

PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

PELLA.

BY

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P R E F A C E.



THIS work is the Survey of Fahil (the ancient Pella), executed by Herr Schumacher for the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund. The place had already been visited, among others, by Mr. Guy Le Strange (see *Quarterly Statement*, 1885, p. 158). It had long been desired to procure a thorough examination of this interesting place, and the Committee gladly accepted the services of Herr Schumacher, whose descriptive map and drawings are now, for the first time, published.

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P E L L A

EARLY on the morning of February 18th, 1887, we rode out of the southern gate of Tiberias, taking our course along the lake shore to the hot baths and the Jordan valley. The morning was very misty, and heavy clouds foretold us that an excursion at this time of the season would make us sufficiently acquainted with the disagreeableness of a Syrian winter. Our cavalcade could be called noble, for we were accompanied by the Governor, or Kaimakam, of Tiberias, several soldiers, an officer, servants, and some German colonists to aid me in my exploration work: we were also followed by muleteers with loaded animals, carrying, besides a tent, cooking implements and the necessary provisions, and some well-mounted Bedawîn. The Governor had less the intention of taking part in my exploration than of spending a day of rest among a tribe of the Jordan

valley, the Ghôr, which, no longer burnt by the summer heat, presented itself as a luxurious grass growth and a blossoming wild flower field. We crossed the Jordan at its outflow from the lake with some difficulty, the depth rising up to six feet and more, and the width not being less than 60 yards; and we first had to procure a little boat for the luggage, and to drag the animals behind, which were obliged to cross the river swimming. After this troublesome job was accomplished we went on, and before mid-day we rested on the borders of the Yarmuk, in sight of the cascades formed by this river, which rushes over large basaltic blocks near the Jisr el-Saghîr—a stone bridge built in Muhammedan ages, which crosses the ancient Hieromax, very near where its floods unite with those of the Jordan. Servants with tent pushed forwards to the tribe of the 'Arab Segûr el-Ghôr, who were encamped little south of the Jisr el-Mejâmia', while we took a more eastern direction, crossed the plain, and arrived at Esh Shûni in the beginning of the afternoon. This little village,* containing huts, stores, and graneries, built on the ancient site of Khirbet el-Ekseir, is the property of our Kaimakam, who added to the Fellahîn population some Bedawîn and Greek gardeners of Beirût, supplied them with European agricultural implements, planted orange and lemon gardens,

* See 'Within the Decapolis,' by G. Schumacher.

watering them by a canal from the adjacent stream of the Wâdy el-'Arab, built grinding mills, and made



Esh-Shuni (Kh. el-Ekseir). From a Photograph.

other improvements, which, if followed up by the lazy Bedawîn, would soon render that part of the

Ghôr a permanently paying, flourishing garden. We



View of Wâdy el-'Arab. From a Photograph.

took a short refreshing swim in the above-mentioned stream, which is bordered by oleander bushes, enjoy-

ing the picturesque view of this lower part of the Wâdy. Here, as seen from the photograph of this part, the Wâdy rushes into the Jordan valley, near an old bridge, with the ruins of Abu Dabbûs, a Muhammedan burial-place, and its immediate transition from a steep rocky ravine into an evergreen mild valley.

It was at sundown when we reached the camp of the 'Arab Segûr el-Ghôr, welcomed by a troop of their best horsemen, whom we followed galloping through this wide encampment to the place where our tent was pitched. The head Sheikh, Raja, had chosen for us a spot of elevated ground straight above the Jordan river, having thus a free view over this powerful, rapid stream, which, in endless zig-zags, rolls southwards. The Bedawîn camping-place was in the notable depression which bounds the Jordan on its entire course along both shores with steep ascents of alluvial earth, and which, doubtless, formed the original bed of the river. We had hardly become seated at the entrance of our tent when the Sheikh's servants began to occupy themselves with the preparation of a Bedawîn dinner, and therefore spared us the conventional request for this repast which is used among Bedawîn, in order to help the host over the critical choice of meals. In its modest way, it is thus uttered in the Bedawîn dialect: 'Ya mu'az-zib, waddy Kahwa tent'alletsh (تعلق), wa

tuthun yehatshy (يَحْكِي) wa dafînt (دَفِينَة) ma yanuttha el Kutt, wa lel Ahsân 'elbet sha'îr, wa rûh wa ta'âl ya Mu'azzib.' Literally: 'Bring, oh host, a coffee which pastes;* tobacco which speaks;† and a heap‡ which cannot be leaped by a cat, and an 'Elbet§ of barley for the horse, and go and come, oh host.'

We added to the frugal dinner some fish we had caught in the Jordan, but which the Bedawîn looked upon as 'Nijis,' or impure, a belief which I have found now and then among the Bedawîn.

The next morning promised a fine day, and our Sheikh would under no circumstances let us go, promising for the following night a 'Sahjy,' or dance, as arranged on festival occasions, but generally excluding strangers; such a rare treat persuaded us to stay a day longer. While the Governor assembled around him the elders of the tribe during the day, settling disputes and calling their attention to Government laws, encouraging them to cultivate soil, &c., we explored the shores of the river and its vicinity. The female members of

* That is, strong and stout.

† Good tobacco must whisper, while burning.

‡ Literally, 'dafina' means 'the buried,' and represents a young cooked ram covered by a heap of cooked rice, and thus served on a large dish, forming together a meal heap 'too high for a cat's leap.'

§ 'Elbet (عَلْبِيَّة) means half a keil, or about a bushel and a quarter.

the tribe occupied themselves exclusively during this day by gathering dry shrubs and tamarisks found in the Ghôr and in the jungles along the river, and piled them up in heaps before our tents.

After the sun disappeared behind the mountain of 'Serîn,' bordering the western banks of the Ghôr, and when the large flocks had entered the encampment, the dim fires gathered the inhabitants of each tent to their meals, while now and then a monotonous song was heard from a female member calling her immediate neighbours together for the festival of the evening. Soon appeared three half-grown lads, who lighted just in front of us part of the gathered bushes, placing arms on shoulders, they attempted a dance with rather primitive movements, which soon degenerated into trying to push each other into the fire. The Sheikh's brother, a sort of Master of Ceremonies, richly dressed, with a mighty cane in his hand, now appeared on the tableau, drove the boys away, and, followed by others, prepared the field for the dance; then he uttered a long loud cry, and groups of singing women, shouting young men, married men and elders of the tribe successively appeared. The latter sat in groups around us and our tents smoking 'Ghalawîn' (pipes) and 'Nargiles,' while a coffee, 'which pasted,' was passed round without interruption by the Sheikh and the 'Natûr' (a sort of landlord). The Master

of Ceremonies now set the young men one by one in a long row, shoulder to shoulder ; behind the front row a second and then a third similar followed, thus numbering altogether about 150 dancers. The young men were only clothed with their blue shirt, which they fastened in the girdle so high that their legs were bared to the knees. The fire was fed until its flames struck high over the heads of the dancers ; then the Master of Ceremonies clapped his hands, made a dancing motion, and in one moment the whole crowd of young men, with the upper part of their bodies bent forwards, clapping their hands in measure, moved towards the fire, making a step forwards and then a step backwards, shouting in a moaning, oppressed tone, 'hojîya, hojîya, hojîya.' About five minutes passed, when a finely dressed young woman, with a long blue silk robe, broke out of the rows of the women, who sat opposite the young men, at the other side of the fire, and planted herself between the fire and the dancers ; now rose the Sheikh, who, marching towards her, drew out his sword and handed it graciously to the handsome young woman—one of his wives. She received the sword, and swinging it several times around her head, danced up and down the rows of the young men, who now broke out into loud shouts and continued their dance with increased vehemence and a louder 'hojîya, hojîya.'

The young woman now put herself in a kneeling position, and feigned to be fighting with the sword with a practice and ability, which did her credit, against the crowd, which continually made rushes towards her. The higher the fire burnt the more impetuous became the motions, and the more boldly the dancers approached to the woman. Presently she sprang up from her kneeling position to her full height with a wonderful elasticity, and swinging the sword around, drove the crowd backwards. They slowly gave way, but only for a minute ; then they returned again, forming a half circle around the fighting woman and the fire. The attacks began again, and again the woman repulsed them with activity ; with astonishing changing movements the long robe and the long ends of her sleeves followed her motions ; but slower and slower became her motions until she finally fell down on her knees, hardly able to continue. This sign of exhaustion was perceived by another young woman, who stood ready behind the fire ; she ran to the fighter, who with incredible quickness threw her robe (which proved merely to be a mantle over her national costume, the shirt) over her reliever, put the sword into her hand and disappeared. The dance meanwhile was not interrupted, and the new fighter took up her duty with no less ability than her predecessor. After she also had exhausted her power, she retired ; not less exhausted were the young men,

who had worked themselves into such an ardour that after stopping they fell on the ground with every sign of over-exertion.

A cup of coffee now was offered, but only a small part had the pleasure of a taste ; most of the dancers were engaged in a dispute about the dance, until the fire was lighted again, and the 'Sahjy' was renewed. Midnight was near before the piles of brush were burnt out and the physical strength of the young consumed. This dance, 'Sahjy' (not to be confounded with the 'Delky,' or ring dance, which is more common), is one of the oldest Bedawin amusements known ; it illustrates the attempted capture of a woman ; the bravest of the young men being the lucky proprietor. Certain young men told me that a Bedawy once victoriously entered the camp of another 'Hamûl' (part of a tribe) with the object to win or rob a bride ; but their united choice fell on the jewel of the tribe, who defended her virtue with the sword, until, exhausted, she delivered herself into the hand of the most brave.

The firing of muskets and pistols gathered old and young for a moment once more ; a dance without order was tried, and then the members of the tribe left the place, singing and laughing, until the silence of the night proved that each family had retired to their hair tent.

Next morning at daybreak, while the others pre-

pared for departure, I considered with the Sheikh and the Kaimakam the question of a reliable guide who could serve us for our coming exploration. The solution of this question proved not so easy, for so lazy are the Bedawîn, especially the clever ones, that they generally decline to engage upon the tiresome duty of a guide, and if forced to do so, they soon obtain their liberty again by manifesting an absolute ignorance of the country to be explored. The Bedawy always prefers to live on (شنيّة 'shnîny') butter-milk and a piece of rough dry barley bread, to smoke miserable tobacco, to lie on his sheepskin all day long, rather than to expose himself to a little physical effort for which he would be well remunerated, and from which he could live for some time, in his way, comfortably. Money often has little attraction for a Bedawy, but when all efforts to obtain his assistance fail, one out of many means may yet be tried, and that is by offering to give him sweetmeats. 'Helu' (from حلو, sweet) is the attractive word for which the Bedawy always has an open ear; open a sack of dried figs, of dates, of candies, or, last but not least, of 'Halâwy' (that is, cooked sugar, or molasses, mixed with nuts), and see what a wonderful effects it produces! Antiquities are brought to you, parts of jewels even, anxiously hidden by a young Bedawy woman, are offered to you for some 'Helu.' It is the most favourite dainty the Bedawy knows,

and is to a wide extent taken advantage of by Jews of Tiberias and Safed, who come bringing a small sack of 'Kuttein' (dried figs), and return from the Bedawîn camps loaded with bags of the best grain.

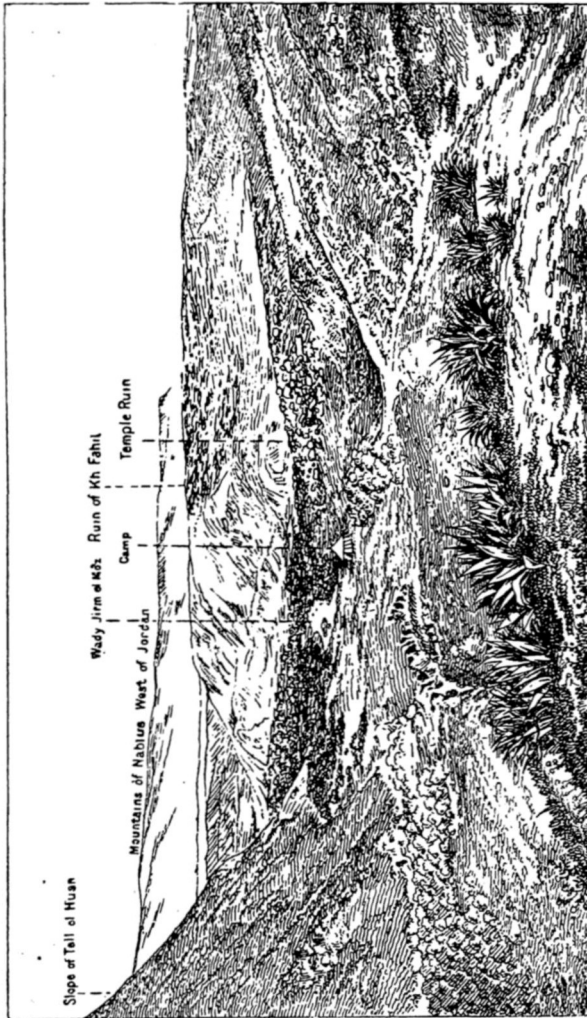
'There is an excellent guide near,' said the Sheikh, 'but unfortunately he is a renowned highwayman, and has just been captured by a soldier.' I was anxious to see Kasem Abu-l-Ghallûs, a name often heard in the Jordan valley, and, promising that no harm should be done to him, he appeared accompanied by a soldier and a companion named Abu Ahmeÿid, also a gentleman of the same reputation, but who limited his trade to the stealing of donkeys and sheep. A short examination proved that both men had a thorough knowledge of the neighbouring country, especially of 'Tabakât Fahil,' which place was much less known by the Bedawîn than I thought. In obedience to the Arabic proverb, 'Ati khubzak (khaddak) lil khabbâz, wa lau akal nusshu' (give thy bread [dough] to the baker, if he even eat half of it), and after the Kaimakam had promised them exemption from punishment for the crimes they had committed if they should guide us to our satisfaction, we agreed together, and soon started, taking a southern direction, while the Kaimakan, leaving a soldier with us, returned to his seat of government. We rode along the Jordan valley in a blazing sun—for the Ghôr becomes hot as soon as the sun appears—crossing the

Zôr el-Bâsha, a wide uncultivated depression, and following a path which led from camp to camp of the Bedawîn, we soon reached Tell el-Arba'în, a small hill with signs of ruins, consisting of scattered building stones. Now and then we explored the valley to the right and left, but could discover nothing else than remains of straight walls of masonry. These may have served in times past for irrigation purposes, and they are partly still used by the Bedawîn to lead the water of the Wâdy et-Taiyibeh down into the Ghôr to irrigate at the end of February those grain fields sown in the beginning of February, and which give the second crop of the Ghôr Beisân.

We were now and then stopped by inquisitive Bedawîn, of the great tribe of the 'Arab Beni Sakhr, who could not understand how Europeans should be in company with such guides as ours, but they were quickly repulsed by the proud answer of our guides, 'Mânifâdi essa'a' (I haven't got time now). A little after mid-day we arrived at the foot of the terraces, or 'Tabakât,' which form the transition from the highlands of 'Ajlûn to the Ghôr, and which from the ruin found on their southern extremity are named 'Tabakât Fahil.' These terraces form a level plateau of well cultivated soil, now and again cut through by a wâdy, and they rise to an average height of about 300 feet above the adjacent Jordan valley, or of 260 feet below the Mediterranean Sea. We climbed up the

steep road, leading over limestone rocks to the mentioned plateau, and, riding for more than a mile in a south-eastern direction, finally arrived at its southern extremity, which is bordered by a precipice. Here are the ruins of Khirbet Fahil. We turned a few steps more to the east, and then went down a rough road, over *débris* and masses of fallen monuments, capitals, and columns, and arriving at the valley, camped at a place overgrown with the so-called 'Khubbeizy' grass, which here reached the luxuriant height of 3 feet. Here numerous springs gush out from the Wâdy bed, forming the lively stream of Wâdy Jirm-el-Môz. From this camping spot the explorer will receive the best idea how well hidden is the locality of the supposed site of Pella. Looking westward, to the right, we see the steep heights bordering the plateau, and the ruin we have just passed; behind us, in the east, the course of the Wâdy is interrupted by an artificial dam; to the left, or south, rises the mighty and steep mountain, Tell el-Husn; while westwards extends the valley with the stream Jirm el-Môz, bordered to the north by the above mentioned plateau, and to the south, below Tell el-Husn, by a range of hills. Leaving in the eastern parts a pretty wide valley, the Wâdy soon narrows, forming a narrow ravine down to the Jordan valley. The banks are here so close to one another that neither from our

camping place can any part of the Jordan valley be



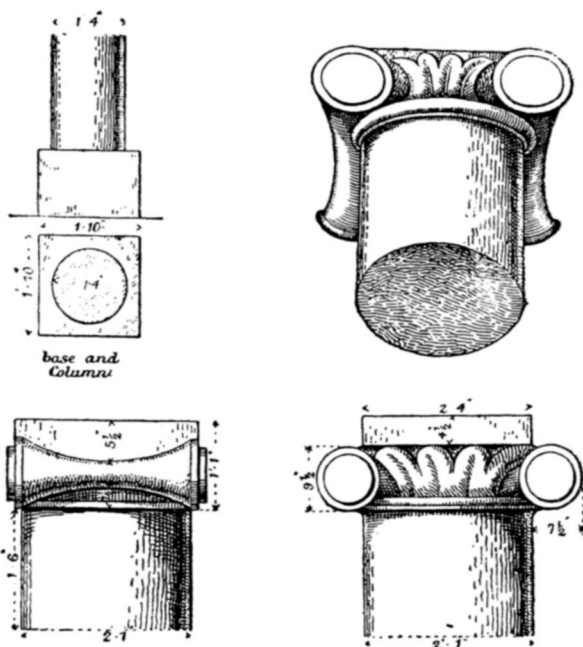
View of Kh. Fahil, looking west. From a Photograph.

seen, nor from this valley is any view of Khurbet Fahil possible—which is thus a real place of refuge. The

annexed photograph shows Khurbet Fahil, with the upper part of the Wâdy Jirm el-Môz.

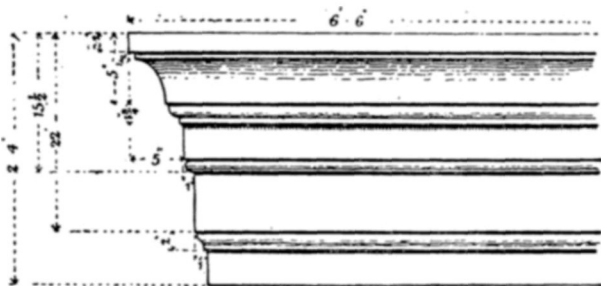
I now began exploring my immediate neighbourhood, undisturbed for the present by the curious eye of a Bedawîn, for none of their camps were nearer than six miles off. A level space between the wâdy bed near our tent and the northern ascent to Khurbet Fahil is covered with gigantic remains of building materials. This terrace, but a few yards higher than the surrounding country, has a length of 50 yards and a width of 25. A long wall borders its southern part, while to the west other walls, well-masoned, partly project towards the wâdy, partly extend to the foot of the ascent of Khurbet Fahil, the north and east being protected by steep mountain ascents. This site, with its important remains, as will presently be seen, may have been that of a temple. With the aid of a crowbar, I turned over the different column heads, parts of column shafts, architraves, lintels, column bases, and hewn blocks. The building material, although of a hard limestone, rapidly becomes weather-worn. The column capitals were Corinthian, with acanthus leaves, Ionic with simple volutes and defaced ornamentation, and common Doric. The column bases are generally Attic, and several pedestals of Roman character with little projecting cornices, to some of which the column bases were worked, were found lying about; these

pedestals had the form of a die (*see sketch*), each side measuring 2 feet 10½ inches. The columns were upwards of 13 feet long (that is, the combined parts of the



Ionic Capitals of the Ruined Temple.

shaft), and had a lower diameter of 21½ inches; they were well worked, and some showed on their lower periphery the Christian emblems **A** and **Ω**. I also found corner columns; that is, a couple of columns worked together, showing half of their circumference, while the other part formed a right angle; these only have a diameter of 15½ inches. These coupled columns are similar to those found by Dr. Sepp



CORNICE

an entirely different character are some columns (lying among those described) which have a diameter of 3 feet 7 inches, and are worked in lengths (pieces) of 3 feet 4 inches length. On some of them, which evidently formed the base parts, we found square holes, generally of 1 foot 4 inches wide and 7 inches deep, and small rectangular holes above them, 5 inches wide and 3 inches deep. The first are worked on three sides (*see sketch*), and must, as I imagine, have been used to fit masonry work built to them ; the small ones may have served for lifting. These columns had evidently no capital, but merely a small cornice. The lower part of the column was hollowed 3 inches deep, leaving but a ring of 5 inches width to enable a solid footing of the column. There are also found long pieces of a top ornament, which, as well as the lintels sketched, are carefully carved. The lintels must have covered an opening of at least 12 feet wide. On the upper parts of the column, as well as the cornice-pieces, I found small

pin holes, 5 inches deep and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide, fitted with a piece of iron, which was fastened to the stone with lead, and which evidently was made in order to combine the parts with each other, and to prevent a horizontal movement.

On the lower part of a broken column yet standing I found the following Greek inscription, the only one I could discover in this site. It reads as follows :—



Greek Inscription on Column.

None of the other inscriptions were legible, although Greek characters were seen here and there on the buried parts of the columns, but so entirely defaced that neither squeeze nor careful study would avail. A stone with a leaf ornament was dug out with great efforts ; it proved to be a console (corbel) with a fine volute, as seen from the sketch :—



Corbel Ornament. From a Photograph.

Next to this stone I found another small one carefully carved, 1 foot 6 inches long and 1 foot 2 inches high, and which seemed to form part of the rib of a vault. The site is so totally destroyed that it would require considerable excavations before a good idea of its original buildings could be obtained. Besides the fragments mentioned, there is nothing more to be found at this ruin, with the exception of numerous pieces of tiles and other pottery work.

Heavy rain, which lasted with but little intervals during the whole of our stay at Pella, interrupted the exploration, and compelled us to look for a shelter in the caves, which we found for the greater part swarming with hopping creatures. The worst of this rainfall was that our tents soon became soaked, and only, thanks to the formation of the place we camped at, was it possible to keep the floods out of the interior. During the long nights we usually engaged our guides to tell us Arab stories, 'Sâlfy,' We sat around a small fire, which we kept burning in the interior of the tent, with the small coffee-can at the side of it. Ahmeîyid, a clever, lively fellow, would begin with a loud voice but in miserable language to tell the stories of the 'Beni Halâl,' the 'Ghûl' (giants), of the 'Medînet Jôhar, whence the famous jewel, 'Rîshet Jôhar,' had to be brought, and when he was embarrassed as to the continuation of the story he stirred the fire, asked for a cigarette, and brewed some new coffee. This on such occasions must be passed around, and would give him time to take up the thread of his tale again. Meanwhile, one of our party was ordered in turn to watch outside of the tent the horses, which in this wilderness were fastened to each other in a row before the tent door, with no other food but the herbage. This, however, was in no way poor, but of an abundance not met with in other

parts of the country. Our own provisions were of little variety, they consisted in soup, rice, onions, salad made of 'Akkûb' (عقوب) and mutton, for we had bought a ram of a shepherd, who came near our tent. The extremities of the animal were seized upon with eagerness by our guides, and knowing we had a hard day's work before us, they, as soon as awakened in the morning, lit a fire, took the head, feet and bones of the ram, and having cleaned the wool but little off them, they put them into the coal, and greedily devoured the meaty parts—although but half done. As they could not eat up all at once, they carefully hid what was left in a bush near, and in the evening, when we retired to the tent again, they looked for the remains and continued to eat, declaring that this was the best dinner they had had for a long time. I often met with Bedawîn who devoured raw meat with great appetite, or when it had been laid but for a minute on a coal fire. One evening we were surprised by the rapid discharge of guns, and soon after a young wild boar was brought into our tent by a young Arab. It had been killed by some fifteen or twenty Christian Fellahîn, who came from the western part of 'Ajlûn to hunt in the jungles of the Wâdy Jirm el-Môz wild boar and other game, of which the place is swarming. They do not sell the game, but after having hunted a sufficient quantity, they return with it and unite at a large dinner their co-religionists of their vicinity; these

festivals are generally arranged on a holiday. I invited some of their head men to dinner, among them a young schoolmaster of 'Erjân, who in the course of the evening gave me interesting information about 'Ajlûn.

As before said, the springs of Wâdy Jirm el-Môz rise just below the Temple ruin we have described ; from here downwards the wâdy is permanently fed by the springs, while upwards from the dam near the tent the wâdy bed is dry in summer. This portion of the dry wâdy is called Wâdy Kefr Abîl ; it is a steep, winding, and narrow ravine, its slopes are uncultivated, and in their upper part covered with brushwood. Along its northern slope we can follow a road which leads from the Jordan valley to the northern part of the 'Ajlûn district of Elkûra. This is much frequented, and, considering the steep slope it follows, tolerably easy to ride up. It cannot, in the absence of any distinct ancient signs, be considered as the Roman road looked for near Pella, at least not with certainty ; but in favour of its being a Roman road, I must state that from Tabakat Fahil no wâdy of the vicinity ascends so gradually as the Wâdy Kefr Abîl, and if Fahil is really Pella, this and no other road must have been the one to which Eusebius refers, and which led from here to Gerasa.

On the upper part of the southern slopes I observed

caves, but I found them to be natural and hardly ever inhabited.

The springs above-mentioned, forming the Wâdy ej-Jirm, number in all nineteen, not counting very small ones, which gush out in between. I took their temperature with the thermometer, and can state the interesting fact that I found this to be *higher* than that of the stream below, where it was no more influenced by the springs.

The following table will show their temperature, beginning with the first or most eastern spring, and numbering the others as they follow in order down the wâdy. The temperature of the air, while these readings were taken, was 60·8 Fah., which remained unchanged during the time of observations.

TABLE SHOWING THE TEMPERATURE OF THE
SPRINGS AT KH. FAHIL.

Spring.	—	Degrees.
		Fahr.
No. 1	First spring, east left-hand wâdy	77°0
2	Below the above, good spring	77·7
3	" "	75·1
4	" "	75·7
5	" "	75·7
6	" "	76·1
7	" " powerful spring	75·2
8	Powerful spring	75·2

TABLE SHOWING THE TEMPERATURE, &C.—*continued.*

Spring.	—	Degrees.
		Fahr.
No. 9	Powerful spring	75°7
10	" "	75°7
11	" "	73°0
12	" "	75°2
13	" "	75°7
14	Very powerful spring	75°7
15	" "	75°7
16	" "	75°2
17	" "	75°2
18	Gushes btween old masonry, powerful	75°2
19	Spring called 'Ain ej-Jirm, whence the name of the wady; sur- rounded by old masonry, forming a 'Birket' and Bedawin Bath, water power $\frac{1}{4}$ -cubic metre per second	75°7

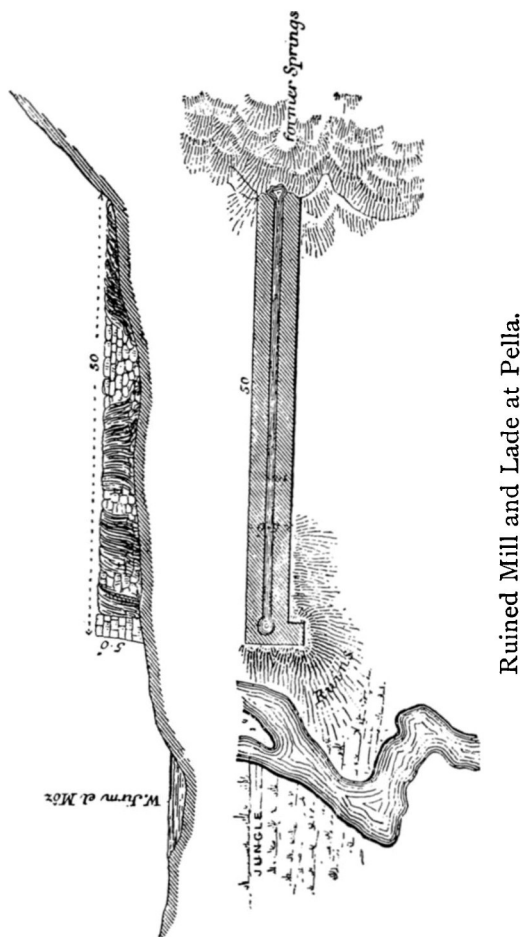
The temperature of the stream 300 yards below the last springs was found to be 68° Fah. The springs Nos. 1 to 13 discharge about $\frac{1}{2}$ -cubic metre per second, 14 to 18 about $\frac{1}{4}$ -cubic metre per second. The springs flow into different directions over *débris* of all kinds, but finally unite somewhere in the jungle of tamarisks, canes, and reeds, called Zôr ej-Jirm. Including the small springs, they together form a rapid stream, 10 to 12 feet across, 8 to 12 inches deep, and give about $1\frac{1}{2}$ -cubic metre of good drinkable water per second. Having discovered that the

springs are of a higher temperature than common, we soon noted what fully explains this occurrence. A little way down the stream, near what may be called the foot of the west end of Khurbet Fahil, I found the ruin of a mill, which, from its construction, must have been built in Muhammedan ages. It extends from the foot of the hill, whence evidently it was fed by a former spring, southwards towards the stream. A small water canal, 1 foot wide, 10 inches deep, is led on the top of a dyke, 50 feet long, to a round opening, and through this to the actual mill now in ruins.

This old masonry is covered on its entire length, especially on its side walls, with the deposit of hot springs, called in technical German 'Quellabsätze,' up to a thickness of 4 inches to 1 foot. The fact that I came across the very same deposit, also found on mill ruins in the Wâdy el-'Arab,* and stated by Dr. Noetling, then my travelling companion, to be the precipitates of thermal springs, which, in the course of a relative short time, had become cool, gives us a right to conclude that also the springs of the Wâdy Jirm el-Môz were once thermal at the era of the last occupation by the Arabs, as the mill ruin mentioned is certainly not older than a few centuries. It may further be noted that the last

* Schumacher, 'The Jaulân,' pages 149-160.

inhabitants of Pella, Arabs, had worked this mill with thermal waters just as the one at El-Hammeh



Ruined Mill and Lade at Pella.

(Jaulân),* is still worked by a hot spring up to this

* Schumacher, 'The Jaulân,' pages 149-160.

date, whence also similar proofs of the formation of such precipitates were gathered. As such remains of hot springs are found throughout the wâdy, especially on its northern slopes, and as I consider the springs observed still show a thermal character, the passage in the Talmud of Jerusalem,* where the city of Pella is mentioned under the name of 'Hamtah,' or hot baths, could now be understood; and this, although the water was found sweet, with the exception of springs Nos. 4 and 5 on the south shore, which had a mineral taste so strong that coffee, cooked from it, was not drinkable.

Near the place where the two streams from the springs unite we find two standing columns 9 feet 5 inches apart, one of them 6 feet the other 5 feet high, with a diameter of 2 feet 3 inches, the original object of which could not be ascertained. Following this stream downwards we find on the southern slopes numerous caves, but whether artificial or not can no more be recognised, for the precipitates of hot springs, which gushed out above them on the slopes, has nearly covered their entrance, and still more their interior, which has the most peculiar aspect of stalactite caves. Long, characteristic, hollow stone pipes hang down from the roof and sides, while the

* According to Mr. Guy le Strange, 'Across the Jordan,' page 273.

exterior portions shows the compact precipitates the same as those of El-Hammeh. Notwithstanding this



Anchorite Caves. From a Photograph.

present altered appearance, I believe that they, as well

well preserved. The above sketch illustrates the cave, which, entering by a door of 2 feet 10 inches wide, and yet 5 feet high, shows us a rock-cut chamber of rectangular shape, and a ceiling cut in the shape of a cross vault, with two pillars on the southern and northern walls. Next to the pillars, a little above the floor, we find a passage or small tunnel (A) of a height of 4 feet and a width of 2 feet, which leads upwards through the limestone rock, for a length of 10 feet, to a rock precipice in the exterior. In the northern wall we also discover a passage (B) 2 feet 6 inches by 2 feet, which also leads to a rock cliff, both being very difficult of access. The cave interior and the tunnels are carefully worked. The bearing of the main axis is north, 55° west—the entire room measuring 13 feet by 11 feet. It may be accepted as beyond doubt that we here have a cave, once inhabited by those Christian anchorites who, in the beginning of Christian era and during the Jewish wars, found a refuge at Pella.* The flooring, consisting of earth and remains of charcoal, as well as the plan of the whole, has no sepulchral character, but rather that of a habitation; the passages being used to secure air and escape in case of a persecution, for these small caves, if their door entrance was carefully

* 'Eusebius, H. E.' III., 5; according to Robinson, 'Bibl. Res.' VII.

shut, were hardly visible from below, and the passages still less. The entire northern slope is honey-combed with such caves, but, to my regret, they were, for their greater part, either not accessible or choked by precipitates or by the crumbling rock. Below the cave described the valley attains its maximum width of about 300 yards, through which the river wends its way in several branches through a thick jungle of tamarisks, and unites again at a rocky projection of the northern slopes, where the shape of the wâdy suddenly assumes the character of a narrow ravine, the stream here forming a cataract, also surrounded by thickly-grown jungles of cane, which made an exploration impossible. Following the stream, and turning around the precipice mentioned, we find the upper parts of the slopes became nearly vertical, and pierced with numerous natural and artificial caves worked in the soft limestone cliff. We climbed over the rubbish, which was piled up in large masses at the foot of the slopes, a product of the rocks bordering the plateau, which crumble by the influence of the weather, and going forwards on hands and feet up the steep cliffs, we finally arrived at one of the caves, which was situated 80 feet above the stream. (*See illustration of precipice described.*) We entered the cave, which had an entrance 5 feet high and 5 feet wide, with no signs of masonry, then stepped down a step 2 feet high, and followed a rock-

cut tunnel of 60 feet length running into the interior



View of Precipice with Anchorite Caves. From a Photograph.

of the mountain, until it became so narrow that it was impossible to go any farther. The floor

of this passage was filled up to 1 foot of thickness with manure, and the remains of countless beetles ; the roofing showed swarms of bats clinging to the bare rock, while here and there bones of animals were lying about ; the whole producing a fearful smell, which would have been unsupportable if a draught of fresh cool air had not met us coming from the interior of the mountain, which was so strong that it blew out our lights. From the entrance of the tunnel a mass of precipitates, somewhat different to those of the mill ruins, could be followed down the slope to the wâdy bed. We climbed on hands and feet along the precipice, and at distances of 20, 50, and more yards between, we arrived at a second, thîrd, fourth, and fifth entrance of rock-cut tunnels, which could all be followed to a certain distance into the interior of the cliff, but which then became too narrow for further exploration, being filled up by mud and parts of the mountain conglomerate. In all of these a draught of fresh air could be felt. Remarkable is the fact that the bearing of these tunnels proved that they all led to a certain point in the interior of the mountain, and, as I afterwards found on the map, would nearly meet at the point where the great church described below is built on the plateau. The fact that a draught of air was felt in each of the tunnels would lead to the supposition that the

tunnels joined and led to a room which was in connection with the air, and so might have been also places of refuge, or at least passages to such, in the interior of the mountain. Although I carefully searched on the plateau for a sign of entrance which might lead to such a subterranean refuge, I must add that all efforts were in vain, unless it be the church ruin, which covers such an entrance. The tunnels might have been hollowed by water streams, but then comes the question, Why were steps found in the interior of the channels, the entrance therefore *higher* than the interior? and one must observe that the tunnels rather have the appearance of being rock-hewn, though showing no masonry work. It would require special excavation work to make it possible for anybody to proceed further into the interior than we were able to go.

Taking still a western course downwards, we soon find, on the northern shore, 30 feet above the stream, another mill ruin, which was fed by a former spring on the slope. Here the formation of the rock seems an alluvial conglomerate which rapidly crumbles. While, as we have seen, the springs on the northern slopes have dried up, we see the southern slopes of the lower wâdy flourishing in an abundant growth and covered up to half of their height with jungles of 'Kusseib,' or cane; and their evergreen appearance reconciles the explorer somewhat to the barrenness

and desert-like drought in which the neighbouring district is clothed at the dry time of the year. If the northern slopes were once enriched with as numerous springs as the southern ones, the Wâdy ej-Jirm must have been a much greater stream, and the quotation of Pliny (when counting up the cities of the Decapolis), where he speaks of Pella as 'abundant in water,'* can be understood. Just below the Râs Jirm el-Môz, near a round-topped hill bordering the south of the stream, but on the north shore, we find a small spring, 'Ain et-Tabakat, near which is an old subterranean vault, one yard wide, covered with precipitates, and something like a mill lade. The slopes above are also covered with precipitates of springs, which once must have been very numerous at this place.

We had, by this, nearly reached the end of the ravine, where it opens into the Ghôr, at a distance of about $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles from the first eastern spring of the wâdy. We now climbed up the northern slopes, which here are easily accessible, and, arriving at the plateau above, we found ourselves within the Necropolis of the ancient site. It is a wide field, spread with sarcophagi of common work, most of them being 7 feet 6 inches long, 2 feet 10 inches high, 3 feet 1 inch wide on the exterior. The other measurements can

* Plin. H. N., V., 16 (18); Robinson B. R. VII.

be seen from the annexed sketch. Their covers were fitted into the sarcophagus by a grooving, and a stone pillow was worked into the interior. A number of the sarcophagi lie in rows running from east to west, so that the pillow part came to lie in the west; but there are also specimens which lie facing other points, and with the pillow in the east. The stone material (limestone) was brought in an unfinished state to the Necropolis, and, apparently, worked out on the place of burial. I also found columns and bases worked to them of a very primitive character lying about among the sarcophagi; some of the latter showed bosses on their outsides, as if ornaments were to be worked on them, but no such could be discovered.

There were also two mausoleums found—one of them a small rectangular building, 13 feet long from east to west, and 8 feet wide, with walls 1 foot thick, but entirely destroyed. Somewhat south, near the church, a second mausoleum of larger dimensions showed very large carefully hewn stones, and parts of a wall enclosing some sarcophagi, but although I turned over the lintel of its former square door, and other fragments, with a crowbar, I could not discover any sign or inscription.

At the eastern end of this part of the plateau, near the street which leads across the plateau down to the stream, we find the ruins of a great Christian Basilica. Irby and Mangles, who visited Fahil on

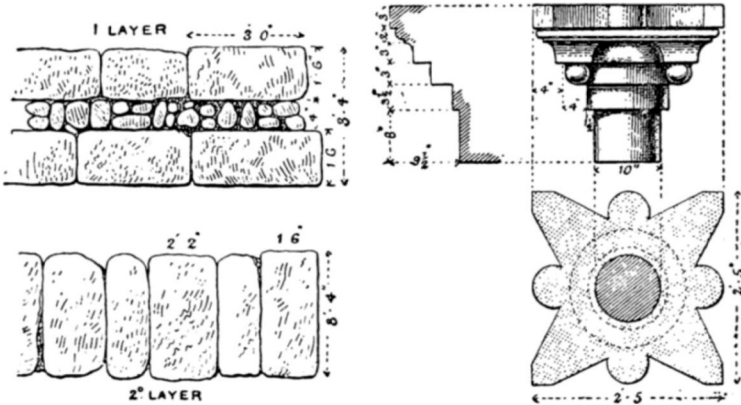
the 12th of March, 1818, write, in their 'Travels,' while they were coming from the west, of 'the ruins of a rectangular building, one side of it being round, and which seemed to have been circumferenced by columns,'* and may therefore have been the first discoverers of this building. Guérin† speaks of a ruin of a Christian Basilica, which he found measuring 42 paces from west to east, and 27 feet from north to south, with three naves corresponding with three apses, and which he believes to be 'contemporary with the first centuries of the Church.' He also mentions a pavement of mosaic.

The annexed plan will show that the above statements are not in every way exact. Coming from the west, we step over a strong wall, surrounding a front court of 138 feet 4 inches length and 74 feet 3 inches width, through a gate 8 feet 7 inches wide, into the court. Stepping over scattered ruins of columns and capitals, four of which seem still in their original place, although fallen, and proceeding eastward, we arrive at a sort of cross nave, or vestibule, 10 feet wide, that is to say, of the same width as the church, and from this we enter the actual Basilica. It is of a rectangular plan, its major axis bearing north, 95° east. Its length is 124 feet 9 inches from the west to the concave end of the middle apse,

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 304, 305 ; Rob., *Bill. Res.* VII.

† '*Descript. de la Palestine*,' III part, tome I, page 290.

this room forbids certainty in this respect. The northern room of 16 feet 3 inches width, which may have been a sort of vestibule. To the south of



Capital and Column in the Basilica.

the Basilica there is an additional square building of the same length, and 23 feet 4 inches width, built on, and also south of this a second building of 17 feet 8 inches width, with an apse in the east. North of the Basilica we find a large yard in addition to the fore-court we have described; this yard surrounded the church on the north and east, but its walls are lost where it approaches to the road. East of the middle apse we find two columns, perhaps *in situ*; others lie about in disorder. The main wall generally has a width of 4 feet 6 inches, the outline walls have 3 feet and 3 feet 4 inches width, the separation walls 3 feet. The whole building has fallen

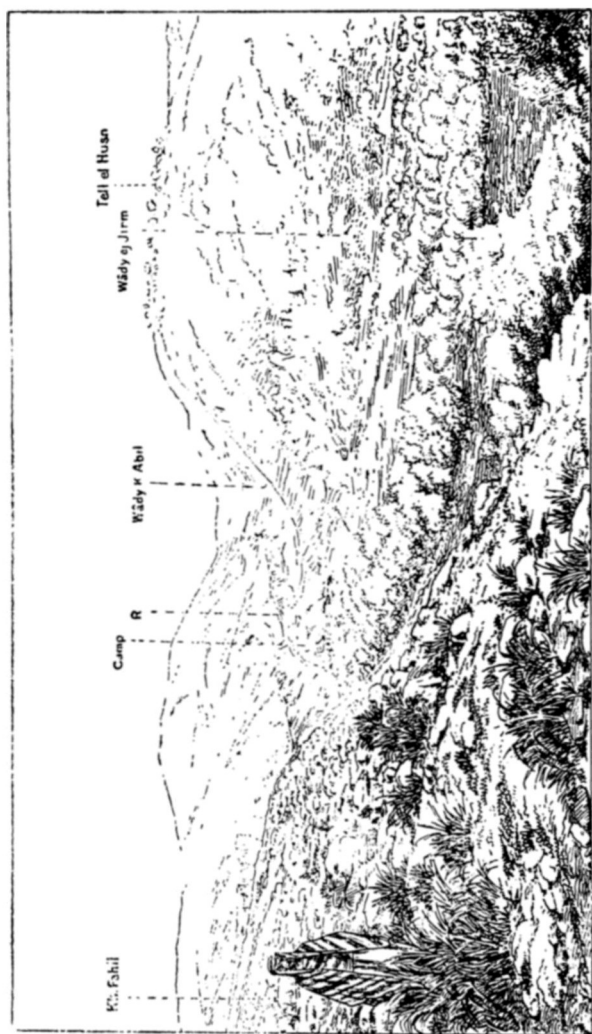
entirely into ruins, only the south wall of the Basilica still showing some layers built above each other ; the wall, 3 feet 4 inches thick, shows mighty hewn blocks, 3 feet 4 inches long, 2 feet wide, and up to 3 feet thick, built together as sketched. Although I could not discover any mortar between the joints, I nevertheless judge from the construction of the first layer (*see* sketch) that a mortar material must have been used. The columns, very much defaced, have a diameter of 2 feet 1 inch ; the capitals lying about were Corinthian, the bases Attic. Some of the top cornices, which once crowned the Basilica, showed the leaf ornament as sketched. Of peculiar interest may also be the capitals, which were attached to smaller columns, only of 10 inches diameter (*see* sketch), and which have a very uncommon form. No other details of the church are definable, not even the doors, with the exception of the western gate, which exactly corresponds with the axis of the Basilica, and a northern door, leading into the front court ; there may have also been a door in the west of the Basilica. In the northern wall of the Basilica we also find traces of an opening which leads into a subterranean ruin, situate in the large yard of the north, close by the church. We could see nothing more than a pit, 33 feet long, 16 feet 6 inches wide, and several feet deep, partly surrounded by masonry. Masses of fallen fragments lie in this

depression, which must have been the entrance to some subterranean room below the Basilica, very probably a place of refuge. This room, I have little doubt, must have stood in connection with the channels just described, and it would be of great importance to carry out excavations here, which might lead to very interesting results. It should be stated that the plan of a Basilica with three naves in the middle, two to the south, and one to the north, is a composition which has no example in the early buildings of the Christian era. It is a question whether the present ruins did not form part of a Roman Basilica previous to the Christian era, which was later transformed into a Christian meeting place, or whether what we here see is not part of a crusading work added to a previous Christian church. This question which could not be solved unless the *débris* were moved away, and the disposition of the whole clearly seen, a work which, as it might bring to light most valuable facts as to the earliest Christian architecture, would give us at the same time an exact plan of an interesting monument at one of the places with which Christianity is closely connected.

The fact that *three* apses are placed here gives me the impression that the Basilica, at least the middle part, was built many centuries after the Christians fled from Jerusalem.

Leaving the Basilica we cross the street before-

mentioned, and at a distance of merely 100 yards we arrive at the ruined walls of Khurbet Fahil. From



View of Wady and Tell el-Husn, looking East. From a Photograph.

this point I have taken a view up the Wady ej-Jirm,

showing the Tell el-Husn, and the conjectural Roman road (R) leading to the 'Ajlûn highlands. As far as can be discovered, Khurbet Fahil was surrounded by a strong wall, bordering the plateau on which this ancient site is situated.

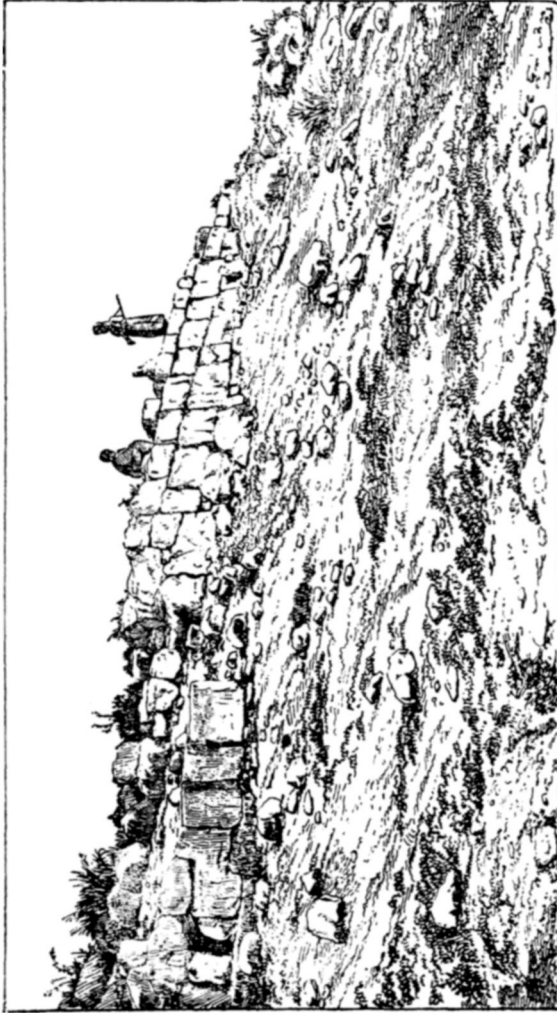
The altitude of the main part of this ruin is 262 feet (below the Mediterranean), and forms a spot which formerly must have been on a level with the remaining plateau. In the west it gradually rises 15 or 20 feet above the plain, in the north its artificial slopes are very steep and end in a valley, which partly must have been formed by throwing up these very slopes; in the east its slopes are also steep, but of little height, while its southern part falls abruptly down into the Wâdy Jirm el-Môz. The plateau thus bordered is 300 yards from east to west, and about 170 yards across. The ruin itself consists of innumerable heaps of building stones, here and there placed together to form walls of huts, which must have been destroyed not more than a century ago, since Irby and Mangles in 1818 speak of the ruins of a rather new village,* and as also proved by the careless construction. Some of the ruins were recently rebuilt into 'Sîar,' or sheep folds, occupied by shepherds, who camp occasionally here at the evergreen pastures of the wâdy

* 'Travels,' pages 304, 305.

when the Ghôr and vicinity is parched. This recent transformation of an ancient site into modern Arab dwellings must be the cause that we cannot find any traces of ancient monuments, and but very few fragments of columns, capitals, and few cornices. The soil, however, is covered by an immense mass of hewn building stones, which accumulate in the south-eastern part of the ruin, proving that here must have stood some building of importance. Notwithstanding the absence of ornamental remains, Khurbet Fahil must have formed the actual ancient city. Strolling down its southern slopes, which have a maximum height of a few hundred feet, I discovered that they were formerly formed into terraces, each of which showed traces of a wall, which ran round the slope, numbering in all ten different walls built in regular distances from the top down to the foot of the slope. The upper wall, bordering the plateau, has a width of 4 feet 8 inches, built in layers of 1 foot 2 inches to 2 feet in height, composed of mighty hewn limestone blocks, which evidently had no mortar to combine them. This wall, which is shown in the annexed wood-cut, was built so as to leave settles of 4 inches at every third layer. The joints were vertical, but often broken.

One of the walls half way up the southern slope shows remains of arcades of a width of 2 feet $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches with arches, which are horse-shoe, and there-

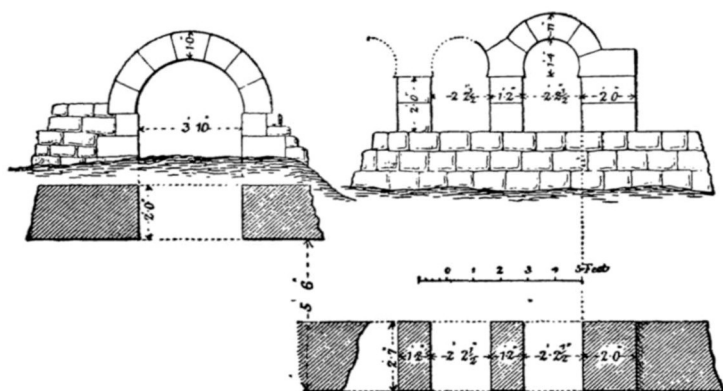
fore were probably erected in Muhammedan ages ; they have pillars of 1 foot 2 inches and 2 feet



Southern Wall of Kh. Fahil. From a Photograph.

between. Only 5 feet 6 inches further up the slope

we find remains of another wall, which also shows arcades, 3 feet 10 inches wide. The first wall is 2 feet 7 inches, the second one 2 feet thick. It seems to me as if all of the terrace walls were



Walls with Arcades on Southern Slopes of Kh. Fahil.

built in arcades to spare building material. Now and then a wall runs at right angles straight down the slope, crossing the walls above-mentioned, for the purpose of obtaining a more solid masonry.

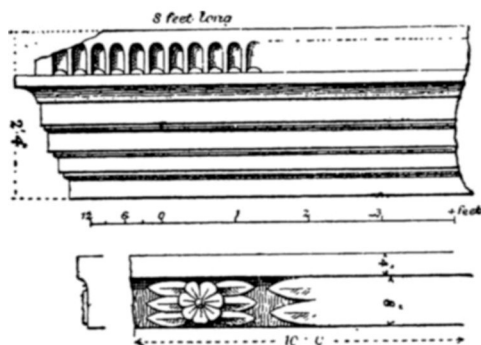
To the north and north-east of Khurbet Fahil, with a small valley in between, the small hills, Tulûl et Tabakât, are scattered about, without any distinct signs of human art. Descending the slope and arriving at our camping place again, we could follow the line of a wall, which runs from the Temple ruin described, along the northern slope up the wâdy.

Higher up, the slope here becoming more abrupt, are scattered ruins, masses of building stones, and fragments of columns, and now and then a cave. The caves seemed to be artificial, but the soft rock falling so quickly to decay conceals the true character. The wall of the slope ends at a sort of dam, which was built across the wâdy as if to connect the Tell el-Husn with the opposite side. The dam is well masoned, and must have supported, in ancient times, a bridge, which the winter stream of the upper part of the wâdy has totally destroyed.

Walking still beyond the bridge up the steep slopes of the wâdy, which now has the name of Wâdy Kefr Abîl, and after crossing two small side wâdies, we finally arrive high up the slope, at the ruins of a rectangular building 53 feet from east to west, and 36 feet across, the interior of which is filled with prostrate columns of 21 inches diameter, and heaps of building stones and Corinthian capitals. A large and deep cemented cistern was found aside of it. The view from this elevated point down the wâdy was a beautiful and a commanding one.

On the buttons of one of the Corinthian capitals I found a cross, carefully worked. To judge from the most careful work with which building stones, as well as the architectural remains of cornices and lintel ornaments (up to 10 feet long) sketched

below, were done, together with the unusual number of finely worked columns, superior to all others which have been found on this site, it would seem likely that



Ornament of Temple Ruin (Lintel).

this ruin must have been a temple, probably rebuilt by Crusaders. The ornament on the upper part of the cornice (Roman pipes) suggests Roman work.

Following the before-mentioned bridge, or dam, we approach the Tell el-Husn, the slopes of which show remains of walls running around the entire hill, masoned with good mortar. We follow a path leading up from the wâdy, round the eastern end of the Tell, and thus climb up its eastern slopes, which, for the purposes of attack, is the only accessible side. Having arrived at the top of the Tell, we find ourselves on a small plateau of a maximum length of 430 feet from east to west, and little less than 300 feet maximum width, surrounded by a wall of little strength, measuring 2 feet 6 inches in height, and 3 feet in width.

The plateau has an altitude of 93 feet (below the Mediterranean), or 169 feet above Khirbet Fahil, or more than 270 feet above Wâdy ej-Jirm, and is covered with scattered ruins, building stones, and traces of walls. The western culminating point is occupied by a mass of stones and strong rectangular walls, probably a fortress; several cisterns now covered up are found near its borders. The slopes of this hill are very steep, its northern and southern parts falling abruptly off into wâdies, while its western part, after an inaccessible upper cliff, gradually extends towards the Wâdy el-Jirm; its eastern slope, although bordered by a steep upper part, is connected with the high mountains by a narrow neck. Along each of its slopes we find terraces with walls built on them. The Tell el-Husn, which was hitherto not mentioned by any traveller, must have formed the naturally protected Acropolis of Fahil, or Pella. The view, down the Wâdy ej-Jirm, commanding the Tabakât, the Jordan valley, and across that over Beisân, the mountains of Nablus, Tabor, Dahy, and the mountains bordering the Sea of Galilee, as well as the scenery southwards towards the Dead Sea, is superior to any sight I have seen across the Jordan; and the position to which it owes this scenery justifies the more the acceptance of its having been an important place of foregone ages.

Eastward the view is less imposing, as the high-

lands of 'Ajlûn rise 1,000 and some hundred feet higher.



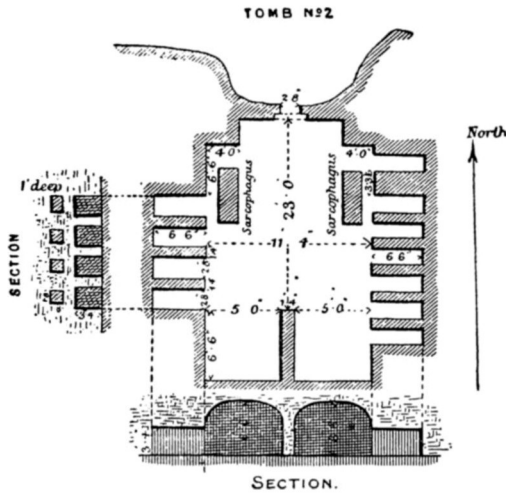
View from Tell el-Husn looking West. From a Photograph.

We crawled on hands and feet down the southern slope

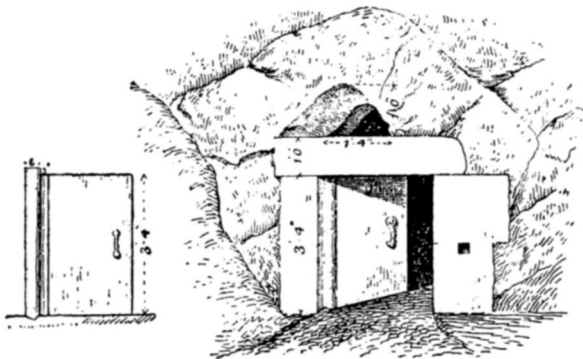
of the Tell, over terraces and walls, of which merely the foundations were to be seen, the other masonry having been washed down to the bottom by the rain, and accumulated there, or carried off by the wâdy. Half-way down the height we passed a remarkably large rock, which projected out of the hill side, and which was covered with precipitates of springs. The tradition of this spot is that, long before, a princess, Bint el-Ghatrif (غطريف), brought the spring of Wâdy ej-Jirm up to the plateau of Tell el-Husn, and that this spring was afterwards led down the slope to this rock to work a mill. Although this tale has little credibility, it is nevertheless a fact that either the Acropolis possessed a spring, or was supplied from a distant one (but certainly not from the wâdy), the water of which was led over this rock; the precipitates can be followed down the slope. At the foot of the Tell, especially in the south-west, we recognised scattered ruins of buildings. Crossing a small wâdy bed, and proceeding southwards to a little plain, we arrived at a small hill, at the northern foot of which a column is still standing, while others are spread about among building remains. The mound itself is artificial, thrown up over a cave, or several caves, called Mugharat el-Halas, حلس, the western and eastern entrances of which, as well as other parts, are fallen in; its doors were formed by carefully hewn stones, and shut by a stone gate. An

exploration in its present state was impossible. We proceeded eastwards, over a field covered with *débris* and sarcophagi, most of which were broken and lying about in disorder, and arrived at the hills which border the small plain. We found about a third way up the slopes a number of caves of sepulchral character. The first of these caves contained, as seen from the plan, five kokim in the northern and five kokim in the southern wall, and two loculi in the eastern wall, while near the entrance, in a sort of fore-room, three other kokim are worked in the southern wall. A widened entrance of 13 feet is cut into the rock, forming a vestibule for the actual gate, which, 4 feet 7 inches high, and 3 feet 7 inches wide, and showing no masonry, leads into the fore-room mentioned, and through a second gateway of 9 feet 4 inches in width, into the sepulchral chamber, which measures 22 feet 6 inches by 14 feet 8 inches; the whole disposition thus having the character of a cross. The kokim are each 6 feet 6 inches long, 2 feet 6 inches wide, and 2 feet 10 inches high, leaving walls 2 feet 2 inches wide between; the loculi are 8 feet 2 inches long and 6 feet 6 inches wide, and 3 feet 4 inches high with a rounded upper part. The height of the cave, from floor to ceiling, is 5 feet 11 inches; the whole is rectangular and carefully worked out of a very soft limestone rock, showing no masonry whatever. The major

axis is N.W. Cave No. 2 (*see plan*) shows an entrance carefully bordered by hewn stones 2 feet 8 inches wide, and a stone gate (still perfect),



Cave or Tomb, No. 2.

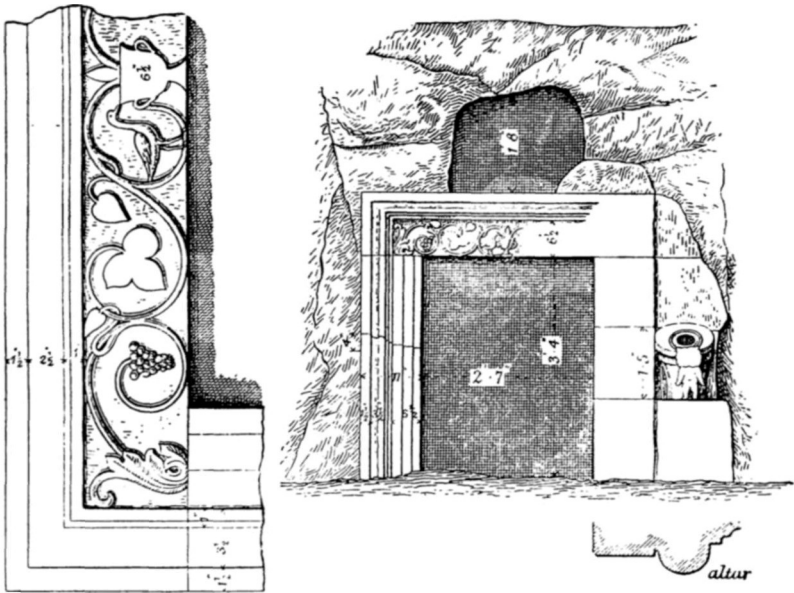


Doorway of No. 2.

which leads immediately into the sepulchral room.

Here we find, on the east, seven kokim, four on the west, and two loculi on the south, leaving a central room 23 feet by 11 feet 4 inches. The other dimensions are seen from the plan. Above the kokim we find small holes, 1 foot 8 inches by 1 foot 8 inches, and 1 foot deep, which may have served for lamps. Near the entrance two sarcophagi of basalt are placed, with covers of rough work. The major axis is N. ; the whole is rock-hewn but fallen to decay. Cave No. 3 shows us a room of 23 feet by 13 feet, with five kokim in the northern and eight in the southern and western walls, with an unfinished loculus on the east. Also here we find the holes before-mentioned above the graves, but 2 feet in height, 1 foot 6 inches in width, and 2 feet in depth. The height of the cave is 5 feet 6 inches. Its major axis shows exactly W. ; in the south-eastern corner we find a mill-stone. The entrance of this cave is widened before the door is reached, which has 2 feet 7 inches width, and which shows a fine ornamentation on its lintel, with a cornice all round (*see sketch*). Above the doorway there is an opening 1 foot 8 inches high, cut into the rock. To the right hand of the door, worked out of one of its bordering stones, there is apparently a small altar, 1 foot 5 inches high, with a human figure, the head of which is unfortunately broken. The top of this altar shows a circular hole, probably destined for libations to the dead. This

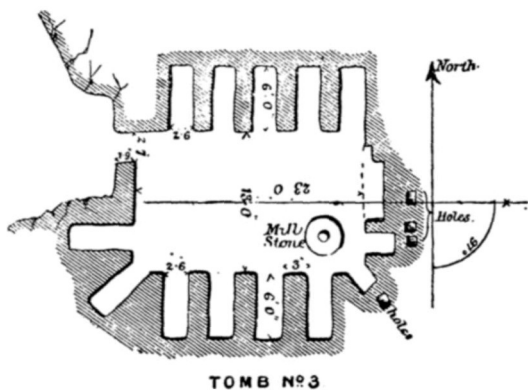
doorway, which is on a line with the northern wall of the cave, shows hinge-holes of a stone gate, which has



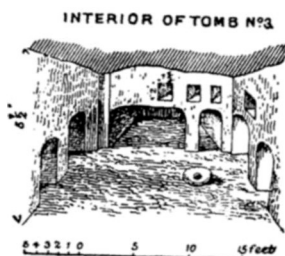
Entrance to Tomb or Cave No. 3.

disappeared. Next to this cave we find another, with four small kokim on the north, and two loculi on the south, but with no other signs of interest. Cave No. 4 can be entered by a western flight of stairs and a rock-hewn door of 4 feet by 2 feet 6 inches, showing an unfinished interior of 18 feet by 12 feet, with a sarcophagus lying on the east of the sepulchral room ; this sarcophagus is of limestone ; its appearance is given in the sketch. Next to this is a cave with a

stone gate, but the entrance which has fallen in makes an exploration impossible. Cave No. 5 shows an en-



Tomb or Cave, No. 3.



trance which is masoned with small building stones to support the very soft and crumbling rock. Within a room of 25 feet by 16 feet shows six kokim on its northern and five on its southern wall ; from here an almost closed opening leads into an unfinished adjacent eastern room of 20 feet by 12 feet, showing seven unfinished kokim ; this cave seems to have been plastered, its major axis points towards the west. In

the roof of this cave I discovered a plate of burnt pottery, 1 foot square and 2 inches thick; after removing it from the rock, I found it to cover the part of a grave, which still contained fragments of human bones, nearly fallen to dust. I conclude that this grave is much older than the grave below, as it must have been dug before the cave was finished. No signs on the surface of the earth betrayed the existence of the burial place.

The caves found along the slopes amount in all to fifteen, all being of the character just described; most of them are temporarily occupied by herds, and the interiors of all of them, without exception, swarm with fleas so that we were only able to remain a minute while exploring, and then rush out to gain fresh air. We soon found it best to deprive ourselves of our clothes, and to continue exploration in a Paradise-like costume, by which means we got quickly rid of our enemies.

The above is all that was found in or near Khurbet Fahil. The southern vicinity of the site has little importance; the hills, which are marked on the map, the Tell Abu N'eir, the Tell Abu Allûba, show no signs that they were ever occupied. In the Ghôr below the Tabakât there are, it is said, scattered ruins and trees, called Benât Yâkûb; but my official duty called me back to the Liva, without being able to explore them.

What has been described above may give us the certainty that Tabakât Fahil, with its Khurbet, and the Tell el-Husn, were places of very considerable importance; but, in the absence of inscriptions, we are not yet justified in stating without doubt that Fahil is identical with Pella. Renowned authorities have brought forward evidences in favour and dis-favour of this identification. The name of Pella is evidently lost, but that of the more ancient Butis (Steph. Byz., Πέλλα πόλις κοίλης Συρίας ἡ Βούτις λεγομένη) seems to be preserved in the present Beit Idîs, a village on the western borders of the 'Ajlûn, the slopes of which run down to the Tell el-Husn; further, also, the slopes from this Tell upwards to the east are called Hîsh Beit Idîs. In the evidence brought together in favour of its being Pella of the Decapolis, (among which especially that of Robinson* must be named, who first identified this site, and that of Guérin,†) it seems to me that the facts noted by Guy le Strange‡ deserve attention. According to him, Yakût, in his 'Geographical Encyclopædia,' states that 'the battle of Fihl, which took place within the year of the capitulation of Damascus, is likewise known under the appellation of the Day of Beisân.' This is of

* 'Bibl. Res.' VII.

† 'Descript. de la Palest.,' III. partie, p. 288.

‡ 'A ride through 'Ajlûn and the Belka' in 'Across the Jordan,' p. 272, ff.

great value for this identification, for Beisân lies just opposite Fahil, on the other side of the Ghôr ; and thus the battle fought could be named after one of these places as well as the other, a fact which could not be brought into correspondence with the sites which, proposed by others, as Eli Smith, or Seetzen,* the latter (or at least his commentators) taking Sûf in 'Ajlûn for Pella.

Besides Fahil, there is no place in the neighbourhood which shows such important ruins, sepulchral and inhabited caves, abundance of water, &c., and no name of a similar sound with Pella was discovered, if it is not Khurbet Abu Felâh (فلاح), a small ruin mentioned to me, which lies in the interior of 'Ajlûn, and which I hope to visit soon.

We left Khirbet Fahil while blessed with a heavy rain, and hearing that near a certain Tell Hamma, which was pointed out to me from the top of Tell el-Husn, a hot spring was to be found, I proceeded northwards and turned into the deep ravine, which runs north of the Tabakât into the Ghôr. The road up this wâdy—if it can be called a road—leads along slippery slopes, which in their upper part are bordered by high perpendicular crumbling rocks, and which near the little stream show a formation of gray clay, down which our horses continually slipped. After

* 'Reisen durch Palästina, &c.,' (Kruse), vol. IV., p. 198, ff.

riding about a mile up the wâdy the road became no more possible, we therefore forded the stream called Seil el-Hammeh, and, picking our way through jungles of cane and brush, we finally arrived at the hot spring called Hammet Abu Dâbly. This thermal spring gushes out of the wâdy bed, forming a small natural basin, from which a little stream of $\frac{1}{2}$ -cubic foot per second flows off; the water is sulphurous, but drinkable like that of Hammeh, near Umm Keis. I found its temperature to be 104° Fah., at a temperature of the air of 68°.

The bushes which surround the basin are covered with bits of rags of all colours, offerings by women, who, in hope of children, use this bath, to which they attribute help, as well as to that of the Northern Hammeh. The ravine from this spring eastwards suddenly widens, forming a lovely valley. To the north of Hammeh, close to the spring, we find the ruins of a small rectangular building, which, to judge from its mighty, carefully hewn blocks, is of Roman origin; these blocks measure up to 4 feet length by 2 feet height and 2 feet width. This ruin seems rather too small for a bath, but may have been a watch-tower to protect the thermal spring. The whole vicinity is pervaded by a strong sulphurous smell; and 80 yards further up we arrive at a second small spring, which, nearly dried up, is also of thermal

character. Many others of less importance lie along the wâdy bed.* Over the second spring a natural bridge, hewn out of the soft limestone rock, spans across the wâdy, which from here upwards has no water in summer. This bridge is cut through the rock in a length of 28 paces, it has a width of 14 paces, and the arch is 10 feet to 14 feet high. The annexed sketch will illustrate the grandeur of the appearance of this mighty rock, and its passage below, which in ancient times must have been widened by human art to its present state. We rode up a path north of this bridge, which, by several windings, brought us up to the top of the rock plateau. We heard that this bridge forms a welcome passage in winter, when the deep wâdy otherwise would be nearly unfordable. We proceeded on the path chosen, south-eastwards up to Tell Hamma, close by, which I found to be a hill of a regular shape, with a plateau on its top, attaining to an altitude of 140 feet above the Mediterranean. I had no time to explore the Tell more thoroughly, and can only state the presence of scattered ruins, artificial slopes, and some caves.

On our way back to the Ghôr we no longer followed the wâdy bed, but found a more practicable road above its southern borders, along which path

* I also discovered precipitates of hot springs.



View of natural Rock Bridge. From a pencil sketch.

we had a fine view down the ravine. The picturesque formation of long stretched, steep ranges of hills, is curiously cut into by the stream and the rain, which leave after every winter distinct signs of their destructive character on the crumbling white rock.

We reached the Ghôr at the place where the Seil Hammeh enters it, at 11.30 forenoon, and riding northwards came, at 12.0, to a ruin called Merkà, situated close to the Wâdy Abu Ziâd, with a lively stream overgrown by Kusseib. The ruin, situated on a small elevation shows nothing but scattered building stones. The mound is surrounded by a lovely valley, bordered on the north by the Jebel Skeiyin, and on the south by a hill called Umm ed-Dubâr. We proceeded 400 yards more, and then struck a road leading up to a village called 'Arâk Abu Rijdân. This village, which contains about thirty huts, is situated on a high rocky mountain top, straight above the Ghôr, and has the appearance of a small fortress. Several springs on its slope, and the large Wâdy es Siklâb, which carries a large amount of water, supply the village with water. Before crossing the lively stream of Wâdy es-Siklâb, we passed a stony field called Ibseily, opposite which, on the north bank of the stream, there were very ancient ruins of a mill, and other scattered building stones, called El Kala'ât. East of this close to the

road, there are bare, large black rocks, called Hajâr es-Sûk, close to which, in ancient times, a market used to be held ; 200 yards to the west rises Tell Arbâin, mentioned before. To the north, the Wâdy es-Siklâb, with its fertile valley, is bordered by the rocky hill Tell el-'Ezziyeh, on the other side of which we cross the large Wâdy et-Taîyibeh, with its rapid powerful stream ; and a few hundred yards beyond, the ruin Wakkâs is reached. The remains consist of a large mill ruin, once carefully built, to the north of which there are forty winter huts, built of stone and mud, the property of the village of et-Taîyibeh.* Among the huts there is an old Muhammedan Wely of Sheikh Wakkâs, shaded by Sidr trees. Still a few hundred yards northwards we come to the Wâdy Mendâh (*see* map of 'Ajlûn, Schumacher) ; then to a path leading up the slopes to et-Taîyibeh, and a few minutes beyond to a wâdy, which in its upper part, where it has water, is named Wâdy el-Kusseib, while its dry part below the road is called Wâdy el-Husa. Down in the Jordan valley, near where the Wâdy el-Bîreh of western Palestine joins the Jordan, there is a small ruin and hill, called Tell Abu 'l-Kamel ; and 1,500 yards to the north of Wâdy el-Kusseib we arrive at Tell Seirawân and Freikâ, places mentioned in my map and account of 'Ajlûn. Near Khurbet es-Sâkhni (*see* same map) there is a dam, evidently artificial, of

* See Schumacher, 'Within the Decapolis.'

earth projecting from the slopes, across part of the Ghôr, which is called el-Midras (wall). I explored Khurbet es-Sâkhni, near Ma'âd, again, and found some caves along the Ghôr which have a sepulchral character; but the conglomerate rock is so rapidly falling to decay, that nothing could be planned except a more or less irregular door, a rock-hewn interior of 10 feet by 10 feet, and some kokim.

In the earlier part of the afternoon we were able to pitch our tent at Esh-Shûni again. Next morning we baksheeshed our highwaymen-guides with presents and money. I asked what they intended to do with the money; 'Nishtery hala lil beit' ('We will buy some sweetmeat for our home'), they replied. As I thought that they would get too much of it if they spent the money in this way, I enquired further, and received the answer, 'Nishtery tshîs kuttein lil bâa' ('We will buy a sack of dried figs and sell it'). I tried to convince them that they ought to save up the money for a time of want, but, evidently astonished, they replied, 'Ya! bidna nakhawwy nûh?' ('Alas! shall we obtain the age of Noah?')

After receiving this philosophical reply we mounted again, and took our way back to Tiberias.

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