

east of the plateau. Some have to go as much as fifteen or twenty miles to fetch water.

Though no large trees are found on the plateau, the brushwood with which it is covered makes a very good grazing ground for sheep and camel. The *shieh* which is excellent food for sheep is found in great quantities. Camels, however, are best adapted to a country where water is only to be had by going long distances, and the best camels of the Teaha tribe of Bedouin come from the Egma. The whole plateau belongs to the Awamra, a section of the Teaha, whose sheikh Suleyman el-Awamra generally lives in the Wady Gera.

If the large cisterns cut in the rock by the Romans on the roads leading to the mines were cleared of the sand and rubbish with which the down-wash of the wady has filled them, an enormous supply of water could be stored there, of great value to the herds.

Although hilly, the Egma is not mountainous. Its rocky hills vary in height from 150 feet to 200 feet and are covered with low bushes. The rocky ground depends entirely on the rainfall for moisture, but yields an excellent growth of bushes which are especially good food for camels.

(To be continued.)

## GIBEAH AT ADASEH.

By THE REV. W. F. BIRCH.

JOSEPH'S cup was found in Benjamin's sack, but Benjamin's Gibeah still hides itself in Jusuf's Adaseh; yet it is worth while to try to show that the Land tallies with the Book.

Years ago Moabite pottery was fashionable at Jerusalem, but now only Byzantine sherds can be distinguished by Jusuf at Adaseh: no Jewish pottery, it is said, being discernible, *as the hill was not a pre-Christian site*; notwithstanding, I am slow to believe that not even one of the 400,000 of Israel, after all the injuries received, broke a single jar on Gibeah's cursed site (*Land and B.*, Jer. xix, 10).

Recently two explorers having inspected Kh. Adaseh, cordially agreed to be of one mind about it: for they found nothing Jewish or worth reporting about its pottery (except what was Byzantine), although up and down Palestine, in tombs and aqueducts, on the

ground and seven feet down in the cave of Adullam, sherds, apparently not Byzantine, may any day be met with. Locusts forsook Egypt, having wings: but I fail to see how for fifteen hundred years Jewish pottery was kept outside the pale of Adaseh.

It is true Israel was so exasperated with Gibeah that they massacred the people wholesale, smote its cattle and might even have taken a wild oath not to leave one sherd unpulverized (*Palest. Expl.*, 126), but in Saul's time it was again inhabited. The mystery, however, at Kh. Adaseh of no pottery, of no sherds except Byzantine, still hangs over that hill, gloomy towards sunset, and is a greater puzzle to me than even the site of Gibeah.

One explorer (Dr. Mackenzie) observed much pottery characteristically Jewish at Tell el-Ful (the popular Gibeah) but he cautiously (I think) avoids supporting it as the real Gibeah; the other (Prof. Macalister) practically rejects it by boldly placing (1) Gibeah of Judges (where the men were Benjamites), at Geba (a city of the priests), and (2) Gibeah of Saul at Ramallah, quite five miles in a beeline from the camp of Titus, which Josephus says was a village near the camp, when he might have helped his readers to grasp the position better by saying *near Gibeon* (two and a half miles from the camp), where Cestius had twice encamped earlier in the war.

It is interesting to note that it is only in opposition to Gibeah at Adaseh, that the two inspectors come into conjunction, so as to be cordially agreed. Let me own that I am perplexed: but I reflect with pleasure that the two explorers were short-timers, while it took me long to show that Adasa was not at Adaseh. One of them was there perhaps six hours, the other twelve (at the most) yet in that time there came to them "the inevitable conclusion that Adaseh could not possibly be Gibeah" (nor even the Maccabean Adasa of A.D. 161) "for the very simple reason that, so far as the data were concerned, it was not a pre-Christian site," but destitute of anything to be assigned to an earlier (than Byzantine) date. I cannot of course say what qualifications come in with the seven words within the commas, so I take them to mean "so far as one could see."

In conclusion I make a few observations. If Gibeah (at Adaseh) were a large place, it might have been a quarter of a mile square, but let us say it was but one hundred yards square. Now to search down to the rock for "very small pieces" of pottery (*Palest. Expl.*, 116) might take one hour, but let us call it one minute. Next—to select the least area and shortest time—I apprehend it will be

found that there would be for one labourer one week's work day and night.

It would therefore be obviously impossible for either explorer on one day to exhaustively search Adaseh for the possible site for Gibeah. Of course every square yard would not need to contain even one sherd. I do not suppose it does so at Rama or Geba or Anathoth, and yet these probably have flourished longer than Gibeah at Adaseh, and so have produced more crops of sherds. The reader, however, will have realised that the time available was inevitably too short for either explorer, or for Jusuf, to make a thorough search. If I err in my calculations, let me hope that someone will kindly put me straight. Unless the margin one has allowed is too narrow, I must say that the conclusion seems to me *premature* rather than *inevitable*. It has been assumed that Gibeah of Judges and of Saul were, as generally supposed, identical. I hope to see observations on this subject, as even topographical statements in the Bible seem to me so reliable that, with only a letter or two now and then wrong, the Land is still found to be in remarkable agreement with the Book.

If a Jewish idiom may not yet, by one word in Judges xix, 14, prove that the travellers on the north road actually saw the sun set by the side of Gibeah, but only informs us that they themselves were beside it, it is surely time to scrutinize the account (2 Sam. ii, 17-25) of the fierce battle at Gibeon, in the hope that one verse, by its precision, may suffice to fix Gibeah (of Benjamin and Saul) near Adaseh in the desiderated situation.

The map (*Q.S.*, 1911, p. 102) shows that Adaseh is two miles east of Gibeon. After Asahel's fall at (= near) Gibeon in the battle (2 Sam. iii, 30), the vengeful Joab and Abishai pressed the pursuit of Abner in his retreat eastwards, then "the sun went down, when (or and) they came as far as the hill of Ammah that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon."

The valuable details here given enable one to cite four witnesses, viz., "Hill," "Ammah," "Vale" (=Giah) and "Way" for the identification of the unique hill (higher than Ramah, west of Wādy ed-Dumm, and miscalled Adaseh) reached by Joab.

Here, on this *one* hill, Abner, having concentrated his men into *one* troop, took up his position (he knew the ground well) for a final stand at the high place, where Saul had slain the priests and his seven grandsons had been executed.

This is the evidence :—

1. Witness "Hill" boldly maintains being identical in name with Saul's birthplace (Hebr. *Gibeah* = hill) and claims to be higher than any other "hill" in the wilderness of Gibeon (east of Gibeon and west of Wādy ed-Dumm). Geikie describes this part as a tract of rolling land having a heap which marks Adaseh.

2. Witness "Ammah" asserts (as the *Hebrew Dictionary* shows) that two other places Gath and Abel are also called by precisely the same name Ammah which means *Mother City*, i.e., the chief city of the district. But if Gath and Abel could enjoy "Ammah" as an *alias*, why might not Gibeah of Saul, the royal capital of Benjamin (but in ruins after Saul's defeat), bear the title of Gibeath Ammah, as above.

3. Witness "Vale" (*alias* Wādy ed-Dumm) claims to be the only vale existing on the map between Gibeon and the North Road, east of Gibeon, being situated before Adaseh: and also on cross examination admits that Conder and Henderson say—that Giah = Ge = ravine.

4. Witness "Way" asserts that he is connected with the wilderness of Gibeon which is west of the North Road, and has nothing whatever to do with the wilderness near the Rock of Rimmon, east of Geba, to which the Benjamites fled (Judges xx, 42, 45, 47). By some this Way is identified with a track going down to the Jordan up which Way Joshua and his host stole by night. But if so, why is this Way not called the Way of the wilderness of Geba or Anathoth? At Jerusalem this Way might be rightly described as leading to the wilderness of Gibeon (*teste* Sestius, Paula). This wilderness apparently extends (and has been so marked) from Ramallah to Hanina, and from Gibeon to Wādy ed-Dumm.

After this simple, plain, and satisfactory evidence of our four topographical witnesses that Gibeah was at Adaseh, it seems to me utterly helpless for Gibeah of Benjamin and Saul to attempt to prove an *alibi* either at Geba or Tell el-Ful or Ramallah or anywhere else. Of course Gibeah (at Adaseh) burnt by Israel, razed by Philistines (as Mephibosheth's nurse expected), but a ruin to Paula, can exhibit now only scanty traces of its short life, but like a stone out of the wall, some potsherd (be the chance only given) may cry out of the ground, but hardly from its surface.

Gibeon, Geba, and Anathoth, priestly cities of Benjamin remain to this day, while "Gibeah of Saul is fled." Why fled? Because after prophesying, he sacrificed, slew priests and talked with the witch. These cities, destitute of Byzantines, flourish on their names, while the highest rock (2,605 ft.) in the wilderness of Gibeon, by nature a very Gibeah, though rich in Byzantines, is not even reckoned among the many Gibeahs, but lies under oblivion—*caret quia vate sacro*—and the missing sherd. Samuel told Saul that he would come in order (1) to the hill of God, (2) the city, and then (3) to the high place. The saunterer from Jerusalem will now, at Wādy ed-Dumm, be (1) at the foot of the hill (Gibeah), (3) at Kh. Adaseh he will search the high place, (2) about midway at the city he may expect that old Jewish pottery waits to be discovered, but whether red like my sherd from Shiloh, or black like one from Hebron, who can tell? "*Caveat Emptor*" mindful of Moabite pottery.

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### DEAD SEA OBSERVATIONS.

By Dr. E. W. G. MASTERMAN.

*Autumn Visit to 'Ain Feshkhal, 1911.*—The visit was made by Mr. Hornstein accompanied by Mr. Newton of the P.E.F. and other friends.

Left Jerusalem Nov. 15 at 10.30 a.m., Bar. 27.65. The early rains had already produced a good deal of verdure. Reached Jericho 6.30 p.m. Bar. 30.8, Ther. 71.6.

Visited the site of ancient Jericho near *'Ain es-Sultan*: the sundried bricks of the ancient city, exposed by the excavations of Prof. Sellin, are undergoing rapid disintegration from the effects of the weather.

Nov. 16.—Left Jericho at 7.15 a.m., followed the road via *'Ain el-Jehēyfir* and reached *'Ain Feshkhal* at 10.25. Bar. 31.25. Temp. of air 72.5, water 77.9. Sky clear, no clouds, slight breeze from the south-east. "White line," faint and broken, stretched from north-east to south-west.