

good map. It is the only part of the Jordan Valley where the mountains enclose a roundish plain, and its circular character is especially marked at its south-western extremity, where, as I am about to show, the Cities of the Plain stood.

The prospect from the neighbourhood of Hai is said to have extended to Zoar, for we read, "Lot carefully viewed all the Circular-plain of Jordan [as] thou comest [to] Zoar." Two widely different identifications of Zoar have been proposed. Canon Tristram claims to have discovered it in the course of his deeply interesting wanderings in Moab in 1874. On the western slope of the mountains of Moab, below the heights of Nebo, he found ruins on a bold headland 3,000 feet high, commanding magnificent views, and bearing the Arabic name *Zi'ara*, which preserves the consonants of the Hebrew Zoar. But surely a moment's reflection would show that the whole of the five associated Cities of the *Kikkar* must have been situated *on* the *Kikkar*, and not in one case 3,000 feet above it. Zoar, like Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, in all probability occupied the invariable position of towns and villages in Palestine plains, namely, slightly rising ground, or the tops of low hills at the foot of the mountains. So far from it being situated, as Dr. Tristram supposes, far up towards the summit of the highland, it is expressly intimated that it was not on the highland at all. In asking leave to take refuge there, Lot cries, "*I cannot escape to the highland. Behold now, this city is near to flee to, and it is a little one. Oh, let me escape thither therefore the name of the city was called Zoar*" [זָעַר from זָעַר, "became little," compare זָעַר and Chald. fem. זְעִירָה "little"].¹

But another very different and hitherto unsuspected explanation has lately been given of these words, "as thou comest unto Zoar," which proposes a startling identification of this spot, not with any place in Palestine at all, but with a fortress in Egypt! It seems to have been ventured first by the learned Dr. Haigh in 1876 (*Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache*, p. 54), was adopted by Dr. Dümichen in his *History*

¹ Gen. xix. 19-22.