



Nehemiah's Wall and the Royal Sepulchres

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region lying to the east of the Jordan-Arabah Valley, and stretching from the base of Hermon for several hundred miles into the Arabian Desert, was the scene of active volcanic operation in the Pliocene, and perhaps in the Post-Pliocene epoch.

It was proposed by Professor Hayter Lewis, and seconded by Dr. Ginsburg, that the best thanks of the General Committee be awarded to Mr. Walter Besant on his resigning the office of Secretary.

It was proposed by Mr. Maudslay, and seconded by Professor Hull, that the best thanks of the Committee be passed to the Chairman, Mr. James Glaisher.

The proceedings then terminated.

NEHEMIAH'S WALL AND THE ROYAL SEPULCHRES.

THE following is an abstract of a Paper read by Mr. George St. Clair, Lecturer to the Society, at the recent meeting of the British Association at Bath :—

The topography of Ancient Jerusalem has been difficult to make out, and the site of the sepulchres of the kings of Judah remains unknown. But the problem has been simplified by recent excavations. We now, for the first time, know the contours of the rock and the features of hill and valley before the 80 ft. of *débris* began to accumulate.

The Akra of the Maccabees being identified, it is seen how by the recorded filling up of the Asmonean valley the two parts of the Lower City became joined into one *crescent*, lying with its concave side towards the Upper City, according to the description of Josephus.

The investigations of Sir Charles Warren show that the Temple must be placed on the summit of Moriah, with Solomon's palace south-east of it, leaving a vacant square of 300 ft., where now we leave the south-west corner of the Harem Area.

From the south-east corner of the Haram enclosure extends the wall of Ophel, discovered by Warren, running 76 ft. to the south, then bending toward the south-west. Further, it is found that from the Gate of the Chain, in the west wall of the Haram enclosure, a causeway, with complicated structures, extends westward towards the Jaffa Gate.

Having this groundwork we may proceed to place the walls :—

The 3rd wall, built by Agrippa, does not concern us.

As regards the 2nd wall, it suffices for the present purpose to adopt the line of Herr Conrad Schick.

The 1st wall was the wall of the Upper City. On the northern side it ran from the Jaffa Gate to the Haram wall. The uncertainty has been about its southern portion. The author gives, on a diagram, the line he has been led to adopt ; and then shows that it corresponds in detail with the descriptions in the Book of Nehemiah.

Taking Nehemiah's night survey; then the consecutive allotments of work assigned to those who repaired the walls; and thirdly, the points successively reached and passed by the processionists when the walls were dedicated—it is shown that every mention of a gate or a tower, the number and the order of salient and re-entering angles, and every other note of locality, exactly agree with the course of the walls as suggested.

This course, moreover, involves the least possible variation from the present line of walls, and more in the way of addition than of deviation.

The hypothesis commending itself as true, by corresponding minutely with Nehemiah's descriptions, by tallying exactly with other Biblical references, and by meeting all the requirements of the case, it has this important practical bearing, that it indicates the site of the royal sepulchres, of the stairs of the City of David, of "the Gate between two walls," &c., and shows, incontestably, that Zion included the eastern hill.

In the author's plan, exhibited, the south wall of the Upper City crosses the ridge of the hill in the line of the present wall, and then makes a bay up the Tyropœan.

A cross wall, to the Ophel hill (also in the line of the present wall), is the wall of the Pool of Shelah, and terminates in steps, ascending and curving round towards the Triple Gate, which is regarded as the Water Gate. The royal sepulchres are on the north side of the wall of Shelah, excavated in the hill of Ophel, the entrance being close to the south-west corner of the buildings which stand out to the south of the Double Gate.
