

conclusion, therefore, seems inevitable, that while the Kuweik "river" could not have produced so much devastation in an instant, the Kuweik aqueduct could and did accomplish, through the besieged in Aleppo, the phenomenon in question.

The aqueduct by which the city is mainly supplied with water, conveyed from springs about eight miles to the north of the city, is supposed by Arab writers to be coeval with the city, but is said to have been repaired by the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine; but when or by whom this aqueduct, of more than 60 miles in length, was constructed is disclosed neither by history nor by tradition. In point of magnitude and utility, it may be favourably compared to those remarkable works in Lower Mesopotamia or Babylonia by which the Euphrates and Tigris were connected, where canals for irrigation and navigation intersected the country in every direction.

VIII.—*Notes on an Excursion to Harrān, in Padan-Aram, and thence over Mount Gilead and the Jordan, to Shechem.* By CHARLES T. BEKE, Esq., PH.D., F.S.A., F.R.G.S., &c., (Gold Medallist R.G.S.)

Read, June 16, 1862.

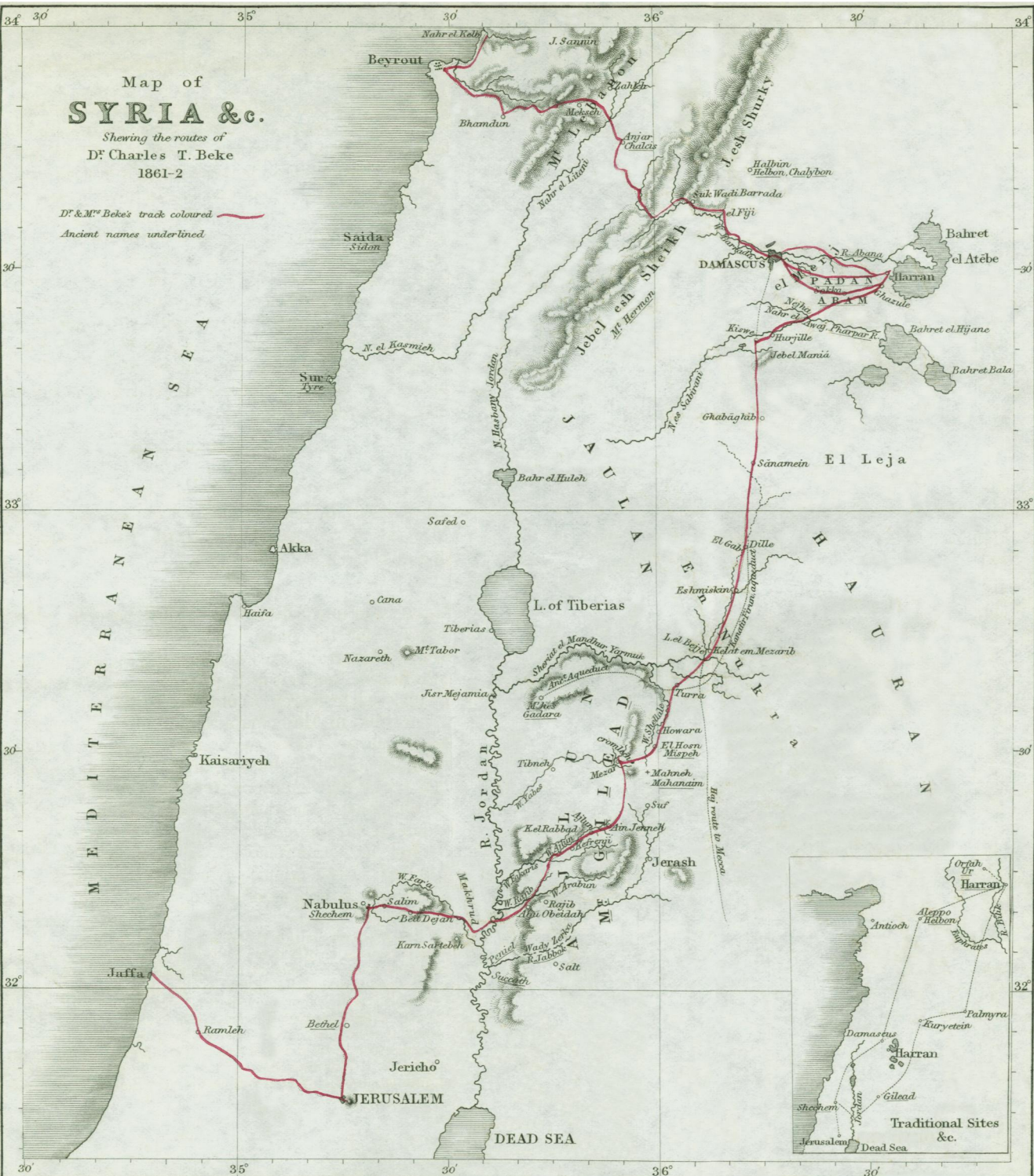
THE excursion into Syria, from which I have recently returned, was undertaken for the purpose of verifying the position of Harran (Haran, or Charran), in Padan-Aram, mentioned in the Book of Genesis and in the Acts of the Apostles. This place has generally been supposed to be represented by Harrān, a well-known town on the river Bilik, in Mesopotamia, beyond the Euphrates;* but many years ago I saw reason to doubt this identification, and in my 'Origines Biblicæ,' published in the year 1834, I expressed the opinion that "the country watered by the Pharpar and Abana—the fertile district known in aftertimes as the *Ager Damascenus*—is Padan-Aram, the country into which, by the Divine direction, Terah and his family removed, and in which was situate the city of Haran, or Charran, whence Abraham was called, and which afterwards was the residence of Laban"† (p. 131). At the time when

* See Dr. William Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible,' p. 755. ART. HARAN.

† From the omission of Nahor's name among those of Terah's family (Gen. xi. 31), who removed from *Ur-Casdim* (Ur of the Chaldees) to Harran, it may be inferred, though it is nowhere mentioned, that Nahor did not accompany his father. But as in Gen. xxv. 20, Nahor's son Bethuel, the father of Laban and Rebekah, is described as being "of Padan-Aram," it is evident, though this, too, is not explicitly stated, that he must have followed Terah into that country; if, indeed, it is not to be inferred from Gen. xxiv. 10 that Nahor himself removed from *Ur-Casdim* into *Aram-Naharain*. Whatever uncertainty may be considered to exist on this historical question,—which for all purposes of the Scripture narrative is, however, of

Map of
SYRIA &c.
Shewing the routes of
D^r Charles T. Beke
1861-2

D^r & M^r Beke's track coloured
Ancient names underlined



this opinion was placed on record, and for many years subsequently, there was no knowledge of the existence at the present day of any place named Harran, in the locality which I attributed to it. As far as I am aware, the first person to whom Harran became known was the Rev. J. L. Porter, who, in his 'Five Years in Damascus,' vol. i. p. 376, describes a visit made by him in November, 1852, to a village called *Harrân-el-Awamîd*, or "Harran of the Columns," situate about 14 miles almost due east of Damascus. This village I at once saw was the long-looked-for representative of the residence of the Patriarchs, and I determined on visiting it at the earliest opportunity.

As the arguments for and against my identification of Harran have already been laid before the public on more than one occasion, and will shortly be so again in a fuller and more connected form, I shall refrain from discussing the question here, contenting myself with asserting my conviction that I have sufficiently established that Harran in Padan-Aram, or *Aram-Naharaim* (that is to say *Aram* of the Two Rivers), is the place of that name between Abana and Pharpar, the two rivers of *Aram*, or Syria,—and not the Harran between the Euphrates and Tigris, the two rivers of Assyria; and, on the assumption of the correctness of this identification, I now proceed to narrate my visit, accompanied by my wife, to that most interesting spot, as also our journey thence over Mount Gilead into the Promised Land, which, as far as practicable, we made along the road taken by the Patriarch Jacob in his flight from his father-in-law Laban.

We arrived at Beyrout on the 5th of December, 1861. This place is too well known to render any description of it necessary here. I may, however, remark that of late years—and more particularly since the military occupation of Syria by the French—very great improvements have taken place in and about the town; and that a carriage-road is being constructed from Beyrout to Damascus, of which one-half, as far as Zahleh, was opened last summer, and the remaining half is intended to be completed in the course of the present year. There is also a line of electric telegraph in successful operation between Damascus and Beyrout.

Before commencing our journey to Damascus and Harran, we made an excursion to Nahr-el-Kelb, for the purpose of inspecting that celebrated locality, and especially in order to examine the inscription recently placed by the French on one of the ancient Egyptian tablets existing there.

When in Paris, on my way to Syria, I had been assured of the

a secondary character,—it applies not less to the traditional Harran beyond Euphrates than to my Harran near Damascus; and therefore it does not in the slightest degree affect the *geographical* question as to which of the two was the residence of Laban.—October 3, 1862.

absolute incorrectness of a statement in the public prints that the Egyptian tablet in question had been refaced, and an inscription cut on it commemorative of the presence of the French army in Syria in the years 1860 and 1861. We found, however, that the fact was as had been stated.

The condition of this tablet (known to travellers as "No. 1, Egyptian") before the French inscription was engraved on it is fully discussed by Dr. Edward Robinson, in his '*Biblical Researches*' (Second Edition, vol. iii. pp. 619-623). The conclusion which that intelligent investigator arrived at is, that when he saw it in June, 1852, no ancient figures remained on the tablet;* but, from its appearance, he says "the suggestion arose in our minds while on the spot, as it had done to others before us, whether the Assyrian conquerors, in their 'pride of power,' may not have purposely defaced the Egyptian monuments erected six centuries before, and then boastfully have caused their own to be sculptured side by side with them."

The pass round the end of the precipitous ridge of rocks which forms the southern bank of the ancient Lycus must always have been a terror to invading armies; and the surmounting of it may fairly have been deemed an exploit worthy of commemoration by each successive conqueror. That, in this character, a Sennacherib should have mutilated the monument of an earlier Sesostris, might be regarded as not unnatural, and therefore venial; but that, at the present day, the temporary occupiers of Syria—not in their own name only, but as the representatives of the other great Powers of Europe, and as the friends of the Government of the country—should have thus appropriated to themselves this venerable relic of past ages, would hardly be credited, were it not an ascertained fact. My wife took a photograph of the ancient Egyptian tablet, with its modern French inscription; which, though the plate was unfortunately injured by water in our passage of the Jordan, affords still a sufficient representation of the monument in its actual state.

We left Beyrout for Damascus on the 14th December, going by the direct road through Bhamdūn, Mekseh, Fijj, and Sūk-Wadi-Barada, and leaving it only to visit the ruins of Anjar, which has been identified by Dr. Robinson with the ancient Chalcis under Lebanon. The ruins of this city are now rapidly disappearing, the broken shafts of columns, hewn stones, and other architectural fragments being either worked up for the masonry of the bridges of the new carriage-road, or else burnt into lime.

* See, however, "*Notice of some curious Remains of Antiquity in the Vicinity of Beyrout, with plates*, by JOSEPH BONOMI, Esq.," in '*Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*,' vol. iii. pp. 105-107; where a representation of the tablet is given, as drawn by that gentleman in January, 1834.

From the advanced period of the year at which we visited Syria, snow had already fallen deeply on Lebanon, and we were fearful our passage by the direct road would be impeded. We were fortunate in passing as we did. Our dragoman, who had to return to Beyrout to fetch tents and other requisites for our further journey across the plains of Hauran (which we had not deemed it expedient to bring in the first instance, lest we should find the journey impracticable), did not meet with equal good fortune, but was forced to take the circuitous route by Rasheiya and Hasbeiya.

The carriage-road, as finished over the ridge of Lebanon, much resembles those across the Alps in their easier portions, there being here no necessity for great engineering works. There are, however, several well-built bridges, and, as far as completed, the work does credit to its undertakers. Just as we were passing the *col* we came up with several droves of mules, asses, and camels, laden with British manufactured goods, iron rods, and *Persian tobacco*; and we met others coming down from Damascus and Zahleh, carrying grapes, dried apricots, and other articles of native produce; as also large flocks of goats, which were being driven down to the sea-coast for pasturage,—the whole in a state of almost inextricable confusion.

That tobacco from Persia should be carried to Damascus from the west, instead of the east, was unintelligible to me till I obtained the following explanation. The caravans between Baghdad and Damascus, of which there used to be three or four annually, have for the last three years or more been discontinued, in consequence of a very rich one having been attacked and plundered by the Beduins, by which the Damascus merchants are said to have lost upwards of 40,000*l.* sterling. The direct communication between Baghdad and Damascus being thus suspended, goods for the Damascus market have to be brought round by the way of Mosul and Aleppo to Scanderoon, where they are shipped to Beyrout, and thence brought up this way. When at Damascus I heard that it was shortly intended to reopen the direct route from Baghdad; and from an article in the 'Times' of the 21st of April (1862), it appears that the attempt has been made, but that unfortunately the caravan has been again attacked and pillaged near Palmyra. This must unavoidably, and perhaps indefinitely, postpone the resuscitation of the direct trade with Baghdad, from which the inhabitants of Damascus might have hoped to derive some compensation for the great losses they have of late sustained. In the present unsettled state of political affairs in Syria it would, however, be useless to look for any certain amelioration of the material welfare of Damascus. The Christians, who were the principal merchants, appear to have abandoned the city; and until a firm, powerful, and energetic government can guarantee the safety

of their persons and their property, they will hardly think of returning. But this is a subject which has been so repeatedly and fully discussed of late, that it would be out of place to dwell on it here.

We arrived at Damascus in the afternoon of the 17th of December, and I lost no time in presenting my letters of introduction to the worthy representative of our nation—Mr. E. T. Rogers, Her Majesty's Consul—to whom I will here at once express our hearty thanks for his great kindness and attention to us personally, not less than in furthering the object of our journey. Our dragoon having left Damascus for Beyrout, Mr. Rogers kindly placed at our service one of his kawasses to accompany us to Harran, for which place we started on the morning of the 20th of December. From the short time Mr. Rogers had been at Damascus, he was unable to state what might be the condition of the district we were about to visit; and he therefore recommended that, instead of going direct to Harran, we should first proceed to Sekka, a village about 9 miles from Damascus, belonging to Dr. Wetzstein, for many years Prussian Consul at Damascus (but now Professor of Arabic in the University of Halle), who then happened to be there, and from whom we might obtain every requisite information and assistance.

Our road to Sekka lay in an E.S.E. direction through the fertile plain of Damascus, bounded on either side by the rivers Barada and Awaj, the representatives of the "Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus," of the Second Book of Kings. For some distance we passed through orchards and plantations, and then over wide-spreading downs, interspersed with cultivated tracts adjoining the numerous villages. On reaching Sekka about mid-day, we found Dr. Wetzstein just about to sit down to a dinner given him by his villagers previously to his return to Damascus that evening. We were, of course, invited to partake of the feast; after which Dr. Wetzstein, with Oriental even more than European courtesy, insisted on escorting us to Harran in person, though all his arrangements had been made for returning that evening to the city. The distance from Sekka to Harran is about 5 miles in an E.N.E. direction; but, owing to the watercourses and ditches being filled by the rains, we had to make a considerable détour, so that we did not reach our destination till near sunset.

As the object of our journey was to visit the place where the Patriarch Jacob had for twenty years kept the flocks of his father-in-law Laban, we could not but be struck by the sight of some large flocks of sheep, with their lambs only a few days old,—they having this year been dropped somewhat earlier than usual; and the white ewes giving suck to black, "ring-straked, speckled, and grisled" lambs, forcibly reminded us of the incidents nar-

rated in the 30th and 31st chapters of Genesis. Our approach to the village recalled to our remembrance even more strongly the narrative, in the 24th chapter of the same Book, of the arrival at Harran of Abraham's eldest servant, when sent to seek a wife for his master's son Isaac. Like him we arrived "at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water;" and as we came "without the city," we met "the daughters of the men of the city," with their pitchers, going out for water. As Abraham's servant must have approached from Damascus, which lies west of Harran, he would have met the women as they went out to draw water. We, entering from the south, crossed their line of march. But, without following them, we at once entered into the village, to make arrangements for passing the night there. Dr. Wetzstein remained with us till early next morning, when he departed for Damascus, leaving us to pursue our investigations alone.

Instead of continuing my narrative journal-wise, it will be better that I should give in a condensed form the general results of our observations and researches, both on the present occasion and on a second visit which we made to Harran on the 30th of December.

Harran—generally known as *Harrân-el-Awamîd*, or "Harran of the Columns," from three Ionic columns standing amidst the mud-houses of which it consists at the present day—is a village situate at the eastern extremity of the plain of Damascus, near the southern portion of the Bahret-el-Atêbe, which receives the waters of the Barada, as the Bahret-el-Hijâne is the recipient of those of the Awaj. In the best-known maps the waters of the Barada are shown as flowing into two lakes, named Bahret-esh-Sharkiyeh and Bahret-el-Kibliyeh; but in Dr. Wetzstein's map these two are but portions of a single lake, to which he gives the name of Bahret-el-Atêbe, as we ourselves heard it called at Harran. Had we been able to visit the lake, we should no doubt have found it at this season of the year covering a greater extent of ground than is even shown in Dr. Wetzstein's map. In the dry season the northern and southern portions most probably form (as it were) two lakes, united only by a narrow line of water, or perhaps of marsh only.

The rains had rendered the village itself such a mass of mud and filth, that it was difficult for us to make any explorations of a very satisfactory nature, or, indeed, to move about at all without great difficulty. At the present day Harran consists of about 150 or 200 houses, built of stones covered with mud; but, from the architectural remains found scattered throughout its streets and in the enclosures of the houses, and more especially from the three columns from which the place derives its modern appellation, it manifestly occupies the site of some ancient Greek or Roman city.

The place appears to be in a thriving condition, its inhabitants,

like the Patriarchs of old, possessing large flocks and herds; and round the village are extensive vineyards, the vines being planted in regular order at some distance one from another, like the cherry and other fruit-trees in our Kentish orchards.

On the sides of Lebanon the vines are nearly as large, only there they are allowed to trail over the ground; whereas here each is pruned into a tree or bush, standing quite erect, without any prop, trellis, or other support. At the season of the year when we saw them they were not in leaf, and they presented the appearance of gigantic gooseberry-bushes. When in full bearing they must look magnificent: we were told that sticks have then to be placed under the loaded branches, to prevent the grapes from touching the ground.

The neighbourhood of Damascus has always been celebrated for its grapes. Those of Halbūn, a village about as far to the northward of the city as Harran is to the east, are, as Dr. E. Robinson tells us,* "greatly esteemed for their rich flavour, and from them is made the best and most-highly-prized wine of the country." We can ourselves bear testimony to this, from having drunk of the wine in the house of our friend Dr. Wetzstein, who had made it from grapes sent to him by the villagers of Halbūn. The Prophet Ezekiel (xxvii. 18), when enumerating the articles in which Damascus traded with Tyre, particularises "*the wine of Helbon and white wool*;" and the geographer Strabo (B. xv. c. iii. § 22) speaks of the wines of *Chalybon* as being among the luxuries of the kings of Persia. The city of *Haleb*, or Aleppo, in Northern Syria, was, until recently, supposed to be the Helbon of Scripture and the Chalybon of profane history; it was, however, only requisite for modern investigators to point to Halbūn, near Damascus, as the true Helbon, and the correctness of the identification was at once admitted.† My identification of the Biblical *Harran* near Damascus, is based on almost more conclusive evidence than that of Helbon. The distance between the two Harrans is also not much greater than between the two Helbons, the former being less than 240 geographical miles in a direct line, while the latter is upwards of 150 miles. Yet, strange to say, the strongest advocates of the rectification of the position of Helbon are the most decided opponents of my identification of Harran.

As may readily be imagined, the first object of our inquiry was a

* 'Biblical Researches,' vol. iii. p. 471.

† Dr. E. Robinson says (*op. cit.* iii. 472), "The missionaries are probably right in regarding this place as the *Helbon* of Scripture." On this Dr. Wetzstein remarks ('*Zeitschr. d. Deutschen Morgenl. Gesellsch.*,' xi. 490), "He should rather have said, 'The Rabbis rightly regard this place,' &c.; for it is by them that the attention of us Europeans has been directed to this, as well as many other important points of Biblical archæology." See also Dr. H. Petermann's '*Reisen im Orient*,' vol. i. p. 310.

well on the *western* side of the town, which should represent "the well of water without the city," at which Abraham's servant—Eliezer of Damascus, as is generally supposed—met the damsel Rebekah. We were at first told there was no well in or near the place; and when we asked where, then, the women were going, whom we had met on our arrival in the evening with their pitchers on their heads or shoulders, we were answered that they were fetching water from a canal running at a short distance to the south-west of the village. However, on inquiring and examining further, we discovered not only one well, but two wells; and I am not prepared to say there may not be others. The chief one of the two wells which we saw is within a covered building standing in the courtyard of the mosque, which is situate at the western end of the village, towards Damascus, and near the public cemetery. Were it not for the inclosure of the yard, the well would be altogether outside the town, as is, in fact, the second well, which is at a short distance to the south-west of the other, and close to the cemetery. The building within the courtyard containing the first well, is constructed of stones, apparently obtained from more ancient edifices, covered over with a cement of lime and mud. It is square in shape, and has a window and two doors, with a wooden ridge-roof, the floor being paved with stones. The well is in the north-east corner; its mouth, which is built of roughly-hewn stones, is about 2 feet 6 inches in height, and 3 feet in width, its orifice being circular, and about 1 foot 6 inches in diameter. Above the orifice, and fastened to each side, is an iron bar, bent double in the middle, from which, by a pulley and an endless rope, is suspended a leather bucket, by means of which the women fill their pitchers. The water stands in the well about 10 feet from its mouth. From the extremely smooth and polished surface of the stones inside, this well must have been in use very long indeed. Near it, within the building, stand two stone troughs, about 1 foot 9 inches in width, and respectively 4 feet and 3 feet in length, evidently of great antiquity, of which the use must (I think) have been to water cattle. But since the well has been inclosed and covered in, they can, of course, no longer serve that purpose. I could not learn that any tradition or history whatever is attached either to the well or to the troughs. Without intending to assert that this is actually the "well of water" at which took place the meeting between Eliezer and Rebekah, I may point to its entire correspondence with all the requirements of the narrative in the 24th chapter of Genesis as being very remarkable.

The second draw-well outside the mosque-yard, already alluded to, is of a similar character to the one within the yard, but rather smaller; its mouth is covered with a stone, and it is no longer used, the water being said to be bad. But that of the first well—

“Rebekah’s Well”—appeared sweet and good to the taste, though evidently containing much saline matter in solution;* and on both our visits we saw many females come there for water with their pitchers and pans. Being, however, within the mosque-yard, it could not serve for the general requirements of the inhabitants; and, accordingly, water has to be fetched from a small and shallow artificial canal from the Barada, which, if not altogether of modern formation, has recently been reopened, the earth thrown up along its banks having been but a short time dug out of its bed.

The mosque itself is a comparatively modern building, constructed of columns and other remains of former edifices, plastered and painted over. It has a square minaret, with a circular turret in the centre, possessing a general resemblance to an English village steeple.

Not far from the wall of the courtyard of the mosque, and at the eastern end of the cemetery, is a building, now in ruins, apparently the tomb of a *wely* or saint, constructed of ancient cut stones, put together without mortar. Several of these are beautifully carved: some figures of eagles are full of life, and some scrolls artistically executed.

The three Ionic columns, from which Harran has acquired its distinguishing appellation, are situate in nearly the centre of the town. Two of them are complete, with their capitals; the third has lost the upper portion. The height of each shaft is 29 feet, and that of the base 2 feet 3 inches. The circumference of the shaft is about 11 feet 7 inches: it is not in one piece, but formed of blocks 8 and 10 feet in length. The interval between the two columns facing the east is 6 feet 9 inches; whilst that between those towards the north is as much as 7 feet 9 inches. We were told

* Sir Roderick I. Murchison had the kindness to direct an analysis of this water to be made at the Royal School of Mines, of which he is Director. The results were as follows:—

“The water from ‘Rebekah’s Well’ contains 109·76 grs. of solid matter in one gallon. This consists of potash, soda, lime, magnesia, sulphuric acid, and chlorine, with a little organic matter. The amount of lime in solution in the imperial gallon is 6·08 grs.; of magnesia, 17·30 grs.: so that the greater proportion of solid matter must consist of alkaline salts. The residue at the bottom of the bottle contained carbonates of lime and magnesia, with some earthy matter—probably clay. This deposit of carbonate of lime and magnesia results from the fact that the water has lost some carbonic acid since it was taken from the well; so that the actual amount of lime in solution in the water, when taken from the well, would exceed 6·08 grs. in the imperial gallon: the same remark applies equally to the amount of magnesia. The amount of water at disposal did not allow of a more complete analysis.

“Laboratory, Museum, June 16, 1862.”

“CHAS. TOOKEY.

It should be explained that the water submitted to analysis was only a small portion of a quantity of several gallons, which was decanted off from the residue, after having stood several days at Damascus in a vessel imperfectly closed.—B.

there was formerly a fourth column, forming a square; but, from the difference between the intervals, this would seem not to have been the case, and I should rather regard them as portions of two separate rows of columns.

The mud buildings, above which tower these beautiful remains of a former age, prevent all means of satisfactory examination; but, as far as we could ascertain, the bases of these columns rest on a massive stone wall, about 9 feet in height from the ground.

The stone of which these columns are formed is a highly crystalline, though partially vesicular, trachytic basalt. In its exfoliation from the gradual operation of time and weather, acting probably on a concealed spheroidal concretionary structure, may be plainly seen how ortholiths, whether composed of one or more than one piece, may be overthrown, without the intervention of the devastating hand of man or any great convulsion of Nature, to one of which causes the destruction of ancient erections is generally attributed. The layers of the stone separate themselves from the mass at its lower end,—not in a rectilinear, but in a curvilinear form,—by which the mass itself gradually lessens in size below. This process continues till, the centre of gravity being transferred outwards, the ortholith falls from its own weight, just as a tree when felled. It is sad to see the columns at Harran rapidly undergoing this silent operation of Nature.

That Harran is the representative of the place of that name mentioned in the Book of Genesis as the residence of Terah and his descendants, there is now no reasonable ground for questioning. What may have been its designation in intervening ages, is for the present a mystery.* Further research will doubtless bring this to light; and a clue to it may, perhaps, be furnished by an inscription on a broken piece of the shaft of a small column which I discovered, but could not bring away with me. Dr. Stanley's attention has been directed to this inscription, in case he should be able to visit Harran when at Damascus with the Prince of Wales; otherwise I have taken steps to have it brought to England.† This fragment is, however, so much covered up, and the small part exposed is so weather-worn, that I was unable to decipher any portion of the inscription, which I believe to be in the *Greek* character, but dare not speak positively on the subject.

* The Arabian geographer Yakūt, in his 'Mushtarik' (edit. Wüstenfeld, Götting., 1846, p. 125), says, "Harrān is one of the towns of the Ghutah of Damascus." It was, therefore, known by its present name in the 12th century of the Christian era.—October 20, 1862.

† Dr. Stanley was unable to visit Harran; but he commissioned the Rev. Smylie Robson, an American Presbyterian missionary at Damascus, to examine, and, if possible, bring away the piece of column with its inscription. Mr. Robson's visit to Harran is described in a letter dated Damascus, July 15, 1862, which is intended to be inserted in an appendix to Dr. Stanley's forthcoming work, entitled 'Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church.'—October 20, 1862.

We had intended to remain longer at Harran, for the purpose of taking photographs and drawings; but the weather was so very unfavourable, and the prospect of its improving so remote, that we decided on not delaying our journey to Mount Gilead, lest anything should occur to frustrate it altogether. On our arrival at Damascus we had arranged with the dragoman who had come with us from Beyrout that he should go with us on our further journey. Under his agreement he had accompanied us on our second visit to Harran; and as on leaving Damascus we had taken leave of our good friends Mr. Consul Rogers and Dr. Wetzstein,—the former of whom had furnished us with letters of recommendation to all the chief personages on our line of road,—we had no occasion to return thither; therefore on the 1st of January of the present year (1862) we started on our journey. The part of it which most threatened to be dangerous was the district lying immediately to the south of the river Awaj. It is occupied by the Arab tribe of Sūlt (plural Salūt), one division of whom are in deadly feud with the Turkish Government, who have put a price on the heads of their chiefs. Whilst we were at Damascus two heads were brought in, and, after being presented to the Mushir Pasha, they were exposed for three days on a black board in the Arab bazaar. On their being thrown down before the Seraskier, he rose from his divan, stamped on the heads, spat on them, and kicked them about, cursing them all the while in the choicest Turkish.

We were in some perplexity as to the best means of passing in safety through this debateable land. At length it was decided that the Consul should apply to Emin Pasha, Wali or Governor of Damascus, for an order to the Commandant at Kiswe to furnish us with an escort as far as Eshmiskin, the residence of Sheikh Ahmed-et-Türk, which he obtained for us just before our departure for Harran. In the plain of Damascus we were, so to say, at home. From Harran, then, we proceeded to Ghazūle, another of Dr. Wetzstein's villages, the sheikh of which, named Mahmūd, whom we had met at Sekka, accompanied us to Nejha, on the Awaj, and the sheikh of this latter village furnished us with a guide to Kiswe. From Nejha our road lay along the northern side of the Awaj, till we came to Hurjille, where we crossed the river over a stone bridge, and proceeded up its right bank to Kiswe.

The Awaj is the Pharpar of Scripture,—the “river” that was crossed by the Patriarch Jacob, when he fled from Laban, as narrated in the 31st chapter of Genesis: “And he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the Mount Gilead.” The precise point at which he so crossed the Awaj may be difficult to determine; but, on account of the mountainous district to the south of the river, known as *Jebel Māni'a*, it is manifest that he must either have gone round to the east of it from Nejha, or else

have continued westward up the river (as we did) in the direction of Kiswe. I am of opinion that he adopted the latter course.*

Kiswe is a large village situate on an eminence commanding the *Haj* road from Esh-Shâm, and possessing a strong garrison. We found that the commanding officer, Ahmed Agha, to whom our *balordi* from Emin Pasha was addressed, had gone south with a body of soldiers; but his lieutenant readily gave us a dozen *bashi-buyurûldi* to escort us to Ghabâghib, where he said we should meet with Ahmed Agha. With this escort we left Kiswe on the morning of the 2nd January, proceeding southward along the high road leading to Mecca.

This road has in past times received much attention from the rulers of the country, the streams being bridged over, and a causeway laid in many parts; but the whole is now in so dilapidated a condition, that it is often preferable to travel by the side of the road instead of upon it; while many of the arches of the bridges are broken through, so as to render the passage of them at times not without danger. The country here is apparently of good soil, but thickly strewn with stones of all sizes, by which its cultivation is rendered difficult. In the dry season, too, it suffers from want of water. Besides this, not a tree or a shrub is to be seen; so that altogether it has a most desolate appearance. As we travelled very slowly, it was four hours after leaving Kiswe before we reached Ghabâghib, a small village built of the black basaltic stone of Hauran, where we learnt that Ahmed Agha had gone on to Sânamein. Our escort wanted to stop here for the night, but we insisted on going on, when they said that their orders were to accompany us only as far as Ghabâghib. As we did not think we were now likely to fall in with any of the Salût Arabs, my wife and I determined on proceeding alone, and started accordingly. Our servants were at first inclined to remain behind with the escort; but before we had got far from the place, they came creeping after us, and we reached Sânamein in safety in about three hours. The approach to this place is very striking. Two lofty square towers are visible from a considerable distance, bearing in our eyes a general resemblance to Rochester Castle and Cathedral. The whole town is full of the ruins of buildings, showing it to have been once a place of importance; but the houses, as at present existing, appear to have been more than once destroyed, and rebuilt with the ruins of former buildings.

On our arrival at Sânamein we found that Ahmed Agha had again fitted. He was said to be scouring the country, being one

* A consideration of the circumstances connected with the preparations for Jacob's departure from Padan-Aram, as related in Gen. xxx. 25-43, xxxi. 1-21, corroborates this inference.

night at one place, and the next at another. This occasioned us no little difficulty with our dragoman and his people, who refused to go on without protection. It was no easy task to make them understand that we ourselves were no more desirous than they were to run into needless danger. The sheikh of Sānamein having assured them and us that we were quite safe in his hands, it was finally arranged that we should proceed to Eshmiskin under the charge of his son.

The next morning (January 3rd) we left Sānamein with our single unarmed guide, and soon fell in with a party of villagers with their laden mules going our way; and, our attendants having joined company with them, they all went on together through a well-cultivated country, talking and laughing, with no more fear than in the plain of Damascus. At Sānamein we had quitted the basin of the Awaj, and entered that of the Jordan, a small stream near this town being a tributary of the Yarmūk; and the character of the country now went on improving the farther we proceeded.

We left Sānamein at a quarter-past nine, and arrived at Eshmiskin at half-past three; our rate of travelling being very slow, owing to the heavy state of the roads.

Eshmiskin or Šekhmiskin is the residence of Sheikh Ahmed-el-Harīri, better known as Ahmed et-Türk,—*Sheikh Mushaiikh Hauran*,—that is to say, Sheikh of the Sheikhs of Hauran, he and his whole tribe being *Sherrifs* or descendants of the Prophet.

In Murray's 'Handbook for Syria and Palestine,' p. 532, it is said that Eshmiskin is "occupied exclusively by Muslims, famous, like all their brethren along the *Haj* road, for fanaticism. Fortunate will the traveller be, or at least well-protected, who escapes insolence and insult at their hands." In justice to Ahmed et-Türk and his people, I am bound to place on record the fact that, when the news arrived in Hauran of the massacre of the Christians in Damascus in 1860, great disturbances took place in this district, and the lives and property of its Christian inhabitants were placed in jeopardy. This was particularly the case at Edhr'a, where there are as many as 500 or 600 Christians, the inhabitants of two villages in Jebel Hauran having removed thither to avoid the persecutions of the Druzes. Ahmed et-Türk, on learning this, instantly sent letters to all his kinsmen, and collected 200 armed men, at whose head he hastened to Edhr'a just in time to save the Christians from the Arabs of the Leja, whom he drove off. He then wrote to all the chiefs of tribes in the Leja, desiring them to spare the Christians among them for his sake, which they did accordingly. Several other instances of his interference to protect the Christians were mentioned. And it was not only here at Eshmiskin that we heard all this. Before our departure from Damascus we had been told of Ahmed et-Türk's noble and

disinterested conduct, the very reverse of "fanaticism," and hence we were induced to make inquiries on the spot.

On the following morning we left Eshmiskin, accompanied by the sheikh's brother, Sheikh Mahmūd, passing through a rich country, the inhabitants of which were actively engaged in ploughing and sowing. In one field alone we counted 12 ploughs. In about four hours we reached Kelāt-em-Mezarīb, an important *Haj* station, the castle being built close to a small lake, called El-Bejje, which contains water all the year round. Our road lay directly towards Jebel Ajlūn, the Mount Gilead of Genesis; the marked separation of which from the country we were traversing shall be described in the words of Dr. Edward Robinson, rather than my own, lest I should be suspected of being biassed by my preconceived ideas of what "Mount Gilead" ought to be, a suspicion from which the evidence of an indifferent observer must necessarily be free. In speaking of Jebel Ajlūn, Dr. Robinson says:—"This province embraces so much of the mountainous country east of the Jordan as lies between the Yarmūk and the Zārka. *At the northern extremity it suddenly declines to the level of Jaulān, which appears at a distance as a continuation of the Nukrah of Hauran*; and presents on the east side of the Lake of Tiberias the edge of a high plateau, intersected by deep ravines. *No mountain crosses it [Jaulan], to connect Jebel Ajlūn with Jebel-esh-Sheikh [Hermon].*" Thus Jebel Ajlūn, or Mount Gilead, stands out distinctly and prominently before every traveller crossing the plains from the north and east, to whom it serves as a landmark and a guide. We could not lose sight of it from the absence of all intervening objects; and we could thus thoroughly appreciate the few emphatic words in which the Patriarch Jacob's flight from Padan-Aram is described:—"He passed over the river, *and set his face toward the Mount Gilead*;" precisely as we were now doing when following in his footsteps. In a couple of hours more we arrived at Turra, a small village, of which the houses are all under ground. As it was raining hard, we did not stop, but pushed on to Howāra; which place we were given to understand was about an hour farther on, but which it took us nearly four hours to reach, for we did not arrive till half-past seven o'clock. Our road for the greater part of the distance lay along the valley, and at times up the bed of the Wady Shellāle, a tributary of the Yarmūk. The moon, though young and mostly obscured by clouds, was sufficient to enable us to find our way, yet not without difficulty. It was fortunate, however, that the evening was not brighter; for in the valley we passed near to an encampment of the Beni-Sakhr Arabs, and saw the fires of another on the mountains above us. Had they perceived us, we might not have passed unquestioned. It is true we had letters from the consul to the sheikhs of three separate

divisions of this powerful tribe, but we were better pleased at not having occasion to produce them.

On the other hand, we had the misfortune to miss seeing the remains of an ancient aqueduct, known as the Kanātir Fir'on, which served to convey the water from a lake or marsh called El Gāb, near Dilli on the Haj route north of Eshmiskin, to the city of Gadara or M'kes, and which crosses Wady Shellāle on three tiers of arches. Notwithstanding that its local name, "Pharaoh's Bridges," might be considered as pointing to an indefinite antiquity, Dr. Wetzstein has shown in his 'Reiseberichte über Hauran,' that this aqueduct is the work of King Gebele I., a monarch of the *Christian* dynasty of the Gassanides, to whom many of the erections in these regions owe their origin.

Howāra is a miserable village, its houses being mostly under ground, and, as there was a total want of accommodation for us, we were glad to pitch our tents outside the place.

Leaving Howāra next morning (January 5th), we in less than an hour reached the village of El-Hosn, conspicuously placed on the summit of a *tell*, or conical hill. Its inhabitants are principally Christians of the Greek Church. We observed here, as in many other places, immense holes or caverns under ground, used as dwelling houses and granaries. The mouth is small, but below they are of great extent. We did not stop to examine them. We were here ascending Jebel Ajlūn, which may be regarded as commencing from Wady Shellāle, most of the sources of which are in its sides. We found, indeed, the whole of the ground as we ascended full of springs. In little more than half an hour after leaving El-Hosn, we came to a beautiful rivulet, being the first *clear* water we had seen since we left Damascus, at which with one accord we stopped to drink: in fact, we all made a rush at it, our animals not less eagerly than our attendants and ourselves. A few minutes more brought us to the summit of Gilead, where our eyes were gladdened with the sight of what is probably the most interesting portion of the Promised Land. The conspicuous cone of Mount Tabor was at once identified; and then Nazareth, Cana, Tiberias, and the principal places of our Saviour's miracles and teaching were pointed out to us. As our road from Harran hither closely corresponded with that taken by the Patriarch Jacob on his return into the Land of Canaan, it is manifest that his resting-place on the summit of Gilead, where he "pitched his tent in the mount," and where he was overtaken by Laban on the seventh day of his flight, must have been somewhere in this neighbourhood, possessing the advantages of a plentiful supply of water and good pasturage for his numerous flocks and herds;—such, in fact, as are found at the place where we stopped to drink. And as, further, it is written that "early in the morning Laban rose up, and . . . departed,

and returned unto his place; and Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him . . . and he called the name of that place Mahanaim,"* it may not unreasonably be imagined that here, on the brow of the mountain overlooking the scene already described, was the place of the Patriarch's mysterious encounter. In the 'Handbook for Syria and Palestine,' p. 322, it is remarked that "about three hours north of Sūf is a ruin called Mahneh, which may perhaps occupy the site of the Mahanaim of Scripture." From the incorrectness of the map accompanying that work, I could not, whilst on my journey, at all make out that I was near this "ruin called Mahneh;" but, on laying down my route since my return to England, it seems to me that Mahneh cannot be far distant from the locality which, when on the spot, I attributed conjecturally to Mahanaim.

As we proceeded, all the mountains in the north of Palestine opened on us by degrees, whilst on the other hand the prospect gradually closed in towards the south. The whole ground now became covered with stones, and several rude heaps of them stood about. We shortly came to a *cromlech*, strikingly resembling Kits-Coity-House near Maidstone. This remarkable memorial of the eldest family of the descendants of Noah is formed of rough unhewn stones. The top stone is about 8 feet long, 6 feet broad, and rather more than 1 foot thick, very irregular above, but flat below, its lower face being about 3 feet 6 inches from the ground. The three upright stones are quite polished on the inside from rubbing, but whether by animals or by human beings I cannot say. It faces nearly north, and the back stone is placed so as to leave a recess behind it about one-third as deep as the front recess. It stands in the midst of a heap of rough stones.

Soon after passing this *cromlech*, we reached the village of Mezār. We had not intended to stop here, but merely to change our guide. It happened, however, that Hammed (Mohammed Emin) Beg, *mutsellim* or governor of Jebel Ajlūn, was in the place, and on the point of leaving for the neighbouring village of Tibne. On hearing our request to the sheikh for a guide, he immediately took upon himself most kindly to forward us on our journey, saying it was not safe for us to go alone. He accordingly gave us a couple of *bashi-buzūks* to escort us to Kefrenji, where he said he would himself join us on the following evening. Our intention had been to sleep that night at Ain-Jenneh, but as the delay at Mezār would have made our arrival too late, we decided on remaining where we were. We did not, however, go into the village, but pitched our tents at a little distance outside.

Here we passed a delightful day, the weather being beautiful

* Gen. xxxi. 55, xxxii. 1, 2.

(astonishingly so for the time of year), and the prospect all around most lovely. On the one side we commanded a fine view beyond the Jordan over the whole of Galilee, and on the other we had almost as extensive a prospect of the plains of Hauran. The snowy summit of Hermon was also visible, and beyond it, to the left, the southern portion of Lebanon above Sidon, likewise white with snow. We felt ourselves here to be already within the Promised Land; and so likewise must the two tribes and a half beyond Jordan have felt themselves, for all these sights were as familiar to them as to their brethren within the Land of Canaan. It was not the river Jordan, but the ridge of Mount Gilead, which formed the natural boundary of the possessions of the children of Israel. Viewed in this light, the covenant between Laban and Jacob at Mizpeh, on the summit of Gilead, acquires a peculiar significance: "This heap be witness and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me for harm." *

On the following morning we started soon after eight o'clock, passing through a country covered with oaks of two species, one of which is evergreen. The difference between the eastern and western sides of Mount Gilead is most remarkable, the latter being as well wooded as the former is destitute of trees. The beauty of the country, together with its excellent pasturage, renders intelligible the desire of the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, with the half-tribe of Manasseh, to possess it for their numerous flocks and herds; whilst the mast of its oaks must have made it at all times a country peculiarly adapted for swine. A few miles only below us was "the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee," where was the "herd of many swine feeding on the mountain," which "ran violently down a steep place into the lake."

Beautiful as is this country, it is incessantly exposed to the inroads of various Beduin tribes. The Beni-Sakhr and Aduān are those whose depredations are most frequent, and on our road we passed the graves of two sheikhs of Kefrenji, who had recently been slain in battle with the latter.

About two hours and a half after our departure from Mezār, we came to where the road to Sūf and Jerash branches off from that to Ain-Jenneh. We took the latter, proceeding along the ridge of the mountain, where we enjoyed a magnificent view of the mountains of Hauran, and beyond them the snowy summits of those of Safa. Behind us was the giant Hermon, visible everywhere, in like manner covered with snow; and then, after a brief interval, we caught a glimpse of Tabor with the mountains of Shechem and

* Gen. xxxi. 51, 52.

Gilboa, and again west of the Plain of Esdraelon the distant range of Carmel.

We now began descending over undulating ground covered with fine grass, well wooded, and studded with small lakes. In all directions were flocks of goats, the shepherds keeping which were all armed with firelocks. At 1 P.M. we came to a large spring bursting out from under the rocks, forming at once a tolerably large rivulet. A little lower down was another, larger than the first, so that the two made together a considerable stream. This was Ain-Jenneh, at the head of Wady Ajlūn, the village of that name being situate a little higher up. We now proceeded rapidly down the bank of the stream, till we came to the village of Ajlūn, where we gained a fine view of the neighbouring castle of Rābbād, fast falling into decay, like the once powerful family of Barakat, its owners, now represented by the sheikhs of Kefrenji. At Ajlūn we were met by Sheikh Diab ibn Freikh, the eldest son (I believe) of Sheikh Durgan of Kefrenji, with an attendant, who from his colour and appearance might well be taken for a Nubian, though he was only an Arab of the Ghor. Diab had received orders from the mutsellim to meet us here, and to escort us to Kefrenji. On our road down we passed an aqueduct carried over the stream on a single arch.

At Kefrenji we pitched our tents and awaited the arrival of the governor. Sunset, however, having passed without our seeing or hearing anything of him, it became necessary to think of making arrangements for the morrow. We had a letter to Sheikh Diab from the British Consul at Damascus, but, being already under the protection of the mutsellim, we did not deem it expedient to show it. The sheikh, to our disappointment, threw every obstacle in our way. The Jordan, he said, was so swollen by the rains as to be quite impassable; it was 5 or 6 fathoms deep; there was no ford or bridge thereabouts; the Beni Aduān, with whom he was at enmity, were on the Zerka; and in fact there was nothing for us to do but to go up to Jisr Mejāmie, near the Lake of Tiberias, and cross the river there. We did not at all like the idea of thus turning away from our projected route, but there appeared to be no remedy. All at once the scene changed. A messenger arrived from Tibne with letters from the governor to myself, to Sheikh Durgan, and to Sheikh Sa'd of the Mashalka Arabs. His letter to me expressed his regret at not being able to come to Kefrenji as he had intended. To the two sheikhs he gave peremptory orders to see to our immediate and safe passage across the Jordan. On this all objections ceased, and Durgan expressed his readiness to escort us down into the Ghor early next morning. During the night a numerous guard was placed in front of our tent; where they sat round a large fire,

talking, singing, playing on a one-stringed fiddle, and making such a noise as effectually to prevent our sleeping. Being intended as a guard of honour, we were hardly warranted in complaining.

Next morning (January 7th) we started at half-past eight, escorted by the two soldiers of the *mutsellim*, Sheikh Diab, and the sheikh who had brought the letters from Tibne, and who went down to the Ghor to deliver to Sheikh Sa'd the *mutsellim's* letter addressed to him. The descent was at first very steep, but afterwards became more gradual, till, having passed Rajib, said to lie about an hour and a half distant on our left, we came to the brow of the mountain, where we had an extensive view over the plain of the Jordan as far as the Dead Sea, which we could well distinguish by the mist overhanging its waters. We then began a sharp descent within the basin of Wady Rajib; which stream, notwithstanding the assertion of Ritter, whose authority appears to have misled all geographers and cartographers, I find to be altogether different from Wady Ajlūn, it being neither identical with nor a tributary of it, but having its own separate course into the Jordan.

Descending still the valley of a tributary of Wady Rajib, we came in about an hour to Wady Rajib itself, down the bank of which we went for a short distance, when we entered upon the *Ghor* or Plain of the Jordan. Continuing over the plain southward for about a quarter of an hour, we came to a mosque covering the tomb of Abu Obeida, a saint much venerated in these parts, supposed to be the Moslem commander of that name under the second Khalif Omar, who was killed in battle against the Persians in the 14th year of the Hejira (A.D. 635). It is mentioned by Ibn Batuta, Burckhardt, and Molyneux, as also by Buckingham, under the name of "Abu el Beady." Passing by this mosque, we continued westward over the plain for about an hour, till we came to a steep descent, which brought us into the lower plain of the Ghor, being that through which the Jordan has its course; and in about a quarter of an hour more we reached the encampment of the Mashalka Arabs, situate at a short distance from the bank of the river. Commander Lynch, of the United States Navy, in his official 'Report of the Dead Sea Expedition,' when he had descended the Jordan to about where we now were, says:—"We had now reached a part of the river not visited by Franks, at least since the time of the Crusades, except by three English sailors, who were robbed and fled from it a short distance below." This alludes to Lieut. Molyneux's party, who were attacked close by here, as related in the 18th volume of the 'Journal of the Royal Geographical Society,' and respecting whom Lynch, in his diary of the next day, has the following entry:—"About an hour after starting, we came to the place where the lamented Molyneux's boat was attacked while he was journeying down by land."

There is no doubt we were in a villanous neighbourhood. Burckhardt, when passing across the country a little higher up, remarks that "a stranger, who should venture to travel here unaccompanied by a guide of the country, would most certainly be stripped." Buckingham speaks of Wady Ajlûn, by him called Wady Fakâris, down which we had just come, as being "so notoriously infested by robbers, that persons scarcely ever pass through it, even in large parties, without being attacked, and it was thought madness for single travellers like ourselves to attempt it." It was not only close by here that Molyneux's men were attacked, but it was by the very Mashalkas—by him called Messallieks—among whom we now were. Capt. Lynch further reports that he and his companions were in expectation of a skirmish with "some strange Arabs, supposed to be a marauding party," who "were believed to belong to the tribe Mikhail Meshakâh, whose territory was thereabouts;" that is to say, these very Mashalkas again. Sheikh Sa'd, whom I suspect to be the worthy individual with whom poor Molyneux could not come to terms because "his charge was very great," told our dragoman, in the course of conversation, that, had he not received such a peremptory order from the mutsellim to convey us across the Jordan, he would not let us pass for less than 5000 piastres—nearly 50*l.* sterling.

Considering the bad repute of this portion of the Ghor, which will not allow of loitering by the way, it is not surprising that even in the most modern maps it should be represented very incorrectly. Still the materials for its rectification are not altogether wanting, only they have been misunderstood and misapplied. Not having, before I left home, given any special attention to this particular portion of our intended route—having, in fact, taken for granted that Kiepert's map in Murray's 'Handbook' was sufficiently correct for all practical purposes—I was not a little annoyed on my arrival in this neighbourhood to find myself quite at sea. Dr. Kiepert himself, however, is hardly to blame: he has only followed his "authorities," and in particular the erudite Carl Ritter, who in his 'Erdkunde (Palästina und Syrien)' has seemingly exhausted the subject by his laborious and in many respects admirable analysis of the various sources of information. Unfortunately, his subsequent combination and adjustment of the materials supplied by his various authorities are most defective, and have induced the errors which have misled subsequent geographers.

The following are a few emendations which I would venture to suggest, subject to verification by competent observers on the spot:—Wady Ajlûn (crossed by me) is in its lower course called Wady Fakâris (Buckingham), Fedjarith (De Bertou) or Fajâris (Lynch): its junction with the Jordan is in about 32° 13' N. lat. Wady Rajib (likewise crossed by me), of which I take the upper course to

be Wady Arabūn (crossed by Dr. Wetzstein), is, as I have already stated, an independent tributary of the Jordan, which it enters in about $32^{\circ} 10'$ N. This is also the latitude of the mosque of Abu Obeida, situate on the south side of Wady Rajib. Wady Zerka, the Jabbok of Scripture, enters the Jordan in about $32^{\circ} 03'$ N. lat.

The ford of Wady Zerka was said to be about an hour and a half or two hours to the south of the place where we crossed the Jordan: it is on the upper plain, namely, that on which is the mosque of Abu Obeida. This is the "Ford Jabbok," where, before crossing over to meet his brother Esau, "Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day . . . and Jacob called the name of the place Peniel."* After his meeting with his brother, Jacob, professing to accompany him, journeyed to Succoth, "leading on softly," and there stopped to "build him an house and make booths for his cattle," whilst "Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir;" † and Succoth I consider, therefore, to have been situate at a short distance to the south of the Jabbok, on the east side of Jordan, and not on the opposite and farther to the north, where it has been placed by other travellers.

Where we ourselves crossed the Jordan, a little to the south of the junction of Wady Rajib, I made the altitude of the stream, by the boiling of water, to be 1174 feet below the level of the ocean: Commander Lynch, at nearly the same place, made it 1049.44 feet. According to Drs. Wetzstein and Doergens, the depression of the bed of the river about $12'$ in latitude lower down its course is 1100 Paris, or 1172 English feet.

On arriving at the encampment of the Mashalka Arabs, we were at once taken into the open space round which the tents of the tribe were pitched, and told that we must remain there for the night. As it was yet early, we were desirous of crossing the Jordan at once, and went to the bank of the river to see whether it might not be done. The rains having ceased during the last few days, we found the water to have fallen materially, and far from being so high as had been represented: at the same time it was manifestly impracticable to ford the river, or even to attempt to cross it without proper means. These Sheikh Sa'd promised to provide for us next morning; but nothing would induce him to move that day, so we returned to the camp. Here he made us pitch our tents in the open space immediately in front of his own, alleging that it would not be safe for us to remain outside, or even far away from him. Our place of encampment was indeed a most wretched one. The tribe having been stationed here for some time, the whole ground was saturated with the filth of the cattle, of which this was the

* Gen. xxxii. 24-30.

† Ibid. xxxiii. 14-17.

night-layer, which in this heated atmosphere was most offensive. At sundown the mountain-sides became covered with animals of all descriptions returning home for the night. All were brought within the circle of the tents, and in a very short time the entire space around us was crowded with sheep, lambs, goats, kids, cows, asses, horses, camels, fowls, and dogs, to say nothing of insects of many kinds. The smell and the heat from the animals were intolerable, and the noise made by them and by the frogs in the swampy ground around us kept us awake the whole night. It was not till nine o'clock next morning that we left the camp, going a little way up the bank of the river to the ford. The water had fallen even since we were there the afternoon before, as was shown by sticks placed by the Arabs in the mud along the water's edge. Could we only have ensured a week's fine weather, we might have forded the stream on our horses. In its actual state the current was very rapid, and the passage a dangerous one. On reaching the bank of the river, Sheikh Sa'd set his men to work to cut down brushwood for a raft; whilst the women of the tribe inflated water-skins, which were placed in the interstices of the branches forming the raft, and the whole tied together. This rude contrivance was at length launched, and by means of it, guided by a band of naked men and boys, our baggage, our people, and at length ourselves, were conveyed across the river: not without everybody and everything getting thoroughly wet, and indeed not without danger to our lives; for, on our own passage (being the last), the raft was so heavily laden that it nearly capsized when in the most rapid part of the current; and it would have done so, no doubt, if my wife had not righted it by throwing herself off into the water, whence she was rescued by our attendants, who (to do them justice) were, as far as lay in their power, most attentive and anxious to take care of us.

I have already mentioned that the attendant of Sheikh Diab ibn Friekh, who met us at Ajlūn, was so black that we at first took him for an African. We noticed the same peculiarity among many of the Arabs about us here; and I observe that Lieut. Molyneux, in describing the Beduins by whom his sailors were attacked, says that "two-thirds of these men were blacks, belonging to the tribe of the Messallieks." It is desirable to ascertain whether this negro appearance is peculiar to this tribe alone, or is common to the other inhabitants of the deep-sunk valley of the Jordan. Should it be general, it would apparently have to be attributed to causes similar to those which have operated in producing the negroes of Africa, as also the Papuans or Asiatic negroes, in accordance with the principles enunciated in 'Origines Biblicæ.'

On our arrival on the western side of the Jordan, everything belonging to us was found to be so thoroughly wetted, that it was

impossible to think of moving till they were in some measure dried by exposure to the sun and air. In fact, we could not load the mules on account of their pack-saddles being saturated with moisture; we therefore pitched our tents and remained where we were till the following morning. Sheikh Sa'd, who had accompanied us across the river, was induced by us to remain here all night with a party of his tribe, for the purpose of guarding us against any hostile attack. He gave us, however, to understand that he would not undertake to protect us on this side of the Jordan after we had left him, and that the utmost he could do would be to furnish us with a guide to show us the road to Nablûs.

I have mentioned that while we remained encamped on the eastern side of the Jordan, the waters of the river continued to fall sensibly: we had hardly crossed when it threatened rain, which was not long in making its approach. During the night the rain was incessant, and on rising in the morning we found the river so swollen that it would now have been impracticable to make the passage, which the brief interval of fine weather had fortunately enabled us to do only the day before; and not merely so, but for several days afterwards the rain continued almost without intermission.

It was half-past nine before we were able to leave the bank of the river, taking with us a guide whom Sheikh Sa'd had found for us. We had not proceeded far when we were joined by a second man, who volunteered to accompany us in the place of the other. Our road lay for a few minutes across the lower plain and then ascended to the upper one, along which we continued, gradually approaching the high country on our right hand. When we left our encampment we had wished to go straight up a path running almost due west, but were told that we must proceed for some distance southward along the Ghor. Having, however, our misgivings, we were urgent on our guides to turn up the mountains; and a good deal of discussion took place between them and our dragoman, which had the effect of causing delay. There is no doubt in our minds that all this was planned, and that Sheikh Sa'd and his Mashalkas had more to do with what now ensued than they would be willing to own.

In little more than an hour after we had started, and just as we were turning a point of the rocks, we looked back for our guides, who had lingered behind, when to our dismay we perceived a party of mounted and armed Arabs advancing on us at a furious rate. So close were they before we were aware of their approach, that we had barely time to draw out our revolvers when they were upon us, brandishing their spears and threatening to kill us. As we had carefully concealed our revolvers, of which we had two pair, and also a pair of pocket-pistols, it had not been known in the camp

that we carried any firearms except a double-barrelled fowling-piece. The Beduins were, therefore, not a little surprised to find us armed to the teeth,—we had in all 26 bullets at their service,—and they consequently in all their movements kept at a respectful distance from both my wife and myself.

The moment the alarm was given, our dragoman called out to his people to make for the mountain, which they did in the most complete disorder, every one caring for himself only, in spite of all our endeavours to keep them together under the protection of our firearms. Our cook, who led the cavalcade mounted on a horse which carried his pots and pans, galloped off and was soon quite separated from the rest, which made him the first victim. Two of our assailants were on him in a moment, and before my wife, who was the best mounted of our party, could get to his assistance, he was stripped. The muleteers had started their mules westward up the mountain, and then ran away to hide themselves among the rocks. The mule carrying the few provisions which we had saved out of the Jordan and our bedding, slipped its load, and this was in like manner pounced on by the Beduins. Our dragoman, armed with my wife's fowling-piece, which she had given to him as soon as we saw the Beduins, galloped forward to protect the luggage, when one of the Beduins threw his spear at him, which passed through his waistcoat and coat and cut his hand, entering the butt-end of the fowling-piece and dragging him to the ground. Rendered desperate by this, he rushed to me for one of my revolvers, with which he shot his assailant's horse: my wife, galloping up to his assistance, also fired upon them. Seeing themselves so warmly received, the Beduins now proposed *khūweh*, or "brotherhood," which our dragoman at once agreed to; though rather against our inclination, as we should have preferred driving them off altogether. However, it was better that the conflict should be brought to a close, as first one and then a second of the Arabs had gone up a prominence of the rocks, as if looking out for the approach of a reinforcement, if not for the purpose of making signals for one. The whole affair did not last half an hour.

As soon as the Beduins had received their *bakhshish*, which our dragoman gave them,—for we would not, though of course we had to make it good to him when we got to our journey's end,—the fellows rode off, and we continued our course westward straight up the steep side of the mountain, forming the bluff between the Ghor and Wady Fār'a, known by the name of El-Makhrūd. At noon, a short time before reaching the summit, we caught a glimpse—a Pisgah sight—of the waters of Wady Zerka, the Jabbok of Scripture, which we had not been permitted to reach, much as we longed to do so. On attaining the summit of the Makhrūd, we gained a fine view of the fertile plain of Wady Fār'a; but there was one

feature of the landscape which we could not admire, namely, a large party of Arab horsemen at some distance below us on the left, who we feared were on the look-out for us. Keeping as much as practicable along the side of the mountains, and moving as silently but as quickly as possible, we continued up the valley of the Fār'a on a general course of about north-west, till we had to descend to cross the stream; after which we continued up the other side, and then proceeded westward, till at 4.45 P.M. we arrived at the village of Beit Dejān, occupying the site of an ancient town, the remains of which are deserving of being thoroughly explored.

On the following morning (January 10th) we left Beit Dejān, crossing the fertile plain of Sālim (Shalem) to Nablūs—the Shechem of Scripture,—which city we reached soon after noon. Arrived at this well-known place, it is unnecessary to say anything respecting our further proceedings, except that from Nablūs we went to Jerusalem, and thence to Jaffa on our way home.

As the object of our journey from Harra had been to follow, as closely as possible, in the footsteps of the Patriarch Jacob, it is proper, before concluding, to remark that, after he had left Succoth and crossed the Jordan (as explained in a preceding page), he would have entered Wady Fār'a at its junction with the Ghor, passing between the Makhrūd and Kārñ Sārtebeh; and that, continuing up the valley, he would at length have fallen into the road taken by us, by which he “came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-Aram, and pitched his tent before the city.”

Bekesbourne, May 7th, 1862.

IX.—*The Hermon, and the Physical Features of Syria and Northern Palestine.* By JOHN WORTABET, M.D.

IN all the geographical researches made in Syria and Palestine there has not been given, as yet—with the exception, perhaps, of an article by the Rev. J. L. Porter ('*Bibliotheca Sacra*,' Jan., 1854 *)—a full account of the Hermon, and of the truly grand and panoramic scenery which may be seen from its highest peak. And yet it is from the top of this mountain alone that we have the best observatory, from whence the general and well-defined outlines of a large part of Syria and Northern Palestine may be taken in one long and comprehensive sweep of the eye.

The highest peak of the Hermon may be reached from three different places. The first is Kal'at Jendal, a village lying to the

* See '*Royal Geographical Journal*,' vol. xxvi. p. 43.—ED.