

THE NAMELESS CITY.

1 Sam. ix., x.

WHEN Saul was without bread there was a whole shoulder already reserved for him; when he had resolved to give his servant's last sixpence (= $\frac{1}{4}$ shekel nearly) to Samuel, the seer was waiting to anoint him king. Similarly when expectation was at its lowest, the expenditure of a little more research meets with a great reward.

It is proposed (1) to find the name and precise position of the *nameless* city where Saul met Samuel, with the "parlour" in which the honoured traveller did justice to the prophet's hospitality, very different from the gloomy spectre that tasted fatted calf in the witch's hut at Endor; and (2) to untie, if possible, the Gordian knot in Biblical topography, caused by the identification of this city with the home of Elkanah "of Ramathaim-zophim of Mount Ephraim."

As novel conclusions are more exciting than close arguments the case shall be stated first and proved afterwards.

The *nameless* city was Ramah, as Josephus correctly assumes, and was variously called Ramath-lehi (Judg. xv. 17) and Ramathaim-zophim.

It was one of the cities of Mount Ephron (for which the better known Mount *Ephraim* seems to have been substituted in 1 Sam. i. 1), and was situated on an eminence about south-west of Solomon's Pools, designated the "Bakoosh (? = Maktesh) Hill" in "Finn's Byeways." A short mile further on in the same direction the ground rises to another conspicuous summit called Dahar-es-Salâhh (Finn's B. = the beautiful mountain) or Ras Sherifeh (the noble promontory), 3,260 feet above the sea ("Tent Work" i. 279).

Here on the highest spot of elevation from which there is a magnificent panorama "twenty miles round" stood "the high place," and in one of the adjoining stone enclosures Samuel's "parlour" might doubtless have been seen any day down to the ill-fated 24th of October, 1874, when (infandum!) these memorable ruins were converted into "Salami's Cairn" (*id.* 280).

In front (*i.e.*, on the north or north-east side) of Ramah the ground slopes to a spring called Ain Kasees (the priest's spring), while farther down is another more copious fountain near the head of the pools, formerly very celebrated as En-hakkore (the well of him that called, Judg. xv. 19).

Standing on this ascent to the city we have (and see?) near us an ancient sepulchre (*vide* F. B. for sketch); probably in such a one, possibly in *this* very one, Samuel was buried by all Israel.

Not far from this spot, "at the end of the city," the prophet must have stood when on the first day of the month, at early dawn, he anointed Saul king, and foretold to the shy and reticent young man the various events of his homeward journey.

Let us stand just behind the seer while he points out the scene of each future incident to the astonished king.

(1) "Thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre." We see the spot marked out by the present "Rachel's sepulchre" near Bethlehem.

(2) "Thou shalt come to the plain (lit., oak) of Tabor." There is the place somewhere between Jebel Deir Abu Tor and the hill to the left, possibly the "House of the (T)erebinthi."—Jos. Wars. v. 12. 2.

(3) "Thou shalt come to the hill of God." "They came to the hill." We see it distinctly. It is the place of the Upper City of Jerusalem (Gabbatha, John xix. 13).

(4) "When thou art come to the city." We can make out perhaps just a house or two, but the greater part lies hidden in the Valley of Hinnom, behind (3).

(5) "He came to the high place." It is the Mount of Olives, "where David (Sp. Comm., men) worshipped God."—2 Sam. xv. 32.

Thus "the high place" brings Saul close to his destination—viz., his father's house at Zelah, on one of the eastern ridges of the Mount of Olives.

(1), (2), (3) are certainly visible from Ramah. See chapter on the Bakoosh cottage. (5) is visible from "the parlour," and will prove to be so (I believe) also from Ramah. Perhaps some one at Jerusalem will more exactly describe the view.

W. F. BIRCH.

CAPERNAUM.

By PROFESSOR SCHAFF, of New York. (Translated from the Transactions of the German Society for the Exploration of Palestine.)

THE position of Capernaum is still a disputed question. Opinions are almost equally divided between Khan Minyeh and Tell Hum. Quaresmius (1639), Robinson (1838), MacGregor (1869), Porter (1875), Sepp (1876), Lieutenant Kitchener and Selah Merrill (1877), sought for it at Khan Minyeh, at the northern end of the Plain of Gennesareth, near Ain et-Tin and close to the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Pococke (1738), Burckhardt (1822), Ritter, John Wilson (1847), W. M. Thomson (1859), Hepworth Dixon (1864), Renan (1864), Captain Wilson (1871), Stanley (1871), Furrer (1871), and Socin, in Baedeker's "Syria and Palestine," place it at Tell Hum, a ruined town which lies three English miles to the north of Khan Minyeh, and nearly at equal distances between that town and where the Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee. A third hypothesis, which suppose the site of the town to be near the Round Spring (Ain el-Mudawer) at the southern end of the Plain of Gennesareth (el-Ghuweir) has been abandoned by its chief advocate, Canon Tristram. The English Society for the Exploration of Palestine proposes to dispatch a special expedition to Galilee, in order, if possible, to settle definitely the sites of the towns of Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin. On a late journey through the Promised Land I had myself decided in favour of Tell Hûm, but will gladly await the further information that will soon be afforded by excavations at that place.