

APRIL 1890

The Theological Monthly

THE STORY OF AN ANCIENT BATTLE- FIELD.

TEN or twelve miles south of Jerusalem, and five or six from Bethlehem, on a ridge of the Judæan hills 2,788 feet above the sea, the present-day traveller is arrested by a group of interesting ruins, an extent of "four or five acres," covered with "the foundations of houses built of squared stones, some of which are bevelled," the centre of the space being occupied by the broken columns of a Byzantine church, with "a large baptismal font well wrought in hard limestone." These ruins, which, it is agreed, date from the beginning of the twelfth century A.D., when the district was over-run and devastated by a party of Turks from the east of the Jordan, mark the site of what was formerly a thriving and populous town; while the name *Tekua*, still attaching to them, leaves it barely open to challenge that here, or somewhere in the vicinity, stood the old Canaanitish city of Theko, or Tekoa, which, according to the LXX., was at the conquest assigned to Judah, and in which, according to the chronicler, Asshur, the son of Hezron (by his third wife) and half-brother of Caleb, became the first governor, as Caleb did of Ephratah or Bethlehem. In later times it was the home of that wise woman whom Joab employed to intercede with David for Absalom, though Thomson avers that amongst its present-day inhabitants such a crafty female would be looked for in vain. When, in the hands of Solomon's feeble successor, the kingdom came to be divided, Tekoa, on account of its strategic