

ern part of the lake and along the whole eastern coast the height of this mountain wall is not less than eight or nine hundred feet, generally rounded off towards the summit and not very precipitous. But on the west the summit of the cliffs is fully one thousand feet above the surface of the lake.—The ground rises with a very gentle elevation from the Great Plain, but when the traveller arrives within two miles of the lake he finds the ground breaking down more than one hundred feet, indicating its near approach, and inducing a belief that he will find its waters, like most other lakes, near the surface of the ground. But, to his great surprise, when he reaches the brow of the cliff and obtains a full view of the object of his eager desire, he sees it lying a thousand feet below him, like a great vault; and, instead of his journey being ended, he finds in that long and rugged descent—as much as a mile and a half—the most difficult, tedious and irksome part of his course.

Along the north-west shore of the lake the cliffs recede, or fall back in a triangular form to a considerable distance, and leave on the shore a large fertile plain of rich black loam. This plain is the celebrated “land of Gennesaret,” so often traversed by the feet of the Saviour, the grand centre of his public ministrations, and the quarter where most of the lake-cities stood. This plain is highly extolled by Josephus, and represented as almost a paradise in point of beauty and fertility. It is three and a half miles long and two broad at the widest part; and it is the only tract of level land of any account on the shores of the lake. For a considerable distance along the lake, on the north side of Tiberius, the cliff comes quite down to the shore, and the road, cut out of the rock, passes along its steep side at some distance above the water. Beyond this, for a distance of nearly five miles, that is, along the shore of Gennesaret, there is a beautiful shelving beach. It was here where most of the business was carried on. Beyond this the elevated ground and high cliffs again approach the lake; and, although there is a kind of a road running along the shore, all the way to the waters of the Upper Jordan, yet it is very rough and difficult, being chiefly hewn out of the rock.

Of all the towns which formerly stood on the shores of this lake Tiberius is the only one that now remains. Their very names have perished from the knowledge of the present inhabitants, and scarcely the slightest trace remains to indicate the spot on which they stood. Tiberius at present is but a little, dirty place, awfully wasted by the desolating effects of earthquakes.—About a mile farther west along shore is a bathing establishment, on a respectable footing, where there are hot springs sending forth copious streams of water at a high temperature, much more than the hand can bear. El-Mejdel, “a miserable, little Muslim village, looking much like a ruin, though exhibiting no marks of antiquity,” is allowed to be the site of Magdala, chiefly known as the native town of Mary Magdalene. It stands on the shore of the lake, four miles north from Tiberius, and at the south-west angle of Gennesaret. At the other extremity of the plain it is now generally believed that Capernaum stood. Dr Robinson was the first, after patient research and careful observation, that pointed out this as the most probable site of Capernaum, and subsequent travellers have generally assented to his opinion. It is true Van Develde continues to give the preference to Tell-Hum, a place about three miles farther along shore, and upon the high ground among the rocks. But the Dutchman’s opinion is of no weight here, for he visited neither of the places. The ruins of Tell-Hum are indeed very remarkable; but they are far too recent and far too distant from the land of Gennesaret to justify the supposition that it was the side of Capernaum.