



A Few Thoughts upon the Route of the Exodus

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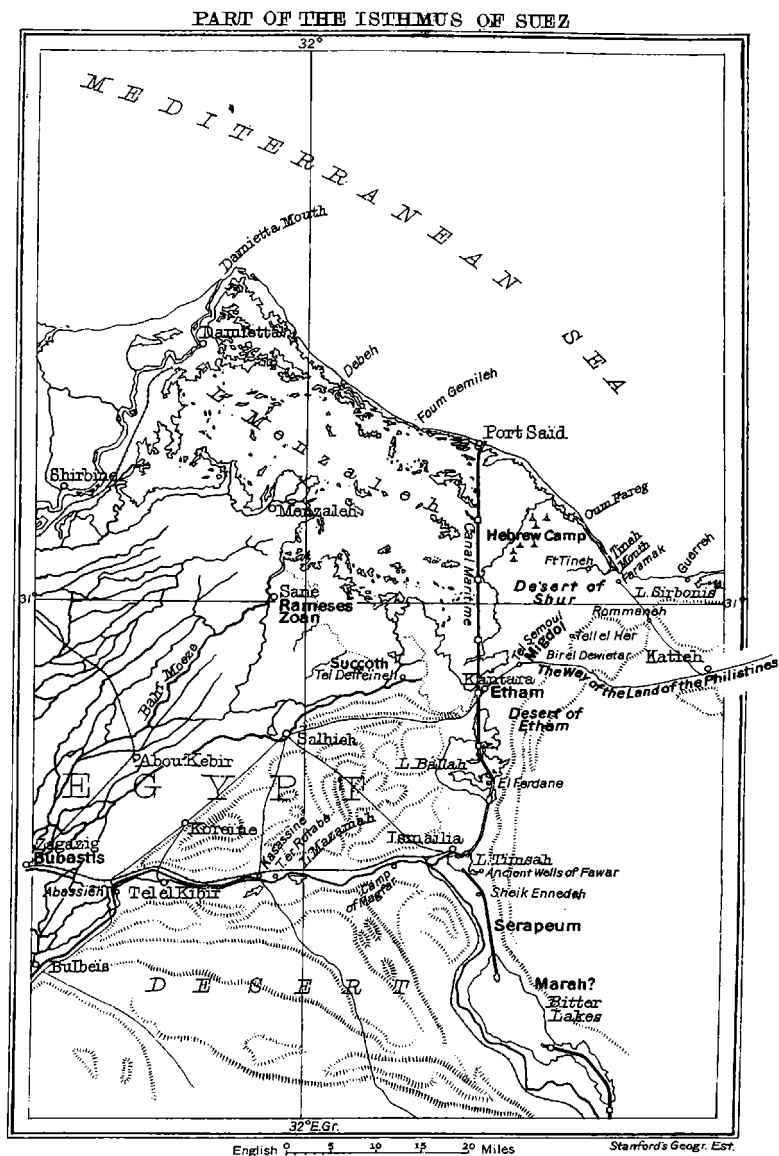
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A FEW THOUGHTS UPON THE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS.

ALTHOUGH much has been written upon the Exodus, I venture to offer these remarks simply to tell how I arrived at what appears to be the true explanation of the facts of one of the most remarkable events in the great history of God's providential care of His people.

I have read many of the various suggestions, and have received help notably from the Rev. G. J. Chester's articles in the July 1880 number of the *Palestine Exploration Fund's Quarterly Statement*, from Dr. Brugsch's "L'Exode," and from Mr. Reginald Stuart Poole's thoughtful papers on "Bible Cities;"¹ but as I resided on the borders of the land of Goshen for four months, have crossed the Isthmus of Suez ten times in various directions, and have visited some of the most important sites connected with Israel in Egypt, I have had unusual opportunities for observation. Perhaps I enter upon a thankless undertaking when I point out views which exactly tally in every respect with the Bible narrative of the Exodus, though they do not agree with the generally received opinion. There is indeed a vagueness and uncertainty about that opinion, for the route of the Israelites has never been satisfactorily laid down, and some of the most important Hebrew words in connection with it have been translated with a bias incident to preconceived conclusions rather than in strict accordance with the text. This is natural, but when sceptics attempt to cast even ridicule upon the scriptural record, it becomes a duty to look boldly into the facts to see how they bear the most searching criticisms. When once I arrived at what seems to be the true route, it was only what I expected, but it was a great delight to find that the closer the investigation the clearer did the story appear.

The Church has not hitherto accepted any particular route, nor is that necessary, but it is important that there should not be the obstinate adherence to Mohammedan tradition with regard to sites, when the subject has been studied in maps, as insignificant in size as they are incorrect in geography. No wonder that with data entirely contrary to Scripture, and with ideas utterly incompatible with the geographical facts, many have arrived at false conclusions.

To confirm my personal observations, I take the Admiralty charts, Wyld's and Keith Johnstone's best maps, and the French map published at the inauguration of the Suez Canal. I have had Brugsch Bey's map, and the sketch map of the Rev. Greville Chester (*Quarterly Statement*, July, 1880) before me, but it will be seen that in the main point I differ from all preconceived ideas; yet the various circumstances which serve to

¹ "Day of Rest," 1881. See also Mr. Dunbar I. Heath's very interesting paper on "Jannes and Jambres," in *Quarterly Statement* for October, 1881.

prove the extreme accuracy of the Scripture record tend to show that just at a very critical time the exact place of the miraculous deliverance has at last been found.

I was passing through the Suez Canal one day at the beginning of this year with a sceptic whose stumbling block was the miracle at the Red Sea. I explained my views; he saw the truth, and confessed that he never could sufficiently thank me. He begged that I would publish a simple note of the facts as I had explained them to him. I have since had opportunities of mentioning them to one of the most learned Egyptologists and Bible students of the day, and have had the advantage of the kindly criticism of one of the first Hebrew professors, as well as that of one of the most profound Greek scholars, of the age. But I cannot expect that this new sketch of an event so grand and so majestic will be generally accepted until it has been carefully wrought out into a perfect picture that can be looked into closely; but even this sketch, as it is, may interest many more than those who have persuaded me to let it be published.

I take the "field of Zoan" as the place where the great wonders were set forth before Pharaoh (Psalm lxxviii, 13, v), until he would let the people of Israel go. *There* is the Zan of to-day, the great city of Rameses II, the place where splendid monuments are still to be seen scattered and shattered on the hill side, but with inscriptions as sharp cut as if finished yesterday—Zoan, "the place of departure," is represented now by an insignificant village on the Tanic branch of the Nile. There are no mounds in all Goshen¹ equal to the hills of Zoan. From the top of these hills all the land of Goshen can be seen. When the bond slaves were free to go forth, from all the plain they would be pressing towards the point where the roads centered upon the one which led to the Promised Land. All the Hebrews had been well warned (Exodus xii, 4, 6), and would be ready to move on the very day when the first Passover feast was done. That very night they were thrust out by the Egyptians. Their rendezvous was the wilderness, and their goal was the Promised Land. "Three days' journey" would take them to the "wilderness." This was all that Moses had first asked for, that they might worship. The exact place in the wilderness is defined. The road across the desert was before them, "but God led them not that way." "By strength of hand the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt, and it came to pass when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not the way of the land of the Philistines, *although that was near*, for God said, lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt. But God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the יַם־סוּף (Yam Suph) 'Sea of Reeds,' and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt."²

God caused them to turn and not go by the direct route, lest they might have been harassed by the Egyptians all the way, and might have

¹ Goshen, "the land of shepherds."

² Ex. xiii, 17.

given up their flight in despair. They were to go in a direction where they would, by the power of God, be delivered, and the whole army of the pursuers be destroyed. The Egyptians, *not the Philistines*, were the enemies they had then to fear.

I might here refer to other authorities, but as Mr. Reginald Stuart Poole, one of the best of all, accepts Zoan as the starting point, and appears to be quite clear that the way by the western side of the Red Sea, south of Suez, was not the route taken,¹ I will now try to define the exact course. I quite acknowledge that we may well say: "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path is in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known,"² yet as it is not God's footsteps, but those of His people we are attempting to trace, the effort to arrive at the truth is not presumptuous when we take the Holy Scriptures as our guide.

The Israelites under Moses set out from Rameses³ the royal city, which is identified with Zoan. Their first camping place was Succoth (*booths*);⁴ in that district the people dwell in booths at the present day; the next, Etham, identified by the Khetham of the Egyptian papyri, translated by Brugsch Bey. The Royal Palace at Rameses, the halting place in Succoth, and the border "fortress" Etham, are all mentioned in extant documents, one day's journey intervening, and at Etham the way to Syria is in front. Here "the Lord spake unto Moses saying, speak unto the children of Israel that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal Zephon" (Exodus xiv, 2). This Migdol is mentioned in the Roman itinerarium. Baal Zephon is the "*northern Baal*," so is to be sought for on the *north* coast of Egypt. Pi-hahiroth is "*the place of Gulfs*," or quicksands, therefore close to the sea.

I visited Zoan by way of the Yam Suph;⁵ I passed through Succoth, and afterwards, by the Suez Canal *via* Kantara, went to the place where Etham on the borders of the wilderness ought to be found. There were ruins of a large city: some Arabs with a herd of young camels were resting near. I copied the frieze of part of a completely ruined temple, on which was the cartouche or shield with the name of Rameses II rather rudely cut in red granite. I inquired of the different Arabs who went with me "Where is Migdol?" They all agreed in the direction, and pointed towards the sea, and said it was distant about half a day's journey. This only confirmed what others have mentioned. In the French map of the Suez Canal it is called "the Migdol of the Bible."

Many a time had I gazed over the desert between Migdol and the sea, and watched the mirage lift up the land into little islands on the horizon. It was difficult to tell where the land ended and the sea began. On the verge of the great sea there is a *long narrow bank of sand*, stretching for many miles along the coast westward, and always dry excepting at one point,

¹ Lecture at Kensington, 1882. See also *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*, April, 1881, page 107. By Rev. G. J. Chester.

² Psalm lxxvii, 19.

³ Numbers xxxiii, 4.

⁴ Here they may have cut the reeds for shelter.

⁵ יַם־סוּף

where, in strong westerly gales the sea washes through. This bank of land could readily hold the whole host of fugitives. Within this bank was a great inland sea. On the eastern shore the Israelites would, as directed, encamp. Then came the alarm that the Egyptians had followed them to cut off their retreat, and thus "entangled in the land," for "the wilderness shut them in," Moses and his followers were caught in a trap. "And when Pharaoh drew nigh the children of Israel lifted up their eyes and behold the Egyptians marched after them, and they were sore afraid, and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord."¹

The map herewith explains the probable position of the Hebrew camp. The Scripture narrative explains the rest. There is the terror in the evening, the strong east wind, the sea going back, the night made dark to the pursuers, and light to the pursued. There is the midnight march through the midst of the sea, the disastrous pursuit in the early morning. The dry land, with the sea as a defence on the right hand and on the left, safely reached by the Israelites, and then the great catastrophe to the Egyptians. All this happened near the sea, the great sea, and yet it was in the Yam Suph, which is translated Red Sea, that the miraculous deliverance took place. Exodus xv, 4; Joshua ii, 10; Psalm cvi, 9—all "Sea of Reeds" in the Hebrew.

The Suez Canal has cut off the east end of the Yam Suph, and has cut through the bank of sand. The Arabs tell of the remains of buildings on the east shore of the sea near to where Pi-hahiroth was. Cities have been built there, and have become ruins,² other armies in the pride of conquest have been overwhelmed at this very place.

There have been many changes, no doubt, within the last 3,196 years;³ but still at this same sea, even west of the canal, when there is a "strong east wind," the sea goes back, so rapidly, indeed, that shoals of fish are left dead on the shore, the sea is changed into dry land, and the waves flow back, and a way is opened through the midst of the sea, a practicable roadway for a host. "The Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry, and the waters were divided." The Hebrew word⁴ here used for divided is the same verb as that employed in reference to two other memorable miracles connected with water, namely, when all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened at the time of the flood,⁵ and when mention is made in the Psalms⁶ of the water flowing from the rock. Bearing this in mind we can understand how this sea was put under the power of Moses's rod, for the very same word is used by Isaiah⁷ when he mentions the same miraculous interposition of Providence at this

¹ Exodus xiv, 10.

² Pelusium, Sin; both names mean "mud," and may refer to one city.

³ Taking the Exodus at 1314 B.C.

⁴ נָקַע

⁵ Gen. vii, 11. נִבְקַעוּ

⁶ Psalm lxxiv, 15. נִבְקַע
Isaiah lxxiii, 12.

very crisis. The Lord's words to Moses were, "Lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea and divide it, and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea."

On the spot one can quite imagine the scene, and the joyful surprise of the despairing fugitives when they saw the waters flow back and the bed of the sea quickly become dry; then they took courage. "And the children of Israel went *into*¹ the midst of the sea upon the dry ground." The sea would, we may suppose, go back so far as to secure the safety of all the fugitives, and enable them to march through the midst of the sea, and deploy upon that long bank of sand. The rearward would see those in front bend towards the west, and in a long long line be marching between the seas, with the great blue horizon of the Mediterranean filling up the distance. For just when the first of the fugitives had passed through the midst of the sea at this place to which we have traced them, they would find—and this is very remarkable—that they had arrived at a very sanctuary, where the sea became a wall of defence to them on the right hand and on the left. So God protected them from their enemies. "Judah was His sanctuary, and Israel His dominion. *The sea saw—and fled!*" Thus the Psalmist *exactly* describes what I have endeavoured to explain, and this Psalm (the cxiv) was used by the Jews in their service of the feast of the Passover; and is a proper Psalm appointed by our Church for Easter Day!

The Israelites had passed from before Pi-hahiroth, the sea had fled before them, they had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea; the sea became a wall unto them on the right hand and on the left; every circumstance tends to confirm the probable identification. We can see how the chariot wheels broke, and how they drave heavily. We can see how the one sea was driven back, and how the great sea broke through, and how the earth swallowed them up.

I have walked in the midst of the sea near this very Pi-hahiroth, "the place of abysses." When the sea was gone, the ground was so dry it scarcely took the impression of a camel's foot; I pressed the ferrule end of a walking stick into the ground, suddenly, after going in a few inches, the stick was swallowed up nearly to the hilt. This shows the character of the ground to be exactly such as we find in the sacred record, for when the Egyptians deliberately followed the Israelites into the midst of the sea, "even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, his horsemen. And it came to pass that in the morning watch the Lord looked into the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels that they drave them heavily; so the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians." The miracle of destruction begins, the waters return to their place in their strength. "Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them, they sank as lead in the mighty waters." Thus does Moses in his song describe the

¹ The word *into* should be rendered through, as \aleph is not used of motive either to or in a place, it is used of the means or instrument. See Exodus xiv, 16, quoted above, where \aleph is translated "through."

catastrophe ; and in the 12th verse he adds : " The earth swallowed them ; " no the locality is very closely defined, and Pi-hahiroth is indeed the place of gulfs ! Joshua (xxiv, 6, 7) very distinctly recognises the position and the action of the two seas—the Mediterranean and the Yam Suph. " I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and ye came unto *the sea* ; the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red Sea (Yam Suph). And when they cried unto the Lord, He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought *the sea* upon them, and covered them." It is precisely at this place the Mediterranean breaks through.

Moses and his people were safe on the dry ground, the sea was a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left ; they could see the utter overthrow of their enemies ; they could see how the wind not only carried back the waters over the midst of the sea, but how the foaming billows stood upright as a heap. It is grand to see the great waves from this place of refuge, the narrow bank, where the sea is a defence upon the right hand and upon the left, when there is a strong gale from the west, the surf runs very high, and threatens to overwhelm the long strip of land where the Israelites found themselves so secure. The great sea itself was a new wonder to these bond slaves, who had been accustomed to look out through a forest of reeds upon the placid sea which borders the plain of Zoan. The very reeds make a natural breakwater, so that there can be no surf upon the southern shore of Lake Menzaleh. Their first impression of the mighty waves that appeared to threaten them, but were kept within bounds and spent their strength upon the open beach of " the great Sea " must have astonished the Israelites as much as when the sea went back and became a way for the ransomed to pass over !

Excepting on Chesil Beach, and on the south coast of Ceylon, I never saw such a glorious surf. Indeed, at one point, and that just about where the Army of Pharaoh would feel its effects most terribly, when there is a west wind the sea breaks through, and adds its force to flood the very land which the east wind made dry.¹

But what is still more remarkable, this region of these miracles has become, in these modern days, under the overruling providence of the Most High, the very spot where people from all nations are being led. From the west side of the outer bank of the Suez Canal, where it passes through the Yam Suph, that sea can be *seen going back* when there is a strong east wind ! Is it at the scene of the miraculous deliverance that a great central port is being formed, with every probability of its becoming the chief port for the Holy Land ? Is this to be the very place to which the scattered people of God will come when the time of ingathering arrives ? They are already coming in increasing numbers each succeeding year. *Will the place of the Exodus be the open gate of the return ?*²

¹ The place where the sea breaks through is marked on the Admiralty chart of Port Said.

² See Jeremiah xxiii, 7, 8, where the great miracle of the return is made to eclipse entirely the miracle of the Exodus.

What is to be the future of Port Said and the Canal? Were it not that I saw the beginning of this new wonder, the opening up of this way for all nations to pass through, this centre for all, and especially for God's people who are scattered abroad, I would not have dared to scrutinise so closely this, story of the Exodus; but when I thought I saw signs of a great miracle that has only now begun, I was led to look out for any signs there of God's doings in the past, and I think that it is not only possible but probable that the one event points inevitably to the other: for He "who knoweth our thoughts long before, has made His plans from the beginning." This new view of the scene of the Exodus takes nothing away from its miraculous character as a providential interposition prepared and carried out, and as every detail tallies with the Scripture record as to when, where, and how, it seems to me to become even more extraordinary that before this elucidation of that which has been hid for more than thirty centuries, the greatest highway for all nations had been made, the preparations for the still greater miracle of the incoming had been actually going on at the very place where Moses sang his prophetic hymn, which is one of the songs of heaven, "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever!" (Ex. xv, 17, 18).

I believe that those maps which confine their information to geographical facts will best help in clearing up the difficulties that have perplexed for centuries the searching after truth. Much may yet be discovered by painstaking explorers, for Lower Egypt is fallow ground in the great field of research. Even where we follow up the Exodus from the place where everything serves to prove that the miraculous deliverance happened, we at once come upon the names of deserts, not of towns. There is first the wilderness of Shur, close to Pi-hahiroth (*compare* Numbers xxxiii, with Exodus xv, 22). Shur means "wall." In Wyld's map the site of this wall is given. At the time of the Exodus it had already been built nearly 150 years, and as no trace of it is visible on the surface, it was probably built only of crude bricks, or of mounds of sand, as a breastwork defence against the Shepherd Kings, perhaps the Pharaohs of Joseph's day, who were driven out before Moses's time. The oppressors of the Israelites knew not Joseph. Rameses the Great had become a mighty conqueror; he had his chariots and horsemen, his fortresses and towers (his Ethams and Migdols). The wall would soon become useless as a defence, for the sands in the desert of Shur are constantly on the move. However, from that desert the Israelites went onward to the wilderness of Etham (Numbers xxxiii, 8), so that they went back by the same way they had come, after they turned as God commanded, so as not to go by "the way of the land of the Philistines." Their enemies were destroyed, they had seen them dead on the sea-shore. When the Israelites returned, the signs of deliverance were seen in the tokens of God's victory, on the very verge of the field of battle, where the natural forces were His weapons of destruction.

Some had perished in the quicksands where God had led them, some had been overwhelmed by the sea which God had brought over them.

God guided and God protected; the Israelite host kept straight on instead of turning now into the "way of the land of the Philistines." They would probably get water at Etham from canals of the Pelusaic branch of the Nile, if that existed then. But in the wilderness of Etham they marched three days without meeting with water; then they would arrive at Marah, or the present site of the Bitter Lakes. Much of deep interest might be said of this region; but first there are some points in the Bible narrative more important to be noted with special reference to the name—Red Sea.

We are all familiar with the terms "Sea of Galilee" and "Dead Sea;" we read even of the brazen sea within the Temple Court, and the crystal sea in heaven, so we can understand the bias of the Hebrew mind in respect to the distinguishing, by special designations, the seas they wished to define. The first mention of the sea where the miracle of the Exodus took place occurs in Exodus x, 19, where we read that the locusts that had plagued the Egyptians were blown by a west wind: "a west wind" blew them into what the Hebrews called the Yam Suph. A north wind would be needed to blow them forty or fifty miles over the desert to reach the Red Sea at Suez. Yam means sea. "Suph" is exactly the same word that we find in the Book of Exodus to describe the reeds or flags amongst which the infant Moses was found. The Israelites on the plain of Zoan could see the locusts fall into the Yam Suph, or sea of reeds. Suph is used in the margin of the English version in the first verse of Deuteronomy, where mention is made of the plain near Jordan; in the Hebrew the word "Suph" alone is used, and some well known bed of reeds is probably meant, but our translators, being ignorant of the locality, add the word "sea," and make the Red Sea there! The Germans, however, always translate Yam Suph as Schilf Meer, or "sea of reeds." The Greek of the Septuagint does not thus translate Yam Suph, but *makes* it, as our authorised version does, ἐρυθρά θάλασσα or Red Sea. Hence many misunderstandings; but we must not try to clear these up by accepting comparatively modern designations; we must look at things as they were.¹ The Greeks knew the beauty of the Mediterranean blue, and when they first came to sail on the Yam Suph (Sea of Reeds), they need

¹ Geography was little known even at the time when the Septuagint was written, and it is possible that the local name of Yam Suph was forgotten. The Jews, who translated the Hebrew into Greek, had to accept the Grecian name of the sea, which had already a Greek designation. No local tradition had satisfactorily defined the place of the miracle which was wrought more than 1,000 years before the Septuagint was written. The translators may have accepted the modern Red Sea as the scene, to make the wonder appear the more gigantic, but the real miracle is the way in which God guided His people in the right way to the very place where they would be safe, and where their enemies would be destroyed, and there He ruled the winds and the seas according to His will.

not accept the name by which the Hebrews had called it—these had gone centuries before the Greeks came—nor need they adopt the name the Egyptians gave it, which had the same signification as that of the Hebrews (the Coptic Bible has the same); but by whatever channel the Greeks entered Egypt, and especially if they entered through the strip of sand into this inland sea, they would find their galleys floating on a coloured sea, *red*, with sand of a reddish colour, and more and more red at the time of the inundations of the Nile. (Sharpe in his History of Egypt says “the Nile reaches the Delta red with Ethiopian soil.”) The inner border next to Goshen is lined with reeds, so that at the present day the entrance to the Tanic branch, which leads to Zoan, is invisible from the Yam Suph; but, thanks to floating buoys of reeds, the channel can be traced and the river entered. On my way to Zoan I crossed this sea with a glorious breeze; it is quite a sea, for from its centre its own horizon bounds it, but the broken edges of mirage-like islands tell that land is near. Its waters are salt; the hundreds of beautiful lateen sails that are its only ornament show what a busy place it might be, were there myriads of slaves to keep up the embankments that in Egypt's golden days held back this salt water from the land of Zoan when the Nile mingled its flood with the lagoon of this Sea of Reeds. That long narrow strip of dry ground before mentioned prevented the ready exit of the water of the Nile into the Mediterranean, and still prevents it; so when the inundations come, part of the once fertile field of Zoan becomes a brackish marsh, for the waters of the sea and river intermingle and flood the plain. The exits to the sea are few and shallow.

There is yet another way to account for the Yam Suph being called the Red Sea. Although Herodotus and others mention the Red Sea, and carry the same name to the Persian Gulf, and even confound it with the Indian Ocean, we can trace the Grecian title into earlier times, and perhaps it was not from the colour of the water but from the name of the kingdom of a mythological king, the “Erythrian Sea” received its Grecian name. The story goes that the parents of Andromeda ruled in Ethiopia and claimed for their daughter a purer type of beauty than even that of the loveliest nymphs of the sea. Neptune was petitioned to punish such presumption; he sent a terrible flood over the land (the inundation of the Nile perhaps), and this could only be assuaged by the sacrifice of Andromeda; but Perseus, returning from his victory over Medusa, recovered the Ethiopian princess, and she became his bride. Erythras, the son born of this union, became the sovereign of the kingdom, and the sea upon the coast was known thereafter as the *ἐρυθρά θάλασσα*. When the mythological story was forgotten, the sea bordering upon Egypt kept the same name, and more modern translators called it the “Red Sea;” but as the limits of the kingdom of Erythras were never known, we can see how the name eventually was given to all the seas beyond even the limits of Cleopatra's power. But, after all, the mythical king might have received his name from the veritable sea, just as the Yam Suph may have got its Grecian name from its veritable colour.

In the direct narrative of the Exodus the one word sea (ים) is generally used. But when the plan of the route is given for the Israelites to take—they were not to go by “the way of the land of the Philistines,” although that was near—we are told that God led the people about, made them to turn towards the wilderness of the Yam Suph, which we choose to translate as the Red Sea. Moses in his song uses the same words, as well as the single word for sea. To the Hebrews *the sea* is always the Mediterranean, just as to Job, who dwelt in Arabia, we may suppose the sea he so frequently refers to was the modern Red Sea; it was the great sea to him, therefore one that needed no special local designation. But this special designation was needed for Moses at Migdol, because the Mediterranean was in front, the Sea of Sarbonis to the east, the Yam Suph, or Sea of Reeds, to the west, and by *that* he was to move to the encampment to which God had commanded him to go. I look at the Old Testament and I find places where Yam Suph is translated Red Sea, some undoubtedly referring to the place of the miracle of the Exodus. In the New Testament there are only two places where the Red Sea is named: those of course are found in the Greek, but that Greek is in both places the natural translation of the Septuagint words, for Yam Suph had come to be accepted as ἐρυθρά θάλασσα, wherever that might be. The word was unintelligible to the Greeks, but intelligible to the Hebrews, and in accordance with the Hebrew text, was probably, in both instances in the New Testament, first used in Hebrew; for in one case St. Stephen was speaking in Hebrew to the Jews, and in another case the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was trying to convince his countrymen of the truths of Christianity and the power of faith. There are doubts about whether the Epistle to the Hebrews was originally written in Hebrew, although Clement of Alexandria says it was;¹ but there can be no doubt of this, that when we offer to the Jews the New Testament in Hebrew, we tell them that the miracle took place at this same Yam Suph! In the Hebrew translation of the New Testament we do not translate the English or the Greek words: we go back to the ancient Hebrew, so that there may be no mistake, and adopt the words that Moses used, which are יַם־סוּף (Yam Suph).

But there are places in the Holy Scriptures which doubtless refer to the modern Red Sea, or rather to the Gulf of Akaba, for in most cases that seems to be the point referred to when the modern Red Sea is mentioned.² Here we must go back to the Hebrew, and also to the Greek text. The latter is a guide to the former, for in one place (Judges xi, 16) we find *Ζυφ θάλασσης*, and in another (1 Kings ix, 26) *ἐσχάτης θαλάσσης*, the localities being identical; the first is an attempt, perhaps,

¹ See Wordsworth's introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

² Elim, the encampment after Marah, has not been accurately defined. It seems to be probable that Elim (Numb. xxxiii, 9, and Ex. xv, 27), Elath (Deut. ii, 8), and Elath (1 Kings ix, 26), are identical. The meaning is the same in Hebrew, high trees.

to distinguish one sea from the other, the יַם־סוֹף (Yam Soph), from the יַם־סוּף (Yam Suph), while the second is a translation of the first, namely, "the end or head of the sea," near Eziongaber.

I can only state these facts to show that the view I take of the Exodus while fully coinciding with the Scripture narrative, almost forces us to accept the simple truth without having to be troubled with inconclusive conjectures as to localities; for these must continue to be inconclusive when they do not tally with the truth and have no satisfactory foundation. I have read the facts written, as it were, before me indelibly upon the very ground, though they were originally written on water and on sand, yet they cannot be blotted out if true. I have not been looking at a mirage, for I have had firm hold of the Bible, and have been looking at that which is most real and true. My view has not been confined to the history that is past, I am watching what is passing now, and I am waiting for the fulfilment of events that have been foretold in Scripture relative to God's loving care for His people. Our faith in the future is strengthened the more clearly we can see the Lord's goodness in events that have passed by. It was by that very "way of the land of the Philistines" where the Israelites were forbidden to travel, that our Saviour probably was carried, in the helplessness of infancy, into Egypt, and although tradition may fix the place of sojourn far away in the interior, beyond the land of Goshen, would He not find a ready shelter on the frontier, not far from the very place where Moses, as an infant, was rescued from the waters which flowed into the sea wherein the enemies of God's people were overwhelmed, and where that first great victory was won?

Whatever may have happened in that region may yet be excelled by signs more wonderful, and by events which will still more add to God's glory. There will be no doubt then as to the place; it is identified in prophecy of the last days: it is there called "the tongue of the Egyptian sea," a name which may still be a mystery, but the mystery will be revealed "when men go over dryshod, and when the Lord shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."¹

How quickly they are now learning the way, we can see at Port Saïd, and when the time of wandering is over the journey to the Land of Promise will be short, for the way thither, "by the way of the land of the Philistines," is nigh!

"I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way," is the prophecy of Jeremiah (xxxi, 9); this may prove to mean the straight canal going through the streams of the Delta, not far from the southern border of the Holy Land, as defined by Joshua (xv, 4, 47): supposed by some ancient translators (says Gesenius) to denote El Arish, the boundary between Syria and Egypt (*vide* the Hebrew text).

This sketch may be filled up more perfectly by those who have time and opportunity for research in different versions of the Bible. I only

¹ Isaiah xi.

venture to put it forward as pointing, perhaps, to the right direction for further research, and exploration on land.

Political events of great importance attract much attention to these regions, but this paper is meant rather for thoughtful students than for the casual glance of those who are merely interested in the events of the day. It is sent as a contribution to the *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*, as it attempts to clear the way for other and perhaps more interesting discoveries that may throw light upon events in Bible History, and serve to prove the accuracy of the narrative, especially at the very points where, from want of knowledge or from want of faith, some have been led to doubt.

Holy Trinity Vicarage,
Milton-next-Gravesend,
September, 1882.

.JOHN SCARTH.

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

GEOGRAPHY.

Mr. GLAISHER presented the report of the Committee, consisting of himself, the Rev. Canon Tristram, and the Rev. F. Lawrence, appointed for the purpose of promoting the Survey of Eastern Palestine. It was as follows :—

We have to report, as regards the Survey of Eastern Palestine, that the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund were able, in the spring of last year, to organize and equip an expedition for the execution of this important work. They were able to secure the services of Captain Conder, R.E., formerly in charge of the Survey of Western Palestine, and they were granted by the War Office the services of Lieutenant Mantell, R.E., a young officer who had recently left Chatham. They were also able to re-engage Messrs. Black and Armstrong, now pensioners of the Royal Engineers. The party left England on March 16th, 1881, arriving at Beyrout early in April. Their instructions were, on receiving the instruments, which were not quite ready when they left England, to begin the Survey in the north, and to make as much use of the friendly Druzes as possible. Unfortunately, a revolt of these people made work in the Hauran impossible, and it was finally decided by Captain Conder to commence in the south, where it appeared probable that operations could be conducted with safety. Accordingly, he led his party across the Jordan, and commenced and carried on the Survey for some months. Unfortunately, it had been discovered by the Turkish authorities that the Firman with which our party worked was one issued by a former Sultan, and that it did not convey the