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THE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS.

By Captain A. E. HAYNES, R.E.

Introductory.—Some ten years have passed away since the pages of the Palestine Exploration Fund *Quarterly Statements* contained anything of importance on the subject of the Exodus, and those ten years have been the most favourable period for the accumulation of knowledge on one of the most interesting periods of Israel's history. It is a remarkable fact that, notwithstanding our position in Egypt, and the ease whereby that position could have been utilised during the past ten years for recording once and for all the topography of the desert of the Wanderings, little or nothing has been done in that direction ; and yet all the while many of the most remarkable intellects of our own and of other countries have been concentrated on the elucidation of the ancient history of the Jews, of which history the story of the Exodus forms a most important part. It is the purpose of this paper to place before the reader the present position of this subject.

Geographical.—It may be first necessary to epitomise our geographical and topographical knowledge of the area involved. This area is the country between the Isthmus of Suez and the Isthmus of Akaba. We hear so much of the former that the latter escapes general notice. The former is about 70 miles wide, the latter 125 miles. As the former is the natural boundary of Africa, so the latter is the natural boundary of Asia ; and between the two lies the desert of Arabia Petræa. This district, situated between the opposing continents — Asia and Africa — is one whereon their boundaries, as at the present time, have never arrived at exact definition. As preponderance of political power fell alternately to Asia and Africa, the common boundary of the two continents coincided for the time being with that isthmus which forms the natural boundary of the temporarily weaker side. This "Tom Tiddler's ground" offered itself, therefore, naturally as a suitable and temporary refuge for the clans of Israel while they prepared, after the Exodus from Egypt, for their subsequent descent upon Palestine. This district is some 150 to 200 miles across, and 250 miles from the Mediterranean Sea to the southern extremity of the peninsula.

Considering the western boundary of this district first, we find that the Isthmus of Suez consists of two portions : the northern portion, from Ismailia and Wady Tumeilat northward to the Mediterranean Sea, is a portion of Egypt Proper ; the remaining portion to the south is desert. This distinction is of particular importance, for as Egypt in ancient times consisted of that country irrigated by the Nile, the boundaries of which were the surrounding deserts, so all roads into Egypt made straight for this cultivated area at its nearest point, consistent with there being

sufficient watering-places on the direct route through the surrounding desert. Thus when we speak of three ancient roads entering Egypt from Asia—the coast road or “the way of the Philistines,” the “way of Shur” from the Negeb to Egypt, and the Hajj road or “the way of the wilderness towards the Red Sea”—we refer to roads making for the narrow eastern frontier of cultivated Egypt, a frontier about 30 or 40 miles long from north to south, the front of which was protected by the Shur, the wall, or fortifications, of Egypt. The southern portion of the isthmus is a desert district, the condition of which in the time of the Exodus we know very little of. Some authorities say that the present Gulf of Suez extended in those days to the Bitter Lakes; others say that there is no reason to suppose that it extended further to the north than its present boundaries. It seems, however, probable that if the Gulf of Suez did not extend further to the north than it does at present, the Bitter Lakes existed in ancient days in the form of an irregular, and more or less impassable, barrier of salt water and marsh stretching from the neighbourhood of Suez to that of Ismailia. If such were the case, it is probable that such lakes would, with the Gulfs of Suez and Akaba, be included in the term “Yam Suph.”

Turning now to the eastern boundary we find a somewhat similar condition of affairs. There are two portions: the northern portion, the south of Palestine, an agricultural and arable country, extending southwards to about $30^{\circ} 20'$ north latitude. South of this and as far as the Gulf of Akaba, a distance of 50 or 60 miles, the country is desert and incapable of supporting a settled population. Rounding the head of the Gulf of Akaba, the Arabian trade route, similarly to the Hajj route of to-day, struck across the desert—by the way of “the Wilderness towards the Red Sea”—to Egypt, or came northwards to Palestine. This district round the head of the Gulf of Akaba was normally in the power of the Arabian peoples; and only rarely, when the power of Palestine was going through a period of abnormal prosperity, did it reach to Akaba.¹

Having considered the two isthmuses, let us now examine the intervening district of Arabia Petreæ. We find it consists of three well-marked portions: the northern district of the sand hills; the southern mountainous district; and the central limestone plateau of Et-Tih. These divisions may be very shortly described in detail.

The Sand-Hill Area.—This is the district of shifting sand-dunes; it skirts the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and extends some 20 to 40 miles inland. North-east and east of Ismailia it is only kept from increasing by Jebel Maghara and Rahah; and up to these mountains the sand-dunes have surged until the hills have in parts lost their lower outlines, and the watercourses descending from them are cut across and barred by a wall of sand. Although in ancient times this district was clearly a desert one, it is probable that in the ages that have elapsed since the Exodus, its

¹ Robinson, “Biblical Researches,” ed. 2, 1856, i, 177 f.; Palmer, “Desert of the Exodus,” p. 284 f.

character has intensified in that respect ; for the constantly moving sands eat away all attempts at growth, and at the little oases here and there one may see palm trees with their trunks half buried in the sand which has only to wait a little to engulf and kill all herbage, in its all-devouring progress.

The Mountainous District of the Peninsula.—A glance at the map of this district, constructed by the Ordnance survey some twenty years ago, shows it at once as an essentially mountainous country, where clusters of sandstone bluffs and granite peaks divide the space between them, almost to the exclusion of level standing ground. Tortuous valleys wind their devious course among the mountains, and in these, a few Bedouin maintain a precarious existence, depending chiefly on their privilege of conducting pilgrims to the Convent of Mount Sinai. This district, which was called "Mafka" by the Egyptians, was the seat of one of their mining settlements. It is separated from the Plateau of Et-Tih by a sharp declivity some 1,000 feet high, formed by the outcrop of the strata which compose the Tih and which are tilted upwards towards the south.

The Plateau of Et-Tih.—This district is the larger division of Arabia Petrea, and consists of about 30,000 square miles. The plateau rises to a height of 4,000 feet at its southern extremity, and slopes down gently towards the north, until it is lost in the sandy dunes fringing the Mediterranean coast. It consists of one vast plain, broken in places by mountain ranges, of which the principal are : Jebel Rahah, Bodia, Maghara, Yeleg, Hillall, and Ihkrimm.

Traversing the plateau of the Tih are to be found, at intervals, broad, shallow watercourses called *seils*. These are, in many cases, a hundred yards wide, and shrubs are to be found in them all the year round : after heavy rains the grass springs up in them, and there is good pasture for several weeks for camels, sheep, and goats. These *seils* are very slightly depressed below the general surface of the ground, and when the rain falls they present the appearance of broad rivers, a hundred yards across, and are from one to four feet deep. The beds of the larger *seils* are very uneven, and the water lies in the pot holes for some weeks after heavy rains. Generally in January and February there is plenty of rain over the Tih—so much so that water for drinking, both for man and for herds, can be found every few miles in the plains and all over the hills. During November, December, and March, there are often dense mists, white fogs, and heavy dews, which saturate the shrubs with moisture, and even deposit moisture among the rocks, so that flocks do not require to go to water.¹

Kadesh.—With the foregoing epitome we can construct a map with the characteristics of the country fairly portrayed. The position of Kadesh, which is now generally accepted as that discovered by Mr.

¹ Most of the foregoing description of Arabia Petrea is taken from Major-General Sir C. Warren's "Notes on the Desert of Arabia Petrea," published in the *Quarterly Statement* of 1887, pp. 38 to 46.

Rowlands, and described by Mr. Trumbull in his book "Kadesh-Barnea,"¹ is situated in the Negeb about 30° 30' N., 34° 40' E.² This position is of great importance. Professor Wellhausen says ("Israel and Judah,"³ p. 21) :—"If we eliminate from the historical narrative the long Sinaitic section the Wilderness of Kadesh becomes the locality of the preceding and subsequent events. It was during the sojourn of many years here, that the organisation of the nation, in any historical sense, took place. 'There He made for them statute and ordinance, and there He proved them,' as we read in Exodus xv, 25, in a dislocated poetical fragment. 'Judgment and trial,' 'Massa and Meribah,' point to Kadesh as the place referred to ; there, at all events, is the scene of the narrative immediately following (Exodus xvii ; Numbers xx), and doubtless also of Exodus xviii." Whether or not we can go with the Professor in his sweeping transposition of historical details in the Old Testament, his testimony is important as marking the importance of Kadesh—an importance well brought out by Mr. Trumbull in his book—in the history of the Exodus. Kadesh was in Canaan ; and it was at Kadesh that the Exodus was made good. Until a base of operations was obtained in the Negeb nothing further could be done ; and without it Israel must have been lost. A close examination of the accounts of the Negeb, especially that given by Trumbull, is calculated to inspire anyone with the belief that in the plan of the Exodus, Moses directed his march on Kadesh designedly, as the point *par excellence* where, remote from any organised power, and close at hand to, even on the border of Canaan, he might weld the people into a nation capable of entering on their inheritance. Trumbull says (p. 396) : "They had left their homes with the promise of being led towards Canaan (Exodus iii, 7, 8, 15-17 ; iv, 29-31 ; vi, 2-8 ; xiv, 3-5, 11, 12)."

Sinai on the Tih.—It thus seems probable that in the plan of the Exodus Moses meant to lead the people of Israel to Kadesh by the direct route across the plateau of the Tih. As Moses had been told

¹ "Kadesh-Barnea," by H. Clay Trumbull, published at New York, by Scribner and Son, 1884.

² 'Ain Kadis, a spring south of Beersheba. The objections to this view will be found detailed in Conder's "Handbook to the Bible," 3rd edition, pp. 249, 250 ; and in his "Bible and the East," p. 52, edition 1896, Blackwood. In the same work an attempt is made (pp. 43 to 50) to identify the route of the Exodus and the stations named. "Robinson (ii, 175, 194) placed Kadesh at 'Ain-el-Weibeh, 35 miles south of the Dead Sea, and 22 to 23 miles west of Mount Hor. The Rev. J. Rowlands, however, in 1842 (Williams' 'Holy City,' i, 464 ff.), identified it with 'Ain Kadis, about 45 miles west of 'Ain-el-Weibeh, and 50 miles south of Beersheba. The site was lost for many years, till it was re-discovered by Trumbull in 1881 ('Kadesh-Barnea,' pp. 238-275), and the identification is now generally accepted." Driver, "International Critical Commentary, Deuteronomy," 1895, p. 6.

³ "Sketch of the History of Israel and Judah," by Wellhausen, published in London, 1891 ; octavo.

(Exodus iii, 12) that the people of Israel were to serve God on Horeb when they had been brought forth out of Egypt, it seems a very natural inference that Mount Sinai was upon the desert of Et-Tih on the way from Egypt to Kadesh. It may be said that *if* the mountain was *on the way*, the presence of Israel there could be little token to Moses that God had sent him, for they would be there in the ordinary course of things ; but this argument avails little, for their stay there was prolonged beyond any ordinary course ; there they served God ; there they received the foundation of their polity and religion, and were in a great measure born into being as a nation. Also it is characteristic of the records of the interposition of God in the affairs of Israel, that such interposition was invariably incidental to the position in which, by the common course of events, the Israelites were placed. It is thus incumbent on us to look upon Mount Sinai, not as the framework of a series of inconsequent wonders and signs, designed to demonstrate the favour of God Almighty to the Jews, but rather as a mountain *on the way* of the Exodus, which henceforth became the undoubted Olympus of the Jews, because it was there they first worshipped God as one nation, and marked the manifestation of His favour towards them. This principle is very apparent in Holy Writ—the miracle is almost invariably incidental to the position ; the position is not created as a framework for the miraculous.

Evidence of tradition in favour of the Peninsula site.—Thus the proposition of Mount Sinai being upon the desert of the Tih, on the road from Egypt to the Negeb, naturally occurs from the foregoing—a proposition which in the light of modern criticism seems more and more likely to be established, and which it is the object of this paper to support. The greatest obstacle to any proposition of the sort is the vested interest of “authority” in the Mount Sinai of the Sinaitic Peninsula. It would seem that “authority” (one would except here Professor Sayce) goes solid for the Peninsula site ; and “authority” in Biblical matters is very difficult to upset.¹ To any proposition of the above sort “authority” has only to say nothing and treat it with contempt, and in ten years’ time, however well grounded it may be, it will be forgotten, and the dictionaries of the day will copy down the old errors with a light heart. “Authority,” it would appear, takes up the position that tradition has said that Mount Sinai is somewhere in the Peninsula, and therefore Mount Sinai must be there. True, it may be pointed out that tradition is very indefinite on the subject, and that the evidence of such tradition lies nearer to our own age than to the time of the Exodus ; that there is no evidence of earlier tradition to support it, while the

¹ It should be distinctly understood that “authority” here includes Wellhausen, “History of Israel,” 1885, p. 430, and Kittel, “History of the Hebrews,” 1895, vol. i, p. 232, and, in fact, most, if not all, “the critics,” except perhaps Professor Sayce. They give their arguments and reasons for their belief, and a deference to “tradition,” it must candidly be owned, does not appear to influence them overmuch in the question.

absence of any such evidence of tradition in Holy Writ or in other Jewish records points to its non-existence in the days when those records were penned. The "Encyclopædia Britannica"¹ says on this point: ". . . . the Biblical narrators who always speak of Sinai as if it were a single summit show that in their time there was no real tradition in the matter," *i.e.*, no tradition connecting Mount Sinai with the mountain clusters of the Peninsula. This matter has been argued frequently before, and it is not proposed to go further into it here; suffice it to insist that the evidence of tradition is insufficient to establish the Peninsula site.

Numbers xxxiii, 10.—Another argument in favour of the Peninsula site is found in *Numbers xxxiii, 10*, which details the encampment of the Israelites by the Red Sea after leaving Elim. This is a verse that cannot be explained away in this connection, except by the possibility that, after leaving Elim, the Israelites might have had to return to the Red Sea, owing, perhaps, to the failure of the waters on the route across the desert that they had first selected. Anyone familiar with the desert and the difficulty of obtaining water there in any quantity can easily understand such a countermarch. However, it would seem that the authority of *Numbers xxxiii, 1-49*, is not to be relied upon in its entirety. Kittel, on this point, in the translation of his "History of the Hebrews," vol. i,² p. 237, is made to say: "It is clear that *Numbers xxxiii* no longer gives us thoroughly reliable information respecting Israel's camping-grounds in the desert." Bacon, in his "Triple Tradition of the Exodus,"³ assigns this portion of the chapter in question to "an addition to P. or JEDP, in the priestly style and sense—450-200 B.C.," and says in a note, p. 246:—"This is a late redactional colophon which may at some period of the text have served as a conclusion to the story of the wanderings. Unfortunately, its principal historical value, the supplying of gaps in the sources, as *e.g.*, P. in *Exodus xii*, supplied from vv. 3-5, is materially reduced by its artificial numerical scheme (40 stations for 40 years, *see Analysis*); for the list of authentic names has almost certainly been supplemented. Nevertheless, it may be reasonably inferred from v. 2 that an actual list of JE. attributed by the writer to Moses, underlies this chapter, and of this we have, no doubt, fragments in *xxii, 12, 20*, *Deut. x, 6 f.* (*Deut. i, 1?*), and *Numbers xxi, 12-20*."

There is a large amount of arguing in a circle on this and similar questions. Thus some demonstrate the fitness of Jebel Musa to represent Sinai because Midian lay behind it, on the west coast of the Gulf of Akaba; quite regardless of the fact that Midian is located on the west coast of this arm of the sea, *because* it fits in with the Peninsula site for Mount Sinai. Others argue that the Peninsula is the correct

¹ "Encyclopædia Britannica," 9th edition, vol. xxii, p. 89, article by Professor Albrecht Socin.

² Kittel's "History of the Hebrews," translated by J. Taylor, 1895.

³ "The Triple Tradition of the Exodus," by B. W. Bacon, published at Hertford, U.S.A., 1894.

place because of Deut. i. 2, which infers that Israel passed Mount Seir on the way from Horeb to Kadesh. For they say that Mount Seir is the range of mountains east of the Arabah up which the Israelites would pass on their journey from the Peninsula to Canaan. But if you ask for an authority for placing Mount Seir east of the Arabah a sufficient reason cannot be found.

The common-sense prohibition of the Peninsula route, from the increased distance involved by it, seems to me to carry great weight. It would be as unreasonable for a man in a hurry to walk from St. James' Railway Station to St. James' Palace *vid* Whitehall, as it would have been for the Israelites to take the Peninsula route for their journey through the desert to Canaan. To properly array all the many reasons against locating Mount Sinai in the Peninsula would require a lengthy paper to itself ; here I can only endeavour to show that the site of Horeb lies elsewhere by indicating one more suitable.

Conditions of the Exodus.—In Trumbull's "Kadesh-Barnea," at the end of the book, there is a paper on the Exodus, which very lucidly lays down the conditions of the start of the Hebrews from Egypt. To most of this paper I cordially agree ; but in one or two particulars it seems to me the case is not fully stated :—

(Firstly.) In his description of the three roads he makes the "road through the Wilderness towards the Red Sea" pass into Egypt at Shaloofi, north of Suez. I do not think such could have been its route in the golden time ; but, instead of passing through Jebel Rahah by Wady Rah, it is probable that the trade-route would have followed the present Hajj route from Akaba only as far as the central plateau of the Tib, branching off some 20 or 30 miles west of Nakhl to the north-west, passing near the south-west slopes of Jebel Yeleg and Maghara, and thence bending westwards to Wady Tumeilat. Such a road exists at the present day, and, until it enters the sand-hills which are accumulating east of Maghara, it is a good-enough road. Water exists on it at the wells of Mahada, about 30 miles from Ismailia ; and caravans from Arabia would, by such a road, reach Egypt by the shortest line ; and the goods, discharged at Tanis or in the Sethroitic nome, might thence have been circulated by the ordinary methods of the country.

(Secondly.) The name "Yam Suph" would very probably have been applied to the continuations of water and marsh which lay to the north of the present position of Suez. Hence, in seeking for a fitting site for the defeat of the Egyptian army at the Red Sea (or "Yam Suph"), it is not necessary to go far from the direct road from Wady Tumeilat into Asia ; but any site near Lake Timsah or the Bitter Lakes, which should be otherwise suitable, will do.

Comparing the accounts of the Exodus in the various codes, of which the so-called "books of Moses" are mainly composed, and taking only as valid halting-places on the march those places which are mentioned

both in the JE. and the P. codes, I obtain the following authenticated itinerary of the Exodus as far as Kadesh :—

Departure from Egypt.
Defeat of Egyptians at Red Sea.
Marah.
Elim.
Rephidim.
Mount Sinai.
Kibroth-hattaavah.
Hazereth.
Wilderness of Paran.
Kadesh.

An examination of the above reveals some symmetry in the arrangement, for there are three halting-places between the Red Sea and Sinai, and three halting-places between Sinai and Kadesh : we are thus reminded of Exodus xv, 22, which details the "three days' journey into the Wilderness of Shur," and of Numbers x, 33, which records the departure "from the Mount of the Lord three days' journey."

Mr. Bacon, in his "Triple Tradition of the Exodus," has analysed the account of the Exodus in greater detail than Canon Driver goes into ; and handles the matter in a somewhat freer style. The following Table gives an analysis of Bacon's division of the codes as far as the stations are concerned ; the "triple" tradition being the traditions of the three original codes—J., E., and P.—of which the Hexateuch is mainly composed. From these codes all later matter, added by way of explanation by the successive editors, has been excluded, and the data stand as they were transcribed from their original traditions or codes. Examining this Table we must remember—and all students strongly insist on this point—that while the *general* results are vouched for, the analysis is often of a fallible character, and the indications do not clearly indicate (as between E. and J., for instance) to what code some verses should be allotted :—

BACON'S "TRIPLE TRADITION OF THE EXODUS."

Itinerary of Exodus. Egypt to Kadesh.

J. circa 800 B.C.	E. circa 750 B.C.	P. circa 450 B.C.
Rameses—Succoth.	Start "by way of the Wilderness towards the Red Sea."	Rameses to Succoth.
Defeat of Egypt in sea. Went three days into Wilderness of Shur. (1st day) Marah. (2nd day) Elim. (3rd day) Massah.	Defeat of Egypt in sea. Moves onward into Wilderness.	Defeat of Egypt in sea. Wilderness of Sin.
The Mount (Sinai). Set forth three days' journey from Mount of Yahweh. Kibroth-hattaavah. Hazeroth. Meribah.	Massah. Meribah before the Rock of Horeb. The Mount (Horeb). Rephidim (battle with Amalek).*	Rephidim. Wilderness of Sinai. Mount Sinai. Wilderness of Paran.
	Taberah.	Meribah (of Kadesh). Num. xx, 13.

* Mr. Bacon places this victory over the Amalekites at Rephidim *after* the visit of Israel to Mount Sinai.

Examining this Table we see three points common to each code, viz.: the Sea (Red ?), the Mount, and Kadesh the sanctuary. Between these points the accounts bear little resemblance. Thus it is possible clearly to recognise the grounds on which Wellhausen, in his "Sketch of the History of Israel and Judah," p. 4, shows his distrust of all detail, and sums up the story of the Exodus in the following words:—"After visiting Sinai the emigrants settled at Kadesh, eastwards from Goshen, in the southern borders of Palestine." A scepticism which may be laudable in an historian is not, however, necessary to the Bible student; and if we amalgamate the data of the three codes in the foregoing Table we get an account of the Exodus, tolerably full in itself and very similar to the itinerary obtained above from Canon Driver's analysis.

Evidence of Topography.—Let us now see if the topography of the country involved agrees in any way with the journey, the authenticated data of which we have obtained above. The interest centres mainly about the roads and the mountains. Concerning the roads, Exodus xiii, 17-18, shows us that the Israelites, at starting, must have been handy to the road "of the Philistines," which probably entered Egypt at El Kantara; otherwise, the observation of the nearness of the coast-road would be inappropriate, and a more direct road would have been by the road "from Shur" across the desert to the Negeb. This latter

road, which is probably identical with the one followed by Holland (described in the Palestine Exploration Fund *Quarterly Statement* for April, 1879, and for January, 1884), runs from the neighbourhood of Ismailia eastwards, past the wells of Mahada, across Jebel Maghara, and following the same line due east continues until it meets the road from Hebron and Beersheba in the Negeb. In the neighbourhood of Mahada this road divides, and another track runs south-east to Nakhl, forming what was very probably the "road of the Wilderness towards the Red Sea." This road leaves Jebel Maghara on its north, and, passing the chain of hill-country marked by the mountains Bodia, Smar, Rahah, Risheh, and Maghara, debouches into the Tih Plateau close to, and to the south-west of Jebel Yeleg.

Whether or not this was the road marked out by Exodus xiii, 18, as the route of the Israelites, it seems in many ways very suitable to illustrate the Scriptural accounts, especially the evidence of the original "Triple tradition," as epitomised in the Table given above. Exactly halfway between Ismailia and Kadesh lies Jebel Yeleg, a mountain of most impressive dimensions, lying like a huge barnacle on the plateau of Et-Tih. The modern name of this mountain approximates closely to the ancient Amalek, the prefix "Am" meaning "country of"; and as we know that this was the country of the desert foes of Israel (1 Samuel xv, 7),¹ and as the battle of Rephidim took place in the vicinity of Mount Sinai, the occurrence of the name of Amalek here is of interest. Taking the routes to and from Jebel Yeleg there are similar points of interest to remark:—On the road from Egypt to Jebel Yeleg we have, at the outset, the journey into the Wilderness of Shur, or Etham, east of Ismailia, along the "road of Shur," as far as the wells of Mahada, which are situated in a district called by the Arabs "Elloo." From here the next known waters are close to Jebel Yeleg, between that mountain and Jebel Maghara. Again, on the march eastwards from Yeleg the Israelites would have entered at once the Wilderness of Paran, i.e., to say, if the identification of Paran with Nakhl, urged by Trumbull and others, is correct. The total distance from Jebel Yeleg to Kadesh would be about 100 miles, a distance which the Israelites, after their long stay and organisation at Mount Sinai, could well have accomplished in eleven days.

It is not sought to *prove* in any way that Jebel Yeleg is Mount Sinai, or that Elloo was Elim, or that this "way of the wilderness towards the Red Sea" was the actual route here laid down. It is quite possible that the actual Hajj route, from Nakhl to Shaloofi, through the mountains of Rahah by Wady Rah, was followed by the Israelites; and there are other mountains on the Tih besides Jebel Yeleg which might be the Mount of God. In our present want of accurate knowledge of this portion of the country, it would be idle to attempt any actual identification. All that

¹ The reading of Telaim, a place in the Negeb, for the Havilah of the Authorised Version (1 Samuel xv, 4) is given by Wellhausen, *vide* "Variorum Teachers' Bible."

is desired is to show the fitness of the country to illustrate the journey of the Exodus, especially since doubts have been thrown by scholars on the itinerary in Numbers xxxiii. In many ways this district seems specially fitted for the Olympus of the Jews. Situated some 100 miles odd from Beersheba, it is a suitable site for the "Mount of the Lord" in the "land of Moriah" (Gen. xxii). Such a position would also be suitable to the account of Moses' connection with the Midianites or Kenites; for, like the Amalekites, these were doubtless nomadic peoples, and, like the Bedouin of the Tih at the present day, had their corn-grounds in the Negeb, although the desert was *their country*.

Then, with respect to Deut. i, 2, which places Mount Seir in the path of the Israelites from Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea, there are not wanting indications that "authority" may have to give way, even in its location of Mount Seir; and that in the Bible maps of the future, this district will have to be placed on the west instead of the east of the Arabah, coincident with the southern portion of the Negeb.

Conclusion.—The above indications of the fitness of the plateau of Et-Tih to illustrate the story of the Exodus might be developed at great length, and supplemented by many allusions to the text of the Hexateuch; but such would be to trespass on the space of the *Quarterly Statement* at too great a length. All that has been attempted here is to make good the case for urgency in the survey of the Tih. This is a district which for thousands of years has been the centre of the known world; and now, though within an eight days' trip of England, it remains, as it has always remained, a very Holy of Holies of untrodden sanctity. A perusal of Mr. Holland's description of his journey through it will show that the country teems with interest; no great difficulty should exist in mapping the area north of the Hajj route in one cold season; while the opportunity that our presence in Egypt affords us of easily overcoming the opposition of the Bedouin is one which, though it exists to-day, may soon pass away.

Anyhow, there is no time like the present. The work calls loudly for execution, and promises great rewards; while the only good reason why it should not be undertaken by a Society like the Palestine Exploration Fund, is the fact that the Survey would be of inestimable value to the Government of Egypt; and this, indeed, is no figure of speech; for the work would be of economic value to Egypt and Syria, as indicating the line for the railway that shall in the future unite the two continents of Asia and Africa; and it would be strategically of value to the guardians of the Land of the Nile, for the time appears to be approaching when the stability of the Egyptian Government will secure to it a wider sphere of influence and power than it at present possesses.

January 10th, 1896.