NOTES ON THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE SEA OF GALILEE.

IN the controversies on the sites of Capernaum and Bethsaida, every crumb of information will be considered of interest, and it is important to clear up every point liable to misconception. The following notes may therefore be of value.

Capernaum.—It is now generally admitted, I believe, that Christian tradition from the fourth century downwards points to Tell Hûm. Col. Wilson was the first clearly to array this evidence. As regards the testimony of Josephus, however, the advocates of Tell Hûm consider that the "Fountain of Capharnaum" was the 'Ain Tâbghah, and that it "fertilised the plains of Gennesareth" by an aqueduct.

I would suggest that as Josephus does not mention this aqueduct, it is of importance to prove that the existing aqueduct is of antiquity sufficient to satisfy the condition of its existence in his days.

The level of the aqueduct is 52 feet above the Sea of Galilee, and the water is dammed up to this level by an octagonal enclosing wall round the spring. The spring wall is of small masonry, apparently modern, and said to have been constructed by 'Aly, son of Dhahr el 'Amr, in the last century.

The masonry of the aqueduct has not been described. If of the Herodian age, the masonry should be large and the mortar hard and white (as at Cæsarea). Small masonry and hard red, or soft white, mortar are marks of Arab work, as is also the working of the stone with a toothed chisel, which was apparently not used in Roman work.

The Tâbghah spring is brackish and unfit for the Coracinus. That fish cannot find access from the lake because of the 50 feet dam, and the adherents of this site seem thus placed in a dilemma. Without a dam the water cannot be conducted to Gennesaret. With a dam (as Col. Wilson remarks) the water becomes unfit for the Coracinus.

It is often said that Capernaum was in the borders of Zebulon and Naphtali, but any student who will consider the line of that border as traced in Joshua xix. will find that it ran west of the plateau called El Ahma, which extends above the Sea of Galilee as far west as Tabor. The following sites within the territory of Naphtali lay far west of the Sea of Galilee :—

Bitzaanaim	..	..	..	..	*Bessûm.*
Adami..	..	..	..	..	*Admah.*
Nekeb (Siadatha)	..	..	..	..	*Seiyadah.*
Jabneel (Kefr Yama)		..	..	..	*Yemma.*
Hukkok	..	..	..	..	*Yakûk.*
Adamah	..	..	..	..	*Ed Dâmeh.*
Ramah	..	..	..	..	*Râmeh.*

The position of these sites makes it impossible to extend the border of Zebulon as far east as Capernaum, and the meaning of the passage in

the Gospel (Matt. iv. 13) appears to be that Nazareth was in the territory of Zebulon, and Capernaum in that of Naphtali.

Professor Schaff states that Jewish tradition connects Capernaum with Tell Hûm. The only Jewish tradition with which I am acquainted connects Caphar Nahum with the city of the Minai, and thus with Minieh. (See "Tent Work," vol. ii., p. 183.)

It seems to be assumed that the Nahum in question must be the prophet, but in that case the city would be named Elkosh. The Jewish tradition makes Capernaum to be named after a Rabbi named Nahum the Old, mentioned in the Talmud (Beracoth vii. 48).

As to the tomb of Rabbi Tanhum, Jewish tradition appears to place it at Mejdel, which favours the Minieh site, as it is mentioned with that of Nahum (Sichus ha Tzadikim, seventeenth century).

Before entering into the question of the ancient name of Tell Hûm, it seems to me that we require to know whether the site existed in the time of Christ or of Josephus. The style of the synagogue so closely resembles that of the synagogues known to have been built by Rabbi Simeon Bar Jochai in the second century A.D.—a time when the Jews are well known to have flourished in Galilee, the Sanhedrin having its. seat at Tiberias—that we may perhaps be justified in considering Tell Hûm, which is not on a site naturally fitted for a city, as having sprung into existence after the first century A.D.

But even if it be older, it does not follow that it must of necessity be mentioned in the New Testament or by Josephus. Josephus does not mention Chorazin, and the Gospels do not speak of the important city of Taricheæ.

Bethsaida.—Professor Schaff proposes a Galilean Bethsaida just west of Jordan, but this seems to be unsatisfactory. It will not meet the old objection of Reland that the Galilean Bethsaida must have been in the neighbourhood of Gennesareth ("Palestina Illustrata," s.v., vol. ii.), and if it is placed so far east a single site—Bethsaida Julias—would be sufficient. The Galilean Bethsaida is supposed to be necessary to the explanation of Mark vi. 45, 53, compared with John vi. 17, but the difficulty is not met by Professor Schaff's proposal, as will be seen on consulting the passages cited. The true explanation, as I hope to show in a forthcoming work, seems to be found in tracing the site of the miracle of feeding the 5,000 at the south end of the lake, opposite Bethsaida Julias. By such an explanation we are able to unravel the tangled topography without supposing a second Galilean Bethsaida— not noticed by any author of antiquity—to have existed within a few miles of Julias.

Lieut. Kitchener proposes to place Julias at Tell Hûm. Against such a theory may be quoted the absolute statement of Pliny that this town was on the east side of the lake, and the description of Josephus that Jordan passed Julias before entering the Sea of Galilee (Wars iii. 10. 7). Neither of these descriptions could be applied to Tell Hûm.

The whole difficulty respecting Bethsaida is caused by its being

mentioned in Luke ix. 10, and it is most remarkable that the Sinaitic MS. omits the name in this passage.

I may perhaps be permitted to remark that the difficulty as to Bethsaida is greater than would be supposed by any one first attacking the question. It has been carefully considered by Reland, Grove, and other authorities, and cannot be settled out of hand (as the Crusaders settled it in placing it at Khŭrbet Minieh), without reference to the arguments and authorities cited by such scholarly critics as those named above.

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RIMMON.

§ THE suggestion that Mughâret el Jâi was a cave inhabited by the remnant of the Benjamites is based on the identification of Rimmon with the Pomegranate-tree under which Saul pitched his tent. The latter identity was first suggested by Gesenius, and is strongly advocated by Mr. Birch, whose zeal and originality in the study of such subjects must excite the admiration of all interested in Biblical topography.

The place of refuge of the Benjamites has always been previously fixed at the present village Rammûn, and the following points seem to be worthy of consideration.

1. There is no necessary connection between Sel'a Rimmon ("rock Rimmon," Judg. xx. 47, xxi. 13) and Ha Rimmon Asher bi Migron, "the pomegranate which is by Migron" (1 Sam. xiv. 2). The latter might be very suitably fixed at "a tree in Ramah" (1 Sam. xxii. 6), which, like the pomegranate in question, was the place of Saul's encampment and in the district of Gibeah.

2. There is no mention either in the Bible or by Josephus of any cave as being the hiding-place of the Benjamites. The English translation, "in the Rock Rimmon," is misleading, as the Hebrew particles are Al "at" (Judges xx. 47), and Bi, "by" (Judges xxi. 13). The existence of a cave in Wâdy Suweinît named Mughâret el Jai has therefore no direct bearing on the question.

3. The site of Rammûn is within the border of Benjamin, since it is south of the latitude of Bethel, whence that border ran "southward" to Archi ('Ain 'Arîk), after crossing westwards from the "shoulder north of Jericho," which seems evidently to be the great Wâdy el 'Aujèh, beside which Naarath, the border town of Benjamin and Ephraim, apparently stood (Josh. xviii. 12, 13). The site is also within the Midbar, or desert of Bethaven.

4. The Rock Rimmon was apparently not far from Shiloh (Judges xxi. 12), which is an argument in favour of the northern site.

5. As regards the meaning of the word Sel'a, which is still in use among the Fellahîn of Palestine, I may remark that it is not generally applied to crags or precipices, which are called Shukf or 'Arâk, but in