

ments of the enclosure are easily traceable, as also some *broken columns*, grey and weather-beaten. This has every appearance of having been one of the many sun-temples devoted to Baal by early Syrians.\*

By temple I mean a succession of open-air courts, with a central altar for sacrifice; a mound actually exists on the highest spot of elevation, which may well have been the site of the altar."

The italicised words seem to me to indicate an antiquity greater than that of a *modern hamlet*. Indeed I shall be greatly surprised if a *great cistern* is not to be found hereabouts, described in 1 Sam. xix. 22 as "a great well in Sechu." A comparison of the different versions, Arabic, Syriac, &c., leads me to think that *Sechu* has been substituted for *Shefi*, = *a bare place on a hill*, and in "Tent Work," vol. i. 279, the position is said to be "a bare and rocky hill." W. F. BIRCH.

### THE ROCK OF RIMMON OR THE POMEGRANATE.

MR. RAWNSLEY'S recovery of the name *Rimmon* in Wady er *Rumman*, and of the tradition that the vast cavern Mugharet el Jai holds *six hundred men*, makes the Benjamites' actual place of refuge to coincide with the obvious position in a way seldom attained in disputed questions of topography.

A further test of the correctness of the identification is afforded in the points proposed for consideration by Lieut. Conder in *Quarterly Statement*, 1879, page 170. In reply to—

1 and 6, Migron is allowed to mean a *precipice*. The difficulty about *two Migrons*, one north, the other south of Wady Suweinit, seems to me to vanish if we take the word to mean the wall of rock forming the north and south boundary of the passage of Michmash (see *Quarterly Statement*, 1877, page 55). That Saul was on the south side of the gorge, opposite to the Philistines, seems clear from 1 Sam. xiv. 6, "Let us *go over*, &c.," and *id.* 17, "See who is gone from us." Therefore the pomegranate-tree, which is *in* (so A. V. rightly, not *by*; see below, 2) Migron, cannot be "a tree in Ramah," if Lieut. Conder means us by Ramah to understand er Ram, distant nearly three miles to the west. Further the latter is literally "*the tamarisk*" (1 Sam. xxii. 6), and so could not be a pomegranate-tree.

2. It is true the Biblical narrative says nothing about a cave, but a little reflection shows that such a shelter would be desirable (not to say necessary) during a four months' stay in the hold, and *large caves* were frequently used as places of refuge (1 Sam. xxii. 1; xxiv. 3).

Lieut. Conder objects on principle to great caverns, such as that at Khureitun (called also Mugharet M'asa = cave of refuge), and

\* The circular depression mentioned by Mr. Finn I have seen, but do not consider it very ancient. It looks like an old lime-kiln. The place is fully described in the Memoir to Sheet XVII. of the Survey. The columns intended seem to be the Roman milestones close by.—C. R. C.

says that they are "never inhabited in Palestine" ("Tent Work," ii. 159). Mr. Rawnsley, however, was informed that *the cave* near Rimmon "had been used time out of mind for refuge by the neighbouring villagers when persecuted by the government."

Mr. Drake (*Quarterly Statement*, 1874, p. 26) reported that the so-called (and, in my opinion, *true*) cave of Adullam is "dry and airy, and admirably adapted for an outlaw's hold." The *little caves* at Aid el Mieh do not at all satisfy the Biblical requirements for the famous cave of Adullam, which was *one*, and necessarily large, and a real *hold*.

If there had been no cave "in the Rock Rimmon," the rendering "in" might have been misleading, but "in" is the *commonest* meaning of the Hebrew "Bi," though it also means "by or near." The quotation is wrong in Judges xx. 47, "unto the rock is "Al;" "in the rock" is "Bi," as in xxi. 13.

(3) Naarath was certainly *not* the border town of Benjamin and Ephraim, since it was on the *northern*, not southern, boundary of Ephraim, as Mr. Kerr showed in *Quarterly Statement*, 1877, p. 44. His line for the northern boundary of Benjamin seems to me to be drawn *correctly* up "the ravine on the north of Jebel Kürüntel," and it gives Remmoon to Ephraim. Of course with this line Taiyibeh cannot be Ophra (Josh. xviii. 23), an identification which strains the order of the places named in that passage. The same error has crept into "the Handbook," and the conclusions drawn from it are consequently wrong.

(4) "The Rock Rimmoon was apparently not far from Shiloh (Judges xxi. 12, ? 13), which is an argument in favour of the northern site." I fail to see this in the words, "They sent . . . to the children of Benjamin . . . in the rock Rimmon." Of two places, four or five miles apart, how is it thus implied that they sent to the nearer one?

(5) The sting of course in the tail. If *Sela* necessarily means a *precipice* (see Lieut. Conder in "Tent Work," II. 91, "A narrow but deep chasm, impassable except by a detour of many miles . . . 'Cliff (sela) of Division' . . . cliffs, such as are to be inferred from the word Sela") then Beit Atab cannot be the rock (Sela) Etam as proposed by the same writer. The two points cannot both be held together, and so Lieut. Conder *rightly* abandons one, but retains, I think, the *wrong* one.

The meaning of the Hebrew *Sela* is not to be settled by its *general* (N.B., *not universal*) modern use, but by *Biblical comparison*. The standard of measurement for *Sela* seems to be Petra (ha-Sela, *the cliff*) with its well-known precipices (Sinai and Pal. 499). "The shadow of a great rock" (Isa. xxxii. 2). This must mean a rock more or less perpendicular. "A sharp rock" (lit., tooth of a *Sela*) surely means in 1 Sam. xiv. 4 a cliff, so precipitous that Jonathan had to "climb up upon his hands, and upon his knees." These passages, as well as those previously quoted, seem sufficient to show that *Sela* is only applied to a rock when it is *precipitous*. Height alone does not entitle to the name.