

forces those plants that are naturally enemies to one another to agree together. It is a happy contention of the seasons, as if every one of them laid claim to this country; for it not only nourishes different sorts of autumnal fruit, beyond men's expectation, but preserves them a great while; it supplies men with the principal fruits, with grapes and figs continually, during ten months of the year, and the rest of the fruits as they become ripe together, through the whole year; for besides the good temperature of the air, it is also watered from a most fertile fountain."

It is not its fertility however, and paradisaical beauty, "a land full of the beauty of Jehovah," some slight traces of which can still be seen, that renders the spot so interesting to the Christian. But the fact that somewhere in this plain were situated Capernaum, the home of our Saviour during the three years of his public ministry, and also Chorazin and Bethsaida, with perhaps Magdala, the home of Mary, who hence was called Magdalene, meaning of "Magdala." That plain, now so desolate, was, in the days of our Saviour, like a very bee-hive as to the number and activity of its inhabitants. Bethsaida of Galilee and Chorazin lying on the lake, were full of fishermen busy catching and curing fish for home and foreign consumption. From these towns came five at least of the twelve Apostles. Capernaum, identified by Capt. Wilson, was right on the great caravan road between Egypt and Damascus, and was probably in the time of Christ the most important city of the twelve cities on the Sea of Galilee, for Tiberias was then under Antipas, only rising into existence under the hammer and chisel of the mason and the stone-cutter. Capernaum had therefore its custom-house, tax-gatherers, its garrison of Roman soldiers with centurions, its schools, and a costly synagogue, 74

feet by 56, built by the Roman centurion, (Luke vii. 4-5), the foundations of which have recently been laid bare. That fertile plain was therefore in the time of Christ, the busiest and richest and most crowded spot in all Galilee; therefore it was that he chose it as the centre of his evangelistic work, preaching in its synagogue the sermon of John vi. But the wealthy, luxurious people, who were exalted to heaven by the presence and preaching of Jesus, were cast down to hell by their neglect of them and the country given over to the desolation and solitude that almost reminds one of the borders of the Salt Sea.

It is drawing on towards evening, and we set our horses' heads in the direction of the lake, "the eye of Galilee." The descent is rapid, for the waters of this sea are between 600 and 700 feet in the bowels of the earth, being far below the level of the other seas of the world. The sun has sunk behind the mountains of Galilee as we draw near Tiberias, but it shines with great beauty on the high rampart of hills that face us to the east of the lake. There is not a sail to be seen on these waters. At one city, which, in the time of Josephus, 280 ships were gathered for purposes of war, and few people to be seen abroad on the beach that once glittered with the temples and synagogues, houses and palaces of Jews and Romans. M. Renan says, that on the shores and environs of this lake we have "a fifth gospel torn but still readable," (uncinquieme, evangile, lacere, mais lisible encore.) That is true; but the fifth gospel Christians find here is not, however, the gospel Renan finds, but rather that found by another poet and Hebraist of a different school, (McCheyne), who thus sings while sojourning by these waters:—

How pleasant to me thy deep blue waves,
O Sea of Galilee!
For the glorious One who came to save
Has often stood by thee.