

The upper section of the next side represented Leto Apollo and Artemis, with their names above them in the following order:—

ΑΡΤΕΜΙΣ	ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ	ΛΗΤΩ
Nude to the waist.	Nude right arm over Artemis's shoulder, with a cloak hanging down his back and over his arm.	Completely draped, with a snake apparently on the left.

The lower section of this side represented five figures, behind a group of four figures, of whom two were naked men wrestling, the other two were naked, one standing with outstretched arm, and one on a sort of stool; above them the inscription, partly illegible,—

ΤΑ  ΠΙΤΟΝΜΕ

and over some of the figures were the letters, **ΝΩΤ ΙΥΡΟ**

On the third side, which I had no opportunity of sketching, on the upper section, under the words **ΤΡΟΦΟΙ ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ**, was a nude infant struggling with a serpent between two draped female figures—evidently Hercules strangling the serpents sent against him by Hera. On the lower section of this side, and under the words **ΘΗΣ ΕΥΣ ΓΝΩΡΙΣΜΑΤΑ**, was a much defaced nude figure on the left, supporting what seemed to be a full sack, and on the right three draped figures.

I understand that they are continuing to find objects of interest at Nablous, which I trust shortly to have an opportunity of going to examine.

THE PASSAGE OF THE ISRAELITES ACROSS THE RED SEA.

BY SIR JOHN COODE.

THE *Quarterly Statement* for April of last year contained an interesting article by Professor Hull, of Dublin, on "The Relations of Land and Sea in the Isthmus of Suez at the time of the Exodus," wherein he deals with the question of the actual position of the passage of the Red Sea by the Children of Israel.

Professor Hull justly remarks that, according to the present position of land and water, there is a direct landway across into the "wilderness of Etham," and he asks whether, if at the time of the Exodus the physical conditions of the district north of Suez had been the same as they are now (of course he disregards for the moment the existence of the Suez Canal), there would have been cause for the cry of despair from the Israelites, or

the necessity for a stupendous miracle of deliverance such as the Bible narrative relates !

He then proceeds to show that the beds of sand and gravel containing shells, corals, and other marine forms now existing in the waters of the Gulf of Suez (which beds are found on either side of that gulf up to at least 200 feet above the present sea-level) form complete evidence of the elevation of the whole land area of that particular region, but that this elevation must have taken place at a time long antecedent to that of the Exodus. He points out, what is true, that if at the time of the Exodus an elevation of not more than from 25 feet to 30 feet had remained to be effected, the land now forming the southern part of the Isthmus of Suez would have been submerged by the waters of the Red Sea, and he regards it as in the highest degree probable that as far back as the time "when the Exodus took place the waters of the Red Sea extended northwards up the valley at least as far as the Bitter Lakes, producing a channel 20 to 30 feet in depth, and perhaps a mile in breadth ; a terrible barrier to the Israelites, and sufficient to induce a cry of despair from the whole multitude."

Having quite recently traversed the whole Isthmus, making a special examination of the portion between Ismailiya and Suez, the following incident, which then occurred, appears to me to be worthy of notice, inasmuch as it is eminently corroborative of Dr. Hull's view.

Whilst engaged with other members of the International Commission upon the investigation of various matters connected with the question of improving the Suez Canal, some of our party landed from time to time, and on one occasion at a point between what is now the north end of the Gulf of Suez and the south of the Bitter Lakes, not, in fact, very far to the north of the bridge of boats by which the pilgrims to and from Mecca cross the Canal.

Desiring to test for myself the character and hardness of the unbroken ground at this point, and at a height of about 12 or 15 feet above sea-level, the first stroke of a pick turned up, from 3 inches below the surface, a thick cake of a dull white substance which at the moment appeared to be gypsum, and whilst stooping to take it up, I remarked accordingly ; but simultaneously, a colleague who was standing at my side exclaimed "Salt." On asking him how it came to pass that he so instantly arrived at this conclusion, he replied that the whole district thereabouts was full of such salt.

When it is explained that this gentleman had the engineering charge of a considerable length of this part of the Suez Canal at the time the work was in course of construction, and consequently had thus acquired an intimate knowledge of this district, and also that on testing the ground at other points thereabouts, I found salt existing below a thin covering of sand at heights considerably above the sea-level, there is ample warrant for saying, as I have done, that the extensive existence of salt in this form and at such a height cannot be regarded otherwise than as a proof that the waters of the Red Sea did at one time extend as far north as the Bitter Lakes ; a specimen nearly an inch thick is before me as I write.

Further evidence that, at some time antecedent to the formation of the Suez Canal, the sea extended as far up the Isthmus as the Bitter Lakes, is found in a remarkable sample of salt which was cut from the bottom of the Bitter Lakes by the engineers of the Suez Canal Company before the sea was let in to effect the completion of the water communication between the northern and southern sections of the work. This block of salt, to which my attention was directed by M. de Lesseps, is preserved in the courtyard attached to the offices of the Canal Company at Ismaïliya ; it is fully 7 feet in height, and, according to M. Voisin Bey, who at the time it was taken out acted as the Company's Chief Engineer in Egypt, salt certainly existed to a still greater depth, but to what precise extent is not known.

I may here mention that whilst passing over the 1,500 (English statute) miles from the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb to Suez, the water of the Red Sea is so far changed by evaporation that samples taken from the surface at Suez have been proved to be nearly 2 parts in 1000 salter than those at Bab-el-Mandeb. It should be borne in mind, moreover, that an exceptionally great amount of evaporation would necessarily take place within such a comparatively shallow inland basin as that of the Bitter Lakes, having its surface swept by the hot dry air of the Arabian Desert, and shut in from the Mediterranean by the high land at Serapeum immediately to the north, or at any rate by the still higher ridge of country at El Guisr. These conditions would obviously contribute to the formation of such a remarkable deposit of salt as is found in the specimen above described.

A peculiar feature in this specimen is the presence of an occasional thin layer of sand, most probably caused during the prevalence of violent southerly winds which from time to time raise the sea-level at Suez nearly 3 feet above that of an ordinary spring tide in calm weather. The strong current to the northward on such occasions would be certain to carry a considerable quantity of sand into the Bitter Lakes, sufficient, it may be assumed, to account for the layers of sand in question.

The facts to which I have here called attention appear to me unquestionably to confirm the view entertained by Professor Hull. Feeling, with him, that according to this view the physical conditions at the time of the Exodus will be brought into harmony with the Bible narrative, and that the difficulty which has hitherto surrounded the subject of the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea will thus have been to a great extent removed, I have ventured to send you the result of my own recent personal observations in the locality in question.
