

About 3 miles N.E. of Anathoth is a most picturesque spot,—a gorge between savage rocks, frequented by wild pigeons. Here a copious stream, abounding with fish, gushes forth :—altogether it is the very place for a picnic. It is called Fârah, and represents the ancient Parah of Benjamin (Josh. xviii, 23). This is undoubtedly the place to which Jeremiah was sent.

Here in the rocks we have *the cliff* required, and the identical Hebrew letters thrice translated “to Euphrates” mean also (when the points are omitted) “to Parah.” The only alteration in the text needed in order to avoid the difficulties of this passage, is that to read “at Parah” instead of “by Euphrates” we must *just once* change the letter *Tau* into *He*, a very slight correction indeed.

It seems to me therefore that as Euphrates was a world-wide known name and Parah only an obscure place, accidentally or intentionally the He was by some one altered into a Tau, so that the passage became more intelligible to the ancient scribe, but most difficult to the modern critic.

W. F. BIRCH.

THE ROCK RIMMON AND GIBEAH.

In favour of the site *east* of Jeb'a, and in reply to Lieutenant Conder's further objection on p. 173, it may be added :

I. That the direction of the Flight was apparently *eastward*, “They chased them and trode them down with ease (unto) over against Gibeah toward the sun-rising.” Judges xx, 43.

II. A wrong identification must not be used as an argument, and it seems to me a groundless mistake to put the battle-field at Jeb'a (Geba) “only a mile and a-half” or two miles from the cave, since “the men of Israel rose up out of their place and put themselves in array at Baal-tamar” (Judges xx, 33); “which Jewish tradition identifies with the large ruin 'Attâra” (“Handbook,” 404), three miles north-west of Jeb'a, and nearly five miles from the cave.

The question about Geba and Gibeah, names often confused or interchanged in the Hebrew, requires notice :

(A) Geba, the priestly city (Joshua xxi, 17 ; Isaiah x, 29), apparently called Gaba in Joshua xviii, 24, and “Gibeah in the field” in Judges xx, 31, and “Geba of Benjamin,” 1 Kings xv, 22, may be recognised with certainty in the present Jeb'a.

(B) Gibeah (Judges xix, 13, etc.) must have been close to the great north road, for the Levite on his way from Bethlehem to the house of God (?at Shiloh or Bethel), proposed to lodge “in Gibeah or in Ramah” (Er Ram), and “the sun went down upon them when they were by (=close by) Gibeah . . . and they turned aside thither” (Judges xix,

13-15). It is absurd to suppose that he went to Gebe (Jeb'a), quite out of his way, whose inhabitants ought to have been priests and not Benjamites (Judges xix, 16).

A mile beyond Tuleil el Fûl the road divides, leading in one direction towards Bethel, in the other towards Jeb'a. This is in striking agreement with Judges xx, 31, "The children of Benjamin went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city; and they began to smite of the people, and kill, as at other times, in *the highways of which one goeth up to the house of God* (i.e., *Beth-el*), and the other to Gibeah in the field." This statement seems to me to utterly preclude Jeb'a from being the Gibeah in question, and to require us to place the latter at or quite close to Tuleil el Fûl, independently of the favourable but unreliable statements of Josephus and Jerome. That the ambush was concealed in a cave as stated in *Quarterly Statement*, 1877, pp. 104, 105, is quite out of the question, as "Israel set liers in wait *round about* Gibeah. These could easily conceal themselves in "the meadows" (i.e., open plain) among the corn, four months before "the dance in the vineyards" (Judges xxi, 21). The expression "*turned aside*" (xix, 15) applies as well to Tuleil el Fûl as to Jeb'a, being in Hebrew identical with "*turned in*" (xviii, 3; xix, 11).

(C) *Gibeah of Saul* cannot be identical with Geba, being named along with it in Isaiah x, 29. At it there occurs among a number of cities, Lieutenant Conder's conjecture that it was a *district* and *not a city* seems to me inadmissible.

Its mention between Ramah and Gallim appears further to require it to have been visible between these two places in the panorama as seen from Geba (*Quarterly Statement*, 1878, p. 133). Thus we may identify it: (1) with *Gibeah* at Tuleil el Fûl, or (2), possibly with the hill-top south-west of Jeb'a, as there is some reason for thinking that it still bears the name of "the King's ruin."

On the assumption that "*the city*" (1 Samuel xx, 42) was the residence of both Jonathan and Saul, (2) seems to me to agree best with the story and with the mention of "*the mountain*" (Hebr. *Har*. A. V. hill) in 2 Samuel xxi, 9.

III. I certainly do understand Mr. Kerr to place Naarath on the *northern* boundary of Ephraim, and therefore must object to its being described: (1), as "the border town of Benjamin and Ephraim," and (2), as affording an indication of the line of the *northern* boundary of Benjamin. If I am mistaken, I shall be glad for my error to be *clearly* pointed out, as the point seems to affect the border of Benjamin.

W. F. BIRCH.