

PROSPECTUS OF THE PROPOSED EXPEDITION TO SEA OF GALILEE.

AFTER the surveyor, the archæologist ; after the theodolite, the spade. The great Survey of Palestine, west of the Jordan, having been brought to a successful conclusion, the Committee are enabled to turn their attention to that examination of certain special districts which was contemplated in the original prospectus of the Society, and has been always kept in view. One great object of the Survey was to furnish that solid geographical knowledge without which the Historian and Commentator, as well as the Geologist and Mineralogist, work in the dark. That object is now attained. The ground has been cleared, the opportunity for a close examination gained. We have a real grasp of those districts in the Holy Land which are connected with the Life and Labour of Our Lord. The Survey is one means to the great end of Biblical illustration. For six years we have been engaged in work on the surface : we now propose to work *beneath* it.

Foremost amongst those special districts is the Sea of Galilee. A special examination of these shores will produce results of the greatest value. The work might be confined to a limited period ; its cost might fall within a stated sum ; and it would furnish materials for a monograph to be published without delay.

Our present knowledge of the Lake district may be briefly summed up. The western shore has been surveyed and the level of the sea accurately determined by Lieutenants Conder and Kitchener in the great Survey on a scale of one inch to a mile. Captain Anderson made a reconnaissance of the Eastern shore in 1866 ; tentative excavations were conducted at one or two points in the same year by Major Wilson. On the plain of Gennesareth there are many mounds, remains, probably, of towns and villages in which our Lord taught. These require examination. On the Eastern shore there are the sites of Gergesa (Khersa), Gamala (El Husn), the still unidentified Hippos, and Gadara (Umm Keis), which have never been thoroughly explored.

The main interest, however, gathers round the three towns of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida. The controversy with regard to the sites of the three Gospel cities is still open. Capernaum has been variously placed at the Round Fountain, at the mounds of Minyeh, and at Tel Hum. The advocates of the first-named site, the Round Fountain, maintain that it is the Capharnahum of Josephus, and point to the fact that the coracinus is still found in it ; on the other hand, its opponents argue that there are no ruins nearer the fountain than Abu Shusheh, which is on the hills some distance off ; that no tradition has ever been connected with it ; that the fountain does not now, and never could have irrigated any considerable portion of Gennesareth ; and that the fountain of Ain et Tabigah, once carried at a high level by a remarkable

piece of engineering into the Plain of Gennesareth, is more likely to be the fountain mentioned by Josephus. In favour of the mounds of Minyeh, it is urged that the old Roman road which crossed the Jordan at Jisr Benât Yakûb left the shores of the lake at this point; that the name of Capernaum might very well be taken from the Tabigah fountain, the waters of which were carried along the face of the hill above the mounds by a rock-hewn conduit; that the mounds in themselves are evidence of the former existence of a place of some size; and that Talmudic doctors (see Conder's "Tent Work in Palestine," vol. ii., p. 184) speak of Capernaum as the city of Minyeh. Against the site, it is agreed that no traces have been found of old buildings, or of any tombs of a distinctively Jewish character; and that in the excavations of 1866 nothing but modern masonry and pottery was found at the lowest depth (12 feet) reached; while the earlier Christian traditions favour Tel Hum rather than Minyeh.

The advocates of Tel Hum point to the existence of ruins covering a large extent of ground, including those of an undoubted Jewish synagogue, which appears to be the earliest of its kind in Galilee; the existence of a remarkable Jewish tomb of white stone beneath the basalt; and of another tomb, apparently one of a group, constructed in masonry on the plan of the rock-hewn tombs; the similarity in the name—"Mount of Hum" for "Village of Nahum;" early Christian tradition, the fact that the synagogue has been included in the scheme of a later building, probably an early Christian church; traces of an old road leading to Kerazeh (Chorazin); the fountain at Et Tabigah, which, on the hypothesis that Minyeh is not an old site, is near enough to have given its name to the place. Against Tel Hum it is argued that it is too far from the fountain of Tabigah; that there are no traces of a Roman road in the neighbourhood, or of any piers on the shore; and that the apparent similarity of the name is not real, because one of the radicals in the word Nahum has disappeared, and the modern name simply means "black mound." To show the diversity of opinion on the subject of Capernaum, it may be mentioned that Dr. Wilson ("Lands of the Bible"), Mr. Hepworth Dixon ("The Holy Land"), Sepp, Ritter, Major Wilson ("Recovery of Jerusalem"), Dr. Bonar, and Dr. Socin ("Bædeker's Handbook"), either pronounce strongly for, or incline in favour of, Tel Hum; while Dr. Robinson, Canon Tristram, Mr. MacGregor, Lieutenant Conder ("Tent Work in Palestine"), and Lieutenant Kitchener, advocate the claims of Khan Minyeh.

Chorazin, in the same way, has been placed at Minyeh, Tabigah, Tel Hum, and Kerazeh. Bethsaida, or the two Bethsaidas, at Minyeh, Ain et Tabigah, Tel Hum, Et Tell, and the mouth of the Jordan. Taricheæ, at Kerak, south of Tiberias, while later investigations seem to show that it was really north of that place.

IT IS PROPOSED to make an exact and exhaustive examination of the Lake District in the following respects:—

1. Excavations will be carried out at Minyeh, Tel Hum, Kerazeh, and

the mounds at the mouth of the Jordan. Minor excavations, according to the discretion of the officer in command, will be made at Ain et Tabigah, Tel Oreimah, the tombs to the north, the mounds of Gennesareth, Abu Shusheh, Mejdal, Ain el Fuliye, Irbid, Tiberias, Kerak, Umm Keis, Kalat et Husn, the ruins at Khersa, and tombs near it, Et Tell, the ruins in the Batiheh, and such other mounds and remains as are found on the borders of the lake.

2. The Eastern shores will be completely surveyed and mapped, and the ruins examined.

3. The remarkable synagogue of Tel Hum, which, if that place be Capernaum, is the synagogue in which our Lord taught (John vi. 59), will be cleared to the foundations; every remaining stone, and every fragment of its broken columns and architecture collected, and care will be taken to prevent further destruction.

4. Whatever additions can be made to the already large store of information in the hands of the Committee as to nomenclature, legends, and traditions will be collected. The geology of the district will be thoroughly examined, especially with reference to the formation of the Jordan valley, and former volcanic disturbances; notes will be taken of the meteorology, the botany, and zoology, of the district; casts will be taken of inscriptions; localities will be photographed; plans will be laid down on a conveniently large scale.

5. As regards the best time for working, the party should be in the field early in December, and work continuously till the end of March, after which field work becomes impossible on account of the growth of thistles and the thick vegetation. The expedition should consist, if possible, of two officers of Royal Engineers, an Arabic scholar, a geologist and naturalist, and two non-commissioned officers of Royal Engineers. The whole expense of the expedition should not exceed £2,500. For this comparatively small sum a detailed and scientific examination may be made, and questions which have disturbed the Christian world for centuries may be finally set at rest.

It is sought to raise this amount by a special effort (independently of annual subscriptions).

Promises of donations or cheques may be sent to the Secretary, at the Society's Office, 11 and 12, Charing Cross.

ZION, THE CITY OF DAVID.

WHERE WAS IT? HOW DID JOAB MAKE HIS WAY INTO IT? AND WHO HELPED HIM?

(N.B.—I am indebted to Lieut. Conder's "Tent Work in Palestine" for the annexed plan of Jerusalem. The positions mentioned in this paper correspond with the plan as follows):—