

THE LORD'S LAND.

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Pool of Hezekiah.

SUNDAY, April 26, Consul De Hass preached on "Caleb's better spirit." Num. xiii. 30. Our camping ground was one of the most pleasant we had yet had, especially on a Sunday.

Monday morning. Another week's journey was before us. We rode first to the ruins of el 'Al, north of Wady Hesban, the ancient Elealeh, situated on a high hill, whence there is a fine view, especially of the Belka, lying north-west. The first mention of the place is at Numbers xxxii. 3, 37, and afterward, as a Moabite town in connection with Hesbbon. Isa. xv. 4; xvi. 9; Jer. xlviii. 34. Thence our course was due south about a mile to Hesban, the scriptural Hesbbon. Its position is commanding, though not much above the general plateau on which it stands. From it the eye in all directions sweeps over beautifully rolling and fertile plains and valleys. The ruins at Hesban are extensive. There are the remains of an old pavement, some broken columns and bases, and in a south-west direction from the principal ruins on the summit, I saw two huge piers of masonry still standing, which had been parts of some large building, possibly a primitive Christian church. There are traces of Jewish, Roman, Christian, and Saracenic art. The cisterns at every turn, and especially the ancient reservoir, just south of the principal hill, recalled the passage in Solomon's Song, "Thine eyes [are] like the fish-pools of Hesbbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim." (Cant. vii. 4.) From Hesban we rode almost due west toward the head of the Dead Sea, galloping over fertile fields and amid grazing flocks, entertained, meanwhile, not only by the charms of nature and association, but by the warlike movements of our escort. Thus be-wildered, almost before we knew it, we had reached Jebel Neba, or Mount Nebo. Those in advance, thinking that Pisgah must still be beyond, pushed forward regardless of the shiek's opinion, without ascending to the top. We all passed on, across an intervening valley to another height, farther toward the plain of the Jordan. Here were extensive ruins, but this point did not answer our expectations of Pisgah; so we went down to another, the farthest prominent point from the uplands overlooking the valley of the Jordan. This was the last chance; so there was general agreement that it must be the true Pisgah. Where else could it be? And yet I felt reluctant to give in my adhesion. This point was even more depressed than the one above it. While the view of the Plain of Jericho and the head of the Dead Sea is quite perfect, the position is too low to command the regions beyond the mountains which bound the west of the plain. The sweep of vision is entirely too contracted to fulfil the conditions of the description given of Moses' view from Pisgah.

After carefully re-reading "Tristram," we concluded we must retrace our steps, and go to the top of Jebel Neba. We did so, and found that it best answers the description given at Deut. xxxiv., "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho; and the Lord showed

him all the land of Gilead unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar." The atmosphere was too hazy to allow as extended a prospect as can be obtained earlier in the season, but it embraced substantially all the details enumerated by the sacred historian. Whether the "utmost sea," evidently meaning the Mediterranean, can be seen in perfectly clear weather I cannot say; we certainly could not see it on this day. The account must mean, as it is hardly possible at any point on this stage to see directly over the hill country of Judea, the land of Judæa toward the utmost sea. The hills about Hebron, however, could be seen. "The mountains round about Jerusalem," the hill of Bethlehem, Frank Mountain, Neby Samwil, Gerizim and Ebal, the Gilboa range, and the hill country of Galilee, were readily recognised. Sufficient of the plain of Jordan is seen to answer the description, Jericho being in the foreground of its western boundary, in a slightly north-west direction. Engedi (Ain Jidy), the "city of palm trees," rests, like a speck of green, on the west shore of the Dead Sea. Zoar cannot be seen. If situated off the Lisan, an arm of land extending from the east into the Dead Sea near its southern extremity, it was impossible for it to be seen from any position so far north. "Unto Zoar" must, therefore, be taken in the liberal sense, as "toward the utmost sea," unless another site for Zoar be accepted.

From Mount Nebo we rode south-eastward over a very pleasant region, passing several Bedawin camps and numerous flocks in sight of Medeba (Num. xxi. 30), where are some of the most remarkable ruins of the country. Crossing an old Roman road, toward evening we came to Ma'in, the ancient Baal-meon, named by the Israelites after they rebuilt it Beth-meon. (Num. xxxii. 28; Jer. xlvii. 23.) This is supposed to have been one of the heights of Baal. We walked around the ruins, which cover the whole hill, about half a mile square. Save an occasional wall or arch nothing is perfect. From the top of the hill, in all directions, the eye takes in lovely hill-sides and broad, productive valleys. We were now under the necessity of parting with our obliging and faithful Haza, as we had reached the southern limit of the Adwan, and must put ourselves under the conduct of the Beni-Sawkis. Fendel Fize, the shiek of the Beni-Sawkis, having been notified of our coming, sent his son Zedam to meet us, and to conduct us through his territory, lying from Ma'in to the districts round Kerak. The Beni-Sawkis are a powerful tribe, very warlike and overbearing.

April 28 — At the breakfast table £1 10s. were contributed for backsheesh, and it was voted to give it all to Haza.

The first point of interest we reached was a flat spot of ground which commanded a view of Wady Zurka-Ma'in, in which the noted hot sulphur springs of Callirhoe are located. The valley itself is a deep gorge, with rocks mostly of black basalt. Turning up to the left, at a short distance we ascended a hill crowned by the shapeless ruins of an old town named Attarus, the Ataroth of Num. xxxii. 3, 34. We made a *détour* to the left and south to visit the ruins of Kureiyat, the supposed site of Kerioth, or Keriat-haim, mentioned in the circle of inhabited cities by Jeremiah. (Jer. xlviii. 22—24.) There is nothing seemly in the whole mass. The position is very commanding, with a good view toward the Arnon. We had to return around the south and west sides of Mount Attarus, a very hot and rough ride, to reach in a slightly north-west direction of M'Kawr. About the middle of the afternoon we found our camp pitched on the side of the hill, adjoining the ruins of M'Kawr, the ancient Machorus. On reaching camp, waiting only to breathe a little, we walked by the edge of the ruins of the ancient city, and descending a valley to the west, crossed at an elevated point where the old Roman road led from the city to the base of the mountain, distant from the ruins of the city about a mile. In the valley leading to the mountain I observed, on the north side, several large caves. We ascended the mountain at the south-east angle. The summit is a round, flat surface, about a hundred yards in diameter, and overgrown with rank prickly weeds. We found on the north side the remains of at least one large oblong cistern, the masonry of which is in good preservation, and the cement at places quite perfect. The chief interest of Machorus centres in the citadel. This delightful spot, with such charming scenery, a climate unsurpassed for its mildness, and adjoining springs of rare medicinal virtue, was a favourite resort of Herod the Great. Here he could live luxuriously in