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GLEANINGS FROM THE MINUTE-BOOKS OF THE
JERUSALEM LITERARY SOCIETY.

BY R. A. S. MACALISTER, M.A., F.S.A.

Introductory Note.

THE Jerusalem Literary Society was founded in 1849, the first meeting being held on the 20th of November of that year. In the rules of the Society the purpose of the Society was stated to be the "investigation and elucidation of any subject connected with the Holy Land." Each member was to contribute a written paper at least once in two months—a rule enthusiastically observed at first, though, as might perhaps be expected, the ardour evaporated as the Society grew older. The Society was to meet every Friday evening, one hour after sunset.

The minutes of the Society, extending from the date above-mentioned to 6th of January, 1854, are contained in two large MS. books, which include not only a report of the proceedings at each meeting, but also transcripts in full of the papers read,—the first volume entirely in the handwriting of Mr. J. Finn (then the British Consul), the President; the second volume partly so, partly in that of a clerk.

The Society still exists in the form of a magazine club; the minute-books referred to are in the custody of Dr. Wheeler, the present Secretary, to whose kindness I am indebted for allowing me to have them in my possession for a time. On glancing through them I came to the conclusion that there was a good deal of matter that deserved to be rescued from the oblivion of the minute-books, and to be made more generally accessible. Many descriptions are to be found of life and travel in the country under conditions now to a large extent passed away. I have therefore transcribed (in whole or in part, as the case might be) such of the communications as seemed worth putting on permanent record. Some rhetorical passages have been excised, and the spelling of the place-names conformed to the orthography of the P.E.F. map, unless there seemed any special reason to retain the form adopted by the author of the paper.

R. A. S. M.

I.

At the meeting on 20th November, 1849, Mr. SANDFORD exhibited a Saracenic helmet of wrought steel ornamented with gold, of very elegant workmanship and in good preservation. It is in shape almost a hemisphere, surmounted by a small pointed ornament. Curved steel bars, terminating in a rim ingeniously riveted on, divide the outside of the helmet into segments. The diameter is $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The edge is perforated with small holes at equal distances: probably a soft cap or lining was attached to these. A curved bar slides in a ring fixed to the front of the rim, and was no doubt intended to preserve the nose and face of the wearer. The following Arabic inscription is emblazoned in gold around the rim:—

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ
 لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ
 لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ
 يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ
 وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ
 وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
 وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهَا
 وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

In the name of God the most merciful
 God—there is no god but He, the living, the self-existent
 No slumber nor sleep shall take Him
 To Him belongs everything in Heaven and in Earth
 Who is he that shall intercede except with His permission
 He knows what is in their hands and what is behind them
 And no one attains anything of His knowledge but as He permits
 The heavens and the earth are His extensive throne
 Sustained without effort by His will
 And He is the high omnipotent.

The curved bar of the helmet bears the words *بما شاء الله*, a constant exclamation of the Muslims, the equivalent of which is perhaps "What hath God wrought."

II.

Mr. FINN read the following "Journal of his recent tour from Jerusalem by Gibeon, Antipatris and Nazareth to Acre."

Left Jerusalem Thursday, 18th October, 1849, for a tour to the north of Palestine. It was late in the evening but we pitched our tents at Gibeon [*el-Jib*] after the young moon had set. Our situation was near the ancient well in the cavern of the rock. It was a lovely starlight night, and in the village there was a wedding festivity going on, with singing, screaming of women, and clapping of hands. The flickering light of a great fire shone wildly among the houses. This was continued to a late hour

19th October.—Rose a good deal before the sun, and found the air really warm. Before the sun appeared I was within the cavern of the well, and also within the dry ancient reservoir Soon afterwards the women with their children were fetching water for the village The village of Kulundia showed very pretty before us

We were mounted at a quarter-past eight, and proceeding towards Beth-horon [*Beit 'Ūr*]. It seems to me that the High Place of Gibeon must have been the rising ground adjoining to it but a little higher, the top of which is still covered with trees, and at the foot of which is the excavated rock-well which alone supplies the people of Gibeon. This appears more distinctly from the road by which we were going than any other direction. In 35 minutes we got a view of the sea and the great plain of Sharon. Here the Roman pavement of the road is more distinct and remains so at broken intervals for a long time.

On our left was the '*Akabet el Ajlūn*, or glen down which Joshua must have chased the five kings of the Canaanites It was along this valley that the body of Bishop Alexander was conveyed towards Jerusalem in December, 1845, as being the least rugged approach known from the plain to Jerusalem. On our left were the villages of *Bidda*, *Beit Dukka*, *Beit 'Anān*, etc. (*Ajlūn* is now a mere ruin). *Beitania* on our right. Then came Beth-horon in sight

with a fine view of Ramleh and its lofty tower. Arrived at Beth-horon the Upper at a quarter to ten, and Beth-horon the Nether at 25 minutes to 11. No people would guide us to *Kefr Saba*, giving as a reason that they were at enmity with all the country of the *Jebel Nablus*.

Passed the ruins of *Khauriyeh* [? Khurbet Dariyah]: under the village of *Shilta* at 10 past 12. We had now left *Jimzu* on our left. Before half-past 12 we were at *Na'lin* trending northwards. *Beit Nabala* at 2.20. *Deir Tareif* at 3.20. Here the people would not serve as guides towards *Kefr Saba* declaring that they would not go a two days' journey for anybody.

Our journey was now due northwards: *et-Tireh* at 3.5, *Awali* [? Kâleh] at 4.20, and in five minutes more at *el Mezeir'ah*. Between these two villages is a small ancient building with a portico of two columns and two pilasters [antae] of Corinthian order. The capitals of the pilasters, being more perfect than those of the two round columns, are really beautiful. The doors and cornices of the front of the edifice within the portico remain entire. The capitals of the columns have been injured by positive violence. The whole has a warm tinge of yellow from the effect of time. I observed that though the elevation is not great (the shafts not exceeding 9 feet in height) the columns swell into larger diameter near the middle. The door is bordered by a deep simple moulding and in the upright doorposts there remain the same cuttings for stone bolts of the door as we observe in the ancient sepulchres near Jerusalem. The people call this edifice the *burj* or "tower." The Muslims have placed a *kibleh* niche within, and this is the first time that I have seen an undeniably classic edifice converted to Muhammadan purposes. The roof has been repaired and some patches of repair effected in various parts . . . Not far distant as we kept our road we found traces of houses and a reservoir.

A very conspicuously situated village on our right called *Mejdel Yabâ* is the seat (*kursi*) of an influential sheikh named *Sadek*. Indeed as we coast along northwards, parallel with the hills of Ephraim, we see these studded with villages, but on the wide plain itself there is a sad want of population. I saw no villages but those whose names I have written.

At 4.50 we arrived at [the castle of *Ras el-Ain*, which has been so often described that it is not necessary to repeat the account of it in this paper].

Most of the great plain has borne some harvest this year, but where are the people? The sun set and we marched onwards towards the pole-star, and towards an enormous fire which glared before us made of stubble of [sesame] in the fields near some village. *Jiljūlieh* at 6.30, *Kefr Sabā* at 7. But we in our ignorance went further, and had to return, thus losing three-quarters of an hour, and dismounted at a little before 8, having been twelve hours in the saddle.

Saturday 30th [*recté* 20th] . . . Here also the people refused to guide us on our way towards Nazareth, under the general pretext of being in feud with all the villages beyond the next one to them: no money could induce them. I sent for the sheikh, but they said he was away at the mills of the 'Aujeh.

Kefr Sāba is a miserable place. I picked up a few tesserae near a small piece of old wall close to our tent, but except these and a small fragment of a column I saw no remains of ancient Antipatris. Indeed I cannot believe that this is its real site. The words of Josephus are very clear—"After this . . . Herod erected another city on the plain called Caphar Saba . . . where a river encompassed the city itself . . . This he named Antipatris . . ." Such a description is ridiculously inapplicable to this village, but might be perfectly exact for the site of *Ras el-'Ain*. Besides, the words in Greek assert that it was the *plain* that was named Caphar Saba . . . It may possibly be that the present village had previously [given its] name to the adjacent plain . . . but *Ras el-'Ain* gives us a much more worthy idea of the military station at which St. Paul halted . . . than this miserable place where there is no other water than a rain cistern . . .

Mounted at 8.30 and soon passed *Kilkīlieh* on our right: this was the village to which we had gone by mistake the night before; it lay east of *Kefr Sabā*. Our course after this lay due north, or one point to the west, still upon the extended plain with a line of mountains abounding in villages on our right. *Kulunsaweh* at 10.15, where there is a remnant of an Arab castle, a well, a large sycamore tree, and date trees. *Miskeh* we heard of as being out of sight on our left. About 11 o'clock we came among extensive cotton plantations, of which we had abundance afterwards all through the territory called *Jebel Nāblus*. At "Tool el Kroom" [*Tāl Kerām*] by 11 o'clock. Before half an hour we were abreast of "Ckackoon" [*Kākōn*], which is on a tell rising from the plain: a

conspicuous place a good distance to the left. Soon we reached "Keir Subb" [*K. Sib*], where we met a European in Arab dress riding: passed without speaking. He had a very delicate, almost toy of an elegant fowling-piece at his saddle bow. No milk to be got from flocks of goats—indeed, never since we left Jerusalem. Met a train of camels carrying cotton. Rested from 12.30 to 12.37 under some olive trees near *Zeita*, with a delicious slight breeze under the boughs, not to be found beyond the reach of their shadow. It is an ancient site, known to be so by tesserae and broken pottery and large dust hills. On immediately descending to lower ground we found that the hill down which we had come was crowned on our left hand by an ancient village called "Caffeen"¹ having fragments of ancient buildings about, and I saw one piece of a very large column. Approaching towards the hills, leaving our line of due north, the border country seemed to be very well peopled.

At 2.15 we were at *Bāka*, heading N.E. Plenty of cotton plantations, and the men, as throughout the *Jebel Nāblus*, wearing their caps dangling on one side, all armed; and the women in white (not blue), with red sashes and head scarfs. They advised us not to attempt travelling after sunset, and said that we could not possibly get beyond *Umm el-Fakm* by sunset; but it being Saturday, I was most anxious, by means of a forced march, to reach Nazareth for our Sunday's rest.

By 2.30 we commenced ascending among shrubs and other trees; at 2.45 we saw the sea once more. There were white clouds to the S.S.W. The oak and *kharûb* trees were taller as we advanced, and for some time we proceeded in a slight hollow between two well-wooded banks, among the varied greens of which the bright colours of my people gave pretty effect. The oaks (evergreen) averaged 30 to 40 feet in height. When our path ascended a bank we had an extensive prospect all around of forest scenery of the evergreen oak, and at our feet were loose heaps of beautiful ancient stones, all large and rebated [drafted ?] at the edges. There were two or three mud huts adjoining, and the people called the site *Kharbet el Wady 'Arah*—into which *Wady 'Arah* we had now to descend. It is a very long plain, with harvest-stubble and cotton plantations, of perhaps half a mile wide, between two parallel lines of hills well

¹ Not on map.—[R. A. S. M.]

clothed with fine evergreen oaks, farther than the eye could reach. This is the very country described in Joshua xvii, 16, 17, 18—the wood country and the mountain given to Ephraim and Manasseh, which they might cut down: and of which a village still bears the orientally expressive designation of *Umm el-Fahm* (“Mother of Charcoal”). I observe that the cotton is sown, if not always at least generally, in a dark fat soil. Following the wady we proceeded N.E. by E. After an hour the valley became less beautiful, the ground less cultivable, and the trees in the hills more scattered and rare. Uncertain of our way, we mounted towards a small clean village half-way up the ridge on our right, to enquire the way and procure a guide if possible. This village we found to be that which gives name to the whole valley, viz., “Arah” [*Ar'arah*] Got a guide for 30 piastres, after near an hour's trouble . . . and started afresh at 4.45

Continued along the same valley: the evening flies very troublesome to the horses, and the best horses feel this plague the most. More forest scenery of oak, the trees bearing gigantic acorns. Then the verdure ceased, and we had but bare, rugged hills. At one spot was a spring, close upon the left of our road, with a wely and fruit trees and myriads of little singing birds. Here we filled the water-bottle (*ma'tara*), and the sun set, throwing a glorious red upon the clouds

Umm el-Fahm we left on our right, and night came on, our old guide with his little donkey going merrily on, sometimes over dangerous parts of road. Crossed the Kishon by starlight at 7.15—not a wide stream in that place at that season of the year. On and on monotonously, over the great plain of Jezreel—ascended towards Nazareth, at a different part of its hill country from that to which we had been accustomed on the way from Jenin. Then wound round and round tediously among broken rocks and trees, and at length reached Nazareth at 12.15, nearly sixteen hours after leaving Kefr Sabâ

Sunday, 21st Visited by two gentlemanly sort of monks, one being the deputy chief of the Convent, the President himself being away. These Spaniards always find their way into political conversation

Monday In the street before us are some Anazi Arabs, squatting on the pavement, with beautiful though rough horses in their society. Before taking our departure I went over to the

Convent to return the visit of the monks. There are beautiful morsels of floral sculpture carefully inserted for preservation in the walls near the gateway. Mounted at 10.20, and started for Acre viâ *Seffûrieh* (Sepphoris). Just before *Seffûrieh* there was a flock of horses feeding in a field. We were at *Seffûrieh* by 11.35. Some squared stones and heads of squared pilasters are visible about. A little beyond the village I turned aside from the road to a lid of an ancient sarcophagus and traces of quarrying. The town stands in a conspicuous and commanding situation on a low hill rising from a plain

On our left we had a view of the long "sides of his Carmel," very dark blue on that cloudy day. People were picking olives before they were ripe. At 12.20 we reached the well and ruined khan of *Dauwieh*: here some rain fell for a few minutes. We were now in a narrow plain, a branch of which, upon our right, retires by Hattin almost to Tiberias. A good many trees scattered about—then a small kind of glen, issuing from which we had *Shefa 'Amr* on our left, a handsome-looking village said to be as large as Nazareth. Here we entered upon the great plain skirting the Mediterranean. Saw Acre at 2.30. Among the fields I picked up a cannon-ball. . . . On arriving at Acre at 4.10 the first sounds we heard were those of a bugle, proclaiming our approach to a garrisoned town.

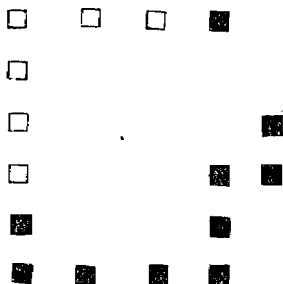
III.

At the meeting of 30th November, 1849, Mr. FINN read a description of "A Temple of Baal in Phœnicia."

The descriptive part of this Paper is as follows—I omit some out-of-date etymological and other speculations about druids, etc. :—

Going northwards from Sûr [Tyre] towards Saida [Sidon] on the Plain road, where a village called "Sairee" [*Sêriyeh*] stands upon the line of hills running parallel to the sea at our right, I observed a number of tall upright stones to our left, which did not appear to be round classical columns—but, nevertheless, to be placed in some kind of arrangement. The guide told me that the place is called the *Sûk* or Market of *Sêriyeh*, and said that the country people believed the big stones to have been reapers in some ancient time, whom God for their wickedness had turned into stone

I found a parallelogram of large squared upright stones, standing separate from each other at intervals (not always uniform intervals) of two to three yards; and two such stones in advance of the parallelogram on its eastern side, which probably formed some kind of portal. The stones of the parallelogram were standing in this form :—



while the others which would complete the figure lay prostrate, some of them a little removed from their places. All the stones have been chiselled into regular angular form, rather more broad than thick, and the tallest one now standing rises six feet from the present surface of the ground. I could find no chiselled indications of their having been connected by transverse lintels No altar is visible I observed traces of a more regular building having stood near it, and picked up a piece of tessellated pavement within the enclosure, but this was probably brought from some other place, perhaps from the more regular building just referred to

(To be continued.)

NOTES ON THE GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE.

By the Rev. CALEB HAUSER, M.A.

(Concluded from *Q.S.*, 1907, p. 290.)

XI. *Nebaloth*.—In a list of Moabite towns which Hyrcanus promised to restore to the Nabatheans (*Ant.* XIV, 1-4) *Nebaloth* occurs between *Libba* (*Libb*) and *Arabatha* (*Rabbah*). *Nebaloth* is evidently the *Balu'a* between *Libb* and *Rabba*.