

perfect on the stone ; the second shows an O quite perfectly. As the left-hand edge of this stone is true, and perfect with the exception of some chippings at the lower corner, this slab can easily have joined another at the left, and thus have formed the right-hand end of a long inscription.

NOTE.

Since writing the above I have visited the church again, as I have done many times during the year past. The west wall of what I have called the "main building," towards the apse of the church, has been removed and the floor cleared, exposing a fine pavement. This pavement, the threshold before mentioned, and the mosaic floor all belong to one period, and to a structure very much older than the date of the "main building." It puzzled me because the threshold west of the mosaic floor was not square with the east wall of the "main buildings," but the reason is now clear. Captain Conder (p. 116) says of this church, with such of the ruins about it as were exposed when he was here, that "the whole is evidently of the Crusading period." As regards the church itself this to me is not so clear, and the mosaic floor especially I would carry back many centuries previous to that era.

At the south side of the floor of the "main building" a new mouth to the largest cistern has been discovered ; over the mouth there is a thick stone 5 feet in diameter. This was eight-sided, and was built against the wall, so that five sides are exposed. The stone was cut in such a way as leave on two of its sides small brackets shaped like the two halves of the utensil called a "tunnel."

It may be of interest to state that this piece of land was offered for sale a few years since, and for a long time went a-begging for a purchaser ; at last it was sold for 40 napoleons. During the present year it has passed into the hands of the French for 2,000 napoleons.

SELAH MERRILL.

THE BITUMEN OF JUDEA.

AN investigation of the nature of this natural product of Judea and the Dead Sea has been made by M. B. Delachanal, who has communicated his results to the French Academy of Sciences. It is employed in Palestine as an insecticide on the vines, and hence the recent attention it has attracted in France, where *savants* are still engrossed with the problem of fighting the phylloxera. Some kilogrammes of the bitumen were procured from the French Consul at Jerusalem by M. de Lesseps, and on this M. Delachanal has operated. He finds the presence of a considerable quantity of sulphur in its composition. It is a deep brown colour, nearly black, and of a friable nature. It contains 27 per cent. of oil, which is nearly colourless, and of the nature of petroleum. A solid paraffin can also be extracted from it. The rest of these experiments is that the bitumen of Judea, if it

prove efficacious as an insecticide, may also be turned to good account by the manufacturing chemist in the production of sulphur and illuminating oils. The presence of sulphur in its composition appears to assign to it a mineral, not organic origin.

THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL.

To the Editor of the Palestine Exploration Quarterly Statement.

SIR,—Captain Conder's note on this subject (1883, p. 102) emboldens me to conclude that my doubts were well founded; otherwise he would certainly have pointed out some further proof of their authenticity.

I should like to say, however, that in my copy of the "Handbook to the Bible" (that of 1879), at page 105, there is really nothing to show that the statement I quoted was not that of the authors themselves, and even in the second paragraph, at the beginning of which the "Comment of Maimonides" is mentioned, it is the "mode of preparation" which he is said to "detail," and there is nothing to show precisely that Maimonides is responsible for the statement that "the Holy Oil failed in the reign of King Josiah."

Now that these assertions are attributed to that author, I think I may fairly expect Captain Conder to allow that, however "careful" an "authority" Maimonides may be, he should not be believed in opposition to the seemingly precise statement of the Hebrew Scriptures in the passages which I quoted (2 Kings xxiii, 30, and 1 Chronicles ix, 30).

Yours obediently,

June 25th, 1883.

H. B. S. W.

PILLAR, OR GARRISON?

To the Editor of the Palestine Exploration Quarterly Statement.

SIR,—I think it will be as difficult for Rev. W. F. Birch to maintain that the "garrison" (A.V.) which 1 Samuel xiii, 3 and 4 tells us Jonathan smote, *could not* be a boundary stone or pillar, as for Captain Conder to show that it is at all *probable* that it was such a pillar that is spoken of throughout chapter xiv.

Three words are used, and though different, are so allied that two of them are in other cases rendered "garrison," "pillar," "image," &c.

May we not, however, succeed in reconciling both views?

At any rate it seems clear that the actual signification must be sought in the context in each case, remembering that the root idea in all appears to be something "set up" or "placed" in a particular spot.