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to work the miracle. It will be for Colonel Watson, and those acquainted with the Jordan, to say if a landslip is at all likely near Damieh. We are, indeed, in face of a Providential interference of some sort, and it was no harder to stop the Jordan near Damieh than to let the Israelites know it would be stopped *anywhere*, *c.f.* Matth. ix, 5. Still, the belief that miracles are not a subversion of natural laws, but that the Creator always works by laws, whether known or unknown to us, would be strikingly supported by Colonel Watson's new evidence, and the received interpretation of Josh. iii, 16; and against the latter, as I have said above, no decisive arguments are forthcoming. It is for this reason, as well as for the critical interest, that the passage deserves careful consideration.

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## THE ROCK OF ETAM AND THE CAVE OF ADULLAM.

By Rev. W. F. BIRCH, M.A.

IN *Quarterly Statement*, 1881, p. 323, I pointed out that this rock or crag was probably in Wady Urtas, near the traditional and true Cave of Adullam; but I could not then positively assert that Samson and David occupied precisely one and the same hiding place.

To some an identification appears incomplete unless the old name survives, or the modern is an admissible corruption of the old name. To me intricate points of topographical agreement seem to have more weight in establishing an identification than any name can have. The term Zion has been applied for fifteen centuries to the south-western hill at Jerusalem; still, the identification of that hill with the Zion or Mount Zion of the Bible is the greatest of errors, and the right position of Zion has been ascertained apart from the name.

The Cave of Adullam has been identified for 750 years with the famous cavern called Magharet Khureitun. M. Ganneau observed in *Quarterly Statement*, 1875, p. 173, that "It has long been proved that the name of Khureitun, applied to the cave, to the adjacent ruins, to a spring, and to the valley below, is nothing else than that of the ascetic Chariton." This *ipse dixit* at that time for me closed the point. Afterwards examination (*Quarterly Statement*, 1884, p. 61) satisfied me that the said cave was beyond all question the real Cave of Adullam; but, for the satisfaction of others, I tried last year to find a name to meet what I still consider an exorbitant demand. The large map offered nothing like Adullam near Magharet Khureitun, yet I observed, with some degree of surprise at my former inattention, that of the word Khureitun the last two syllables, *viz.*, *Eitun*, make a very presentable Etam, and next that *Khur* corresponds equally well to the Hebrew Chor, a hole or cave (whence Beth-horon and the Horites or dwellers in caves). Then at last, through its

gossamer veil, I perceived that the modern Khureitun means nothing more or less than the hole or cave of Etam.

Let me now boldly say that Chariton was an impostor. No ascetic who could drop his Mar could be a genuine saint like Mar-Saba, &c. Ecclesiastics do not shed but cling to their titles. Instead of the ascetic giving his name to the cave, it seems to me much more probable that it was *vice versa*; only the British Museum is not at hand for me to prove the transfer.

Anyhow, here is the veritable name, "Cave of Etan," occurring *four* times in connection with the very place to which fourteen years ago I was satisfied it belonged in Samson's story. Here is a crag (*sela* Hebr.) with a cave actually labelled to this day "the Cave of Etam." What more can be asked? The identification is complete to the very name.

Major Conder has placed the rock of Etam at Beit 'Atâb, and takes (Primer 86) "a curious secret passage and chamber communicating with the spring" to be the "cleft" where Samson hid himself. As there is only a *knoll* and not a *sela* or crag at Beit 'Atâb, it cannot be the *sela* Etam. The passage, however, apart from Samson, is of considerable interest. In "Memoirs," iii, p. 83, it is stated: "The people say that there is a subterranean passage from the castle to the spring at the bottom of the hill." Major Conder adds (p. 23): "The cavern is in all some 250 feet long . . . Its average height is about 5 to 8 feet, and its width about 18 feet . . . The west end of the tunnel is supposed to be about the centre of the modern village . . . The east end leads to a vertical shaft . . . about 60 yards from the spring." To me this is extremely interesting, as I see in the passage the "gutter" (2 Sam. v, 8) injured or unfinished whereby the besieged schemed to get water from a spring outside their city walls. As Chitral is the last, so Zion (as far as I know) was the earliest instance of a covered or secret way from a fortress to a spring without. Between the two historically may be placed, as regards Palestine, Gibeon and Rabbath-Ammon as known instances, and Bethel and Samaria as apparent ones. I could name ten or twenty more elsewhere.

The Hebrew word for *top* (A.V.) of the rock Etam (Judges xv, 8), is translated *cleft* (R.V.) and also *fissure*. This term tallies exactly with Bonar's ("Land of Promise," p. 250) vivid description of Wady Khureitun. After admitting that the Cave of Adullam was probably the cave of Khureitun, and connecting this last name with Hareth, he adds: "We gazed upon the vast precipices that fronted us, and down into the horrible *rent* beneath us, that seemed a *split* in the very foundations of the earth, as if some of its "bars" (Jonah ii, 6) had snapped and opened a *seam* in its lowest base." The italics are mine, the words Bonar's, though he had no suspicion that this was the *cleft* or *fissure* of the crag of Etam.

The natural course for water from Ain Atân (Etam) near Solomon's pools, would be down Wady Khureitun, just below and in front of the cave. The Bible says that Samson dwelt in the cleft of the crag of Etam;

but as hermits have an inveterate partiality for caves, Samson would doubtless make the said cave his headquarters. It is high up the side of the gorge, and is approached "by a terrace formed in the rock, which either by art or nature is very narrow" (Pococke). "A huge fallen block, about 7 feet high, has to be surmounted; between this and the upper rock is a space of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet. Continuing along the ledge we come to another fallen block, and mounting this we are confronted by the door of the cave" (*Quarterly Statement*, 1874, p. 26). "In front of the entrance are two large blocks of rock some 7 feet high" ("Memoirs," iii, p. 375; also see Photograph 177).

The hand of man must have placed all these blocks, weighing over one ton apiece, in their present position. Did the gate-bearer from Gaza beguile his solitude by single-handed collecting these stones to have them ready to hurl at those dogs the Philistines, or did the Horites or the men of Judah make this stronghold (Judges vi, 2) as a *dernier ressort* from their enemies? If Dr. Bliss can spare a day to dig in the large chamber he will no doubt find an answer from the pottery.

Curiously in the LXX the "Alex. Codex" gives a free rendering of Judges xv, 8, compared with 11, as if the translator had in his mind the spot to which Samson withdrew. Instead of, he dwelt "in the cleft of the rock of Etam," we read (παρά τῷ χειμάρρῳ ἐν τῷ σπηλαίῳ Ἡτάμ) "by the brook in the cave of Etam." Josephus, too, as if he had seen the *narrow ledge* in the face of the *precipice*, speaks of the *strong* rock, and says that Samson came *down* from the rock to the 3,000 men of Judah who came to bind him.

The artist on our Executive Committee having accepted the said cave, will perhaps give us the scene—above, the shaggy Nazarite standing alone on the ledge near the cave's mouth, terrible in mien, and as wild as the beetling cliffs around; beneath, the craven crowd of Judah, pledged to buy peace by a base surrender of the champion of Dan. History repeated itself on the same spot. A century later a nimbler foe to the Philistines is tracked to the same lair. Equally fearless, he comes out to meet his now true-hearted countrymen (1 Chron. xii, 18), and to hear the loyal greeting, "Thine are we, David, and on thy side."

A few years later the outlaw is king. Zion has just been gained by treachery; Jebus is under the heel of Joab; the Philistines are swarming in the valley of Rephaim and occupy Bethlehem. The three mighty men have had enough of Joab at Jerusalem, and have come down into (1 Chron. xi, 15) the Cave of Adullam, eager for an opportunity of showing that if they are not so lucky or crafty as Joab, they are quite as brave and as devoted to the king.

Oh, to have done with the Philistines! Oh, to be rid of the son of Zeruiah! to be once more but a shepherd, with only a lion and a bear to vex one!

This seems to be the covert meaning of the hasty exclamation, "Oh, that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem!" The three chose to take the words literally, and soon were seen hastening

to Bethlehem, to prove as fearless as a Dorso in the presence of the hostile garrison.

Poor Josephus has been badly treated over "the Cave of Adullam." Obviously he knew nothing about its position, and pardonably, like others, foisting in the word "city," he reproduces the expression as "a cave near the city of Adullam." This city was in the Shephelah. There was a famous *hold* near the real *cave*. From the *cave* (1 Sam. xxii, 1-5) David takes his parents to Moab, and (obviously returning to the *cave*) is told not to abide in the *hold*. To this said *hold* refer the words (1 Chron. xii, 8, 16) "into the *hold* to the *wilderness*." The LXX here omit the words "into the hold," and Josephus, using the LXX, and conscious that *cave*, *hold*, and *wilderness* were all connected, describes David's next move, not as from the *cave* or *hold*, but as from the *wilderness* ("Ant." VI, xii, 4), in which the city of Adullam certainly was not, but where the true cave is still. Again, Josephus says rightly, that the exploit of the three took place when King David was at Jerusalem ("Ant." VII, xii, 4), yet wrongly makes the hold which was near the cave, to be the citadel of Jerusalem. If Josephus is to be quoted on this point, let all the passages, and not only one, be considered.

Further, the city of Adullam is a most undesirable position for the cave. It is evident (2 Sam. v, 7) that David succeeded in capturing Zion just in the nick of time, before "all the Philistines (2 Sam. v, 17) were upon him." He was far too wary to shut himself up in an ill-provisioned fortress. Therefore, leaving Joab to hold the newly-won Jebus, David took to the field, and went down to the famous hold (near) the Cave of Adullam (Khureitun). Like other great generals he preferred to fight in the open. Cooped up in Zion he could do next to nothing, while in the desert of Judah, having traversed it in every direction, he could elude and walk round the Philistines, as he did with Saul, and treat them as Sertorius did Metellus in Spain. When David and his men entered walled Keilah, Saul at once saw that they had stepped into a trap. Surely then, David, a master in stratagems, would not be so silly as to march down to Adullam in the rear of the Philistines and close to their country, when he was threatened by them. There is no support whatever for the popular notion that the Cave of Adullam was near the city of that name in the Shephelah.

The same want of discernment is shown in placing the rock of Rimmon of the Benjamites at Rummon, in the tribe of Ephraim (*Quarterly Statement*, 1882, p. 50), but error is hard to kill, whoever plants it.