwach*, "tablet" or "slab." It is interesting to observe that the cromlechs found by Captain Conder are mostly placed on the live rock. He also finds holes often excavated in the live rock close to the cromlechs, as also a similar hole in the top slab, probably to receive the live embers (charcoal) for kindling the sacrifice. Various passages of Holy Scripture come to mind in reading these things, and first in importance are the numerous references to the rock צֶרֶף as an emblem of God (see Deut. xxi, 4; and xxx, xxxi; and 1 Cor. x, 1 and many other passages).

Moses speaks of the heathen gods: "Their rock is not as our rock." Deut. xxxii, 31. Again, God forbade hewn blocks or slabs to be used in building His altar, Ex. xx, 25. The very altars were to be different. It is interesting to notice that Manoah placed his altar upon a rock, Judges, xiii, 19. And the connection of the great rock on Moriah with the temple and the altar is very interesting. The rugged simplicity

* See also "Byways," p. 283, for the account of a remarkable rude stone monument between Tyre and Sidon.

that venerable rock still bears testimony to the obedience of the Hebrew people to the law of Moses. It was left unhewn, though, but the base foundation of the temple and altar. The Bedaween told Captain Conder that the cromlechs are called "Beit el Ghul," "ghouls' house," *i.e.*, demons. Compare this with the statement of Moses in the chapter above quoted, Deut. xxxii, where the rock of Israel is contrasted with the heathen "no-gods" in verse 17. They sacrificed unto devils, that is, demons. St. Paul, in 1 Cor. x, evidently has these passages in his mind, when he speaks of the rock, v. 1, and in v. 20, "the Gentiles sacrifice to devils (*δαμόνια*), not to God." The word used here is the same as used in the Septuagint, Deut. xxx, 11-17, and signifies, like the Arabic "ghoul," a malignant demon. The Arab tradition has preserved for us the allusion to ancient customs older than the days when Deuteronomy was written by Moses on the eastern side of Jordan, where these altars not "overthrown" by Israel still exist.

E. A. FINN.

THE MOUNTAIN OF THE SCAPE GOAT.

JERUSALEM, *January, 18, 1882.*

Having visited to-day, under the guidance of Sheikh Rashid, El Muntâr, I am able to confirm what is said by Captain Conder in the *Quarterly Statement*, p. 206.

The distance from Jerusalem, the grand view of Jerusalem, the expanse of country spread out before one, the strange character of the mountain (on the one side rolling in rich folds of pasture grounds tenanted by numberless flocks, on the other, bleak, bare, chill, and precipitous), the accordance of the nomenclature, all these things make one believe that this *must* be the "mountain of the scape goat."

I do not know whether Captain Conder has called attention to the large cistern on the top of the mountain, to the fragmentary pieces of mosaic pavement, or to the traces of walls and other buildings.

One thinks generally that not much may be done on a winter day. But this morning—with its heavy clouds massing over and then drifting away from Jerusalem, and the many bursts of sunshine bringing out every detail,—Bethlehem, Beit Jâla, the Hill of Evil Counsel, Zion, Moriah, the Mount of Olives, &c., were lighted up in a marvellous manner.

The view to the north-east was very cloudy, but the view of the Dead Sea and the desert country of Judah was magnificent!

C. PICKERING CLARKE.