

EMMAUS IDENTIFIED.

BY MRS. FINN.

AMONG the many questions of interest that occupied our attention while living in Jerusalem, there was none more attractive than this "Where was the Emmaus of St. Luke's Gospel?"

During the first ten years after our arrival in Palestine, we had sought the reply, but had found none that could be considered satisfactory, although various travellers and writers on the topography of Palestine had dealt on the question.

Dr. Robinson, successful as he had been beyond all that went before him in identifying long lost sites, had in this instance resorted to that refuge for distressed critics, "a different reading" of the sacred text, and suggested that St. Luke had originally written as to the distance of Emmaus from Jerusalem—not three score furlongs, but *one hundred* and three score furlongs. Dr. Robinson thought that this altered reading would allow of the Emmaus of St. Luke's Gospel being identified with the Emmaus afterwards called Nicopolis, on the Plain of Sharon, at the foot of the Judæan mountains, twenty-two Roman miles distant from Jerusalem.

Is not Nicopolis rather 176 than 160 furlongs distant from Jerusalem?¹

In considering the matter on the spot, however, it appeared to us that very serious difficulties present themselves against the attempt to apply the narrative in St. Luke's Gospel to any place so far from Jerusalem as the Nicopolis-Emmaus.

First of all, the events occurred in Passover Week, which all devout Israelites spent at, if not in Jerusalem. Nicopolis-Emmaus is a distant place out of the hill country of Judah.

Secondly, a journey of twenty miles on foot up steep mountain passes, is altogether at variance with the circumstances under which the two disciples returned from Emmaus to Jerusalem that evening. On their arrival at the village, they had dissuaded our Lord from going further, because the day was "far spent" (declined). It was towards evening when at their entreaty he went in to tarry with them. Then came the evening meal, which according to the custom of the country is not commenced till at or after sunset. At Passover or Easter time, the sun sets soon after six o'clock, and there is but a short twilight in Palestine. When the disciples had discovered who their guest was, they "rose up that same hour" in their eagerness to communicate the glad

¹ Josephus also mentions an Emmaus at 60 furlongs from Jerusalem; but Dr. Robinson deals with that in the same way, and suggests "another reading" for Josephus also. Dr. Tregelles, in a letter to Dr. H. Bonar, shows clearly that the evidence of the best MSS. in favour of the revised reading of Luke xxiv, 13, is thoroughly preponderating, and decisive in favour of the 60 furlongs.—"Land of Promise," by H. Bonar, D.D., p. 538.

tidings to the rest of the disciples. But it is highly improbable that they had to walk a distance of twenty miles up a continuous ascent of above 2,000 feet from the level of the plain to Jerusalem. Had they made such a journey as that, most of it steep climbing, they would not have reached Jerusalem much before midnight, and long after the time when Easterns go to rest. But on arriving they found the eleven still together. They also must have been at their sunset meal—the last for the day. But if it were 60 furlongs ($7\frac{1}{2}$ Roman miles), that distance could have been traversed within two hours. They arrived and told their wonderful history—and as they yet spake (Luke xxiv, 36), the Lord appeared to them, finding them still “at meat” (*ἀνακειμένοις*, Mark xvi, 14), and offered to share the scarce-finished meal: “have ye here any meat?” (food). They gave Him a piece of broiled fish and of an honeycomb, and He did eat before them, and then entered upon a conversation which could not have been a short one.

All this implies that the two disciples must have got back from Emmaus early in the night.

The word used by St. Luke in describing Emmaus being *κωμὴ*, “a village” or “hamlet,” would not be applied to the Emmaus-Nicopolis on the plain, which Josephus expressly calls a *city*, and which he declares to have been well fortified with strong walls and towers (see “Ant.,” xii, 7, 3; xiii, 1, 3; “Wars,” iii, 3, 5). Jews while keeping their Passover as these disciples were doing, would scarcely go to any other *city* than Jerusalem.

It seemed to us that the Emmaus of St. Luke’s Gospel must have been a country village within easy reach of Jerusalem, the walk to which would in no way interfere with the due observance of the great Paschal Festival.

All these considerations led us to continue our search for Emmaus within a circle of 60 furlongs around Jerusalem.

The only indications in the Bible are those referred to above, *i.e.*, the name “Emmaus,” the distance “60 furlongs;” and the size, “a village.” Josephus also mentions an Emmaus, a Roman colony, at 60 furlongs from Jerusalem, of which more hereafter.

And with regard to the name *Emmaus*, Josephus gave us a clue in its derivation and meaning, a clue of immense value. He mentions a third Emmaus, distinct from the Emmaus-Nicopolis on the plain, and from the Emmaus colony near Jerusalem.

In “Ant.,” xviii, 2, 3, when describing Tiberias at the Lake of Gennesaret, he says there are warm baths at a little distance in a village named Emmaus. In “Wars,” iv, 1, 3, he tells us that “Vespasian removed from Emmaus where he had pitched his camp before the city Tiberias,” and adds, “now Emmaus if it be interpreted may be rendered *a warm bath*, for therein is a spring of warm water useful for healing.”

This rendering of the word is undoubtedly correct, Emmaus being merely the Greek form of the Hebrew *חמַת* Hamath.

The place near to Tiberias, which Josephus calls Emmaus, is called

Hamath in Joshua xix, 35, and is to this day known by the Arabic equivalent word *Hammâm*, "hot baths."

The Syriac form of the word is *Amatha*, given by Eusebius and Jerome as the name of the hot springs at Godera (*Um knis*) which are also called *Hammâm* by the Arabs of the present day (see also Reland's "Palestine," pp. 30, 703, 755, 758).

The Emmaus-Nicopolis of the plain received its name from the fact that it also was remarkable for a fountain endowed with virtue for healing man and beast, which is said to have been stopped up by Julian the Apostate. This fountain is mentioned by both Jewish and Christian writers (Reland, pp. 759, 760).¹

The etymology of the name Emmaus led us to the conclusion that wherever the Emmaus of St. Luke might be, there must also have existed hot baths, and the modern Arabic use of the term *Hammâm* as applied to baths generally, whether of natural hot springs, or of water artificially heated, led us further to the idea that St. Luke's Emmaus need not be a place of hot springs, but that it might possibly be a place where abundance of water had caused the establishment of artificial baths of some importance.

We convinced ourselves before long, that there is but one place within the circuit of 60 furlongs from Jerusalem, where there is a sufficiently copious spring of water for the supply of baths. That place is the pretty valley of Urtas, which is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ Roman miles or 60 furlongs from Jerusalem, south of Bethlehem.

The valley descends from the ancient Etham (the fountain of which still bears that name), and passes round the base of the Herodium (or "Frank" mountain, called by the natives *Jebel el Furaidis*) on its way towards the Dead Sea.

These two places, Etham and Herodium, are among those whose distance from Jerusalem are specified by Josephus. He tells us that Etham was 50 furlongs off ("Ant.," viii, 7, 3), and that Herodium was 60 furlongs off ("Ant.," xiv, 13, 9, and "Ant.," xv, 11, 4).

Urtas, village and spring, lie between the two, and the difference between the 50 furlongs' distance of Etham from Jerusalem, and the 60 furlongs of Urtas, may be easily accounted for by the difference of the road to Urtas, which winds considerably, or by the relative position of the two places—the one higher, the other lower in the same valley.

The actual *distance* of Urtas from Jerusalem well answers the requirements of St. Luke's narrative.

¹ At the date of our search, we had not the aid of the Dictionary of the Bible, in which we afterwards found the argument against Nicopolis ably summed up, or of the "Geographie du Talmud" of M. Adolphe Neubauer.

M. Neubauer has a note on Emmaus, on p. 100 of his valuable work, and at pp. 34–38, he defines Emmaus and Hamath as being the usual appellation for thermal baths.

The Bible dictionary says that Emmaus has yet to be identified.

Nothing is more delightful on a spring afternoon than the 7 miles' walk across the Plain of Rephaim, past Rachel's tomb and Bethlehem, to this charming spot, the most charming and the most accessible from Jerusalem in the whole district.

There is here the most copious perennial spring of water to be found anywhere within the required distance from the Holy City.

It never fails, but runs with a strong stream in summer as well as winter, and it is altogether distinct from the spring at Etham, or from the other springs that supply the pools in the valley above.

The village is small, but there are remains of ancient buildings, and, indeed, it is easy to see that a village must always have existed here on account of the beautiful spring of water, yet being so near the fortified city of Etham, this probably never was no more than a village, and thus would answer to the terms used by St. Luke and by Josephus as to the size of the Emmaus to which they refer.

Here, then, is a place which fulfils the important requirements as to distance, ~~size~~, and supply of water for baths.

But the name Emmaus, and its Hebrew and Arabic equivalents, were wanting, and, above all, where were the baths.

It was several years before we discovered any traces of either the name or of the baths.

While waiting for some discovery that might settle that decisive point, we studied with ever increasing interest all that served to throw light upon the past history of Urtas.

And first as to the name "Urtas,"—which has no meaning in modern Syro-Arabic nor in Hebrew, but is believed to be comparatively modern, and only a corruption of the Latin *Hortus* (garden), given to it at a period when Latin was much used and spoken in and around Bethlehem, close by.

This carries us back at least to the days of St. Jerome, whose memory is still fresh among the Christians of Bethlehem. There within the precincts of the great Convent of the Nativity is still existing the chamber where Jerome made his translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Latin. The short mile of hill and dale from thence to the valley of Urtas must often have been traversed by him and his companions—Paula with her daughter and others.

In the life of Vigilantius we get glimpses of the rural delights around Bethlehem. The city of David ~~was~~ then as now supplied with pure water from living springs, by the ancient aqueduct which winding around the hill sides, passes from Urtas, through Bethlehem to the Temple at Jerusalem. We know that Jerome and the Latin speaking Christians of his day regarded Urtas as the site of the Hortus conclusus, the "garden inclosed" of Solomon (Song of Solomon iv, 12). Had any Hebrew or Syrian name for Urtas been extant in Jerome's day he would surely have found and preserved it.

But the identification with the gardens of Solomon is reasonable. The proximity of the place to Bethlehem would in itself lead us to search here for the royal gardens.

Josephus tells us that they were at Etham ; the name Etham survives to this day as the name of a spring of water at the head of the valley, Ain Aitân. And the ancient city of Etham was doubtless on the mountain beside the spring. From 2 Chronicles xi, 6, we learn that Etham was near Bethlehem and Tekoa, which agrees well with the position of Urtas.

After Urtas Tekoa (now Tekua) is the very next town to Bethlehem. The Septuagint have placed Etân or Aitân among the cities of Judah, Bethlehem, Fagor, &c., inserted by them in Joshua xv. Fagor (now Faghoor) is the next important place of ancient date south of Urtas an hour distant. Josephus tells us that Etham "is very pleasant in fine gardens, and abounding in rivulets of water." No place but the Urtas valley would be thus described. He speaks of the early morning drives of King Solomon in his chariot to this delightful retreat ; and Urtas is the only place to which an easy pleasant drive across the plain would be possible.

The Song of Solomon is full of allusions to the charms of this garden, with its waters, its fragrant hills, its vineyards, its paradise (ch. iv, 13, rendered "orchard") of pomegranates and pleasant fruits.

In all points the Urtas valley with its fruit gardens and vineyards on the mountains around, fully coincides with the descriptive touches in that song.

The word *paradise* gives us a further clue. No ordinary garden or orchard can be justly described by the word *paradise* ; but only such a one as was the garden of Eden ; watered by a network of streams *parted* (Gen. ii, 10, "from thence it was *parted*" בִּיד) from the fountain head, into refreshing rivulets that keep up perennial verdure and a succession of pleasant fruits upon trees growing by the rivers of waters alluded to in Psalm i, the imagery of which is probably derived from this very spot.

In Ecclesiastes (ch. ii, 5, 6) Solomon speaks of his paradise : "I made me gardens and paradises (orchards), I made me pools of water."

We find both in the Urtas valley. The pools, ascribed by ancient local tradition to Solomon, and still called by the very same word as that used in the Hebrew text, lie with the system of aqueducts in the head of the valley just below Etham ; while the word *paradise* lingers in the same valley below Urtas, as the native name for the Herodium, *Jebel el Furaidis*, "Mount of the little Paradise."

The aqueducts are still existing which were carried from the one to the other.

There can be no doubt that the "little Paradise," which gave the name thus traditionally preserved, was the Paradise which Josephus says Herod the Great formed around the newly-built fortress tomb, where the Edomite king was afterwards buried.

This Paradise of Herod was but a revival by him of the Royal Paradise belonging to the Great Solomon, whom it was his constant ambition to rival and to outdo in his kingdom, his magnificence and his buildings, including the Temple on Jericho—the palace on Zion and the country retreat here in the loveliest vale of Judah's royal inheritance.

The name Etham, which the valley formerly had from the city above, had in all probability been superseded after the days of Solomon by that of "Paradise," and the transition to that of Hortus = Urtas is not difficult to understand.

But still this gives no clue to the name of Emmaus having belonged to Urtas—although Urtas was clearly the only place where baths could have been maintained, and although Urtas was at the distance which Josephus gives as that of an Emmaus existing in his time.

We now turned our attention to what Josephus says about this Emmaus. It is not much, yet he alludes to three particulars in which his Emmæus agrees with that of St. Luke's Gospel.

1. The name.
2. The distance—60 furlongs.
3. It was a place, or village,

Χωριον, and therefore not the fortified city Emmaus - Nicopolis on the plain. But there is more than this to be got out of the notice of Josephus.

The position of Emmaus is indicated, and it is described as having been chosen for a Roman settlement of military colonists, 800 strong.

Jerusalem had fallen. Vespasian and Titus had returned to Rome. Lucilius Bassus was Legate in Judæa.

The regular army had already been sent into other countries, excepting the 10th Legion, and some companies of horse and foot. The commander had attacked that citadel, which was in Herodium, Jebel Furaidis in the Urtas valley, and having taken it, he reduced Macherus, east of Jordan, which was then the most important fortress left in Jewish hands.

That taken, there remained but one stronghold, that of Masada, on the western cliffs, a few hours from Herodium on the way towards it (*see* Josephus, "Ant.," xiv, 13, 9).

Masada was seemingly impregnable, and it was in the hands of a powerful and desperate body of infuriate Jews, whom the Romans were resolved to subdue.

It was about this time that Cæsar had ordered the lands of Judæa to be put up for sale, *all but one place*, which he "ordered to be reserved" for 800 men, whom he had dismissed from his army—which he gave them for habitation—it is called Emmaus, and is distant from Jerusalem three-score furlongs." ("Wars," vii, 6, 6.)

This place then must have combined advantages for colonial settlement with those of a central position among the mountain fastnesses, whence the Arabian and other tribes might be held in check, as well as the Jewish garrison at Musada.

What place so likely to attract the sagacious Romans as Urtas, with its copious supply of water from perennial springs, its rich soil, its admirable military position among the mountains with regard to Jerusalem, and to all the eastern and southern tribes—in the same valley as the Herodium (but just captured), and so near Musada as to prevent any hostile movement on part of the Jews in that fortress.

The Imperial Emmaus colony may well have been posted at Urtas—and the name Hirtus may possibly date from the occupation by these Roman soldiers, who would not easily abandon so fertile a spot when once they had it in possession—and after the Roman troops were withdrawn, the Latin speaking people at Bethlehem would naturally preserve the Latin name.

The present Fellaheen, who are so tenacious in the preservation of ancient Shemitic names, could give us no other name than Urtas, which has been used by them from time immemorial, but which has no meaning in their tongue. This fact alone points to the conclusion that this race did not directly succeed to the original Jewish owners, but that a Latin speaking colony had intervened for at least a temporary settlement.

Otherwise the ancient name would be still in use, as in so many hundreds of places where the Fellaheen have preserved them.

Nablous (Neapolis) for Shechem, and Sebastieh (Sebaste) for Samaria, are instances of Greek names which have in this manner supplanted older Hebrew names.

Urtas for Hirtus would be one more instance of similar change where an occupation of foreigners came between the ancient and the present possessors.

Not only are the position and character of the Urtas valley suitable for a Roman settlement, but in the village there are actual remains of a strong stone building, possibly a small fort. The character of the masonry points to the Roman age. Further down the valley there are remains of similar style, and massive masonry which the Fellaheen call "the Mills."

There is an instance at Kotonieh (the first station on the road to Jaffa, west of Jerusalem) of a Roman fort built like this in a commanding situation in a valley instead of on a height.

Kotonieh is acknowledged to have derived its present name from a Roman colonia, or military colony stationed there. Though also a watered valley, the position is not likely to have been the one chosen by the Roman Emperor for his Emmaus settlement, for it would have been altogether useless on this western side as a check on the eastern fortress of Musada, or on the mountain district in general, being too much off the upper plateau of highlands.

Having so far identified the Urtas valley with the Etham where Solomon had his gardens and paradise, and Herod the Great his paradise around the Herodium, and also as a suitable place for the Emmaus military colony, the name Emmaus still remained a difficulty.

Why should the Etham of early Jewish history have become Emmaus in Roman times?

And where were "the baths," which alone could have justified the name Emmaus?

The following circumstances led to the recovery of these missing links: the name Hammâm, which in Syro-Arabic represents the Greek Emmaus, and the ruins of sumptuous Roman baths.

In 1847 the rich soil and streams of living water in the Urtas valley, then deserted and desolate, had attracted the attention of John Meshullam, a British subject of Jewish birth. He sought and obtained the protection and assistance of the then British Consul (my husband), Mr. Finn, in establishing himself there upon lands leased from the Fellah proprietors. By the year 1856, a considerable part of the valley had been planted and restored to a condition of fertility and beauty. In that year I joined him in taking under cultivation a fresh tract, further down the valley.

Gardens and orchards, in fact "paradises," irrigated by streams from the fountain head, were once more formed in the valley-bed as of old.

At one part, however, progress was arrested, the ground could not be cleared as elsewhere, for planting; it was fully occupied beneath the surface by remains of buildings hitherto concealed by about 20 inches of soil, evidently washed down from above in course of ages. We had noticed before that when the stream of water reached this spot, it used to disappear as if into a chamber of some kind.

Early in 1857, in digging for the foundations of a retaining wall for a garden plot, we once more came upon these remains, and found excellent hewn stone lying loose from some former building, also a fragment of cornice, pieces of a stone door with a place for the bolt, a few copper coins (one of Constantine, the rest Cufic), and a small bit of glass mosaic.

What was our delight when, as we stood there watching the Fellah workmen, we caught from their lips the word "Hammâm," "baths."

"Hammâm!" we cried, "where is the Hammâm?" "Oh!" replied one standing by, "the Fellaheen here *always* call this spot the place of the Hammâm, and yon rock jutting out into the path they call *Leeyet al Hammâm*, "the promontory of the baths."

At last, then, here was the missing link, the name *Emmaus*. But how make certain that the name had real value. Where were the baths?

Several years passed before funds for making excavations were forthcoming.

But one thing became clearer each succeeding year, that in no other place within 60 furlongs of Jerusalem was water sufficient for maintaining baths to be found excepting at Urtas only.

At last, in 1861, Mr. Cyril Graham, whose discoveries east of Jordan had already cast so much light upon the literal accuracy of Holy Scripture, joined us in commencing diggings at the so-called Hammâm in Urtas.

Just before we began, there were dug up in a field adjoining that spot, two Corinthian capitals of extremely pure style, and a fragment of cornice, all of native limestone. This quickened our zeal. We set to work, and the very first thing that came to light, only a few feet below the surface, was a *bath!* lined with purest white marble in perfect preservation, 4 feet long by 3 feet 7 inches wide, and 3 feet 9 inches deep, having in it a step or seat for convenience of the bather.

The marble is foreign, apparently from Greece.

In this bath were found two bronze strigiles, or bath scrapers similar

to those found in the baths at Pompei. Also large quantities of coloured and gilt glass mosaics like those of Pompei, and those which ornament the dome of the rock on Moriah, the Churches of the Holy Sepulchre, and of the Nativity, and St. Sophia at Constantinople.

Next to this bath, we found another bath or tank, 23 feet by 18 feet, and 4½ feet deep. The cement still remains in considerable quantity on the floor and sides. We then found, at a higher level, above the marble bath, and communicating with it, another tank, 4 feet 4 inches long by 4 feet wide, and 4 feet deep.

In all of these were found glass mosaics ; in the largest there also lay a small fragment of a column of blue and white marble ; many pieces of thick greenish panes of glass, evidently window panes of the bath ; much white marble pavement ; one Jewish copper coin considerably worn ; several Cufic coins, and the ornamental hasp of a brass lock.

Higher again than the small tank, and communicating with it by a cylindrical bore through the massive stone wall, we next found a large pool (perhaps swimming bath), 51 feet wide, that is 30 cubits of 21 inches, by 8 feet deep. The length he could not then ascertain. It was quite filled with mould washed down in course of ages from the higher ground.

In this pool we found still more proofs of the costly and magnificent character of these baths. Buried in the earth, there lay the shaft of a column, 8 feet 8 inches long, and 3 feet 11 inches in circumference, also of pure white foreign marble ; and not far off three marble capitals of peculiar style, very richly and beautifully carved in a species of palm-leaf pattern, somewhat like Corinthian, and reminding us of the monolith at the Huldah Gate of the Temple on Moriah. The roof had doubtless been supported on pillars as in the baths of Caracalla at Rome.

Here were also fragments of very thin glass vessels and of ancient pottery ; bits of Roman tiles ; two little metal implements, apparently ear-picks ; a piece of a stylus of unknown material ; and fragments of marble pavement grooved so as to be bound together with metal clamps, which were still in some of the pieces.

There were a piece of an iron hinge, a rusty sickle, and a small bit of glass shaped like a solid trumpet (similar, as some one told us, to metal ones found at Pompei), also a fragment of glass, which bears on it marks of the casting process, such as one sees on glass cast nowadays. Cast glass has also been found in the baths at Pompei. The last, and perhaps the most interesting of the miscellaneous relics dug up, were small triangular pieces of black bituminous stone which had evidently been used in mosaic pavement.

This stone, found near the Dead Sea, is now used by the Bethlehemites for small ornamental cups, vases, &c. But Josephus tells us of the use to which it was put in the days of King Solomon, as pavement on the road which he laid for chariots from this very place, Etham.

“Now Solomon had divine sagacity in all things, and was very diligent and studious to have all things done after an elegant manner, so he did

not neglect the care of the ways, but he laid a causeway of *black stone* along the road that led to Jerusalem, which was the royal city—both to render them easy for travellers, and to manifest the grandeur of his riches and government” (“Ant.,” viii, 7, 3, 4).

The marble lined bath when laid open to view at once struck our Jewish friends as similar in arrangement to the Mikoah, or bath used for ceremonial ablutions at the synagogue. And they argued that this was proof of the whole being the work of their great King Solomon. It is of course possible that Solomon may have added baths to the luxuries of his country paradise—though not of the Roman style.

But the foreign marbles, the style of the capitals, the glass and the pottery, led us rather to ascribe them to Herod the Great, whose extraordinary love of luxury is well known, and who would gladly adopt the custom which had newly come in with the reign of Augustus Cæsar of establishing magnificent Royal Thermæ. There was an unmistakable resemblance here to Roman baths. And Herod would naturally mingle Jewish arrangements with those which bespoke his Roman tastes. The only other sovereign by whom they might have been arranged was Constantine. But his residence at Jerusalem was too short for such an undertaking, and the baths must have existed before St. Luke and Josephus wrote about Emmaus, near Jerusalem.

Here, then, beyond all cavil or doubt, we had brought to light Emmaus, the Hammâm, the baths, at 60 furlongs from Jerusalem.

And it seems to me that while the accuracy of St. Luke and of Josephus are vindicated, we may easily account for the fact that Hamath, the purely Hebrew form of Emmaus, has not been recovered as attached to this spot. There are no natural *hot springs* here to deserve the name of Hamath. These are artificial Roman baths, just such as the proud luxurious Herod in his emulation of Cæsar, no less than of Solomon, would erect here at his little paradise and near his fortress at Herodium.¹ The Greek name Emmaus would naturally be used in those Greek speaking days for the little village, now that the ancient Etham higher up was no longer a strong city. As Emmaus only, not as Hamath, could it have been known to the writers of our Saviour's days. It was as such the creation of Herod. The mention of this place by this name by two writers of the Herodian period, St. Luke and Josephus, is one of those undesigned coincidences so invaluable in evidence.

This Emmaus was Emmaus *only* at the particular period when they were writing.

¹ Thermæ—hot-springs, meant properly warm springs or baths of warm water—but came to be applied to those magnificent edifices which grew up under the Empire in place of the simple balnea of the Republic. . . . Writers, however, use these terms without distinction; thus the baths erected by Claudius Etruscus, the freed man of the Emperor Claudian, are styled by Statius balnea, and by Martial Etrusci thermulæ.—“Dict. Greek and Roman Antiquities,” Art. *Balnea*.

And when the splendid baths were laid in ruins the marble columns which had supported the roof, the capitals, the mosaics, and all the rest were mingled in general ruin, the baths lay buried under the ruins ; Emmaus disappeared and became known as the Hortus of King Herod (as of Solomon before him) to the Latin speaking soldier colonists of Titus who occupied the ground, aided perhaps by native Fellaheen. These latter in their turn swarmed over the land and took possession of it as Urtas, which it has remained till now.

All Jewish inhabitants must have disappeared and made way for the Roman soldiery, who would be at no pains to preserve the Hebrew name, otherwise it must have been handed on and preserved by the Fellaheen, whose language is so similar to Hebrew.

The marvellous fact remains that though the name of the village was lost, though the ruined baths were buried in the soil, these ignorant peasants had preserved to us in their unerring and imperishable tradition at the place, and the promontory of the Hammâm, the clue to the discovery of the long lost Emmaus, here at 60 furlongs from Jerusalem, with its baths of royal magnificence.

Another consideration of deep interest suggests itself in connection with the sacred history of this Emmaus. King Solomon would not have appropriated this valley for his country retreat, unless it had been his by inheritance from his father David, and his grandfather Jesse, the Bethlehemite. He could not otherwise have obtained it, for the law of Moses forbade the alienation of land from any family by purchase or sale (Leviticus xxv, 23-31 ; Numbers xxxvi, 7-9 ; 1 Kings xxi, 3 ; Ezekiel xlvi, 18).

Now if the Urtas valley from Etham downwards was the family property of David's Royal House, it must also have been the legitimate inheritance of Him Who was the lineal descendant of David—and as such the rightful Heir to his possessions and to his throne—the acknowledged Son of David.

What an unexpected interest this gives to the simple narrative of St. Luke's Gospel, in which is accorded how on the day of His Resurrection the Lord joined the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. Cleophas himself as connected with the family of David may have also had some inherited part or share in the valley as well as in Bethlehem close by. Eusebius in the "Onomasticon" says that Cleophas *was a native of Emmaus*.

The invitation addressed by the disciples to our Lord was not that of mere strangers visiting the village.

How familiar must every object have been to these wayfarers—how well known every step of the road across the plain, now green with springing corn and bright with flowers, how pleasant every turn of the sweet retired road that leads winding from Rachel's sepulchre along the hill sides in full view of Bethlehem, to the sheltered valley.

The Edomite usurper of David's throne had appropriated to his own use this possession of David's family. Josephus tells us ("Wars," vii, 8, 4) that

"he feared the multitude of the Jews lest they should depose him and restore their former kings to the government." He had tried by slaughter of the Innocents to destroy Him that was born at Bethlehem King of the Jews. Where was the Great Herod on that Easter evening when the risen son of David visited Emmaus with His two disciples? No man feared the tyrant now—he was dead thirty years before, and lying buried in his fortress-tomb on the summit of Herodium which looks down upon Bethlehem, and upon the Urtas valley.

Here, then, in the quiet village of Emmaus, the first meal was shared—the first bread broken, and the blessing given by our Lord. When the disciples saw Who He was, and rose up to go to Jerusalem, it was for no weary journey of twenty miles up steep mountain passes, but for a delightful walk by familiar paths, and across the smooth plain that they hastened forward to the Holy City—to find the eleven, and those that were with them, still assembled after supper.

This little company was shut in isolated and anxious, "for fear of the Jews." What a different meal had theirs been from the feasts going on that night among the thousands of Israel who were keeping holiday in Jerusalem.

Some at least among the disciples had been disabled according to Mosaic law—"defiled by reason of a dead body," when assisting at their Master's burial, and in visiting His grave.

For them there would be no further share in festive social gatherings, in the grand temple services or the solemn benedictions of the High Priest. Their Passover had been abruptly closed in grief. Now suddenly sorrow and perplexities are ended. The two arrive with glad tidings, and while yet they are speaking, the Master appears with peace upon His lips, and confirmation of the joyful tidings. The lonely meal is timed with high festival by presence of the Divine Guest Who shares it with them. The testimony of the two is placed beyond doubt, for He repeats to the whole company the arguments from the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms which had been the subject of discourse that afternoon on the way to Emmaus.

May we not say that we now know where that highly honoured village lay, and that the Emmaus 60 furlongs from Jerusalem has been identified with Urtas by the ruins of Herod's costly baths?

The site of the royal gardens is still marked by trees bearing fruit in their season, nourished by refreshing streams, the mountains still breathe the fragrance of aromatic plants, the vineyards yield clusters of rich grapes, and pure waters are still carried by the ancient aqueduct from the fountain head to Bethlehem, and even sometimes to the Temple Courts on Moriah.

But the highest and most sacred interest of all that cleaves to this valley, this royal heritage (reserved unsold by the Royal Emperor when he ordered all other Judæan lands to be put up for auction), is for ever bound up with our Lord's visit to Emmaus on the day of His Resurrection with His two disciples.