

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 Khürbet Minieh), without reference to the arguments and authorities cited by such scholarly critics as those named above.

C. R. C.

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 Suweinit 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 'Arik), 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

the neighbourhood of the village of Rammûn there are cliffs sufficiently high to be called Shukf (especially that now called Shukf Dâûd). According to Gesenius the root *Se'la* means "elevated," but not necessarily precipitous.

6. Migron was apparently farther north than Wâdy Suweinit, and near Ai (Isaiah x. 28).

7. Josephus places the site of Saul's camp at a place called Aroura (Ant. vi. 12. 4), and it is remarkable that he translates the expression "under the tree" (1 Sam. xxxi. 13), in another passage, by the same word Aroura (Ant. vi. 14. 8). He probably follows a Targum rendering of the Hebrew *Ashal*. There is a village 'Arûra north of Bethel, but this could scarcely have been in the district of Gibeah.

C. R. C.

THE NAMELESS CITY.

[See *Quarterly Statement*, July, 1879, page 130.]

THE position of the city—called Ramah by Josephus—where Saul and Samuel first met (1 Sam. ix. 6; Ant. vi. 4. 1) is a *crux interpretum*, and one of the most difficult questions of the Old Testament topography. I have enumerated in a former paper the arguments in favour of a position near Soba, where Robinson endeavoured to fix Ramathaim Zophim, the main objection to which is the mention of Rachel's tomb on the line of Saul's return journey.

There are two indications which seem to point to the identity of the nameless city with Bethlehem. First, the fact that it was in the "land of Zuph," by which we may perhaps understand the country of Zuph, Samuel's ancestor, to be intended, who was an Ephrathite, or inhabitant of Bethlehem (1 Sam. i. 1). Second, the connection between Ramah and Bethlehem implied in the New Testament (Matt. ii. 18). The term Ramah, or "hill," would apply to the situation of Bethlehem on a well-defined spur.

It seems to me that we should be cautious in introducing any element of pure conjecture into such a question. Ramah was a common name for towns in Palestine, and Ramath Lehi was apparently on the border between Judah and Philistia, below the rock Etam (Beit 'Atâb), and thus not near Bethlehem.

Dr. Robinson was equally unsuccessful in attempting to identify the city with Ramah on Mouut Ephraim, and the attempt to identify several Ramahs on one site resembles that of Jerome to combine various Gibeahs and different Rimmons, which has caused endless confusion.

Mr. Birch supports a view which has often been put forward before, that the "hill of God" (Gibeah ha Elohim) to which Saul returned from the land of Zuph was Jerusalem. The objection to such a view appears to be that Jerusalem was at that time held by the Jebusites, whereas the "hill of God" was a garrison of the Philistines. Geba of Benjamin