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EXCURSUS ON THE RESURRECTION ON THE HYPOTHESIS THAT IT TOOK PLACE FROM A TOMB SIMILAR IN CONSTRUCTION TO THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS, AND IN THAT VICINITY.

By Canon GELL.

ATTEMPTS to realise the actual conditions under which this, the supreme event of human history, was accomplished have often been confused by want of a clear idea of the particular kind of tomb in which the body of our Lord was laid. The serious difficulty of harmonising the visits to the tomb, recorded by the Evangelists, together with prevailing misconception as to the tomb itself, have combined to produce a vague impression as to what really took place detrimental to a firm belief in its historical veracity.

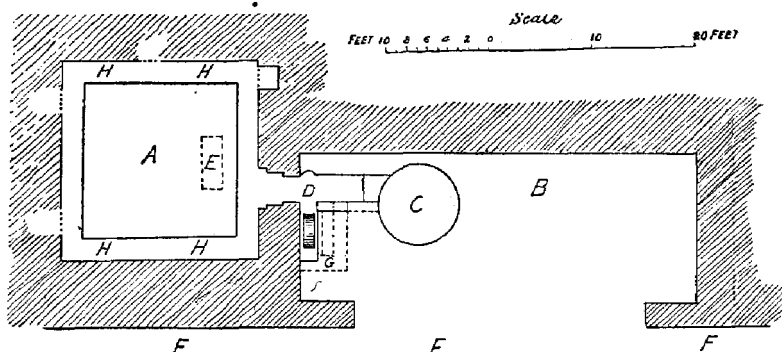
It is easy to deprecate investigation, and to point to strong and even bitter divergencies of opinion, but when the angel, seated upon the stone he had rolled back, said to the affrighted women, "Come see the place where the Lord lay," he gave some sort of sanction to our topographical enquiries, while he struck the only note of localism in religion which remains in this dispensation.

In a former paper I have enumerated thirteen indicating hints, gathered from Holy Scripture, pointing to the locality where we may expect to find the sepulchre, and suggesting the kind of sepulchre for which we should search. To my own mind these are fully sufficient to exclude from consideration both the traditional site within the present city and the recently suggested site just outside of it; but I have carefully guarded myself from assuming that I have proved that the *Kubur es-Saladeen* was the actual tomb where, as in a mortuary chapel, the sacred body of the Lord lay. Indeed, if I felt as certain as some advocates of other sites profess themselves to be, I should not proclaim it, lest some modern disciples of Eusebius and Constantine should make it a place for pilgrimage. All for which I contend is this—that the indications about the burial in Scripture prove—not that this was the place, but that the place was like this, and in this vicinity, and what I now desire to do is to show how the Resurrection might have taken place, on the supposition that it took place there.

In order to make the matter as plain as possible it is necessary to remind your readers of the peculiar construction of this ancient Jewish burial place, and to refer them to the plan which accompanies this paper. "In the place where He was crucified there was a garden" (there is nothing about a "villa," which has been imported into the narrative without authority); "and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man

yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day ; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand " (St. John xix, 41, 42).

Thus the record runs, and supposing that the three crosses were set up near the side of the great north road, as seems not improbable, and in strict accordance with Roman custom, at a place near the cross roads called Golgotha (possibly as being on the traditional site of the tomb of Adam), the "garden" would be the excavated enclosure 10 or 15 yards from the crosses and about 20 yards from the roadside. In the western scarp of this recessed plot, which is about 30 yards square, the sepulchre was made. It consisted of a distyle portico leading to a vestibule about 38 feet by 16 feet, in the southern end of which is a tank for the water required for lustration of the corpse, and below the level of the floor is



References.

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| <i>A.</i> The embalming chamber. | <i>E.</i> Probable place of stone of unction. |
| <i>B.</i> The vestibule. | <i>F.</i> The garden. |
| <i>C.</i> The tank. | <i>G.</i> The connected passage to back of the rolling stone. |
| <i>D.</i> The groove for the rolling stone at entrance. | <i>H.</i> The stone bench. |

the peculiar arrangement for concealing the entrance which distinguishes this tomb from all others now extant at Jerusalem, as the only one in which the disc of stone closing the entrance, remains in place. The architrave above the portico is still to be seen ornamented with the same "ill-understood Roman Doric," as Ferguson calls it, which fixes the date of the tomb, as is allowed by all experts, to the time of Herod, but the pyramids, stelæ, or cippi, mentioned by Josephus, are gone.

Approximate figures of dimension only are given, because we learn from our Masonic friends that in all but one chamber the measure which appears to have been used was the Roman foot of 11·6 inches. In one chamber the Jewish cubit of 25·2 inches seems to have been adopted. The use of these measures is another proof of the date of the excavation, which it is generally supposed was

used in subsequent years by Helena, Queen of Adiabene. Ferguson argues that Herod himself was buried here and not at Herodium. If so he must—on my hypothesis—have got the place from Joseph of Arimathea, the rich and honourable councillor, by whom it had been prepared for his own use. The prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah's grave would be made "with the wicked and with the rich in his death," and certainly if our Lord was laid here Joseph was rich enough and Herod wicked enough to fulfil the prophecy. At the time of the crucifixion the tomb had just been "hewn in stone," so there would have been none of the additional chambers and loculi which we find there now. The only chamber required at first was what I may call the embalming chamber, which in this tomb is about 19 feet square, and surrounded by a stone bench. There would probably have been also a stone of unction, or bier, on which the body lay, while the process of embalming was being effected and the loculus dug. Convenience makes it probable that the body was not deposited on the floor of the chamber. Of course, the paving slab, which ultimately was to conceal the entrance, would not have been laid down till the whole process was finished. Thus the women who sat "over against" the sepulchre could see into it, and there seems to have been no restriction to prevent any friends entering the vestibule or even going inside the chamber where the body lay; so whether the women were seated (the Jewish posture of mourning) on the opposite garden wall, as I thought at one time, or had entered the vestibule for closer observation, and sat near the further or northern end of it, would make no difference to the fact that from outside the chamber they could see "how the body was laid." This we read they did before they retired on the eve of the Sabbath. The method by which the entrance was closed has been often described, and I need not explain it, except to observe that the stone disc, the greater part of which is now remaining, is about 3 feet in diameter and 1 foot thick, and sufficiently heavy to justify the fears of the women that without help they could not move it away from the entrance where they had seen it rolled by Joseph's servants on the Friday evening. The concealed passage by which a man could get behind it to roll it with a lever across the entrance is indicated by dotted lines in the plan. After a corpse had been embalmed and the loculus dug it was sealed up, the entrance closed, and then the paving slabs forming the floor of the vestibule would have been laid over all, cemented in the reveal, and the entombment was complete. The only other feature of this remarkable tomb which needs mention is the means of access to the herb garden in which it was constructed. This was by a rock-cut staircase of twenty-five steps leading down from the level of the ground above to the archway, cut through a curtain of rock 7 feet thick, admitting to the garden. In my time the stairs and garden were encumbered with rubbish, which has now been cleared away, and portions of the pillars of the distyle and, as is conjectured, of the pyramids which Josephus

mentions, have been found by the indefatigable Dr. Schick among the *débris*.

Let me now suppose that this was the new tomb of the Jewish Councillor who went to Pilate on that fateful afternoon and begged the body of Jesus, and try to realise the scene. The mysterious darkness had passed away. The westering sun is casting level beams across that wonderful landscape, now comparatively tame and featureless, touching the gilded spikes along the roof of the great Temple, and reddening all the loftier buildings of the city with sunset glow. A few lingering women remain near the crosses, which the Centurion has just left, after handing over to Joseph legal possession of the body of Jesus. Joseph and Nicodemus, with four or five servants and slaves, proceed, as rapidly as possible, with their work of love. Not 10 yards from the cross—if, as I believe, it was a cross—is the recent excavation with its scarce finished tomb. Thither the whole party hurriedly go, lifting their precious burden down the steps, through that archway into the vestibule. At the cistern close to the entrance the lacerated frame is washed quickly and carefully, before being passed through the entrance and laid on the bier or slab near it, watched by the women, as the heavy jar of powdered spice is brought in by the slaves, and sufficient quantity used, by sprinkling it between the folds of the linen cloths and face napkin, to keep the body sweet and fragrant over the Sabbath. No doubt several servants were required to carry the spices, to fetch water for the lustration, and to perform the necessary services which neither Nicodemus nor Joseph could have performed, on such a day, with their own hands. At least five or six persons must have been moving about, in the performance of these offices, within the chamber. But it is clear that whatever was done was only provisional; especially as the unguents required to be used with the powdered myrrh and aloes were not brought till Sunday morning, when the women came to complete the embalmment.

It was now nearly six o'clock. The Sabbath was close at hand. Out they must all come at once, and one of the slaves must roll the heavy disc of stone across the entrance. In that dark subterraneous tomb, in the deep mystery of death, the body lay, till the yet deeper mystery of resurrection was accomplished, unseen by mortal eyes, in the first moments of the third day.

It was Passover time in Jerusalem. The suburb—afterwards called the New Jerusalem—which covered a large part of the plateau north of the city, was crowded with many thousands of sojourners. Probably most of the houses there were small, and the narrow lanes which led through the clustering tenements were dark and tortuous. The Galilean disciples would be lodged there. John and Peter would seem to have occupied a separate lodging. The mother of Jesus had gone, probably to Bethany, or to John's house, to recover from the shock she had sustained. Before the day dawned Mary of Magdala, with her friends, hastened to the sepulchre. If they had not lodged in the suburb, they could not have done so, as the city gates were never opened till daybreak. They seem

to have known nothing of what had happened in the interval. Even the "great earthquake," which must have been limited to the immediate neighbourhood of the tomb, does not seem to have been noticed.

When they reached the entrance they see at once that it had been violated, and fly to tell the rest, but Mary quickly returns, for we find her again, alone, in the vestibule, gazing sadly into the dark chamber. The entrance being below the level of the floor, she had to stoop down, perhaps to kneel, in order to look in. She sees, through her tears, two persons, seated at the head and foot of the slab, where she had seen the body laid. In the early light, 20 feet or more below the level of the ground, it was too dark for her to see that they were angels. Supposing them servants of the owner, she replies to their question: "Why weepest thou?" with her complaint that the body had been removed.

Suddenly she becomes aware that someone was standing in the portico behind her. She turns to speak to him, but his back being to the light, she does not recognise him; and supposing him to be the caretaker, prefers to him the same complaint, offering to take charge of the body, if he would tell her where it was. I need not point out how exactly all this agrees with the construction of the Kubur es-Saladeen. Mary of Magdala was a person of good means, and probably feared, lest our Lord, who had died as a criminal, might be cast into the common pit in which criminals were usually buried. This she was most anxious to prevent. His voice pronouncing her name, undeceived her and convinced her that it was not the gardener, but the Master himself.

Then follows the visit to the empty tomb made by John and Peter. How they missed the others on the way to or from the place, can only be explained by supposing there were narrow lanes through the gardens and suburb, as we see in many Oriental cities. One party would go this way, and another that. The asseverations of so reputable a person as Mary seems to have stirred St. John and St. Peter out of their despondency. They ran—probably it was only a very few minutes' run—to the place, eager to test the truth of Mary's story. John first, rushes to the open door, but hesitates to go in. Peter, who never hesitated, enters, then John follows. What they saw is described by St. John without comment. His simple narrative leaves us to fill in the details, and, as in so much recorded by the Evangelists, to draw the necessary inferences. In doing so the most scrupulous care is needed lest we over-run the record. When John reached the vestibule he sees the tomb is open, and, like Mary, he stoops down to look in, and sees the linen clothes, but not the napkin, till Peter enters and he follows. Then they both see what made John believe, not merely that the body was gone—that was obvious—but that it had been removed in some way that had left the linen cloths undisturbed, and the face napkin folded up and laid aside "in a place by itself." In a very interesting attempt to throw some light on the facts by Mr. Latham, the Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, the writer is hampered, if I may be permitted to say so, by an erroneous theory of the sort of tomb in which our Lord lay. He

supposes the body laid in one of the *arcosolia* of a cave on a level with the ground, on which the sun is streaming in through a door 4 feet high, which would not have required a stooping posture to look into it, but would have required a stone of enormous dimension to close it. He thinks the napkin lay on a low step which had acted as a pillow for the head of the corpse, and which, if it was like the representation of it in the illustration, would have dislocated the cervical vertebrae. On this raised step, where the head had lain, Mr. Latham supposes the napkin lay in the form in which it had been bound round the head and face of Jesus. He bases this idea on the word *ἐντετυλιγμένον*, which he interprets to mean "retaining the twisted form which had been given to it when it had been twined round the head of our Lord." One of the first Greek scholars of that University of which Mr. Latham is an ornament,¹ assures me that the word will not bear this meaning; but simply means "folded" or "rolled up." Mr. Latham's object is to show that in the resurrection there was no touch of human hands, with which we entirely agree, but as angelic hands had rolled back the stone, so they doubtless removed the face napkin, rolled it up, and laid it "apart in a place by itself," which surely cannot mean that it was left in the same place and in the same form in which it had been before. And why the napkin should have been left, by Mr. Latham's theory, "standing up a little and retaining its rounded form," when the linen cloths were, as he says, "lying flat," he does not explain. Moreover, he supposes that the whole of the hundred pounds weight of powdered spice was enclosed in the cloths—a supposition both unnecessary and improbable, when we remember that the ointments were not brought till Sunday, and recollect, too, the purely provisional nature of what was hastily done on Friday evening. Improbabilities are not necessary to maintain Mr. Latham's position, that the appearance of the cloths was such as to suggest an evanescence of the body from out of them, rather than a disrobing or hasty casting them aside, which would have indicated removal of the body by human hands. We must stick as closely as we can to the record. The linen cloths were lying "by themselves" (St. Luke xxiv, 12), probably on the slab from which the Lord had risen. The napkin, for some reason not stated, was rolled up "apart in a place by itself," probably this was the stone bench which runs round the chamber, that part of it near the door not being visible by St. John from outside. Gradually, very gradually, the stupendous fact dawned upon the minds of the Apostles as they went pondering and wondering home. The other visits to the tomb, so far as they throw any light upon it, are in accordance with my theory, but I do not attempt the task of marshalling those visits in their order—a task which would be profitless in the present state of our record. No doubt we are not in possession of all the facts, and must wait for the solution of any difficulties in harmonising those we have. We have enough to indicate the quarter where the tomb may be looked for, and the kind

¹ The Master of Corpus.

of tomb it was ; and there is but little excuse for those travesties of the great event we often meet with in pictures and descriptions.

NOTE.

Among the indicia which I gave in a former paper for identifying the probable site of the sepulchre, was the hint, for it is no more, afforded by the curious fact that the Jewish ritual required the burnt sacrifice to be killed "on the side of the altar northward." Eusebius is blamed for not knowing that the type required that the sacrifice should be without the camp, *i.e.*, outside the city—but the indication of locality to which I have drawn attention has escaped all our topographers, except Sir Charles Wilson ; though there seems no reason why one type should be more topographically important than the other. Surely St. Paul applied the one that we might learn how to apply the other.

F. G.

NOTICES OF FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS.

*Palästinischer Diwan.*¹—Dr. Dalman, who was entrusted by Franz Delitzsch with the final revision of his Hebrew New Testament, has earned the esteem and gratitude of scholars by his "Grammatik des Jüdisch-Palästinischen Aramaisch," "Die Worte Jesu," and other learned works. Here he enters a field where, in spite of all that has been written on Palestine, little of importance has hitherto been done. With a view to this undertaking he enjoyed the special tuition of Dr. Albert Socin during the last winter of that scholar's life. The 15 months, from March, 1899, till June, 1900, he spent in the Orient, studying the various aspects of the people's life. The desire to find illustrative material in connection with the recently revived interpretation of the Song of Solomon, led him to make a collection of Arabic folk songs. Their importance for his main purpose is obvious. The life and thought of such peoples are faithfully reflected in their proverbs, their tales, and especially their popular songs, passed on from mouth to mouth. A selection from his gathering is here laid before us, with only such notes as are needful to understand the songs and indicate the localities where they were found. A fuller treatment of these things is reserved for another publication. The book will be eagerly read by all who desire a thorough acquaintance with the life and thought of the Syrian peoples. Bible students will find welcome light on many interesting problems.

The wide field from which the materials are drawn lends this volume a peculiar value. From Jerusalem to Aleppo, from Nebo to Damascus,

¹ *Palästinischer Diwan als Beitrag zur Volkskunde Palästinas, gesammelt und mit Übersetzung und Melodien herausgegeben von Gustaf H. Dalman.* Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1901.