

importance, but these stood either in the foot hills or upon natural or artificial mounds in the plain," and with such a conclusion all must agree who are acquainted with this malarious region. He then shows that around the north-east end of the Dead Sea, in "the plains of Moab"—the great Shittim plain of Numbers xxv. 1, still abounding with the *shittah*, or acacia tree—there are *exactly five tells*, or mounds, affording the characteristic sites of Palestine cities. These are now called *Tell Kefrein*, also known as *Tel es Sharab*, and identical with Abel Shittim and the Abila of Josephus; *Tell er Ramr*, the Beth Haram of Joshua; *Tell Suweimeh*, probably the Beth Jesimoth of Joshua; *Tell el Hammam*, and *Tell Ektanu*, the last standing furthest towards the south-east. On all these *tells* there are ruins. The district is watered by three streams, flowing respectively from the *Wady Shaib*, *Wady Kefrein*, and *Wady Hesban*, besides the springs of *Tell Suweimeh*. These, Dr. Selah Merrill thinks, may well have formed the sites of the five Cities of the Plain, and *Tell Ektanu*, which is certainly in the right position, he would identify with Zoar. He speaks of it as the most remarkable of the group, and as containing the oldest ruins he had seen in the country. He says, "Its position also deserves notice, it being nearer the mountains of Moab than any of the others, and although it cannot be reckoned as one of the foot-hills, it is so situated as to command an extensive view of the whole plain around and below it. I learned the name from some of the most intelligent Arabs who belong to that region; questioning different persons on different occasions, that there might be no mistake about it. They could, however, give no account of the origin or meaning of the name, except to say that it was very old. They said also that the ruins upon this *tell* were the most ancient of any that were known to them. The name, indeed, has no meaning in Arabic, and we are compelled to look elsewhere for its origin and signification. It appears to be the Hebrew word *Kātān* [קטן], which means 'little,' or the 'little one.' This signification is appropriate for this *tell* as compared with the others.