

A Footnight in Galilee.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PLAIN OF GENNESARET—THE SEA OF GALILEE.

Standing on the mount on which Christ preached his memorable sermon, let the traveller look towards the east. Some thousand feet below him is the Sea of Galilee, pear-shaped, lying like a mirror in its frame work of mountains. It is some thirteen miles in length and six miles in width at its widest part, but it is only the northern section that can be seen from this mountain. The eastern side of the sea is guarded by a wall of grey hills, (some 2,000 feet high, bare, and deeply furrowed by ravines,) between which and the lake there seems no room for cultivation. There might be room, judging by the eye, for a road, except in some spots where the cliffs seem to push their feet sheer into the water. To the north one can easily see the gap in the mountains down which the Jordan makes its way from Lake Merom to this lake, "the eye of Galilee," at our feet; and yonder, up high on the brow of Lebanon is Safed, visible here from Christ's pulpit, a fit illustration, as a city set on a hill and seen by all Galilee, of the position Christ intended his church to hold in this land and in this world.

Next to the lake the spot of greatest interest to the traveller standing on the Mount of Beatitudes, is the plain of Gennesaret, which lies between him and the north end of the lake. It is only a small bit of country, about four

miles long and three miles wide, shaped like a bow tightly strung, but one of the most famous spots to Christians, in Galilee. It was a district of great fertility because of its abundant supply of water; there are no less than four streams and two copious fountains pouring their precious burden over the plain by means of aqueducts and canals, the remains of which can still be traced. Further, its soil is deep and rich, being a dark alluvial loam containing the debris of the basaltic rock in the neighborhood, washed down by these mountain streams. And again, the plain lying some six hundred feet lower than the Mediterranean, sheltered also on the north by lofty hills, possesses a climate very much like Egypt. Taking these things into account, we can believe almost every word of the glowing description Josephus gives of the spot, when he writes as follows:

"The country also that lies over against this lake hath the same name of Gennesareth; its nature is wonderful as well as its beauty; its soil is so fruitful that all sorts of trees can grow upon it, and the inhabitants accordingly plant all sorts of trees there; for the temper of the air is so well mixed, that it agrees very well with those several sorts, particularly walnuts, which require the coldest air, flourish there in vast plenty; there are palm-trees also, which grow best in hot air; fig-trees also and olives grow near them, which yet require an air that is more temperate. One may call this place the ambition of nature, where it