

in 'Tent Work in Palestine' Lieutenant Conder states his own recovery of twenty-nine of these places, or rather their sites, and Mariette Bey's identification of forty-two. More than 9,000 names had been fixed, and would appear in the English map, a map which should be aided by Australian gold. The *Quarterly Statement* of the work of the Fund would be supplied to all contributors of £1 1s., and it was to be hoped that such contributors would be numerous.

"The Rev. G. Woolnough also addressed the meeting, pointing out how admirable a commentary upon the Scriptures, and how complete a directory to Palestine the map would form. The literature of Egypt and Assyria, at least such remains of it as could now be procured, was deeply interesting, and throws light on a great many points at present obscure.

"The Chairman then invited those present to become subscribers to the work, and set the example himself of doing so. He announced that further subscriptions would be received by Dr. Steel, or by the secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association.

"This closed the business of the meeting, and the Bishop having pronounced the benediction, the meeting terminated."

## THE ROCK OF THE POMEGRANATE.

JERUSALEM, *Monday, April 28th.*

"I HAVE the pleasure to report to the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund that I have been able to examine carefully a curious spring of water called Ain Suweinit and a large cave of refuge known to the shepherds as Mugharet el Jai, possibly Grass Cave (Jawa), in Wady Suweinit, both on the *south*, or Benjamin side of the ravine, the former 450 feet below the Ras el Krein (Migron?), or eastern end of the Plain of Jeba, and about fifteen minutes' descent from the said spot; the latter 200 feet lower down the cliff, and twenty minutes or half an hour's clamber from the spring.

Dr. Chaplin is in reality the author of the search, and was only prevented by illness from accompanying me last week in quest of this spring, and to him any thanks are due for this communication. I have visited the spring and cavern twice; on the former occasion I was unable, owing to accident, to do more than find them, but on my return to Jerusalem Dr. Chaplin begged me to communicate with you, and feeling that without measurement such communication might be of less use to you, and that much more might be gathered from the inhabitants of Jeba about this cave, I spent a second day in measurement, &c. On this second occasion Mr. Salami, the Consul's secretary, accompanied me, and gave most valuable assistance in interrogating the natives of Jeba and in taking down the names of the hills, ravines, caves, &c., in Arabic from their lips. Since then he has most kindly inquired into the roots of some of these, and has furnished me with the

interpretation of the meanings of most of them that most approve themselves to his mind. I enclose these names as written by him in Arabic; if they prove of importance he will, on your returning the enclosure to him, gladly write them out more legibly and fully in ink.

Both fountain and cave are well known to all the inhabitants of Hizmeh and Jeba, but owing to superstitious fear no shepherd, as far as I could learn, has ever penetrated beyond the main entrance of the cave Mugharet el Jay, or Jai. Our guide on both occasions was an old shepherd, Mhesen Hassan, and he told us that he had been shepherd all his years, and as a boy used the cave for an "ossub" (a sheep wintering-place), but had not entered the main passage.

The tradition in the village of Jeba, we learnt from the villagers assembled, is (1) That the Christians used it a long while ago, when God sent an evil wind to destroy them. (2) That it has been used time out of mind for refuge by the neighbouring villagers when prosecuted by the government. (3) That it extends from Wady Suweinit to Jerusalem.

As to the size of the cave, the current tradition in Jeba is that it will hold 600 men, a coincidence in number with the Bible account of the Benjamite refugees in the rock Rimmon (Judges xx. 47). One man asserted vehemently that it was large enough to contain 6,000, but the number 6 seemed invariable with them. The shepherds asserted that the main entrance cave held 16 flocks of 100 sheep in each. This number I obtained on separate testimony from three or four Jeba shepherds.

As to the time during which the cave is tenanted now, it appears that each winter the shepherds use it as an "ossub" for their sheep, remaining in it from fifteen to sixty days, according to the weather; that it becomes so hot owing to want of ventilation, that when fine sunny weather comes they are driven from the cave by heat. But it appeared afterwards that want of fuel in abundance and within easy reach is also the cause of their not making too long a stay in the cavern.

In old days, if one is to trust the derivation of the name Suweinit, from the abundance of Sunt, or Thorn, or Acacia bushes, this latter hindrance to a long stay in the cave would not exist; the more so that of all the woods used for fuel in this country, the Sunt, when grown to size, is considered best by the peasantry. (A story was told me of a man who lit a single branch of Sunt (Acacia), cooked his food for three successive days by it, left the cave in which he was staying for a week, and on coming back found the little log still burning.) But, my informant said, this is only the case if the Sunt bush is grown to a good big size. These big-sized Acacia bushes do not now exist in the upper part of Wady Suweinit. We may argue, perhaps, therefrom that the wooded growth of the valley is not the same as it was in Saul's time. If this is so, we shall not be surprised to find no remains of any Pomegranate or Rumman trees, such, for instance, as the one under which Saul was sitting in the uttermost part of Gibeah (1 Sam. xiv. 2).

The first question that naturally arises as to the possibility of water-

supply for the shepherds or tenants of the cave El Jai is answered by the custom of to-day. The shepherds who use the cave as a wintering-place (ossub) take their flocks to the spring Ain Suweinit, on the cliff ledge to the west, or towards Jeba, but if necessary go down the valley to Ain Farah and Fowar, one hour and a half down east—both on the southern or Benjamin side; or from two other springs, Ain er R'aiân and Ain esh Sherâr, also down towards the east, but on the northern or Philistine side of the ravine.

The next question we asked was, the amount of water obtainable per day from the spring Ain Suweinit. The shepherd said that twenty goat-skins would empty it, but that if so emptied it would be full in half a day again. This is a smallish supply, but we may remember that time and want of care must have much choked the basin, and that possibly in old time a great deal more would be obtainable from it. One quotes the Selah Spring, near Solomon's Pools, as an instance of this choking up of a spring, and consequent diminution of supply. It appears, too, that just at the point where, after passing over the Plain of Jeba, we descend into the ravine to visit Ain Suweinit and its one large Karoob-tree, there is a large cistern by a well-known fig-tree at Khurbet et Tineh, which would be within easy reach of the cave Mugharet el Jai. This is filled by the early rains, and remains full till the end of harvest time, when the farming men finish the supply as they work at the harvest-fields near.

As to the approach to the spring and cave, the former is easily reached along a good goat-path from the big "ossub," or shepherd's shelter, Khurbet el Hai (the place of the camping-ground), so called, they say, from the Bedouin use of the cliff near.

This Khurbet el Hai is on the brow of the declivity, at the easternmost end of Jeba Plain, and from this Khurbet el Hai, which is capable of affording shelter to 100 sheep, is obtained the best view of the spring and Karoob-tree of the Suweinit.

The spring could, if necessary, be clambered down to from above, but, placed as it is on the slight plateau half-way up the hill-side, above a sheer cliff with scarp below, an approach from the valley to it would be impossible. As to the latter, the cave Mugharet el Jai, it is reached with comparative ease from the wady bed by following a goat-path, and for the rest is well placed as a cave of refuge; for, while communication can be kept up between it and the spring Ain Suweinit by scrambling along the rock scarp below the line of cliff on which the spring is situate, till within 100 yards of the spring, and then ascending to the plateau of the Ain Suweinit and Karoob-tree, the said communication could be most easily barred from the direction of Jeba or west again, while ascent up the cliff under which the cave is, is possible by a climb close to the cave's mouth. Any descent without rope or ladder to it would be extremely hazardous.

One other feature about the cave's position may be remarked—its absolute secrecy. It is so placed in a corner of the cliff, and so protected



VIEW FROM KALAT EL HAI IN WADY SUWEINIT  
1. Spring under the dark Carob Tree to which the arrow points 2. Kurunt el Falasin opposite the cave Mugharat el Jai

by outstanding ledges, that until within ten yards of it you could not tell its existence as one approaches from the westward or Jeba end, while again the adjacent cliff to the eastward, curving out towards the north, would hide it to any comers up the valley from the east.

#### DESCRIPTION OF SPRING AND CAVE IN WADY SUWEINIT.

Leaving Jeba, we cross the fallows of the long eastward-going plain that slopes all the way at a slight angle from north to south; on our left the deep Suweinit or Vale of Michmash, on our right hand the green open valley of Hizmeh, called as we proceed eastwards Wady er Râdadeh.

Approaching the declivity from which we obtain our first view of the Suweinit gorge, we find this Wady er Râdadeh, and that part of the plain we are crossing called El Kharjeh, or the going out. That is perhaps the place from which in old times the men of Jeba have gone out towards Jordan, or in later days have made their exodus as fugitives to the cave of El Jai in time of trouble.

Arrived quite at the brow of the steep descent to the ravine, we find a large shepherd shelter-place, or "ossuh," known as Khurbet el Hai, or Haiyeh, and from the front of it we can take in at a glance the position of Ain Suweinit and the cave in question.

The eye at once catches two trees, neither of them such pomegranates as Saul once sat under, but both of them remarkable enough to be called *The Tree*. The first is close by on the hill spur to the right, a fig-tree, some ruins, and a cistern above spoken of, and gives its name to the mountain spur.

The second is a dark-coloured Karoob-tree, half a mile away, perched on the brow of the precipitous band of cliff that rises from its scarp half-way up the southernmost side of the wady. This seemingly inaccessible tree stands close to Ain Suweinit, and is nurtured, no doubt, by its waters.

Taking the southernmost side of the wady, we find it is divided, at far as eye can see, into four main divisions or rounded spurs. The first of these—that is, the nearest to us—is Khurbet et Tineh (the Fig-tree ruin); the second is nameless; the third, El Kuba; the fourth, El Mukaarat. By a movement of a few yards to the left we discover a fifth, Ras el Fowar (the head of Farah), that part of the wady near the Furrâr Spring.

All along the wady-side, two-thirds from wady bottom, stands, as if built by hand of man for use of fortress, a slant scarp with fortress wall above it from thirty to forty feet high. There is a plateau or brow upon this grey, steep, running line of fortress rock, and thence to the sky line rugged, rounded masses of rock and vegetation, in some places easily accessible, in other places unclimbable.

Above this rock and scarp is hill number two. The nameless spur grows the Karoob-tree, and the spring is close beside it. Beyond the fourth spur, hid entirely from view by the outstanding spur, at a lower

level, the foot of the fortress cliff, lies the cave Mughâret el Hai. On the other side—*i.e.*, the northern side—of the wady from where we stand is the Kharjeh. At the Khurbet el Hai we only seem to be able to distinguish a long unbroken line of cliff, till just opposite El Mukaarat there is seen to be a deep recess in the mountain block, and east of it is a curious leaning buttress, best described as a cone cut in two from apex to base, and laid on to the mountain side. This deep recess is called Wady Habibeh, and the descent from the cliff top to the wady bed is easy enough down it. The curious projection of half-cone buttress that seems to fill the valley with its grey rounded mass, is known as Kournet el Falkain = the "horn or corner of the two divisions," and the cliffs beyond to the east have the name of Jebel Oushaish, or the hill of the little nest.

It is exactly opposite the quaint-featured Khurbet el Falkain that the cave of refuge for the Benjamites, the Mugharet el Jai, is placed on the southern side; and hence the need of describing the Khurbet el Falkain at length. But the apparently single mountain mass on the north or Philistine side of the wady, between us and the deep-recessed Wady Havileh, is in reality, as we saw afterwards from near the Ain Suweinit, broken up into three masses, the cliff mass nearest us being called El Marjameh, the next Jebel el Hûty, and the third Jebel el W'ar.

Marjameh, or the hill of the stony place, with its hint of warlike times and pass defence, is separated from El Honteh by a steep recessed wady or mountain gully known as Wady Rahab, leading up to Khurbet Rahab ("The Monk's Plot"). Here we have a hint of the use of certain caverns that dot this northern line of cliff in mediæval days.

But it is noteworthy that this mountain gully, with its cave Hosn or Houson ("Cave of Defence"), is entirely hid from view by a tooth of rock that, like a tower on a bracket, hangs in mid air at the angle of the rock cliff. The next hill's name to the east of Jebel Hûty is known as Jebel Arak el W'ar. Deep caverns high up on the cliff sides have given their names to both of these hills. But the deep mountain gully dividing El Hûty from El W'ar is perhaps of most interest to any who attempt to localise the scene of Jonathan's exploit, and his climb on hands and knees against the men of Michmash.

This mountain gully is called Shehab el Hûty. A curious natural stairway of rock is hid from all view to men at the eastward by an equally curious natural balustrade. A whole regiment might ascend to the Philistine heights unseen up this Shehab el Hûty. One has described this particularly because its position is exactly opposite that of the Ain Suweinit; and if we may believe, as we are told, that the Philistines had come out to the passage of Michmash (1 Sam. xiii. 23), we can seem to see this Shehab el Hûty accurately described enough in the following chapter (1 Sam. xiv.), and can recognise a possible locality for the pomegranate on Migron (1 Sam. xiv. 2) in the place of the present Karoob-tree that is such a landmark, or spring-mark, in the uttermost of Gibeah—Jeba.



ENTRANCE TO CAVE "MUGHARET EL JAI" IN WADY SUWEINIT

The caverns on this northern side of the Wady Suweinit are many, the principal being Es Shenaar, El Hisir, or Hosn, Arak el W'ar, and Arak Kbadaish, the latter beyond Kurnet el Fakair, and being exactly described by its name the Rock of the Scratch.

From our point of view of the wady, we descended along ledges of rock, a good safe path even for mules if need be, by yellow furze, and variegated-leaved thistles, till we reached the main ledge or brow along the top of the cliff of naked rock that is the feature of this southern side of the valley. Keeping along this for about ten minutes, we reached the Karoob-tree and the huge blocks of limestone that seem to guard it on every side with their seven massy blocks (the one east of the tree was 30 feet 18 inches in diameter).

The spring close by was so hidden by huge masses of the fallen limestone that, but for the shepherd, we should have missed it. Ascending between these rock boulders immediately behind the largest of the masses near lay a little stone cup, about 14 inches by 8 inches. Behind this a small triangular opening, beneath overhanging masses of confusedly-piled stone, gave admittance to the spring, which lay at the bottom of a steep rock-hewn and stone-built passage, 12 feet 6 inches from the entrance. Down this, feet first, we slid, and found every stone the whole way polished as smooth and as white as marble. Thousands of feet during a space of hundreds of years alone could have done this. It seemed on examination that the fountain head had been built over in this way: the passage from above scooped out down to the water at this angle, then walled rudely, and two large masses had it seemed been made to fall so as to prop each other up overhead, while light was admitted by a side opening carefully protected by stones above, but a little to the west of the roofing immediately over the spring.

The basin of the spring had evidently been hewn out of the living rock. The water was fresh and good, but water-leeches lay in heaps in the dark corners.

No writing, no marks of any kind, were found at or near the spring, and the noticeable features were the apparent concealment of the fountain by the huge natural screens of fallen rock masses, and the evidence of enormous use that the smooth polished stones of the spring entrance seemed to give. As for the Karoob-tree, its roots were level with the waters, and its luxuriant foliage and heavy crop of beans told a tale of roots that reached to cool ground and sucked moisture in the driest of weather.

Leaving the spring, we proceeded on eastwards, round the next two rounded bluffs, El Kuba' and El Mukaaret, to the cavern of Mugharet el Jay. The way was easy for the first fifteen minutes, but we then had to descend the cliff ledge and creep along cautiously on the bare rock scarp. The guide took his shoes off, for it was so slippery that one of the party was forced to turn back from giddiness.

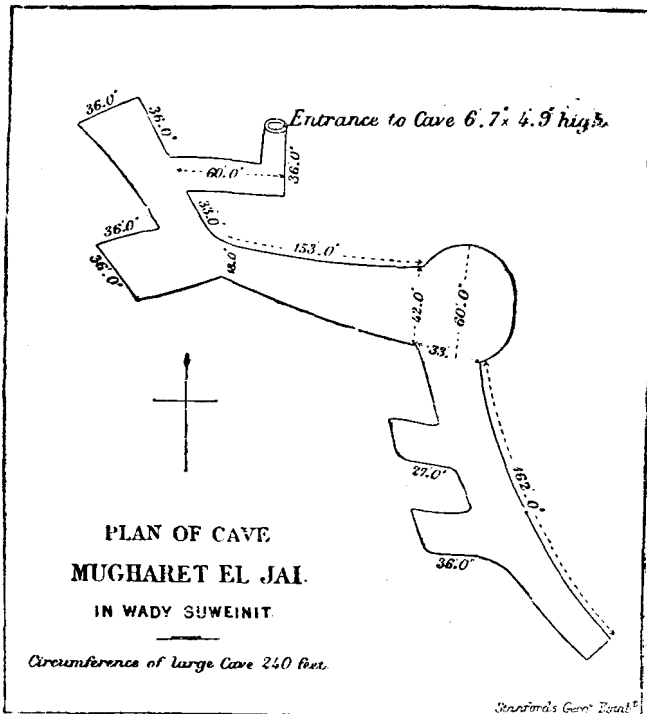
But in fifteen minutes we had gained better footing and had rounded



the corner of the bluff El Mugharet. A vulture flew from her nest five yards above our head, showing the loneliness of the spot.

But though one cave, built up artificially at its mouth, with an artificially-hewn doorway beneath, stared at us halfway up the cliff that faced us as we turned the corner of the cliff, the Cave El Jai was not visible.

The guide beckoned us on past a projecting shoulder of rock, and crawling up the scarp and turning our faces due west, we saw a



little low triangular opening in the far corner, with a smaller aperture, a smoke hole or window, above.

Entering it over an inclined plane of slippery rock, marked by the feet of last winter's goats, we found ourselves in a spacious cavern, whose chief feature was the honeycombed structure of the walls, the overhanging mass of rock that made a pillar, as it seemed, for the roof in the far south-western side.

The far-reaching gallery that ran up hill beyond due west, the side gallery going away to the north, and the oily blackness of the smoke-grimed rock. The floor was deep with dust of ashes of the fires of many generations of refugees or shepherds. Our guides shook

in their shoes as they were pushed along with the torches. The roof, some thirty feet high, shone glossy black as we measured this entrance cave. Then we passed along the west gallery westward, ascending as we went. A gallery, wide and high in proportion, turned sharp to our left—that is to the north—and descending as rapidly, passed along a parallel passage back towards the east. At its extremity a lesser passage, hewn, it seemed, in the rock, gave notice of our nearness to the northern outside walls of the cliff, for the wind well-nigh blew our torches out. This was perhaps for ventilation sake. Retracing our steps, and finding no marks of man but the oily blackness of smoke and dust of ashes at our feet, we entered a lesser gallery towards the north-west at top of the hill, thence retraced our steps to the main entrance cavern. All this way had been spacious enough for the living of men, but no galleries that with its double entrance. Soon after meeting in one beyond the antechamber, if I may so call it, that opened south of the main entrance hall, was not lofty enough to admit of standing room, and this we had crawl up.

Returning we crawled up two short passes to the west of this antechamber, examined a small cave and recess perched on the water-scooped rock near entrance to this vestibule, and so back into the large cavern and daylight.

Our feeling about the cave was that it was not so capable of stowing away men as the so-called Cave of Adullam at Khureitun, but that on emergency more than 600 men could hide here if need be; 300, perhaps, find ample lodging.

This made me anxious to examine the cavern called El Kuba' or El Kârat, that was perched inaccessibly without help of rope or ladders in the cliff eighty yards away to the east, and within easy speaking distance of the Mugharet el Jai, or Jay. The shepherd could only say of it that it belonged to the Christians, and was large, but he added that no man had ever entered it, so his testimony was a little worthless.

A natural or artificial ledge had at one time given admittance from above to this cavern, and the rough-hewn doorway, reminding one of a rock tomb below the stone-filled entrance, told of former occupation.

Looking for the cavern's mouth we had a fine view of the Kurun el Falkair opposite, with its Wady el Habibeh (ravine of the loved ones), the dark low cave of Arak el W'ar, the cavern at the head of Kurun el Falkain, and the cave under the ledge farther east of Jebel Oshaish, know as the Scratch, *Khaaish*. We scrambled up the cliff close by with help of a band from above, and so along easily back to the Ain el Suweinit, in less time than we had taken to come. Such are the facts as to this cavern.

I beg to enclose the notes of the names written down in Arabic by my kind friend Mr. Salami, the Consul's secretary. There is only one note that should be added. The two adjacent cliffs to this cavern, El Kuba' and El Mukaaret, seem to point, from all one can understand, to (1) Detention of an enemy in distress (Kuba'). (2) To (a) a place

known as the Place of Caves, the Hill of Holes (1 Sam. xiv. 11). ( $\beta$ ) To a place whence loud crying out was made, El Mukaaret. There is a collateral meaning to this last to be found in the name of the valley from Geba to this head of the ravine. Wady er Radâdeh, one is informed, means the Valley of the Wailer or Crier in Return; and some traditional hint may perhaps be here preserved of the Benjamites and the cry of peace mentioned in Judges xxi. 13.

Lastly, one also hears that the word Sanâtu means to stop. If this be so, and Wady Sunt, or Suweinit, be derivable from a word meaning detention, this added to the cliff's name, El Kuba', with its kindred signification, may perhaps allude to the detention either of Saul and his 600, or of the Benjamites and their 600 men, in the neighbourhood of, if not really inside of, the cavern Mugharet el Jai.

Please make what use you can of these hastily written notes *en voyage*, and accord me the favour of taking care of both notes, plan, and sketches, if neither serve you or the end that, in common with you, I have at heart.

Yours truly,

H. B. RAWNSLEY.

Wady er Rumaman	= Vale of Pomegranates.
El Kharjeh	= The going out.
Khurbet et Tineh	= The Ruin of the Fig Tree.
Khallet el Hai	= The Place of the Camping Ground.
El Krein	= The Little Horn.
Wady er Rumman	= The Valley of the Pomegranate.
Wady er Radâdeh	= The Vale of the Return (but see next page in Lieut. Conder's notes).

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#### NOTE BY LIEUT. CONDER, R.E.

This cavern is shown on the Survey map. The view of the Valley of Michmash (Tent Work, vol. ii.) includes the cliff of *el Hosn*, described in the present paper, on the north side of the valley.

A few remarks may be added as to the Arabic names collected, which appear to be all descriptive. Many of them occur only in the Survey lists, and from want of space, and in order not to confuse the clearness of the plate (which is full of detail), are omitted from the map.

*Fûrrâr* is a word commonly used of a spring head where the water "bubbles up."

'*Ain er R'aiân* = "shepherds' spring."

'*Ain esh Sherâr* = "dry spring."

*El Kharjeh* = "the outer place"—a common term.

*W. er Radâdeh* = "winding valley." This is a common term occurring several times on the Survey.

*Khûrbet el Haiyeh* = "ruin of the snake."

*Kub'a*, apparently the Hebrew *Koba*, "a helmet," from the form of the hill.

*Fârah* is the Hebrew *Parah*, a town of Benjamin.

*'Arâk el War* = "cliff of rough rock."

*Shehab* (vulgar for *Sh'ab*) *el Hüty*, "the walled hill spur."

The Survey party ascended this gully in 1873 after descending from the plain east of *Teb'a*.

*Suweinit* diminutive of *Sunt* = the little acacia.

*Esh Shinâr* = the partridge.

*El Hisir*, probably *el Hosr*, "the pebbles."

*El Hosn* = "the fortress."

C. R. C.

### OBSERVATIONS ON THE ABOVE.

By Rev. W. F. BIRCH.

The precision of the Hebrew language in the use of different words again helps us in this inquiry. "Rock" in the A.V. represents (at least) two words in the original, *Tzur* and *Sela*.

The latter always means a *precipitous* rock—*i.e.*, a *cliff*. Therefore the Rock (*Sela*) of Rimmon (as also *Etam*) was a *cliff*. Where, then, was it situated?

On the tribe of Benjamin being at last defeated in the third battle at Gibeah, the light brigade, according to Josephus, cut their way through the enemy, and so anticipated Balaclava—

" Archers to right of them,  
Slingers to left of them,  
Spearmen in front of them,  
Charged the six hundred,"

"and fled into the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months" (Judges xx. 47).

A village, three miles east of Bethel, called Remmoon (apparently considered as Rimmon by Eusebius), has, by virtue of its name, had greatness thrust upon itself, in its site being taken to be the veritable rock Rimmon; but though it may be described as "a white chalky height" (S. and P.), or "a rocky Tell" (Bibl. Res.), on no side does it present a *cliff* (*sela*). This want is a *fatal* defect in the above identification, so that minor difficulties need not be considered—*e.g.*, the probability of Remmoon being not in Benjamin, but in *Ephraim*, the scarcity of caves to shelter the refugees, the water supply, &c. Rimmon means the "pomegranate tree." In 1 Sam. xiv. 2 it is stated that "Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a (lit. *the*) pomegranate tree (Rimmon) which is in Migron" (*i.e.*, the precipices). This position on the southern side of Wady Suweinit (the passage of Michmash), about a mile east of Jeba, suits very well the local indications in Judges xx.—*e.g.*, (43)