

greeted his eyes on his return from his long exile in wild Arabia."¹

I have thought it right to state this interesting and ingenious explanation of the passage, but I cannot by any means admit its accuracy. *Zar*, or *Zaru*, is not the Hebrew *Zo'ar*, lacking as it does the strong important ז, and the word, spelt in precisely the same way, occurs within ten verses further as the name of the fifth City of the Plain, and is shortly afterwards interpreted to mean "little," as it does elsewhere.² The Hebrew expression בָּאֵרָה לְעֵר is elliptical, being literally "thy coming Zoar," not as ordinarily in such a Hebrew use of the infinitive בּוֹא, "thy coming towards Zoar" (לְעֵרָה), or "thy coming to Zoar" (אֶל-לְעֵר), and this on the face of it may seem to favour the rendering, "thy entering Zoar," but an examination of those passages where בּוֹא stands for "entering" does not confirm it. Biblical Hebrew is altogether too elliptical to build anything for certain upon the omission of a preposition or of the suffix ה. We have solid grounds for concluding that in the words of Genesis xiii. 10 "[as] thou comest [to] Zoar," the town of that name at the foot of the mountains of Moab in "the *Kikkar* of Jordan" is intended, and not the differently spelt *Zar*, or *Zaru*, the fortress entrance at the south end of the towered wall to the east of Egypt.

Having now found the general position of the *Kikkar*, or Circular-plain, of Jordan, we are in a position to appreciate the importance of Dr. Selah Merrill's discoveries in this region, when engaged, as archæologist of the party, in the survey of Eastern Palestine by the American Palestine Exploration Society. He calls attention to the *tell*-system of the Jordan. These *tells* are natural and in some cases perhaps artificial mounds at the foot of the hills, on which it is evident that the cities of the ancient inhabitants were built. He claims that his "researches have established that, with regard to the Jordan Valley, the flat land was never occupied by cities or towns of

¹ *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, vol. xviii. pp. 75, 76.

² Genesis xiii. 10; xiv. 2; xix. 20-22.