

DEAD SEA OBSERVATIONS.

(Continued from p. 69.)

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SPRING VISIT TO 'AIN FESHKHAH, 1906.

THE first visit of the current year was made on April 17th from Jericho.

State of the Weather.—When I left Jerusalem on April 16th the weather was gloriously fine, bright sunshine, a few scattered clouds, and a fairly cool, gentle N.E. wind. Jericho was reached about 5. The whole southern end of the Dead Sea was shrouded in dense, black clouds, against which the sunlit mountains near 'Ain Feshkhah and E. of the Dead Sea stood out in extraordinary brilliance. A storm was evidently brewing: between 5 and 6 the black cloud bank steadily advanced from the S.E., although the wind at Jericho was by then a fairly stiff N.E. breeze. A little before 6 the wind momentarily dropped, then blew E., and then came some violent gusts from the S.E., blowing up the dust around us in thick clouds. A few minutes later a terrific downpour commenced, accompanied by most vivid and rapidly occurring flashes of lightning. The storm raged for over three hours, and was one of the most severe remembered in the land. In Jerusalem it was quite remarkable; in Jericho such a storm in April was never known to have occurred before. The whole Jordan valley was shrouded in dense cloud, the lightning at times was continuous, and there were some loud thunder bursts. After half an hour or so the wind dropped and the rain descended almost perpendicularly. The following observations made on the anæroid barometer may be of interest:—

Jerusalem, 10 a.m., 27·52. Inn of Good Samaritan, 2 p.m., 29·34.

Jericho, 5 p.m., 30·93: 6.30 p.m., 31·03 (height of storm):

6.45 p.m. (after wind dropped), 31·1: 7 p.m., 31·06: 9 p.m., 31.

By nine the storm was practically over.

The next morning was fine, the air fresh and cool. Some clouds covered the sun for a time in the early part of the day. Breeze

N.W., very slight in morning, later stronger from N.E. In the afternoon two thunder clouds were visible, one to N.E. over the mountains of Gilead, the other N.W. over, apparently, Nablus. Bright flashes of lightning appeared at times from these, and apparently heavy rain was falling. Between the Dead Sea and Jericho and Jerusalem there was, however, no rain. The atmosphere was very clear, and all the details of scenery on East side of the Dead Sea could be seen clearly.

Results of the previous night's storm were everywhere visible. The stream in the Wady Kelt, which was running freely the previous evening, was quite doubled in volume. In all the other Wadies crossed, although there was no running water, there were evident signs, *e.g.*, uprooted shrubs, washed out banks, piles of accumulated flood débris, of the violence of the flood that had traversed them the previous evening. In the *Wady Kumrân* the down-rush of water, drainage of *el Bükkâa*, must have been terrific, and it had spread itself over a considerably wider area than in ordinary rainy periods.

The surface of the sea was broken into small uncrested waves, which however gradually subsided as the morning progressed. No regular white line was visible, only a few irregular patches about half a mile from the shore.

The state of the level of the sea was very interesting. At both the 'Observation point' and at the 'rock in the Pool' the level had risen 34 inches since the Autumn observations. This is by far the greatest rise yet recorded on any one rainy season. The previous records were:—

1901—a rise of 14·5 ins.	Rainfall previous season, 15·94 ins.
1902—a rise of 6 ins.	Rainfall previous season, 20·04 ins.
1903—a rise of 25·5 ins.	Rainfall previous season, 26·67 ins.
1904—a rise of 8 ins.	Rainfall previous season, 21·05 ins.
1905—a rise of 23 ins.	Rainfall previous season, 37·32 ins.

The unusually marked rise of this season has followed the great rainfall. Up to the time of taking the observations 37·95 inches of rain had fallen.

The pool, which had recently become so shallow, is now deep, as it was some three years ago. It is again full of fish, and the reeds around have grown so thick as to shut off the view of the outlet eastwards to the Dead Sea. The accumulated sedimentary deposit

in the bottom of the pool, which made it once so admirable a 'mud bath' in places, has now been scoured out, and the bottom is clean and stony.

Barometric Observations.—'Ain Feshkhah, 10.30 a.m., 31°44; Jerusalem, 8 p.m., 27°54.

Thermometer.—'Ain Feshkhah, Atmosphere, 81° F.; Water, 80° F.

General Observations.—Reeds in a somewhat dried up condition, except in patches, where the young reeds have not yet come to flower. They almost completely cover previously cleared areas. As there were no cattle and no men at the oasis, the process of clearing areas by burning the reeds is at present in abeyance. There was no stream from the *Haish el-Mukdám*. The springs at 'Ain en Nahr are plentiful, and rise as high as ever they did.

Many storks, sand partridges and hawks seen, also a gazelle on the plain near *Wady Dabr*.

A new road has been almost completed, which will enable carriages to avoid the dangerous descent on the old Jericho road just before the plain is reached. This road runs from the Jericho road about a mile below the Inn of the Good Samaritan, following an old and much-frequented path to *Nebi Músá*, and after reaching the proximity of that famous shrine it follows the old Jericho-Nebi Músá road to Jericho. From the mountains it traverses the Jericho plain in a perfectly straight direction for between three and four miles. By means of this road several carriages conveyed passengers to the *Nebi Músá* festivals this spring. Some small bridges and culverts are still needed to complete the work.

NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS AND FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS.

Bible Side-lights from the Mound of Gezer. By R. A. Stewart Macalister, M.A., F.S.A. The publication of this book is well timed. Among the many subscribers to the Fund not a few have, from time to time, shown some impatience with the careful search of the ruins of Gezer and the results recorded in the *Quarterly Statement*, many of which have appeared to them as merely of