

they were, died the day after setting out for Ujiji, and the goods were brought back to Unyanyembe. I have little faith now in the Sheikh Saeed bin Salim, and shall write to Mr. Stanley, who will probably not have been able as yet to quit the place, and authorize him to make such arrangements as he can to get the goods forwarded, or, if not, to act for me to the best of his judgment in protecting them from plunder; but in such a state of things as this, it will be most fortunate if they have escaped, and ever reach their destination.

"The messengers will start on their return in a day or two, and should be able to accomplish the journey easily in seventy or seventy-five days, for the way so far is open and food plenty.

"To the Arab ivory trade the present position of affairs is most serious; they have now settled far up in the country, and collected about them thousands of slaves drawn from the country itself: these they cannot do without, and yet cannot trust; they are all armed, and may turn against their masters.

"The chief with whom they are at war is well provided with arms, and a caravan of his is now on the way up with several hundred kegs of powder, to stop these people on the way. The Wasagara have been told already to attack and plunder them; but this, too, may be but the beginning of similar attacks on Arab caravans, for the wild tribes, when once plunder has been encouraged, will care little whom they attack.

"I have, &c.,

"JOHN KIRK,

"Acting Political Agent and Consul for Zanzibar."

"Earl Granville."

Captain R. F. BURTON said this was not the first time that disturbances had broken out between the Arab trading communities and the natives of Unyanyembe and Unyamwezi. The present state of things might continue for two or three years; but if Livingstone wished to avoid passing through that district there would be no difficulty in his returning by the south of Lake Tanganyika. At the same time, a white man like Livingstone, fearless, and speaking the native languages, would be able safely to pass through places in which no black man dare venture. He had not the slightest fear with regard to Livingstone. He was convinced that the moment anything happened to him the news would rapidly spread to the coast, and the Society would hear of it almost as if it came by telegraph.

The following Papers were then read:—

- I.—*Notes on an Exploration of the Tulul el Safá, the Volcanic Region east of Damascus, and the Umm Nirán Cave.* By Captain R. F. BURTON, Medallist R.G.S.

[ABBRIEMENT.]

ON Wednesday, May 24, 1871, we—that is to say, Mr. Charles F. Tyrwhitt Drake and I—left Damascus, intending to commence a tour through the Hauran Mountain (Jebel Durúz Haurán) by an exploration of the Tulul el Safá. Little need be said concerning our first eight days of travelling over a well-worn line, except that we found the mountain, like Syria and Palestine generally, explored as to the surface in certain well-worn lines, and elsewhere absolutely

unknown. My friend's map of the tour will be a considerable addition to our scanty geographical knowledge of the Trachonitis.

We sketched during that week some 120 inscriptions, including three in the Palmyran dialect. We also dug under the tower of Bassos at Shakkah, the Saccæa of Ptolemy, and we found that here, as at Palmyra, the dead were mummified. Three long inscriptions, in Greek hexameters and pentameters, give all possible information about Bassos, and the date of his death is generally placed in A.D. 176. On Friday, May 26, we ascended the quaintly fashioned tumulus of clay, or rather indurated mud, sprinkled over with scorïæ, which the people call Tell Shayhán, from the holy man whose tomb crowns the summit. The importance of this feature has been greatly under-estimated in all our maps. A view from the south-west, where it appears a huge legless arm-chair, at once shows that the Leja or Refuge, the Argob of the Hebrews and the Western Trachon of the Greeks and Romans, is mostly the gift of the Tell Shayhán. It is, in fact, a lava-bed, a stone torrent poured out by this volcano over the ruddy-yellow clay and the limestone floor of the Hauran Valley, whilst in later ages the surface has been modified by the action of the elements. Dr. Wetzstein rightly defines the limits of the pyriform "Mal Paiz," placing "Brák" town (Burák or the Cisterns) on the north at the stalk of the pear, Umm el Zaytún on the east, Zora (Dar'ah) at the westernmost edge, and Ri'mat el Lohf to the south. But he feeds the Leja with a "grosser lavastrom," proceeding in an artificially straight line from Jebel Kulayb, and flowing from south-east to north-west. We ascertained, by careful inspection, that this feature does not exist. At Kanawát, the ancient Kenath and Canatha, Mr. C. F. Tyrwhitt Drake secured the fine altar-head of basalt now lying in the rooms of the Anthropological Institute. At the noble ruins of Si'a were found two Palmyran inscriptions, showing that the Palmyrene of Ptolemy extended to the south-west, far beyond the limits usually assigned to it by the moderns. We then ascended the Kulayb for the purpose of mapping the tops of many craters which appeared to be scattered in confusion. Viewed from the height of the Libanus, the Anti-Libanus, and the Haurán, this mountain appears like a dwarf pyramid, studding the crest of a lumpy blue wall, and it is popularly supposed to be the apex of the range which palæographers have identified with the Ptolomeian "Alsadamus Mons."* The name is erroneously written Kulayb, meaning "little dog," and is mispro-

* See, however, Dr. Wetzstein (p. 90). I avoid making extracts from his excellent 'Reisebericht,' and my leisure moments are employed in translating and annotating it.

nounced Kulayyib. The orthography is Kulayb, "little heart," or "turning point," and the latter is doubtless the correct sense, as the central ridge of the Jebel Haurán here drops southwards into an upland valley. On a nearer view El Kulayb has one peculiarity: where all the cones are barren heaps of red and yellow matter, it is feathered with trees up to the summit. A little south of the apex we found a diminutive crater opening eastwards. The aneroid showed 4.18° lower than the summit of the Cedar Block, the greatest altitude in Syria and Palestine; the B.P. 205.50° (temp. 75°), and the hygrometer supplied by M. Casella stood at 0° .

The summit of El Kulayb gave us two valuable observations. The apparently confused scatter of volcanic and cratered hill and hillock fell into an organized trend of 356° to 176° , or nearly north and south. The same phenomenon was afterwards noticed in the Safá Region, and in its outliers, the Tulúl el Safá, which lie hard upon a meridian. Thus the third or easternmost great range separating the Mediterranean from the Euphrates Desert, does not run parallel with its neighbours the Anti-Libanus and the Libanus, which are disposed north-east and south-west.

The second point of importance is that the "Turning-point Mountain" is not the apex of the Jebel Durúz Haurán. To the east appeared a broken range whose several heights, beginning from the north, were:—

1. Tell Ijánah bearing 38° , and so called from its village. Though not found in Dr. Wetzstein's map, it is rendered remarkable by a heap of ruins, looking from afar like a cairn, and it is backed by the Umm Haurán hill bearing 94° .

2. The Tell, rock and fountain of Akriba (Dr. Wetzstein's Akraba), bearing $112^{\circ} 30'$.

3. Tell Rubáh, bearing 119° ; and

4. Tell Jafneh, a table-mountain with a cairn at the end, bearing $127^{\circ} 30'$.

During the course of the day we passed between Nos. 1 and 4, and we assured ourselves that our observation with a pocket goniometer and spirit-level, taken from the summit of El Kulayb, was not far wrong in assigning 300 feet of greater altitude to Tell Ijánah. But though the "Turning-point Mountain" is not the apex of the Haurán highlands, it conceals the greater elevation from those standing either upon the crest of the Hermon, or in any part of the Auranitis Valley.

A visit to the eastern settlements facing the Euphrates Desert convinced us that the Jebel Durúz Haurán has greatly changed since it was described by travellers and tourists. Until the last

150 years it was wholly in the hands of the Bedawin; at that time it began to be occupied by the Druzes, whom poverty and oppression drove from their original seats in the Wady Taym and upon the slopes of the Libanus and the Hermon. During the last five years not less than seventeen villages have been repeopled, and in the autumn of 1866 some 700 or 800 families fled to this safe retreat. We can hardly wonder at the exodus, when we are told that nearly half the villages of the Jaydúr district, the ancient Itureæ, eleven out of twenty-four, have been within twelve months ruined by the usurer and the tax-gatherer. It is hardly necessary to dwell upon the short-sighted policy which drives an industrious peasantry from its hearths and homes to distant settlements, where defence is much more easy than offence; and where, as Cromwell said of Pease Burn, "ten men to hinder are better than a hundred to make their way."

On the evening of Wednesday (May 31st) we reached Shakkah, the ancient Saccæa, still showing extensive ruins and sundry fine specimens of Hauranic architecture, especially the house of Shaykh Hasan 'Brahim, with its coped windows and its sunken court. Here we were received by the Druze chief, Kabalán el Kala'áni. This person had met us at Kanawát, and had promised an escort to Umm Nírán. He now warned us that his people were on bad terms with the Ghiyás Bedawin, who were in their summer quarters, the Ruhbah Valley, distant only about 15 geographical miles from the cave. Presently we found out that his only object was to urge an exorbitant demand for some ten horsemen—a less number would fear to travel. We at once determined to make our *point de départ* the little village of Taymá, lying about 8 miles to the south-east. It was out of our way, but the Shaykh Yusuf Sharaf had shown himself our friend. In justice to the Druzes I must remark that Kabalán el Kala'áni was the sole base exception to the hospitality of his race, and to the national affection with which they regard their old friends and allies the English. And as a proof that his conduct was generally reprobated, six youths, the sons of Shaykhs, or chiefs, at once volunteered to escort us, and refused all remuneration.

Our first step was to dismiss all the *bouches inutiles*; the next was to secure a Bedawi guide, and two camels for carrying grain and water. Our own little party thus consisted of Mr. C. F. Tyrwhitt Drake, myself, and a single attendant—Habíb Jemayyil, a Syrian youth of good family, from about Bayrut, who had, during a year and a half, more than once proved his pluck. We had a poor chance against 200 or 300 Bedawin, a force which the bandits can

always muster, and the value of the mares mounted by our escort suggested that their tactics would be the Parthian, without firing *à tergo*. Still the offer was intended as an act of civility, and we could not refuse it without seeming ungracious.

Despite the stiff scirocco, which blurred the outlines of the distant highlands, before beautifully crisp and clear, we left Taymá at 1.50 p.m., on Friday, June 2nd. The bridle-path led past sundry small villages of Druzes to the well-defined Wady Jahjáh, which after rain discharges eastward into the basaltic outcrop, known as El Harrah, the "hot" or "burnt land." One hour's ride over rough but not difficult ground placed us at the Krá'a, which is simply a lava-torrent, showing volcanic dýkes, secondary craters, and blow-holes, with barrows arbitrarily disposed at all angles. The two normal forms, the long barrow and the round barrow, are sketched by Dr. Wetzstein (p. 13). He considers them to be big bubbles, whose reticulated surface is almost invariably blown off at the top, or split along the ridge, by the bursting of the gases which elevated them. In some cases, however, the narrowness and sharpness of the gashes at the summits, and of the clefts which divide the lengths, seem to argue that the mere contraction of the cooling mass is sufficient to part and split it; moreover, not a few have cross cracks as well as longitudinal fissures.

Evidently the basaltic formation of the Trachons is of younger date than that of the Hermon. An active volcano presupposes the neighbourhood of the sea or of some large lake. This outbreak probably belongs to the days when the Eastern Desert—a flat stoneless tract extending from the Trachonitis to the Euphrates—was a mighty inlet of the Indian Ocean. The northern limit of this extinct Mediterranean may be found in the range of limestones and sandstones, the furthest outliers of the anti-Libanus, upon whose southern and eastern part Palmyra is built, and which runs *viâ* Sukhneh eastward to the actual valley of the Great River. At the river known as Kasr el Hayr, in the Jayrud-Palmyra Valley, I found the stone composed mainly of scallops or pectines so loosely agglutinated that the fingers could pick them out.

We crossed the K'rá'a in 55 minutes, and entered the Naka', rolling ground of loose ruddy-yellow soil, the detritus of basalt which, during wet weather, balls the feet so as to prevent walking, and in which, during the dry season, horses sink up to the fetlock. This is the staple material of the Haurán. Our passage of the Naka' occupied two hours. We then ascended a hill-brow, which in Spain would be termed a "Loma," and fell into El Hazm: the only difference in the aspect of the land was a trifle more of stone, whilst the

basalt was either lamp-black or snow-white with the usual cryptogam. These people borrow from the Bedawin a name for every modification of terrain, however trifling. The lands to the north—a mixture of clayey soil and stone—are called El Hármiyyah; the stony ground to the east is the Wa'ar, the usual generic term; and still on our right ran the rocky Wady el K'rá'a, which we had crossed and left southwards.

Here we had our first fair view of the Safá. The little volcanic block, with its seven main summits, is well laid down in outline by Dr. Wetzstein (p. 7), and to its south is an outlying scatter of cones and craters, which the Druze youths called Tulúl el Safá, a term naturally confined to the northern offsets at Damascus, where no others can be seen. A deeper blackness made the Safá stand conspicuously out of the Harrah: here the latter is a rolling waste of dark basalt, broken by and dotted with lines and veins of yellow clay, bone-dry at this season, and shimmering in the summer sun. These veins are generally known as "Ghadir," or hollows where water stagnates. The trend is north-east to the Ruhbah, a long waving streak of argillaceous formation. In the far distance, extending from east to south-east, and raised by refraction above the middle ground of flat basalt which lay beyond our rolling volcanic foreground, gleamed the sunlit horizon of the Euphrates Desert—that mysterious tract never yet crossed by European foot.

Here we began to appreciate the precautionary measures by which the old Roman soldiery kept the Bedawin at bay. Far to the east, and in the heart of the Harrah, which is bisected by a military road, are shown their outstations, Khirbat el Bayza, El Odaysiyyeh, and Nimárah, which must have been impregnable to the wild man, and behind which lay the waterless waste investing the fertile regions of Syria. But whilst civilization in these lands ebbs and flows, the Bedawi exerts a constant pressure from without: the moment he finds a weak place he rushes at it with ruin in his van and barbarism in his rear. Hence, according to no less an authority than Napoleon the Great, the ephemeral tenure of empire in olden West Asia. As has been shown under modern rule the Bedawi is lord of the land, and he will remain so till some strong European power revives the strong system of the Romans.

The next march was peculiarly severe. We left our hard beds at 4 A.M., and a few yards of advance showed us the "Ghadir Abu Sarwál," the "Hollow of the Father of Breeches," where we had been promised water. This deep depression in a shallow wady underlies a heap of rock which forms the right bank, and the yellow surface of caked and curling silt proved to us that it had

been bone-dry for the last six weeks. Here we again fell into the "Sultani," a main track which we had lost during the night; and, after half-an-hour, we struck El Nabash, a depression in the slope with the shapeless ruins of a settlement upon both banks. Then bending to the south-east, where a network of paths converged, we struck, at 6 A.M., the Ghadir el Ka'al: thus expending a total of 8 hours 40 minutes upon a march which, all assured us, may be covered by laden camels in 6 hours to 6 hours 30 minutes. This basin is, according to our guides, the drainage point of the Wady el K'rá'a, at this season a mere sink without watershed: trending east and west, it is about 90 yards long and some 4 feet deep: it does not outlast the year, and its highest water-mark is not more than 4 feet above the actual level where it would flood the eastern clay-plain.

We spent an enjoyable 50 minutes at the water, and then the watch showed 7:15 A.M. We retraced our steps, and fell into the Saut, or whip-thong. This is a line of drab-coloured clay, which subtends the western Lohf or ruins of the northern Tulul el Safá.

* * * * *

After 1 hour 50 minutes up the Saut, which often became a scatter of stones apparently swept down from the Lohf, we turned sharp to the right, and crossed the lava-ridge, where it had a break; here it was subtended by several parallels which bore much the appearance of earthworks and cavaliers. Within was a grim and grizzly scene of volcanic ruin and devastation, a landscape spoiled and broken to pieces; here ghastly white, there gloomiest black, and both glowing under the gay sun of a Syrian June. The altitude was that of Damascus city, but the light sweet breath of the north ceased when we left the Ghadir, and the shape, as well as the components of the "Wa'ar," or Trachon, admirably condensed the heat: the air danced and reeked, affecting man and beast with intolerable thirst. All was bare of Bedawin: at the Rajm el Shalshal, however, where we rested in a shady fissure, we again saw traces of our friend on the dromedary.

We were presently surprised, at 4.20 P.M., by seeing the advanced party spring suddenly from their horses, and by hearing the welcome words, "Umm Nírán." The transit of the ugly monotonous "Wa'ar" had occupied four hours twenty-five minutes, and the day's journey a total of eight hours fifteen minutes. From Taymá we had spent seventeen hours, which result was a distance of 23½ direct geographical miles.

The feature, concerning which we had heard so many curious

and contradictory tales, lies at the western foot of a fang-shaped, scarped and round-topped block, which the Arabs called El Zirs, from its likeness to a grinder-tooth. Occupying the eastern slope of a rounded hillock of basalt, the mysterious cave opens to the S.S.E. (133°), with a natural arch of trap which at first sight appears artificial, and it is fronted by a circular hollow of clay, to which rude steps lead from the stony eastern edge. There is another approach from the west, and both show that at times the water is extensively used. All above this cave is dry as the sand of Sind: after rain, however, there is evidently a drainage from the fronting basin into the cave.

The floor, coated with shallow dry mud, is of ropy and other basalt, and the slope is easy and regular. The roof shows a longitudinal ribbing as if the breadth had been nearly doubled. A sensible widening, with a lozenge-shaped pier, the rock being left to act as column, succeeds the low and narrow adit through which a man must creep. Passing from this bulge to a second shaft, after a total of 200 yards we reach the water, a ditch-like channel, averaging 4 feet in breadth, with mastababs, or flat benches of cut rock, on either side, varying from 2 to 6 feet wide. The line then bent at an angle of 50° to the N.N.E. Here, by plunging his head below the water, and by raising it beyond where the roof-spine descended, my companion found an oval-shaped chamber, still traversed by the water. He could not, however, reach the end; a little beyond this point the arch ceiling and the water met. The supply was perfectly sweet, and the thermometer showed 71° to 72° Fahr., the air being 74° Fahr.; the atmosphere was close and dank, and the basalt roof was dripping. The water varied in depth from a few inches to mid-thigh, and the taped length was 140 feet. Thus the total length of the tunnel was 340 feet; but it may be greater. According to the Arabs, it is supplied by springs as well as by rain, and the hottest season fails to dry it.

This curious reservoir is evidently natural, but it has been enlarged and disposed by art.

We are now at the southern limit of the northern Tulúl el Safá, a projection from the Safá Proper, the eastern *Τράχων* of the Classics, which apparently has been so puzzling to modern translators. Strabo (Lib. xvi. cap. 2, para. 20, Hamilton and Falconer; London, Bohn, 1857) says; "*Above* (read "beyond") *Damascus are the two hills called Trachones* (read "the so-called Trachones, namely the twin Wa'ars of the Lejá and the Safá"); *those towards the parts* (i.e. south and south-east) *of Damascus, occupied by Arabians and Idumeans promiscuously, are mountains of difficult access, in which are*

cases extending to a great depth. One of these caves (Umm Nírán?) is capable of containing 4000 thieves." Pliny (vol. i. chap. 16. Bostock and Riley; Bohn, 1858) reckons Trachonitis amongst the Tetrarchies. The 'Revolt of the Trachonitis' is the subject of an Essay by Josephus ('Antiquities of the Jews,' Book xvi. chap. 9). Ptolemy (chap. xv. Table iv.) mentions amongst Syrian mountains the Alsadamus, whose centre would be in π . long. 71° , and in n . lat. 33° , and the Bathanesæ Provincie (Bataniyyah or Bashan) à cujus orientali parte est Saccæa (Shakkah). Et hujus sub Alsadamum Montem sunt Trachonitæ Arabes." Popular works (*e.g.* Smith's 'Classical Dictionary,' *sub voce*) of course repeat that Trachonitis was "for the most part a sandy desert intersected by two ranges of rocky mountains called Trachones." Similarly in the 'Concise Dictionary of the Bible,' Trachonitis is represented to have included "the whole of the modern province (!) called El-Lejah, with a section of the plain (?) southward, and also a part of the western (add eastern) declivity of Jebel (Durúz) Hauran. This may explain Strabo's two Trachones." Our fortnight's excursion will, it is hoped, introduce a correct topography for future writers. The fact is that the Safá or Eastern Trachon, together with the western, that is to say the Leja Proper, would be included in the Tetrarchy of Trachonitis, which thus extended from Auranitis or the Hauran Valley to the Desert of the Euphrates.

The shape of the Tulúl el Safá region is pyriform, like the Leja; the lone El Mafradah forms the stalk; the bluff end to the north is the Tell Shámát together with its dependencies, whilst to the north-west the boundary is the Arz el Jaháshshiyah, looking like the dry bed of a torrent, brown and rust-stained. We did not lay down the eastern limit, but the villagers of Dhumayr pointed out certain Istirát or unnamed cones depending upon the Umm Rakfbeh. This frontier may perhaps be extended to the Jebel Says bordering upon the Hamád Region.

We set out at 5 A.M. in a cool west wind, making north for the great red cinder-heap known as Umm el Ma'azah (Mother of the She-goat). After 1 hour 35 minutes, in which we covered perhaps $4\frac{1}{2}$ direct geographical miles, we halted for observations at the foot of the cone, and then we fell into the trodden way which winds round to its west. After 20 minutes of slow march, we directed the camel-men to make straight for the Bir Kasam, whilst we ascended the Tell 'Akir, by the Bedawin pronounced El 'Ajir. Usually known as the Shaykh el Tulúl, this "Head-man of the Hillocks" rises some 7 statute miles from the Umm el Ma'azah. We then rode up in 1 hour 20 minutes to the foot of the cone,

which springs from a high plane, with large outliers trending to the south with a little westing. Some minutes were spent in stiff climbing up the ridgy surface of thoroughly burnt scoriæ. The angle of the north-western slope was $19^{\circ} 30'$, that of the north-eastern 22° ; the southern ramp up which we walked showed $22^{\circ} 30'$, and the stoniest part above the lateral folds reached 24° . We then ascended the eastern or highest point, for a better prospect of the peculiar scene before us. Viewed from this elevation the volcanic Tells and craters, modern tertiary and pleiocene, which before seemed scattered in wild confusion, fell into three regular lines, disposed nearly north and south. The middle range is represented by the Umm Izn (Mother of an Ear), so called because the table-top has a projection at one end, a kind of "cock-nose," breaking the straight line of features. About the centre of the line stands the "Monarch of the Mounts," and to the south project the Zirs and the Raghayleh Blocks. The plain was silt upon a limestone floor, explaining how from afar a yellow sheet appears spread to the very bases of the cones and pyramids. The latter rise from this sterile investment in naked heaps, black and white, red and yellow; they are table-topped and saddle-backed, as well as conical, whilst inky dots show the smaller fumaroles and sable bars and lines the connecting ridges of basalt. All the Tells, especially those to the north-west, project immensely long black tails to the east. The zebra-like stripes of black and white are the effect of the regularly blowing west wind, which dispose the fine and comminuted dust of the shells produced about the Swamps, in thin sheets over the western slopes of the cones, whilst the latter shelter the basalt ground to their lee or east.

After inspecting the 'Akir, we had a truly wearying and monotonous march over the hilly plains to the west. The Druzes, as usual, rode forwards, leaving us to follow with the camels, and every hour and a quarter of march obliged us to dismount, tiring us by want of exertion. At last, after three hours thirty minutes of actual riding, we came upon the scorched yellow white flat of the Kala'at and Ayn Kasam (the Fort and Hill of an Oath), concerning which I cannot discover a trace of Arab tradition. We reached the fort in thirty minutes, and thus ended our total of seven hours forty-eight minutes, the work of that day. We had great trouble in finding the well which maps place to the south-east of the Kala'at. It really bears 10° and $9^{\circ} 30'$ from the Tell Kasam.

The next day (Monday, June 5) was the last of our desert excursion. The Druzes quietly left us during the night, under the escort of one of their number, Mahommed Kazamani, who, though

badly wounded in a late fray, followed us to Damascus and received a five-shot revolver as a reward. But instead of making for Dhumayr *viá* the Derb el Ghazawát, or Road of Razzias, fortunately for us we determined, despite the unusually hot and still weather, to inspect the Dakwah Mountain, upon which so many of our fellow-countrymen have cast longing looks from the minarets of Damascus. The view from the summit enabled us to correct the position of the Salás Ikhwán, or Three Brothers. As will be seen, they adjoin the Dakweh, whereas our maps place them upon a parallel instead of a meridional line, and give them the curiously corrupted name "Tulesawa." At 4.50 P.M. we reached the Dhumayr village, where we were received with effusion by the good Rashid El Bostaji. We had covered 20 indirect miles from Jebel Dakweh, and a day's total of 30.

Our escape had been narrow. The messenger set out from Shakkah on Friday, June 2, and reached the Ruhbah Valley on the evening of the next day. The Sunday was employed in mustering the Bedawin. The latter missed us at the Umm Nírán, at the Bir Kasam, and upon the Robbers' Road; in fact, they were a few hours too late, and our zigzag path had saved us from the *Royaume des Taupes*. The party numbered 80 to 100 horsemen, and some 200 Redifs (dromedary riders), two to each saddle. I duly appreciated the compliment of sending 300 men to dispose of three. The felon act failed, however, and our fifteen days of wandering ended without accident. We entered Damascus before noon on Wednesday, June 7.

Mr. W. G. PALGRAVE said Captain Burton was the only European who had properly explored the region of El Safá. He himself had been over about two-thirds of the same ground, though without reaching the cavern which Captain Burton had described. His own visit to that part of the country terminated at the southern end of El Leja. This great volcanic district was celebrated as being the scene of the destruction of the Egyptian army in the time of Ibrahim Pasha when they attacked the Druzes in their basaltic labyrinth. In every respect, the description given by Captain Burton was most exact. For himself, during the last five years his time had been busily passed in that part of the world known as the Caucasus and the Anti-Caucasus, and since his return to England his state of health had entirely prevented him from preparing what he should have otherwise prepared, some memorial of his labours for the benefit of the Society. However, he trusted, before leaving England, to be able to do so, and to give some information regarding the volcanic district of Eastern Asia Minor and the traces of the glacial period, which were very distinctly marked on the uplands of those regions.

The PRESIDENT stated that M. de Sauley had announced his discovery of a new dynasty which had reigned in the Trachonitis. It had always been known that Herod appointed a Jewish general, Zamaris, to guard the trade coming from Babylonia *viá* Palmyra to Damascus, and coins of that king were in existence; but lately De Sauley had discovered coins of the son and the

grandson, so that an actual dynasty was now acknowledged in numismatology. These kings must have ruled during the whole of the first century A.D. Very little had been known about them hitherto, or about the country. Some twenty years ago a Turkish general who had commanded an expedition there, gave him a description of the district; and Captain Burton's account now verified the accuracy of the description.

2. *Geography of Southern Arabia.* By the Baron VON MALTZAN.

HAVING in former years travelled in Central Arabia, and accomplished in 1860 a pilgrimage to Mekka, the author's attention has been of late particularly drawn to another part of the peninsula, viz. the extreme South. Wrède's travels had left a great part of Southern Arabia unexplored. They, in fact, only comprised the country between 48° and $49^{\circ} 30'$ E. long., reaching from the coast to about 15° N. lat. Another valuable addition to our knowledge of the southern part of Arabia was made in July, 1870, by the excursions of Captain Miles and Mr. Munzinger. It may in fact be said that these gentlemen continued the work of Wrède. Thus a space of nearly three degrees of longitude and about two of latitude of Southern Arabia might be called more or less explored. The author spent the winter of 1870-1 at and near Aden, and first investigated the language of the Mahrah tribes. He was enabled to draw a grammar of their interesting language, which is evidently a dialect of the now nearly extinct old South Arabic idiom, closely connected with the Ethiopian and even with the modern Tigré dialect. Part of these researches have already been published by him in the German 'Oriental Review.'

For his geographical researches he chose the territory to the north of Aden between the strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and 48° E. long. Here he had also a vast extent of nearly virgin soil, it being a most extraordinary but, nevertheless, true fact, that during the 32 years that Aden has been an English colony nothing had been done for the exploration of the interior of the neighbouring country. The nation which furnishes the most intrepid of all travellers has left a country so near its own possessions unexplored. He commenced by some excursions in the neighbourhood of Aden. These he afterwards extended to some of the neighbouring little states of independent sultans. But he soon found that the information he obtained on these occasions was very limited. He therefore began another system—gathering as much information about it as he could at Aden.

He began a systematic research, receiving every day a certain number of Arabs from all parts of the interior, and questioning