

period occupied its present position, and cannot possibly have been formed in historic times above the ruins of the cities of the plain. Major Conder declares, "Geologists now hold that the lake had reached its present condition before man was created," and he establishes this conclusion by various proofs.¹ Indeed, since Professor Hull's account of his geological expedition across the Peninsula of Sinai, and through the Wady Araba into Palestine, this question may be said to have been finally settled.²

Nor could these Cities of the Plain, as some suppose who follow the tradition of Josephus, have lain to the south of the Dead Sea, for only the country lying to the north of that lake is visible from any hill in the neighbourhood of Bethel or Hai.

A sketch of the landscape looking east from Hai may be seen in Major Conder's last work.³ Over the rolling sea of countless brown hills that intervene, the comparatively barren mountainous inheritance of Benjamin, the eye passes on to rest with pleasure on the wide expanse of the green plain of Jordan at their feet. Both a portion of that part of the *Kikkar*, under the western hills around *Ain es Sultan*, the ancient Jericho, and the whole of that still more extensive part of it which lies beyond the river at the foot of the mighty natural well formed by the mountains of Moab, are well in sight.

As Professor Socin, M. Clermont Ganneau, Mr. Guy Le Strange, and others, misled by tradition, which in this, as in all other matters, is never to be followed if it "makes the Word of God of none effect," have insisted on the Cities of the Plain lying south of the Dead Sea, it may be well to give Dr. Birch's short but unanswerable reply. In addition to the argument that I have adduced, he says, "Lot chose the plain, *Kikkar*, of Jordan." This *must* mean the plain at the northern end of the Dead Sea, since no valley at the southern end

¹ *Tent Work in Palestine*. Vol. ii. p. 46.

² *Mount Seir*. By Professor Edward Hull, F.R.S.

³ *Palestine*. By Major C. R. Conder. p. 32. Richard Bentley & Son, London. 1886. George Philip & Son.