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LETTERS FROM PALESTINE

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LETTERS FROM PALESTINE:

WRITTEN
DURING A RESIDENCE THERE IN THE YEARS
1836, 7, AND 8.

By THE REV. J. D. PAXTON.

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LETTERS ON PALESTINE.

[1]

LETTER I.

Beyroot, June 18th, 1836.

After a stay of twenty-four hours at Cyprus, rendered pleasant by the several interviews which we had with the missionaries at that place, we sailed about three o'clock P. M. with a fine wind, and before night, the isle, and even the mountains of Cyprus, were sinking out of view in the north-western waters. In the night our winds became light. At a little past five in the morning I went on deck, hoping to see the top of Mount Lebanon, which, from our run, I thought must be within the reach of the eye; but a dull heavy fog lay on our eastern horizon, and limited our view. Just as I was finishing my breakfast, the captain put his head down the hatchway, and let me know that the mountains could be seen. I ran on deck, and could see the faint outline of the top of Mount Lebanon, peering above a long line of fog that spread like a wide circle round the horizon. The upper part of the fog was breaking into irregular masses and rolling off; at times the mountain could at some points be seen very clearly; then, again, the fog or clouds would close in upon it, and hide it from our view. The highest parts of it were partially covered with snow. It lay, however, in parts and parcels; and often in long irregular forms. This was owing, most probably, to the form of the ground on which it lay; being most abundant in hollows, and on the north sides of ridges. [2]

Great is the power of association. From my childhood, I have been taught to read the book of God, and prize its precious truths; and I bless God, and thank my dear and beloved parents, more for this, the religious instruction they gave me, and their prayers, than for all other benefits received through them; and they have not been few. Mount Lebanon I found often, very often, referred to in that best of all books; and, from the various ways in which it is introduced, it associates itself in my mind with many parts of Scripture history; with some of its most touching incidents; with many of its most precious and consoling truths. How often in my boyhood, and even in more mature days, have I wished, like Moses, that I could see that "goodly mountain and Lebanon!" Now, indeed and in truth, I saw it rising into view, and hoped before long to land at its foot, and in due time to traverse its ridges, visit its cedars, and drink of its pure snow waters. I was born and grew to manhood among mountains, and it is natural for me to love mountain scenery. A landscape is to my eye,—I was going to say, defective,—that does not give, at least, a glimpse of a mountain.

I was often much struck with my feelings on this matter, during the ten or fifteen years I have spent in situations in which no mountains could be seen. When a journey of business or pleasure led me to the neighbourhood of mountains, they appeared to have a beauty and a charm in them, that rose paramount to all that the wide and extended plains could have.

But never did I feel such pulsations of delight from beholding a single mountain as now from looking at that "goodly mountain and Lebanon"—that Lebanon so associated with patriarchs and prophets, with the Land of Promise, with the Temple of the Lord, and with those thousand things which give such ever newness and freshness to the oracles of God. [3]

As the day passed away, we drew nearer and nearer, but our winds were so light, that our approach was slow, and a peculiar haziness of weather much impeded our view of the changing aspect of the mountain. Beyroot came in view towards night; but, owing to the lightness of wind, and that against us, we did not reach it until about sunrise next morning.

Beyroot lies at the south side of the river Beyroot, which runs in from the mountains. The coast recedes at this place, and forms a wide, open, halfmoon-like kind of a bay. A small part of the town lying near the water appears pretty closely built; but much of the town, or very many houses, stand out over the gentle rise of the hill, with gardens connected with them. Indeed, the whole face of the plain and ridge, on which the town stands, is quite covered with trees. The trees are not large, being many of them mulberry, almond, (the pride of China I think it is called), a few olive and apricot, &c. I have seen no place in the East that struck me more pleasantly than Beyroot.

The mountains behind it rise in succession. They have a good many trees on them, but are not entirely covered. They appear to be rather confined to spots as if planted by man, and cultivated

for special purposes. With the help of a glass, I can see that, while a small growth is more generally spread over the side of the mountain, there are many places where a much larger growth may be seen. But I must omit farther notice of this until I have rambled over them, and ascertained their true character. [4]

We learned, on communicating with the shore, that there had been several cases of plague, that the quarantine was strict, and that we should have nearly two weeks' quarantine to pass, before we would be allowed to have free intercourse with the friends we hoped to find there.

In the course of the day our consul came off, and informed us that he had procured for us a house in a healthy and airy part of the suburbs, in which we must pass our quarantine. Mr. B. also, who is connected with the mission at this place, came off to see us. From him we learned that the Rev. E. B. Smith and lady had, within four or five days, left this for Smyrna, partly on account of Mrs. S.'s health, which has lately failed much; and that the other families were on the mountains, about three or four hours' ride from town.

LETTER II.

Beyroot, June 27th, 1836.

We had hoped to get out of quarantine to-day, or at least to-morrow, when to our discomfort we heard that they had added four days to our time, owing to information which they had received from Smyrna. There is no better way to manage such matters than patiently to wait until the time is out. But as they give me more of quarantine, I see not why I may not tell you more about it.

Through the kind agency of our consul we were not put in the Lazaretto, which is said to be a miserable place at best, and worse now as the plague is there; but had a very comfortable house assigned us, to the west of the town, on the side of the hill, nearly a quarter of a mile from the walls. The whole side of the hill where we are is cut up in plots, which form gardens planted with trees, and here and there is a dwelling-house. We had all our baggage landed and carried by the crew to our house, except a few boxes, which being wood were not infectious, and were carried by porters. Two guardians are assigned us—one of them must be always at the house, to see that no person touches us, or any of our articles; the other we may send on errands, such as to do our marketing. They are not to touch us, nor we them. [5]

They bring us what we want, lay it down, and we take it. They bring us water, wood, jugs, pitchers, dishes, provisions, fruits: these are not infectious—but cloth, paper, &c. are. They bring us notes, papers, books; but we cannot send such articles without a special observance. For instance, if we wish to send a letter to any one, or a note not as big as your finger, with the name of any article on it which we may need, the guardian may not touch it. He takes a small box; you put it in; he takes it to the health-office, where it is smoked with sulphur, and then it may be received and read. Or, you may write on a small board, or on a slate; the guardian may touch *them*. While there is care to avoid touching you or anything that conveys infection, there is, in other respects, a free intercourse. We received many visits—our friends come, and sit down, a few feet from us, and remain as long as they please, conversing with us, and thus helping to while away the time. They furnish us with any books that we may need, and we at the end of our quarantine can restore them. We are allowed to walk as much as we please, taking one of our guardians with us, who sees that we touch no one or anything that conveys infection; availing ourselves of this privilege, we have rambled about a good deal, and made ourselves acquainted with the neighbourhood. [6]

To the west and south-west, at a quarter of a mile from the town, commences what may be called *the sands*, which gave me a better idea of the *sands of the desert* than anything I have before seen. The whole surface is a bed of fine sand. It includes the highest part of the promontory, and much, if not all the south-west side of it. There is, at places, occasionally, a weed or bush, but much of the surface is very fine sand, which is moved more or less by the wind; and as the wind blows much from the south, the sand has the appearance of approaching nearer and nearer the town—at the place where it stops, and the gardens begin, the sands are a good deal higher than the gardens, ten, fifteen, or twenty feet; and the bank advances, owing to the sand that is carried forward by the wind, and rolls down towards the gardens. Some houses and fields have been covered, and others are in danger, and must soon be overwhelmed with it.

The side of the hill next the city, and west of it, is all cut up into small plots; and much labour has been expended in making these plots level. The side of the hill is thus thrown into terraces one above another, but without any order or regularity. The plots are of various sizes and shapes. A stone wall is built up at the lower side, and the earth drawn to a level. On the tops of the wall is often planted the Indian fig, or prickly pear, which abounds here. Few of these gardens have either flowers or vegetables in them—have, in fact, little else beside mulberry-trees, with a few fig, olive, apricot, pomegranate, and other fruit-trees. From the appearance of the hill side, I am disposed to think, that it was once covered more with houses than it now is—that the levelling of the ground may, in part at least, have been made to fit it for houses, which have now disappeared. There are some old cisterns, pillars, &c., which indicate this. [7]

I have met with several things which struck me with some force, as illustrating Scripture. The roofs of the houses are flat, and a way is made to ascend to the top, which is a most pleasant place for a walk in the cool of the evening. "Samuel called Saul to the top of the house."—1 Sam.

A number of the houses have a kind of a tent on the top, made of reeds, &c., in which they sit, and I believe sleep. "They spread Absalom a tent on the top of the house."—2 Sam. xvi. 22.

There is usually a small railing, or elevation, round the edge, to prevent any from falling over; and the law of Moses required them to make a battlement for this purpose.—Deut. xxii. 8.

While some have tents on the top of the house, others have them out under the trees; and the fig-tree and the vine, having large shady leaves, are very favourable for this. Thus they sit "under their vine and fig-tree." And where they do not use tents they are very fond of sitting out under the trees. They usually take out a straw mat or small carpet, which they spread down; sometimes on this they lay their beds, and sit on them. They have not feather beds, as we have, but a kind of wool mattress, which is easily folded up and removed. Mr. and Mrs. —, who are of our party, are natives of this place, and hopefully pious. They often take out their mat, and spread it down under a tree, and spend much of the day there. In our walks we see many thus under the vines and fig-trees, whiling away their hours.

Almost every night we hear music and dancing at no great distance from us. The music is hardly worth the name—is a kind of *beating*, accompanied with some wind instrument, and serves to keep the time. The dancing, as it is called, is not much more than a slow walking, stooping, changing of position. It has none of that active and fatiguing action which dancing has in the western world. The men and women do not join together in it. It is done almost wholly by men; and often old men. The women sit by and look on. The Sabbath night appears more especially a favourite time for this amusement. [8]

The promontory on which Beyroot stands is low at the south-east side, where it joins the main land, and on that low part, which once may have been covered with water (making the promontory an island), there is much sand. On a part of this there are many pines; a few of them are large; and a large space is covered with small ones. There is some care taken of them, and persons are not allowed to pillage them. The larger ones are trimmed up very high, and have a large, flat, bushy top, which gives them a rather singular, but pretty appearance.

The sycamore here is a different tree from that which bears the name with us. The wood is valuable, being hard and very durable. It is a low tree, with a thick body, many branches, shaped a little like the apple-tree, the leaf large. It bears a fruit which is to some extent valuable. One of the prophets said he was "a gatherer of sycamore fruit." It would seem that much of it was used, and gathering of it a business.

There are few, if any, springs here, as we should call them—but wells; at least, in all my walks I have not seen any. There is a low place a little out of the city gate, where there are three or four wells. They are walled up, with a large flat area over them, in the middle of which is a hole, large enough to let down a bucket. There is no pump, or windlass, nor even a well-sweep; but a rope. The vessel used almost constantly for bringing water, is a large jug with two handles, and a small mouth. It may hold from two to four gallons. They tie the rope to the neck or to the handles, and let it down. It fills, and they draw it up. In passing these wells, especially in the evening or morning, you find a crowd of people drawing water. Some have mules and donkeys on which they carry it—usually having four of these water-pots, two swung in a wooden frame on each side of the animal. The others carry the jar on their shoulders, or rather on the back, held over the shoulder; but one hand is raised to support it. You see no one carrying anything in his arms, as is the custom with us, but upon the head or shoulder when not too large, otherwise upon the back—even children are carried in this way—it is amusing to see the little things riding upon their parents' shoulders. There is no vessel attached to these wells; and thus we see the force of the saying of the woman, "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep;" and thus Rebecca came "out with her pitcher upon her shoulder." A large proportion of those whom we saw drawing water were females. [9]

The Turks are usually a grave and silent people. They talk less than the Greeks, and indeed than almost any other people that I have been among. It was therefore rather a novelty to meet with one who was of a different cast of temperament. Both our guardians are young Turks, I should think about twenty; and very good-looking. One of them is rather of a grave cast; a genuine Turkish, but withal an unusually mild aspect. The other is as full of life and glee and innocent mischief as he can hold. The first day or two he did not show it much, except in occasionally playing off a little of his humour on his companion. He then began upon Angelo, my Maltese servant, whom I had engaged at Smyrna. The Maltese language is a dialect of the Arabic, and they could therefore converse with him. Our establishment having but two rooms, one of which being occupied by the ladies, and the other by the gentlemen, Angelo had to take up his lodgings in the porch where some of the baggage was placed. The guardians slept in the yard under the tree. They pretended that they would do all sorts of bad things to him at night, and excited his fears not a little. On finding it out I interposed, and assured them, through an interpreter, that if they did not desist from thus working on his fears, I would report them to the police. They assured me they were only in fun, and would not trouble him. Angelo had more spunk than I expected; he got a large knife to defend himself with—we took it from him. I told him to sleep in our room—he would not. I told him to sleep close to the door, which I left open; no, he would sleep at his selected place—and he did. [10]

When we walk out, one of our guardians always walks with us, and generally the lively and talkative one chooses that office. He amuses himself and us in various ways, and usually contrives to put in a claim for a boksheesh (a present) at the close of the walk. As he does not always get it, it is amusing to observe in how many ways he contrives to let us know that it would

be very acceptable. At times when he does not get it, he pretends to his companion that he has; and thus has sport with him, in refusing to let him have any part of it. They are very obliging—I have seldom seen more perfect good-humour than they manifest.

LETTER III.

[11]

Beyroot, July 4th, 1836.

I think I informed you that Beyroot is a walled town, and has a strong garrison. It is held under Ibrahim Pasha, and for his father or step-father Mahommed Ali of Egypt. Ibrahim spends most of his time north of this at Aleppo, Tripoli, Scanderoon, and Tarsoos. He is erecting a palace not far from Aleppo, and may possibly purpose making that his home. Beyroot is the most important port on the coast, but still its trade is small. The walls are of considerable height, appear strong, and have several strong towers connected with them. The number of troops at this place I have not been able to ascertain with certainty; there must be several thousands, possibly from 3000 to 5000.

I have been equally unable to ascertain the population of the town and suburbs; nearly one-third of the population, I should think, live without the walls, in what is called the Gardens. The houses without the walls are much more pleasant, at least in summer, than those within the town. They stand apart; have gardens and trees about them, are higher and much more cool. The town stands in a low spot, is much crowded with houses, has narrow filthy streets, and during the hot weather the heat is considerable, which causes sickness. The gates of the town are guarded, and at an early hour in the night all but one are closed. This one is kept open to a late hour.

At the quay, or public landing-place, there is an immense number of old, broken pillars. The wall fronting the bay is for thirty, possibly fifty yards, composed almost wholly of them. Most of them are more or less broken. Many of them have been connected, no doubt, with buildings of consequence, as their high finish seems to indicate; a number of them are fine Egyptian marble. They are of various sizes, but most of them of the largest kind. Broken pieces of pillars and other work in marble are to be seen in many places about the town, both without and within the walls, all indicating that, at some period, this was the seat of wealth and taste, of luxury and splendour.

[12]

Brumanah, Mount Lebanon, July 20th, 1836.

After getting out of quarantine, and spending ten or twelve days in Beyroot to see the place, I came up to this village, where the mission families are spending the summer months. It lies about three hours' ride from Beyroot, on the top of one of the ridges which runs down from the main ridge of the Lebanon towards the sea. It may be about one-third of the way to the top, and one-third of the height of Jebal Sun-neen, the highest point of Mount Lebanon. We have from Bru-manah a fair view of the mountains, as they rise above us, and run far to the north-east and south-west: a long sea coast spreads out before us—the town of Beyroot—the shipping that lies off the town on the face of the smooth waters, all rise into view, and give a rich and beautiful variety to the prospect.

Nearly one-half of the village is composed of Greeks, and the other half about equally divided between the Druses and Maronites. They all speak the Arabic, which is indeed the vernacular language of this region. The people appear friendly, and but for the influence of the priests would, no doubt, give more proof of their friendship. The missionaries have opened a school among them, which promises to do good. The females wear what is called the tantoor on their heads. It is very like those tin horns which are often used by hunters to call their dogs; stage-drivers at times use them. The tantoor is a foot long; the largest part is fixed to the forehead, and by means of a small piece of wood, or some such thing, which passes over the head, and is fastened to the hair, the whole is made to stand upon the head like a horn. It usually leans forward, and reminds one of the figure of the unicorn. The horn is of silver, and has at times various ornamental devices engraved on it. The chief use of it seems to be to sustain the veil, which is universally worn by the women here. It is thrown over the horn, and hangs down over the shoulders. When men are present, they draw the veil with one hand close over the mouth, so as to cover the lower part of the face, leaving but one eye exposed. While they are thus careful to cover the face, they often, I might say usually, leave the breast most shamefully exposed. Indeed, they seem to have pride in exposing that part of the body.

[13]

Sometime before I got out of quarantine, there was a death in the Emeer family of this village; and, as is the custom, the people are not allowed to wash their clothes for forty days—as they are not much given to cleanliness at any time, this was an order grievously out of place. About the time I came up the people were most fearfully dirty. The days of restriction are, however, past, and it is thought the people have been using water. It is a rare evil for people to get habituated to—a disregard of cleanliness—for it is hard to correct the evil.

Most, if not all, of the houses here are of one story—a few, indeed, that stand on the hill-side, have a small room under the elevated side of the main floor. The floors are uniformly, as far as I have seen, made of clay, as also is the roof. They wet it and make it into a kind of mortar, and have a heavy stone roller with which to make it smooth. For the roof, pieces of timber are laid

across, mostly a few strong beams, then across them smaller pieces of boards, and flat stones; and on these the earth is laid, in a wet state, and the roller made to pass over it, until with that and their feet they make it hard and smooth. All the roofs are flat, having some little channels to collect the water, and a low place at one side to let it off. There is a way of ascending to the top, which, in large houses, is a fine place for walking and taking the air. These roofs do very well in dry weather, but in the rainy season the water, it is said, comes through, and gives much annoyance to the inmates. The sides are usually made of stone, very coarsely put together; very little mortar is used—often none. They plaster the inside with clay, such as they use for making the floors; and give it a slight coat of whitewash. It is, to be sure, done in poor style; still the houses do pretty well for a summer residence. Generally they have but one room, but occasionally they have two or three. [14]

These flat roofs and their earthen materials illustrate what was meant by the grass upon the house-tops—grass does often spring up in the wet season, but the heat of the sun withers it and it comes to nought.

"Shall men give into your bosom?"—The usual dress here, is a long robe, not much unlike a woman's gown. It is fastened about the waist with a girdle. This is a long, large piece, often as large, and even much larger than a sheet, but of a fine texture; usually of the shawl kind. They wrap this round them four or five times, forming a band from four inches to a foot wide, as the taste of each may be,—then give such a fastening to the end as each may choose. It is odd, and to us laughable to see them putting them on. I have seen them fasten the end of their long girdle to a door, post, or table—adjust its folds—regulate its width—put one end to their body, and turn round and round until they have wrapped it all to their liking. Yea, I have seen them do it on the road. On my visit to Nice, not long after I left that plain, I passed a man on the road who from some cause wished to adjust his girdle. Possibly it was a preparation before he entered that city of ancient name. He had stopped, taken off his girdle, adjusted its width, arranged its folds, fastened one end of it to a bush, drew it out to its full length, applied the other end to his side, and holding it, turned round and round carefully, attending to its width and the adjustment of its folds. I felt strongly disposed to laugh, and had there been any one to join me in it, I doubt not should have laughed heartily, the danger of offending the gravity of the Turk to the contrary notwithstanding. But there is no fun in laughing alone; and my old Greek guide looked as grave as if he saw nothing amusing, in seeing a man winding himself in a shawl. But to the point I meant to illustrate. The part of the dress above the girdle having an opening, is used for stowing away all sorts of things; handkerchiefs, when they have any; bread, fruit, &c., nothing comes amiss; they put it into the bosom. As the receptacle goes all round the body, it is equal to three or four of those large pockets our great-grandmothers used to wear. [15]

LETTER IV.

Bru-ma-nah, July 23d, 1836.

I have just returned from a tour of four days among the mountains. The ladies rode on donkeys, which are not much larger than the largest kind of sheep; they have great strength and a pleasant gait. They are also sure-footed, which in such rough roads is no small recommendation. I hired a mule, the owner of which, as is usual in such cases, went along to take care of his animal. The other two gentlemen had their own horses. It is not here as in Europe, where you can find taverns and beds. There are no such things here. We, of course, had to take all things needful for eating and sleeping. We carried two tents—one for the ladies, the other for the gentlemen; our bedding, provisions, utensils for cooking, a pot, a pan, plates, knives, forks, spoons, coffee, tea-cups, sugar, salt, towels, &c. We required, of course, two or three mules to carry these, and a servant to take care of them and cook for us. Although our plan was to take no more than was really necessary, we made quite a cavalcade. [16]

You have, no doubt, heard that coal has lately been found in the mountains near Beyroot. The chief mine that is worked lies near a village called Corneil, about three or four hours' ride from Brumanah, and up near the main ridge of the mountain. Our first object was to visit those mines which lay south-east of Brumanah. We passed up the ridge on which Brumanah stands, but gradually wound along its south-east side, until we reached the bottom of the ravine which separates it from the ridge which lies to the south. Much of the higher part of the ridge on which Brumanah stands is of the sandstone formation; it is, however, singularly mixed with patches of limestone. We found the ravine a most rugged and rocky one, and almost wholly of limestone. We saw many loose masses of green stone at the bottom, which must have been brought from some distance, as there was no appearance of that rock in sight.

In crossing the next ridge, we passed a village, in the midst of a well-cultivated spot. There were more trees, and vines, and garden herbs, than I had seen at any of the villages that I had passed. The prince of this village has a pretty good-looking palace, of considerable size. We passed close by it, and as the people within assembled to see the party of Franks, it gave us an opportunity to see them. After ascending about half way up this ridge, we again passed into the sandstone formation, which occupies the top, except some small locations of limestone, which appears in some strange way to have got out of its proper place. But of this hereafter. We passed over this ridge, and at the foot, near the lower part of the sandstone formation, we found the coal mines. Mr. Brattle, the English superintendant, received us most kindly, and took us through and [17]

showed us the mine. He has made four or five openings, and finds ample stores of coal. It is from three to four feet thick—dips a little into the mountain—has several considerable falls in the strata, which will require more labour in working it. There is another mine south of the next ridge, which is also now worked. The coal is not, however, as good as at the one we visited. None of the coal yet found is as good as the English coal, but most probably a further search may discover coal of a better quality.

It is about ten or fifteen years since this coal was first discovered. Several men were sent to examine it, but were not skilful, and did not report favourably. There was an attempt to work it a few years since, but no good resulted. At length Mr. Brattle, who is acquainted with the business, was induced to come out, and under his direction they are becoming more and more important. He labours under great disadvantages, from the absence of most of those aids and facilities which are so needful in carrying on such work. He has proved, or is proving, however, that they are valuable. This coal is carried on mules and donkeys to Beyroot, over a most villanous road. Were a good road made, and proper coal wagons used, it would greatly facilitate the matter. But that day is not yet come. There is no such thing as a wheeled conveyance here, at least I have seen none, nor the track of one of any description. [18]

There is a great irregularity in the sandstone strata near and above the coal, it is thrown about in all sorts of ways. But I shall have occasion to notice this repeatedly in my tour. After spending several hours at the mine, Mr. Brattle took us to his house at Corneil (the old palace, the best house in the village), and entertained and lodged us with great kindness and hospitality. From the terrace of the palace, which looks towards Beyroot, we had one of the most splendid views I have ever seen. We saw the sun set in the ocean behind Cyprus; could distinctly see the island in the full blaze of the setting sun. It lies so far to the west, that it is only in peculiar states of the air it can be seen. Corneil stands on a rocky knoll on the top of a ridge. At this place the limestone is thrown up, while both above and below on the ridge the sandstone prevails. It is surrounded with vines, mulberry, fig and other kinds of trees. But they stop here. This is the highest point on this part of the mountain where trees are seen. Almost immediately after leaving Corneil we saw no more trees, not even bushes, except occasionally a very low evergreen, which appeared to be a kind of thorn. It grows in bunches, spreads over the ground, but seldom rises above from six inches to a foot. Occasionally we saw some heather and fern in wet places, and more frequently furze and thistle; a few low flowers appeared, and some other mountain plants that were new to me. The whole face of the mountain was bare rocks, rocks, rocks. The ridge on which Corneil stands leads up to a very high point of the mountain called, if I recollect right, Jebal Knee-se. There are now, it is said, the remains of a church and monastery on the top. It was a place of some interest as an ecclesiastical establishment. It really must have looked like literally getting up, if not *to* at least *towards* heaven, to live upon the top of a mountain which is supposed to be from nine to ten thousand feet above the level of the sea. It was, no doubt, a monastic establishment. Why it was deserted I know not. I felt a wish to visit it, but the labour would have been considerable, and as another point which lies several hours' ride north-east is still higher, and is the one that is usually ascended, and as we thought the ascent of one would be quite enough for our invalids, we passed round the foot of the high peak of Jebal Knee-se, and made for the top of the ridge, at a low place between Jebal Knee-se and Jebal Sun-neen. [19]

The upper part of Jebal Knee-se is regularly stratified limestone, and horizontal. It has many shells in it; we stopped and collected some fine specimens of four or five different kinds. About the middle of the day, we reached the top of the ridge of Lebanon, at the low place between the two points before named. This place is above the limits of trees and cultivation. The mountain is barren even of bushes. There are, however, some of the smaller plants which I mentioned a few lines above.

We had from this place a fine view of the Bokar, or plain of Celo-Syria, which lies between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. It is a long and narrow plain—narrow compared with its length. It may be from fifteen to twenty miles wide, but must be several hundred miles long. It looked like a dead level. We could see many villages in it, and groves of trees, and the green fields. It was a lovely sight. We pitched our tents on the top, and made our dinner, enjoying the delightful view which lay around us on all sides. The cultivation on the side next the plain ascended much higher up the mountain than it did on the north-western side. There were fields of grain but a short distance below us, so near indeed that one of our muleteers took down his mule, and let it feed on the grain, and even brought up a bundle of green wheat which he procured there. [20]

The place on which we pitched our tents was the upper part of the sandstone formation. There was a good deal of sandstone, breccia or puddingstone, but near us on all sides the limestone formation was seen. After the heat of the day was a little over, we set out north-east along the top of the Mount for the Sun-neen, the high point which is usually ascended, and on which the most snow is found. There is a little flat, or nearly flat, space along the top, on which we found a footpath, much beaten. All over these high places the sheep and goats and cattle are driven for the sake of pasture. We saw more flocks on these upper parts of the mountain than we did on the lower parts.

Not far from our encampment, we passed a place near the upper part of the sandstone formation, where strata of a peculiar character cropt out. It split easily into lamina as fine as paper; was peculiarly elastic. You might roll it up in rolls, and it would, when let loose, spring back to its former state. It burnt freely. You might almost make torches of it. It was, no doubt, bituminous shale. In some places it had more of these properties than others. The strata was of considerable thickness, as we could see on the sides of the hollow on which we found it. It lay on the north-west side, a little below the top of the ridge. Most likely, as the strata was horizontal, it cropt out [21]

also on the south-east side next the plain of Celo-Syria.

Two or three hours brought us to the foot of Jebal Sun-noon, and up near the foot of the snows. Here we selected a good spot, and again pitched our tents; intending to employ the next day in our ascent to the top and return to the same place. We found it much colder than it was in the lower parts of the mountain. We really needed fire; but it was with difficulty that wood enough could be procured to make our tea, much more to make a fire to warm half-a-dozen people in the open air. We had, however, expected this, and brought clothing accordingly, so that we did not suffer much.

In the morning, we began the ascent; we rode nearly an hour, and took a donkey still farther for the benefit of the ladies; but then left all our animals, and betook ourselves in good earnest to the matter of ascending the Mount. On the side which we ascended, between where we encamped and the top, are two or three offsets, then the mountain falls off and leaves a kind of level. These general levels have small ridges and round hills on them, and many deep valleys and sink-holes, or holes of that peculiar kind which abound in districts where a horizontal limestone stratum lies on the surface. In these deep sink-hole places, and in the valleys, and on the sides of the ridges, the snow was accumulated in great quantities, but it did not cover the whole surface of the mountain, as I had supposed it might. But a small part of the mountain had snow on it. It lay in patches, and possibly not over one-twentieth part was covered with it. I saw no ice—all was snow. From the action of the sun and wind, it was just hard enough to walk on with safety. The foot would sink in it one, two, or three inches—seldom more. I walked on it in my shoes without inconvenience. [22]

We were three hours in reaching the top—we proceeded slowly, and stopped frequently to allow the ladies rest. We found the summit much like the offset, which I have just described. There was what may be called a general level, of a mile or two across, with many rises in it, and full of deep holes of various shapes, some nearly round, others long and narrow. These were full of snow. It was usually much melted at one side, and the largest masses were, as a general thing, found lying on the west or south-west side of the hollow. What appeared most singular, was the fact, that for the most part, the outsides of this great cone appeared the highest—around it were the highest knolls, while the inner parts were lower, and its holes and sinks more deep. The rain and snow water does not seem to flow over and down the outside of the cone, but sinks in it, and finds its way out as it can.

The whole upper part of the Mount, from where we pitched our tents, which was near the sandstone formation, is limestone with its varieties. It lies horizontally, and is stratified with unusual regularity. This can be seen with great distinctness on the west side of the Mount, where the deep hollow, in which a branch of the river Beyroot heads, terminates against the cone, and makes a regular, steep, sloping descent of, I should think, from four to six thousand feet. Near the top, on the west side, I saw a small spot of fine white marble—much of the rock, indeed, approximates to marble. High up, at the north-east corner, we found some limestone breccia, and saw, also, in various places, much arragonite, which is a peculiar and rare variety of crystallised limestone.

But what gave us most interest were the shells which we found at many places as we ascended, and also on the top itself. We found some very fine specimens of them—four or more varieties. I procured several, nearly as large as a common conch shell; all of them were petrified. At various places on the side, and also on the summit, we saw rocks that appeared little else than a mass of shells. As to when and how they got there, I have at present but little to say. Of one thing, however, I am fully satisfied, that they do not contradict the Mosaic account. It is possible that they may, with other facts which are collecting, prove, finally, that in some points we have put a wrong construction on the Mosaic account. Thus it was when the newly received system of astronomy was first brought forward. It was assailed with more zeal than knowledge, by a certain class of religionists, who insisted that it was at variance with the Bible, which said the sun rose and set; whereas, this new system made the sun stand still and the earth turn round,—and not only the anathemas of the church, but the fire and fagot were called into requisition, to maintain the good old received opinion, that the earth stood still for the quiet of man, and the sun, moon, and stars, which had nothing else to do, went round and round to give him light. It was, however, found out at last, that the truth in astronomy was not at war with truth in revelation—that the earth might turn round, and move at the same time in its orbit, without infringing, in the least, against the truths of the Bible. Thus, I doubt not, it will be found with the geological fossils, which are now accumulating, and some of them are truly singular. They will be found to coincide with revelation. [23]

I do fear, indeed, that some weak heads will be injured by these facts, and that some minds wishing to find occasion against religion, will eagerly seize these facts, and take it for granted that they are inconsistent with the Bible account, and will throw off all regard for that most precious book. Such persons ought to recollect that geology is a science that is yet in its *infancy*. That on some of the most important questions that bear on its relation to the Mosaic account, there is not only a want of agreement among geologists, but much contrariety of opinion. Farther, this eastern world, where the main examination ought to be made, has been but little examined; and still, the Bible will admit of any explanation, in agreement with these facts, on the same principles on which explanations in common life are daily received. [24]

The view from the top of Sun-noon was most splendid. We had a most extensive view of the Bokar, as the Celo-Syria plain is now called. The great range of the Anti-Lebanon stretched along the farther side, running parallel to that of the Lebanon. Parts of the former had snow on them, and especially a high point that lay a good deal to the south. On the general range of the Anti-

Lebanon, there was less snow; and I should think it a good deal lower than the Lebanon. It has the same naked and rough appearance, and I am told is even more rough, more destitute of forests, and less occupied with villages. To the south, we could see as far as Mount Hermon and the mountains about the sea of Tiberias. To the north, the plain ran out till it met the horizon. The whole plain of Celo-Syria appeared to be a dead level. The mountains rise from it as if they rose out of a sea. In this it reminded me of the plain of Ephesus, which stretches up almost to Smyrna. Baalbec can be seen from Sun-noon, but the state of the air was not favourable to a distant view on the plain. North of the point of Sun-noon, on which we stood, the main ridge of the Lebanon sinks a good deal, as it does on the south. Beyond this low place, at a considerable distance, I should think a day's travel, say fifteen or twenty miles, it throws up another high point, or mass of mountains. On this last point, which may be about as high as the Sun-noon, grow the famous cedars so much spoken of. Our plan was to have extended our tour so as to visit them and Baalbec, which stands nearly opposite them, on the other side of the plain, but some engagements and matters of duty did not allow all the company to proceed thus far. [25]

Our descent from the top was much more easy and expeditious than our ascent, owing in part to an experiment we made with complete success. On the south side of the point a hollow ran up almost to the top; on the west side of this hollow was a large field of snow, which extended from near the top to the foot of what I have called the cone, or down to the second general level. We made a trial of how we could descend on the snow, and found that, by keeping near the edge, and walking with care, sticking the heel with a little force in it, we could get along with much more ease and expedition than we could over the rough and exceedingly rocky ground. Our descent to our horses was soon accomplished; and just as the sun went down under the western wave, we arrived at our tents, a little tired it is true, but greatly gratified in having reached the top of that "goodly mountain and Lebanon," perhaps the most interesting mountain in the world.

While we were on the Mount, the day, as it shone on us, was perfectly clear; the general state of the air, when we were shaded with an umbrella, or under the shade of a rock, was pleasant. The direct force of the sun was, however, warm. We were above the clouds, and had a most interesting view of their forming far, far below us, and especially on the sea. Soon after mid-day they began to form on the far distant horizon over the sea, and continued to increase until a large part of it was covered; and about the time we reached the foot of the cone, where we had left our horses, the clouds exhibited a most brilliant spectacle. A small strip of the sea, near the foot of the mountain, had no clouds on it. It lay smooth, like a frozen lake. The remainder, in all directions as far as the eye could reach, was covered with immense masses of clouds, which appeared to us like hills of cotton or wool upon the waters. It reminded me of some of those great plains of the valley of the Mississippi, covered with its immense forests, as seen from some high point of the Alleghany or Cumberland range, after the fall of a heavy snow. The clouds appeared about as high above the water as the western groves rise above the plain—the irregularity of hill and dale, and the fleecy whiteness of the clouds, as we looked upon the upper part, which was strongly illuminated by the sun, corresponded well with groves loaded with the new-fallen snow in all its virgin purity. [26]

To make the scene still more interesting, a wind set in from the sea, and drove the masses of clouds against the mountains. We saw the plains covered and again laid bare, as masses of clouds, like the irregular columns of an army, passed over it—drove against the mountains—rose higher and higher up its sides—and at last swept over us and by us in huge piles. It was not one large dense cloud, but a multitude of clouds of various sizes, and at different heights. The sun pouring its flood of light upon these masses, so various in height and density and rapidity of motion, presented the most brilliant and perpetually varying spectacle that I have ever seen. We had all the variety of tints and colouring that light and shade can make, and that ever-changing aspect which is presented by the kaleidoscope. There was, however, no rain; for while we often have clouds on these mountains, there has no rain fallen since I reached Beyroot, which is now more than six weeks. [27]

We spent the night at the foot of the snows, where the former night was passed; and having packed our minerals, shells, and flowers, which we had collected, set off for Bru-ma-nah. We took a more direct road than the one by which we came, as we wished to see as much of the mountain as possible. We passed along a great ridge that ran from our tents, at the foot of the cone, with various irregularities, on to Bru-ma-nah. We found it much as the ridge on which the coal-pits of Corneil are situated. The upper part of it much of the way is of the sandstone formation. On the higher part of this is a stratum of very fine puddingstone. Almost everywhere, in this sandstone formation, we find petrified wood, much iron ore, iron stone, and at many places slate, and all the indications of coal. There can be no doubt that coal exists extensively in this formation; and, from the tour which we made, I should think that from one-sixth to one-fourth of this ridge was of the sandstone formation. It lies about midway up the mountain; has, generally considered, a horizontal position; but is at many places most singularly thrown out of its place. At the heads of hollows, and at the points of ridges, and often in other places, the limestone seems forced up, but retains its horizontal position: at other places, the sandstone is suddenly cut off, and begins again at a great distance above or below;—but my paper is full.

LETTER V.

Bru-ma-nah, Aug. 2, 1836.

Last Saturday, I went down to Beyroot, mainly to spend the Sabbath with the small number of Franks that usually meet at the American consul's for worship. I had been on the mountains about three weeks, and found the general temperature pleasant. The thermometer seldom rose to 75° Fahr. The direct action of the sun was, it is true, considerable, but I seldom, except when travelling, went out during the greatest heat of the day. I found the heat greater at Beyroot; from five to eight, and at times ten or more degrees. Still the thermometer does not give the whole difference. There is a closeness—an oppressive something in the air in the town that makes it more trying than the same degrees of heat would produce on the mountains. There is also a very manifest difference in the heat, and oppressive character of the air, in the town, and in what is called the Gardens—the numerous dwellings that lie without the walls, and are scattered for several miles round the city, mentioned in a former letter.

I have repeatedly witnessed since I came to the mountains an appearance in the setting sun which I never before saw, nor have I ever seen it noticed in books. In this dry season of the year we have but few clouds, and the sun usually clear; but in setting, it very often assumes strange and singular appearances. They begin about the time the lower part of the sun touches the line of the horizon. The lower part, at times, appears to *flatten up*; the upper, to *flatten down*; and at times, the sides *flatten in*—so that the disk of the sun forms nearly a square; it seldom, however, took this form. More frequently about the time that one-half of the disk is sunk below the horizon, a portion of the upper part of the remainder appears to separate from the body of the sun, and often assumes the form of an inverted cone, or rather that of a common washbowl, set on the sun, and at times separated from it by a black mark, of, say an inch in diameter. This crown-like appearance, at times, is distinctly visible after the disk of the sun has disappeared; at other times the body of the sun appeared to be surrounded with a groove and a band, giving it the appearance of the capital of a pillar. I have seen it again and again, as it sank under the line of the horizon, flatten down, and spread out horizontally, until in truth it did not look wider than a large walking staff, while it appeared nearly a yard in length—the length of the strip of luminous matter appeared really longer than the usual apparent width of the disk before it began to take the new form. But the most singular fact of all remains to be told. We have several times seen, for it is the most rare appearance, the sun appear distinctly under the horizon, after the luminous aspect was wholly gone. It appeared as a dark mass, nearly of the shape of the sun, but much larger. It seemed under the water, and gradually to sink deeper and deeper. This sinking of it below the line of the horizon causes it to appear to approach nearer the spectator. I saw it on one occasion most distinctly, when the distance of its upper edge appeared a full yard below the line of the horizon. It then gradually became fainter and fainter, until it disappeared. I am not sure that I am philosopher enough to account for these strange appearances. They do not appear every night; and seldom for two nights together are the forms the same. The general cause, I suppose, is the peculiar state of the body of air through which the rays of light from the setting sun reach us on the mountain. We are in a high, pure, and elastic atmosphere. At the foot of the mountain, and the plains on to Beyroot, over which the rays pass, the earth must be greatly heated, and sends up a heated and rarefied body of air—then, farther on, is the ocean, which must keep the stratum of air over it cooler. To this I may add, that we see the sun set over Cyprus. This island lies at the very edge of our horizon, as seen from Bru-ma-nah; so distant that it is only at times that we can distinctly see it. Now Cyprus is an island of considerable size, and not having much growth is greatly heated by the action of the sun. This may, by the rarefied volume of air which it presents to the rays of the sun, tend still farther to vary their course. Thus passing two or three warm and rare, and as many cold and dense strata, may be the cause of all the variety of phenomena above described. I leave it however for others to solve the problem.

It will soon be two months since I reached Beyroot, and few things have struck me more than the uniformity of the weather. There has not been a drop of rain. There has been scarcely any weather that we should call cloudy. True, some clouds do at times collect over the sea, and at times they rest on the mountain, but they are clouds without rain. They very seldom spread over the face of the heavens, so as to withhold the light of the sun; they are mostly confined to one part, and leave the remainder in its usual clearness. I have, again and again, been reminded of the fact, that one day is almost precisely like all the others. We have no opportunity to say "this is a fine day,"—all are fine.

We may suppose that when there is for so long a period no rain, and when the sun, almost without exception, pours on the earth its full blaze of light and heat, the air would become very dry. It is so; but not to an unpleasant degree—at least I am not sensible of any unpleasant effects from it. Plants and vegetation do, it is true, feel it—they wither and droop; and those who wish to preserve them in their freshness and beauty, must resort to the means of watering them. But, as regards comfortable feeling from the air, I have found few places that were to be preferred to Mount Lebanon.

The clearness of the air is a most striking characteristic of these regions. It is most striking, and is manifested in many things. It is seen in looking at the starry heavens. The stars are numerous, and the face of the heavens has a clearness in it, that makes the impression on the mind that we can see further into the deep and pathless abyss by which our little earth is surrounded than we can in other countries. It agrees in this with the Italian sky, but is, I think, still more clear. This clearness of the air is also manifest in looking at distant objects. They appear much nearer than they really are. I am almost perpetually struck with this in looking from Bru-ma-nah down to Beyroot, and the long line of coast which lies to the north and south. When I stand on some one of the points of the ridge that runs out towards Beyroot, as I often do, especially in my evening walks, the town appears so near, and the bay at such a short distance below me, that I can hardly get clear of the impression that I could throw a finger-stone into the bay. The ascent and descent,

three or four times repeated, has, however, given the matter-of-fact proof that it takes nearly four hours of hard travel to pass the space that lies between Bru-ma-nah and Beyroot. The air, it is true, is not always equally pure and transparent; a dulness and obscurity, like that which is often observable in other countries, at times exist here. The air here is, I think, at least in the dry season, less liable to it; how the rainy seasons may affect the air in all these respects, I am not as yet prepared to say; as I have had no opportunity of making observations. [32]

But little dew falls at this place; and from all that I saw in Beyroot, there is but little there, at least in the dry season; I have not noticed it in the form of drops on the leaves, indeed I have at this place hardly observed it in the form of dampness; a slight degree of this is observable in the evening after sunset. This is our usual hour for walking, and I have observed that our clothes were a little damp on our return. I was struck, however, with the fact, that the nights we were encamped at the foot of the cone of Jebal Sun-noon, there was an abundance of dew. Our tents were wet; and the grass and vegetation, and even dust of the roads, bore witness to it. How it happened that there was so much of it up there, and so little of it down here, I leave for the wise to decide; possibly the cause may be in the neighbourhood of the fact, that the heat here and at Beyroot is remarkably uniform. It varies but few degrees in the twenty-four hours; at our place of encampment, referred to, the variation was much greater; we had great heat by day and almost frost at night.

The more usual and valuable produce of the mountains is the silk. Much of their best ground is planted with the mulberry-tree, the leaf of which is used for feeding the worms. Not much of the silk is manufactured here; most of it is exported to Italy, France, and England.

The principal grain grown here is the barley, and a kind of bearded wheat that looks much like it. I have not, however, travelled enough to make observation to much extent. They raise some tobacco—almost every one here, as you no doubt have heard, smokes—the pipe is everywhere one of the most common things seen; they have long handles, usually made of the cherry-tree; the finer kind are nearly as long as the owner is high, and are tipped with a mouth-piece of *amber*. They often use a kind of pipe called the *nargely*, in which the smoke is drawn through water. Much of their time is spent in smoking and taking coffee. [33]

I am told that in the plains of the Bokar' or Celo-Syria, a good deal of Indian corn is grown. I have not seen any of it on the mountains, nor did I notice it on the plains of Beyroot as I passed and repassed. The mountains do not raise bread-stuff sufficient for its own consumption; grain is brought from the plains. They appear to me, indeed, to live on very little up here; and I have often, while looking on their simple fare, thought of the poet's lines:

"Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long."

Still a people may have too few wants, they may be too indifferent as to comforts and conveniences; and the absence of these excitements may lead to idleness and almost complete indifference towards all things. If it be not good for man to be alone, it is still worse for him to be idle; and he who in great kindness to man gave him the woman to be with him, in the same spirit of love gave him employment—to dress the garden and keep it. The devil, it is said, finds employment for idle people; and, even if that were not his peculiar business, the idleness of many must, I should think, put a sore temptation in the devil's way, to give them something to do. I have often heard the devil charged with tempting people, but I am inclined to think, that the temptation is not all on one side; I suspect that people often tempt the devil. Had our first mother Eve been attending to her domestic matters as she ought; or, in company with her goodman, been helping to take care of the garden, she would probably have escaped the evil into which she fell. [34]

But to return from this digression. The people of these mountains are greatly given to idleness; it may result, in part, from the kind of culture they pursue. The silkworm can employ but little of their time, and much of the remainder is unemployed. It would be better for them were they employed more constantly. The pasha, it is true, gives many of them employment in connexion with working the coal-mines, and taking coal to Beyroot; and, while there may be hardship in the manner in which he presses them, with their mules and donkeys, into the service, I am not sure that in a more enlarged view of things it may not be to their advantage; were companies of the idlers kept at work constantly in making roads on the mountains, and keeping those made in good repair, the benefit to the whole region would be great indeed. But all improvements travel very slowly in these ends of the earth.

I have long since read of the big-tailed sheep, but do not recollect seeing any until I reached this place. The sheep is about the usual size. On the rump and around the root of the tail, there is a large mass of soft loose flesh or fat, which appears to be but loosely connected with the body, except as kept in connexion with it by the skin. It hangs loose, and shakes about like the udder of a good milch cow, and altogether has a very singular appearance. I have not often, if at all, seen flocks of sheep on these mountains. The goats are often seen in flocks with their keeper, but the sheep are usually seen singly, or but two or three together, having a string about their necks, by which they are fastened when at the house, and led and managed when out at pasture. We may see them led about in the gardens and vineyards, and out on the mountain side, where a tuft of grass is to be found; a boy or girl is usually in attendance upon each sheep. In the evening, I have often seen them bringing the sheep to the springs and pools of water, and pour the water plentifully over them, I suppose to cool them. The sheep appear to take it very kindly, seemingly accustomed to it. [35]

The goats are much used for their milk. The cow is indeed used, and possibly its milk is

considered the best, but the goat, as the more thrifty animal, is most easily kept, and suits the spare vegetation which is found on the mountains. They are seen in considerable numbers, and some of them have uncommonly long ears, which are of a speckled whitish colour, and hang down from eight to twelve inches.

The camel is much used here as a beast of burden. It is a tall, raw-boned, long-legged, and long-necked animal, but of a patient, quiet spirit. It shares with the donkey and mule the hard service which the people of these lands exact of their cattle. I have been surprised to see what masses of timber they carry down from these mountains on the backs of camels—beams for houses, shipping, and all sorts of things. I have seen a beam from fifteen to twenty feet long, and from eight to ten, twelve, or fourteen inches in diameter, laid on the back of a camel, one end projecting forward before the head of the animal, and the other reaching far behind, and somehow fastened with ropes to the huge pack-saddle which he carries. Thus loaded he is made to pass over roads, which require some fortitude for a man to ride, and pass up and down descents that are most fearful for such loads: one driver attends each, who may at the more dangerous passes take hold of the beam and aid in keeping it steady. The poor animal usually reaches his place of destination in safety with his lumber—I say usually, for at times, over-loaded or worn down with the length of the way, or missing his step, he falls, and is crushed to death by the merciless load upon his back. [36]

Who has not heard of the scorpion? and yet who has seen one? It was not until after I reached Beyroot that I saw one, and that occurred in a way that took me a good deal by surprise. One evening during our quarantine, the scorpion happening to be mentioned as a reptile that abounded, I expressed a wish to see one. This was reported to our guardians. The next morning, soon after I was out of bed, I was called to the porch, and to my no small surprise, mixed with some apprehension of danger, I saw one of the guardians having a handful of them,—literally a handful of scorpions. He may have had from six to ten of them. They were all small. They are a short reptile—these were about the size of a common locust; the body short and flat, with a tail rather longer than the body. The sting is in the tip of the tail. They strike forward with the tail. They appear rather a slow, dull animal, and do not appear eager to strike or do mischief. When held in the hand, they cannot strike, and the pressure of the hand appears to produce a dull, heavy disposition. The guardian handled them as he pleased—he took hold of the lower part of the tail, with a quick motion, and then held them close in his hand, piled one on the other. They have a way of taking them, I am told, by putting a stick to them that is covered with bees-wax. The scorpion strikes his tail in it, it sticks fast, and he is taken. Their sting produces pain, it is said, but is not often, if ever, fatal. It is but seldom that persons are stung by them.

And who has not heard of the chameleon, that wonderful animal that one traveller declared was blue, and another that it was black, and its owner asserted that it was green, but which, when produced, was of a different colour from any of those mentioned! The chameleon is not the only thing which has been made more marvellous by report than nature made it. It is a lizard, of a size rather larger than those little four-legged, long-tailed animals, that in the spring and summer are seen about old fences and trees, nearly the colour of the moccasin snake. The chameleon is, in its usual colour, not unlike the above-mentioned lizard, rather lighter—more like the rattlesnake as to colour. It is a perfectly harmless reptile, may be handled at pleasure. It is rather slow in its motions, and when you touch it, it will swell and blow at a great rate, but does nothing else. As its passions are excited by handling, its colour is in a slight degree changeable, and it may be still more so when seen in different kinds of light. The change, however, has been much magnified; and were it not that "as changeable as a chameleon" has become a proverb, and every one expects something, hundreds of people might see and handle it, and not observe any change in its colour. They are often found about houses, and are said to be fond of flies—what their art of catching them may be, I know not; their motions appear too slow to make a living in that way. [37]

I had heard, long before coming to Asia, fearful accounts of the annoyance I must expect from fleas, bed-bugs, and other similar sorts of gentry; I have as yet only come in contact with the fleas, and an occasional musquito. But really the number and pertinacity of the fleas will well make amends for the absence of the other tribes of annoying insects. I know not to what it may be owing, but the flea does seem to multiply in a way that is astonishing. They abound almost everywhere, and it appears to be a matter of impossibility to get wholly out of their reach. The evil may be increased by the earthen floor, and the peculiar character of their houses, and, above all, the unclean habits of the people; and as all the Frank families have native servants, and are visited a good deal by the natives, it is not easy for those families to keep their houses free from the annoyance. I have heard, indeed, a very significant saying, that the king of the fleas resides at Beyroot, and his pasha at Jaffa. I suppose it signifies those are the favourite places with these light-footed gentry. [38]

The fruit season is now coming on, and we have some fine varieties of fruit brought to market. The district of country a little on this side of Jaffa, is the place most famed for the water-melon. There are but few grown on these parts of the mountain. I have seen but few vines, and these bore a small and inferior kind. But the quantities that come from the vicinity of Jaffa are very great; vessels arrive at Beyroot almost daily with them. They are sold for a mere trifle. They are carried all through these mountains, and are a very fine fruit of the kind.

I have never seen the plum any where to be compared with those here. They grow, however, near Damascus. That place is famed for fruit of various kinds, and great quantities of it are brought to Beyroot, and other towns on the coast. At this time of the year, when the fruit is ripe, it is a considerable business to carry fruit and supply the market. The plum to which I refer is nearly as large as a hen's egg, and has a fine rich pulp. It is of a deep red colour, and does credit to the

land where it grows.

The apricot abounds at Damascus; and they are brought in large parcels for the supply of this market. It is a fine fruit. I have not seen many growing on this part of the mountain, nor have I seen the apple or the peach growing in very large quantities. The best used here are brought from Damascus. I have not seen any apples to be compared with our best; the apple season, however, is not yet come. [39]

The grape grows well, and there are some fine vineyards. The grape that abounds most, as far as I have observed, is a large white grape. The single grape is often nearly as large as a partridge's egg. The branches contain a noble collection of these grapes, and more than once the large size of the bunch has made me think of the cluster which the spies took from Eshcol, as a sample of the fruit of the land. Some wine is made on these mountains, and of a very good kind, as is said, for I have not so far forgotten my temperance habits as to use, unless very occasionally, and under peculiar circumstances, the wines of any of the countries through which I pass. The wines, I am told, are peculiarly free from alcohol, and have, if any, but a very small portion of the intoxicating principle. They are not so strong as the well-made cider of the middle States.

These mountaineers have a peculiar way of baking bread. They dig a hole in the ground, about the size of a large bottle—put a thick coat of plaster around the side and on the bottom, and then let it dry. It is very much in the shape of a large pot, a little bulging in the middle. A fire is made in the bottom of it, of small branches, and kept up until the sides are well heated; the flames are then suffered to go down, leaving the mass of coals in the bottom. They have the dough ready, and take a piece of it, about as large as a biscuit, and laying it on a board, press it out as large as a common-sized plate, and nearly as thin as the blade of a thick knife. They place it on a round pillow or cushion, (it is so thin it cannot be handled otherwise,) and strike it against the inside of this potlike place. It sticks, and in about one minute is baked. It is then taken off, and another put on. There are, usually, several women engaged at it at the same time, and they put them on with great quickness. You may see three or four of these wafer-like cakes sticking round the tan-moor, as it is called, at the same time, and changed for others every minute. They soon bake bread for a meal. [40]

LETTER VI.

Beyroot, August 26th, 1836.

I have just returned from a tour to Damascus, Baalbec, and the far-famed Cedars of Lebanon, and will attempt a brief account of these places, and my adventures by the way.

I had the company of Mr. B—, Angelo to cook for us, and a muleteer, who took care of our mules, and who ought to have been our guide, but who, on trial, was found not to know the way himself—a state of things not uncommon in this country—and did it not extend to higher matters than to find the road from one place to another, it would not be so bad; but from all I see and hear, it is most dolefully the case in the great matter of finding the way to everlasting life. Guides there are many in religion, but few, if any, understand the way of salvation through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is, indeed, astonishing how far the great mass of those who in these regions call themselves Christians, have sunk in darkness and ignorance respecting the most plain and leading principles of the word of God. The priests are "blind leaders of the blind."

As we set out for Damascus, from Bru-ma-nah on the mountain, we did not follow the usual road to Damascus from Beyroot, but took a more direct route. We made for the lower part of Mount Lebanon, between the Sun-neen and Jebal Knee-se. I had before passed over part of this, on my tour to the Sun-neen, some account of which I have already given you. Part of our way, however, before reaching the top, was new, but did not differ much from what I had before seen. We passed a considerable village, where the Jesuits are said to have a school. It is in a lovely, romantic spot, and near a most tremendous precipice. [41]

The descent from the top to the plain is much greater than I supposed, when on the top. It took us above two hours to reach Zahle, which stands on the lower part of the mountain, and at some distance above the level of the plain. The side of the Lebanon next the plain is not quite as rough and rocky as the other; in other respects it does not essentially differ. The cultivation may possibly extend farther up—the rock more disintegrated, and the strata not as distinctly marked,—the general course of the ridge was more regular and uniform. The road, as we approached Zahle, was better than any I have seen on the mountains—it passed through a considerable extent of vineyards, and labour had been expended upon it—it was very passable, a rare thing in these parts.

A little above Zahle, and in and near it, a number of fine springs arose, and their effect on the vegetation was most striking; while the whole face of the mountain presented a most dry and parched aspect, with only here and there a bush to be seen, the heads of the little hollows about Zahle—a small district near the town, and a narrow slip along the waters, widening as it approached the plain, were rich in verdure, and abounded with the Lombardy poplar, the willow, the white walnut, and a variety of fruit-trees. You could trace most clearly where there was water by the vegetation which there covered the ground. Yea, you could point out most distinctly where the water was carried along the hill sides, in trenches, by the verdure which covered the whole district below, while all above was almost destitute of vegetation. The rising of water above and [42]

near the town, being very considerable, and being carried along the hill sides, and extensively used in irrigation, a larger district about this town was covered with trees, and bore more marks of productiveness than any I have seen in these quarters. A little below the town were some mills on this water-course, and many lovely gardens lay on all sides. The town Zahle contains from eight hundred to one thousand houses. They are crowded together, with narrow, crooked streets; and, like all other towns in this land, it has no claim to cleanliness. Judging from what I saw, the houses are universally built of unburned brick, made with a good deal of *short straw* mixed with them, no doubt to prevent them from breaking to pieces. The houses are of one story, have flat roofs, where people are often seen walking or lounging, and on which various things are deposited.

It being about sundown when we entered the town, we made some inquiries for lodging. There are usually in the towns, and occasionally on the roads, houses built for the accommodation of travellers, called khans. They have rooms, but are entirely unfurnished, and the traveller is expected to provide for himself. They are beginning to keep, at some of them, the more necessary articles of food for man and beast, which the traveller may obtain at a reasonable price. Having, in some of my former tours, been greatly annoyed with *fleas*, and knowing these khans are the very *head-quarters* of such gentry, we were rather on the watch, and made inquiry before alighting, whether they had any fleas in their establishment? They assured us that they had "*a plenty! plenty!*" We declined stopping, and passed on amidst the laugh of the bystanders. It began, however, to grow dark about the time we got out of the town, and after passing down the stream, among the gardens, for some time, and not finding a place that offered a good encampment, we were constrained to put up at a house on the road side, and sleep in a kind of open court. We found, to our discomfort, that we had not much mended the matter. We were most grievously beset with fleas, which were as greedy as if it was the first Frank blood they had tasted, and feared it might be the last.

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We found in the morning that we were in the immediate neighbourhood of a considerable body of the pasha's troops. Their parade-ground was over against us; arranged along one side I counted thirty-six cannon drawn up, and as we passed, we saw a considerable number of artillery-men, five or six in a company, manœuvring, each under the direction of an individual. Several of these groups had a *little carriage*, not more than a foot long, a perfect toy, with a string to it, and were drawing it about and manœuvring it in place of the cannon. It was laughable to see five or eight great awkward fellows pulling about a little toy, like a waggon, which a baby could have thrown about at pleasure. This is the Egyptian version of European tactics.

There was near this place, which was on the edge of the plain, a most noble threshing-floor. It was a large space of several acres, and there may have been from a dozen to twenty floors, without any partition between them. On some of them people were employed in threshing grain, others separating the straw and chaff from the wheat; on others lay great piles of grain, some clean, and others mixed with the chaff and straw. They separate the wheat by throwing it up and letting the wind blow the chaff away. Of course they must wait for a wind. I saw no instrument to make wind. The threshing instrument is a board, about three feet in width, and six or eight feet in length; at the fore end it is turned up, a little like a sleigh. The board is about three inches in thickness. On the under side many holes are cut in it, from an inch and a half to two inches, and in these are fastened pieces of stone, flint, or iron; these project nearly an inch from the face of the board and serve as teeth, to tear the heads of the grain in pieces. Oxen are fastened to the front of these boards, and driven round the floor, drawing this instrument after them. The driver of the oxen usually sits or stands on the instrument. This is the common threshing-machine in these countries. I see it everywhere—and I have seen no other. It would seem that it is the same instrument that was used in the days of the prophet, who speaks of a "new threshing instrument having teeth." The oxen are usually without muzzles, and often, as they pass round, take up a few straws and feed on them. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." I do not recollect of ever seeing the horse used on the floor—the oxen very often.

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As we passed the threshing floor, in and around which were many cattle, I could not but notice a fact of which I had often heard and read, but had not before seen—the collecting the manure that fell from the cattle and preparing it for fuel. A female was employed in collecting it with her hands, working it into balls, and sticking it in flat cakes against the walls of the houses to dry—when dry, it was collected in piles and laid on the house-tops, or made in little stacks in the yard. When well dried it burns very well, and will make a fire sufficient to boil coffee. On some occasions, during our tour, we were glad to get it, and found it did very well. This throws light on a passage in Jeremiah, where he is directed to prepare his food with fire made of human excrement—the prophet entreated, and was allowed to take cows' dung. This is a common kind of fuel in many parts of this country. The prophet was only directed to do as his people generally did.

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Our course took us directly across the celebrated plain of Celo-Syria. It is nearly a dead level—we were about two hours and a half in crossing it, which, at three miles an hour, the usual rate of travelling on mules, will make it about eight miles wide. This is less than I stated in a former letter. I mentioned then what a gentleman who had crossed it gave as its supposed width. I now give what *I* found it to be. It may, however, vary in width at different places, and no doubt does. There are very few trees on the plain. Near the villages, and there are usually several in sight, some trees may be seen, and at a few of the villages are considerable groves of them. As regards the great body of the plain, not a tree or a bush is to be seen—not a fence—not a hedge—not a house, except at the few villages.

On the plain, where we crossed, there was a little water. The stream which flowed in from Zahle

is parted and carried into the plain, and used in irrigation; and it would seem nearly if not wholly exhausted in this way. Near the farther side of the plain, we passed several channels that contained water, but the amount was not great. The water had but a slow, dull current, and the ground being soft, we had a little difficulty in crossing, as we feared swamping. There appears to be a stream of water entering the plain from the Anti-Lebanon, a few miles north-east of Zahle; for on that side of the plain we found most water; and when we entered the plain on our return from Damascus, which was half a day's journey to the north-east, we saw scarcely any water, except this stream passing in—south-west. The channel shows that more water flows in at times, but it is never more than a small stream—never deserves the name of a river.

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Much of the plain appeared to have been cultivated with small grain. It was now gathered about the threshing-floors, several of which were seen in different directions. I saw also several lots of Indian corn, and a field that looked almost precisely like what with us is called broom-corn. It is, I believe, the millet, here called durah. The corn was a most diminutive kind, and the same is the case with all the corn I have seen in the East. It was beginning to tassel and silk, and yet its general height was not above four feet; with us such a field of corn would not be thought worth anything. It was, I believe, of the usual size and promise.

We passed several fields of the castor-oil plant, and were informed, on inquiry, that they extract the oil from it. It did not seem to grow as well as I have seen it in other countries.

We saw several encampments of Bedouins on the plain. Their tents are said to be made of goats' hair. They are black—"black as the tents of Kedar," thought I. There were many flocks of sheep and goats about their tents. The Bedouins look almost as black as their tents. They are a dirty-looking set. We spoke to several of them, and tried to get a drink of milk. They, however, were so indifferent and slow, and showed so little inclination to serve us, that we passed on. I noticed before one of their tents, a huge skin, suspended on forks. It either had been taken off the animal nearly whole, or had been sewed up. It was full of milk, which they were shaking, and thus churning it, making butter, or something of that sort. I did not much envy the eaters of it—but every man to his liking.

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The whole plain lay open; and as far as we could see, without any landmarks to point out the special property-rights, which particular persons may have to parts of it. There are no fences, nor hedges, nor even ditches, for the purpose of designating property. There are, it is true, channels cut in different directions through the plain for the purpose of irrigation; but only for that purpose. The flocks that wander over the plain, are under the care of keepers; whose business it is not to allow them to commit trespass on spots under cultivation; except there, the flocks go pretty much where they please, and eat whatever they can find; and really they appear to have a poor chance to find much; the above spots excepted.

The Anti-Lebanon lies on the south-east side of this plain; and is very much such a mountain as Lebanon. It is, perhaps, as a general thing, not quite so high. Still, to the south of us it attains to a great elevation, and its upper part in that direction has much snow upon it. These two mountains, the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, are nearly of the same appearance; and are nearly parallel to each other, having between them the plain, nearly level, of an average width of from six to ten miles, in the part that I have seen. Our road, which was but a path for mules and donkeys, led us directly up the mountain, winding and crossing a hollow, that ran up to the top. The ascent was steep and fatiguing, and took us about three hours. There were a few thin bushes, and as we got up into the mountain we found a good many oak-trees—a few of them of the size of a small apple-tree, but most of them were only six or eight feet high. As we approached the top, these were discontinued; and over the whole of the upper part of the mountain, there was almost a total want of vegetation. A few stunted thistles and bunches of furze were almost the only vegetable growth to be seen.

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On the top of the Anti-Lebanon, where we crossed, there was a general level of four or five miles. Possibly this may not be a fair sample of the width of the mountain, as we may have passed over an unusually wide place. As far, however, as we could see, there appeared to be a wider flat on the top than any I had seen on the Lebanon. The rock, as far as I observed, was wholly limestone. It is all of the secondary formation, and appears to be of a softer kind than that which composes the great mass of the Lebanon. It is much more affected by the action of the weather, and is greatly broken into fine pieces: this is the case on the top; we often passed over beds of fine broken stone almost like gravel. The stratum, from the yielding character of the rock, was not so clearly to be traced as on the Lebanon. At some places, however, it could be seen; and the general position of the stratum approached the horizontal. There were, however, many deviations from it: I noticed several small locations which had the dip to a very considerable degree. This was especially the case in some small elevations, or secondary hills, next the plain.

We had a pretty long, and part of the way a rough, descent to the narrow and beautiful valley of the Bareda. The rock, as we descended, retained much of the character which it had on the top. There was, in places, much rock on the surface; tremendous precipices; piles of rock heaped on each other, as if mountains of earth had been washed away and all the rock left.

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In the plain, at the point where we reached it, is the town of Zebdane. It is near the head of the plain, and is well watered by the upper springs of the river Bareda, or Bariade, as it is at times spelled on maps. The town has several hundred houses, mostly inhabited by Mohammedans. The waters are here taken out of the bed of the river, and spread over the plain. There is quite a grove of trees in and near the village. The houses are not so crowded together as we often find them in other villages; many of them have gardens, which are filled with trees—the mulberry, poplar, willow, hickory, apple, plum, and other fruit-trees. Much of the town is, indeed, well

furnished with shade; and is a most lovely spot, in the midst of a dry, parched land.

After six hours' exposure to the burning sun, the cool shades of Zebdane, its flowing waters and rich gardens had powerful inducements to stop us. In truth, we needed both rest and refreshment. We had set out early from Zahle, that we might cross the plain, and ascend the mountain before the heat of the day set in, intending to breakfast on or near the top of Anti-Lebanon; but when we reached the summit we found no water, and our muleteers had neglected to fill our leathern bags. There was no alternative but to go on. The burning sun on the top, added to the fatigue, made us all suffer for water; but none was found until we were close to Zebdane. When about to begin our descent, however, we met several muleteers with mules loaded with fruit, which they were carrying probably to Beyroot or Tripoli: in the fruit season, much fruit is brought from Damascus to Beyroot, Tripoli, and other places on the coast. Supposing that the mules had fruit in their packs, I was casting in my mind how we could induce them to let us have some, especially for quenching our thirst, when the foremost muleteer, while yet eight or ten yards from me, put his hand into his bosom, took out a handful of apples, and, with a kind salutation, handed them to me. I know not that the apples were better than usual, but I know that I have seldom eaten apples with a finer relish; they were most refreshing. Feeling much in need of our breakfast and rest, we passed through a part of Zebdane, hoping that we could find a cool and comfortable place for both these purposes. We wished, in short, to get into some one of the gardens, and under its trees loaded with fruit, and near the cool streams of water we saw flowing through them, take our rest; but no one invited us in; and to one or two applications we received a refusal. We stopped under a large tree in the street, and were about spreading our carpet, when a very good-looking female came out of a garden near us, and very kindly invited us in.

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A stream of water ran through her garden; near it was a small fire, and preparations for washing. She had been washing clothes. A young female, whom I took to be her daughter, and a little boy, her son, were with her. Although her clothes were rather soiled, they were of a texture that indicated wealth: both she and her daughter wore rich ornaments. The daughter had a clasp of silver on each arm, of an inch and a half in width; and two of gold, about three quarters of an inch wide; with rich ear-rings, &c. Their manners had the ease and frankness of well-bred persons who have been much in company. They pointed out to us a good place to spread our carpets, gathered us some fruit, and sat down near us, and conversed pleasantly and cheerfully. They spoke of our clothes in a complimentary manner; said they would be very pretty, were it not that our pantaloons were too tight. This last was a hit at me mainly, as my companion, Mr. B., had on the *Persian* pantaloons, which are of most ample dimensions. It was said with great good-humour, and even a little apparent blushing, by the good ladies. Mr. B., who acted as interpreter, enjoyed the laugh at my expense not a little. I felt half inclined to retaliate on them—that even tight pantaloons were more modest than absolutely naked breasts. But Mr. B. was not inclined to interpret it for me, and, on second thought, I let it pass. Fashion is an odd thing! My pantaloons were of the ordinary size—what, indeed, many would call large; yet they were not thought modest by these good, oriental ladies, as showing too plainly the shape of the lower parts of the body; while *they themselves* had their breasts almost wholly exposed! Such is the fashion of the ladies here. Indeed, I have often been not a little provoked at the exposure which females here make of the upper parts of their bodies: they cover their faces, and expose their breasts. But thus it is in the East, or in this part of it; and fashion has its influence here as well as in the western world. If there be no disputing about taste, there may be some little about fashion.

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When our breakfast was ready, we had quite a company of people to see us eat. We gave them but a poor sample of Frank manners, as from necessity we had to eat *à-la-turque*, at least in part. They were much interested with the looks of our loaf of white sugar, and we had various applications for small pieces. But as it was a fast with them—that is among the Greeks, and our visitors were mostly of that church—they did not eat the sugar we gave them, but laid it away until the fast should be over. The same took place with some sweet-bread we gave them. They would not let the little boy I mentioned eat what I gave him, but took it from him to keep until the season of fasting was over. I doubt whether he will ever get all of it.

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The valley in which Zebdane is situate may be on an average from three quarters to a mile wide; there are several other villages in it; and it extends five or six miles in length. Its general direction is from north-east to south-west, nearly parallel to the plain of the Bokar. The parts of this plain that are irrigated by the waters of the Bareda, and the several springs that rise along the foot of the mountains, appear productive, and are covered with vegetation, and a space for a mile below the town is covered with gardens and trees of various kinds. The remainder has rather a sterile and naked appearance. The mountain that lies south-east, has especially the most utterly barren aspect of any district that I have ever seen. Above the little green spots, that along its foot mark the places where water rises, there is hardly a trace of vegetation to be seen, all a naked, sun-burnt surface, desolation could hardly be more desolate.

The gardens about Zebdane are almost universally inclosed with well-made hedges. The thorn is much used for this purpose. They are plaited together in such a way as to make a most ample defence. They have gates, which have also a kind of fastening, and are thus made very secure. They are the best hedges I have seen in the East. A similar protection, I observed, was in some degree extended to the fields of Indian corn, the castor oil plant, and other spots under cultivation.

We had a fine sample of irrigation here. The corn fields are from time to time covered with water. It is let in upon a field, and runs until the ground is well saturated, then turned off to another field, which, in its turn, gives place to another; and thus the water is transferred from field to

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field, and garden to garden, to the no small benefit of the trees, and vegetation of all kinds. Nothing can thrive in these lands without being from time to time thus watered. The righteous man is well compared to a "tree planted by the rivers of waters." It is eastern imagery, to the life. About 4 P. M. we left the garden, and took leave of the good lady who had received us with so much kindness. We made her a small present, which she very thankfully received, and intimated that at our return we might enjoy again the accommodation of her garden.

A little more than an hour brought us to the end of the plain, where the Bareda turns short to the east, and passes by a narrow and deep defile, through the mountain. The road follows the stream. The whole mountain, as seen on both sides of the pass, is of a peculiar character. The stratum of the rock is very irregular; at places it has the dip, but with much irregularity. The rock is limestone, of a very soft, yielding kind, and breaks to pieces readily from the action of the atmosphere. Much of it is a very coarse kind of breccia—appears to have been broken into small pieces, and again combined with a soft cement. Some of the pieces seem to have been subjected to the action of water, while in a separate state. But a great deal of the mountain has all the appearance of an immense mass of marl, and much of it is in a very soft state, so as to be easily reduced to a fine white dust. In some places the road is worn or cut ten, fifteen, or perhaps twenty feet, down through this marl-like rock.

There are at some parts of the pass considerable precipices of rock on one or both sides, and on the face of some of these rocks and at a considerable height from the ground we saw the entrances of tombs. It must have been difficult to cut such holes in the face of the rock at such a height. Near the end of the pass we crossed a good arched stone bridge, and soon found the valley beginning to open. The character of the rock continued the same, and the whole face of the country was peculiarly barren, except a narrow strip along the river. The waters of the river, even in the mountains, were taken out of its bed, wherever it could be done, and made to water a little space on both sides, which space was more or less covered with trees. We saw indeed in two places, channels cut across the face of the rock above the road, which I am of opinion was for the purpose of carrying the water thus high, that on clearing the pass, it might be used for watering a wide space of country on the eastern side. If this was the case, the neglect of modern times has let go to ruin what may formerly have given fertility to a wide district east of the mountain, now almost utterly barren. Many things have fallen back greatly in this country. As the valley opened below the pass, the water was taken out, and made to keep nearly a horizontal course, along both sides of the channel, and used to water all the district between it and the former bed, and on this district were fields, corn, vines, fruit-trees, poplars, willows, and grass for the flocks of sheep and goats, and other domestic animals. [54]

We passed one or two small villages, and night began to set in. After looking in vain for the cover of a good tree, in such a situation as we wished, we spread our carpets on a little elevation about fifty yards from a small village, and made our beds for the night. A few of the villagers came to look at us; but they did not seem to have as much curiosity or politeness as our good friends at Zebdane. They were rather a shabby set. [55]

About the time we had finished our supper and were going to bed, some cause of dissatisfaction among the villagers, or a family quarrel, took place; and for a short time there was a terrible strife of tongues. It died away in part, and I hoped was about to terminate; but was revived or continued mainly between one man and woman, as the voices indicated; and such a scold I have seldom heard. The woman appeared manifestly to have the advantage. Her tongue was like a sharp sword. It must have been used before, or it could not have been wielded with such terrible power on the present occasion. I thought of the old saying, that "the tongue is the only instrument that grows sharper and sharper by daily use." The adversary, whether neighbour, or brother, or husband, I know not, but suspect it was the latter, appeared to feel that he had a losing case. He yielded, lowered his tone, let her do two-thirds, three-fourths, and, towards the last, a still larger portion of the talking. Such a storm could not last always, it gradually passed away and the voices became silent. How many such storms daily take place on earth! but not one in heaven, no, not one!

It was a Mohammedan village, and this probably a Mohammedan wife, maintaining her rights against an unkind or petulant husband. Verily, we of the western world are far from the truth in the judgments we form about the domestic manners and intercourse of the Mohammedans, and especially their mode of treating their wives. We not only take it for granted that the Mohammedans believe their women have no souls, (which is not true,) but we suppose they have no rights, no privileges, and dare hardly look at their lords, much less speak to them, under fear of losing their heads. Now, all this is wide of the mark. The Mohammedan ladies have their rights, as well as our own fair ones, and know how to stand up for them—and the female tongue is fully as powerful an instrument in the East as it is in the West. Judging from what I used to hear when a boy about the Mohammedans, I should have expected to have seen this *fair one* put in a sack and thrown in the river, or, as water is rather scarce here to be used for drowning *scolds*, I should at least have expected to have seen her head cut off, and her tongue nailed up in terror to others. But it was plain that the good lady was in no fear of such treatment; and the good people of the village, instead of coming to the relief of the man, were glad to keep out of harm's way; and the ruler of the town, if it had any, knew better than to intermeddle with other people's matters; and the man himself received a lesson which I hope may do him more good than it did me. [56]

"On that night could not the king sleep!" And so it was with me. Whether it was owing to the train of thinking which the strife of tongues occasioned; or whether that Angelo had made my tea too strong, which he is almost sure to do, for I can't get the notion out of his head that the stronger

and the richer his dishes are, so much the better; or whether other and unknown causes tended to chase sleep from my eyes, I know not; but so it was, I could not sleep. And really it was worth remaining awake to look on the face of such a sky. We lay on the summit of a little hill; not a bush or a green leaf near us. We had a fair horizon, and one of the clearest skies that I ever saw. It seemed that I could see farther than usual into the deep abyss, over which the stars are scattered in wild, irregular, but beautiful confusion. I do not wonder that astronomy began in the East, and, admitting the very strong and general tendency of mankind to idolatry, I the less wonder that, in this eastern world, with such heavens nightly spread over them, there should have been so strong a tendency to the worship of the host of heaven. It has much more show of reason than the worship of stocks and stones, the work of men's hands.

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When we arose in the morning, there was a scarcely perceivable dampness on our bedding; but the dust in the road was not laid. The case was, however, different on our return. We slept out near Zebdane, and not far from a district irrigated by the waters of the Bareda. Then our bedding was wet, and we all felt chilly. The dew was most copious. This was no doubt owing to the low situation, and its vicinity to a large district over which the water had been thrown. It was also near the trees and gardens which for a mile or two cover the plain.

We had about four hours' ride from our place of lodging to Damascus. Our course was south-east, and, for the most part, we followed the course of the Bareda. This stream runs in a channel depressed below the general level of the country. The country indeed rises into hills, and small mountains, all of which, without exception, are wholly destitute of trees. Indeed, it is rare to see a bush on them under which a lamb could be shaded. There are a few stunted thistles, and furze, and an occasional tuft of grass. I have often noticed the fact, that the thistles, a small stunted thorn, and the furze, which has on it many prickles of a thorn-like character, are more uniformly to be found than any other plants. "Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." It is even so in these eastern regions. They grow where nothing else will, but some places are too bad for them.

The rock through this whole district is of a soft, friable nature. Much of it has that puddingstone appearance, which I mentioned as abounding in the mountain through which we had just passed. I was inclined to think it that kind of limestone called aolite. Many of the hills were so white, and washed so easily, that I doubted whether they did not belong to the chalk formation. They reminded me of the chalk cliffs of Dover, and the general appearance of the chalk formation as seen near Dover.

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When near the top of the last high range of hills, near Damascus, we had, on looking back, the most striking view of a naked and barren district that I ever saw. The whole range of country, up to the top of the mountain through which we passed on leaving Zebdane, and far to the north and south, was in full view; a range of fifteen or twenty miles in diameter, perhaps much more; and, except the little green strip that at some points could be seen along the river Bareda, there appeared to be neither tree nor bush, nor any green thing. I called Mr. B——'s attention to it, and asked him if he could point out, with the exception just made, one green thing—tree or bush. He could not. As the river runs in a deep channel, and the trees along it are small, it was only at a few places that their tops could be seen. A more dry, parched, desolate landscape I never saw.

Our approach to Damascus was from the north-west. The general course of the plain on which it stands is north-east and south-west. The northern part, near Damascus, is bounded by a high, steep, and precipitous mountain; the suburbs and gardens of the city extending close to its foot. It was not until we had reached the top of this range of mountains, from which the whole region we had passed over for the last five or six hours rose to view, that we saw on the other side, along the middle of a most noble plain, a wide district covered with verdure, fields, gardens, and a forest of trees, extending eastward towards the Bahr-el-Mrdj or Sea of Meadows, as far as the eye could reach. In the midst of this, encircled with gardens for miles around, rose the old, the famous city of Damascus, with its many gilded domes glittering in the sun. The sight was most delightful and refreshing; and the more so from the absolute barrenness and desolation by which it was surrounded.

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Damascus is a walled town; but on some sides the town has spread far beyond the walls, and forms extensive suburbs. The north-west side, through which we passed on entering the city, and in which most of the Franks live, is thought to contain, if I recollect aright, nearly twenty thousand people. This, however, is the most populous part. The walls have once been of great strength, and were defended on many parts, if not entirely around, by a deep foss and rows of towers. They are now much out of repair. The gates are falling to pieces, or approaching that state. The foss is much filled up at many places, and the towers have lost their beauty and strength, and possibly in great part their use—*sic transit gloria mundi*.

The streets are narrow, crooked, and miserably dirty. But little effort is made to remove filth and produce cleanliness. In truth, throughout this whole eastern world, the people appear to have very low ideas of neatness and cleanliness. While the city abounds with water, and a fountain of it is seen in most of the good houses, you meet with filth everywhere, and are often most grievously annoyed with the stench of dead animals in the roads and streets. Some of the streets are paved, but in a very indifferent way, and from the great accumulation of dust they are not in a comfortable condition for passing over. Some allowances, however, must be made for this abundance of dust in streets, roads, and open places, and even in the houses. It is now nearly three months since I reached Beyroot, and not one drop of rain has fallen—the sun has not, with the exception of a few hours, been so covered with clouds as to be hid from sight—most of the days it has, without ceasing, poured its burning rays upon the earth. What marvel if the earth be *roasted*, and except when water abounds, be converted into dust! The roads are indeed dusty to a most uncomfortable degree. So are the streets—and we need not be surprised if the dust should

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find its way into courts, parlours, and even bed-rooms. One of the main streets, called Straight, is shown as the one in which Paul was found by Ananias. I did not find a full agreement about its name, some saying it was so called, and others that this was its usual name. Different names, it would seem, are given to different parts of it.

Most of the houses, when seen from the street, have an old and very shabby appearance. Many of them are made up of patch-work—mud, wood, and stone. The mud, however, as the cheapest article, is most abundant. Occasionally, you may see the lower part of the building of good hewn marble,—which soon gives place to a miserable patch-work kind of half stucco and half mortar. The door-frames are very often found of hewn stone, and sometimes arched, and this may be the only stone that you see in the building.

The precise number of mosques in Damascus I did not, while with those who could have informed me, think of asking. As I left the city, however, and ascended the mountain, which gives such a fine view of it, I made an attempt to count the minarets. I made about thirty; and possibly this may be an approximation to the true number.

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While under the guidance of the man who showed us the house of Ananias, and the window through which Paul made his escape, we were taken to see several other things, especially some graves, which were not far from the gate. In one of the large vaults, which was in part open, we could see the skeletons of various persons—their winding-sheets in part rotted off—the flesh all gone, and the whole exhibiting a spectacle most humbling to human nature. In health man is the most beautiful of animals, and in corruption the most loathsome. But death will lose its victory through Christ, to the believer. We were also taken to the grave of the gate-keeper, who ought to have known how Paul made his escape, but did not. While he watched the gate, Paul, it would seem, by the help of some friends, escaped by the window. The poor gate-keeper knew and of course could tell nothing about the matter. But that very ignorance, as it was with the soldiers who kept Peter, was brought in charge against him. He ought to have known, and was put to death for not knowing. The gate-keeper, however, has fared rather better than the soldiers. Posterity has sainted him—has erected a neat tomb over him—put a paling around, and a cover over it. It is considered as a sacred place, and little offerings are deposited within the paling. I saw some pieces of money that were placed on the tomb. I had often heard, that with the papists, ignorance was the mother of devotion, but here it was the cause of saintship. When will the measure of folly, under the name of religion, have come to its full?

Bad as the falsely so-called Christian saints may be, they are not so shameless as the living saints, which are at times seen—the Mohammedan, men who have been to Mecca, and set themselves up to be saints, are often seen here. I did not happen to see one at Damascus, but saw one in Beyroot, who passed about the streets and bazaars in a state of perfect nudity. With the most perfect shamelessness, they will pass among females, and even enter the houses and apartments of females, without so much as a fig leaf to cover their nakedness. Their supposed holiness gives them great consequence; and at times and places of peculiar sanctity, at special processions and in the mosques, they put themselves forward and take the most honoured place. Poor human nature! how low it can and will come down, where grace does not prevent.

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There are, just outside the walls of Damascus, some mills, that looked better than any of the buildings of the sort I have seen in the East. They stand on the main channel of the river, and avail themselves of its waters to work their machinery. The bread of Damascus is, for the East, good.

One of our longest walks was in the after part of the day, along the river, and among the gardens and shady trees which line its borders: I could not but notice how the people were walking, sitting, or lying along the side of the stream, and how they appeared to enjoy its refreshing coolness. They were "beside the still waters." Near the eastern side of the city I was much interested in meeting with a field of hemp. It was just beginning to blossom. It was the first, and I may add, the only field of hemp I have seen in the East.

Most of the houses have balconies, or places projecting out on the front, having windows at the three sides. They serve the double purpose of giving access to the air, and enabling the people to see what is going on in the streets. These are more or less common as fixtures in houses, all through this eastern world. The greater part of them have also courts that are open to the heavens; these in several of the best houses that I have visited were paved with marble, and had noble fountains of water in the centre. Some have more than one fountain; and the house in which I lodged had one perpetually flowing in the room in which I slept. There is water enough to keep their houses and persons clean, would the people but use it.

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I was struck with the great contrast between the outside of the houses and the appearance within. Without all looked old, rusty, and ready to fall to pieces; but within there was often a richness and beauty in the marble pavements, the gilded ceiling, and fanciful carvings, that was striking. To what this may be owing I know not. Possibly, in part to avoid the oppressive exactions which all through these lands is apt to follow the track of wealth, or the outward show of it.

Noticing that the roofs and upper parts of many houses were greatly injured, and sadly in need of repairs, I inquired, and learned that last winter was one of very great severity at Damascus,—that an unusual quantity of snow fell, and by its weight did great injury to the houses. Their mode of building is not adapted for durability. Their mud walls do not well stand the rainy season, however they may abide the dry. The wood they use for joists, and for supporting their flat mud roofs, is in great part the Lombardy poplar and willow, which is their most abundant growth, except perhaps the mulberry. This wood they put in, full of sap, bark and all, and of course in a

few years it must rot, and fall out of its place. When it is entirely defended from the air and moisture, it may last some time, but when, as in most cases, it is almost entirely exposed to both, [64] no marvel if the house needs repairing nearly every year; and this I am told is not uncommon.

The bazaars or streets, where the stores and shops are placed, are generally covered over, so as to exclude the sun. The streets not being more than ten or fifteen feet wide on an average, a roof is thrown across, at ten, fifteen, or twenty feet above—not a very close roof, but one that keeps out the sun, but lets the air have more or less circulation. All through these countries there is a great care to procure a shade from the scorching rays of the sun; for this purpose the streets are made narrow, and in many places are covered, so that those who pass may have shade. This narrowness of the streets, and the covering of them, does, it is true, give a closeness to them, and operates against a free circulation of the air; but this is supposed to be compensated, in part at least, by the protection they give from the direct action of the sun.

I was taken to the house, as was said, where Ananias dwelt. It is a kind of cellar,—a poor, miserable place; and I am sure that so good a man deserved a more comfortable residence. I doubt altogether whether it was his house. But I did not judge it worth while discussing the matter with the Catholic priests, who claim the ownership of it, and show it. I also went to see the window through which Paul is said to have been let down in a basket. It is over one of the gates. I had as little faith in this as the other. There is indeed, I think, strong evidence against it. I did not go out to the spot at which Paul is said to have been converted. The day was hot, the distance considerable, and nothing marked the place. There is a thousand chances to one against it being the real place.

The population of Damascus is not certainly known. From all I could learn from several resident [65] Franks, it may be 125,000; and in the one hundred and seventy-three villages which lie round Damascus there may be an equal number. A gentleman who has paid some attention to the matter, and has been some time a resident in the country, supposes the population of all Syria to be about one million and a half. The chief data used in forming the estimate is the number of men, the heads of families, who pay the tax levied on such. They are about 25,000 in Damascus, and may form one-fifth of the population. This, at least, gives an approximation—the best we have when no census is taken. The majority of the population is Mohammedans, but the proportion I either did not get, or have forgotten it. There are a few Jews, and some of all the various sects of Christians found in these regions.

Damascus has long been considered by the Mohammedans as one of their sacred cities; and it is not many years since when their bigotry was so great that Christians had to use much caution to avoid its outbreaks. There is a great change in this respect. Christians may now go about with little danger. We rode repeatedly through the crowded bazaars, and no one appeared to take the least offence; and generally gave their salaam with indications of kindness. Still, it will sometimes show itself. It is not long since that Mr. Calman, a Jewish missionary, when engaged in selling the Scriptures, was taken up by the bigoted Mohammedans, and for a time feared that he might be put to trouble, but was released without much difficulty.

The main, if not the only river which waters the part of the plain where Damascus stands, is the Bareda. It rises near Zebdane. We followed its course, as I have before informed you, until it [66] entered the plain. There it is divided into three parts, which are led at a distance from each other for the purpose of watering the plain. From these channels a multitude of smaller ones are led in all directions, so that every part of the plain within reach of the water may, from time to time, receive its life-giving influence. The main channel passes through or near the city, and its waters are carried by pipes to every part of it.

To the south and south-east other streams are said to enter and flow through the plain; but we did not visit those parts. They must be small streams. Indeed the Bareda is a small stream. It would with us be called a good mill stream. We would rather term it a creek than a river. It is mostly confined in a channel of eight or ten yards wide, and then may be waded without coming above the knee. Much of the water of these rivers is exhausted in irrigation. They flow east, and after rendering a noble plain very fertile and productive for twenty or thirty miles, form a lake or marsh—they have no outlet. I wished much to ride eastward through this plain and see the country about the lake, but the time of the year and other causes prevented.

It was the sickly season, and there was much sickness in Damascus. Visiting the city at such a time was not classed with a high degree of prudence and caution, while to have spent a week or so in exploring the plain, and visiting the many villages along the Bareda, would have been considered almost madness—a tempting of Providence. I therefore spent but one night and two days in Damascus, and then hurried back to the high ground on the great mountain of Lebanon—not, however, without a lingering purpose that when the heats of summer are passed, I may take Damascus in my route again, and see more of its wide-spread plains, and thickly-planted villages.

The whole country east of Damascus, on the Euphrates, is, I am told, much like what I have seen [67] in the part already passed over. As a general thing, it is wholly destitute of trees and even bushes—and during the summer there is but little verdure; much of it is covered with sand. There are, however, spots where water is found, and at all these vegetation is produced. Where these spots are of any size there are villages, and man contrives to live. These green spots are like small islands scattered over the face of the ocean, and may be found all the way to the Euphrates, and down that stream past Bagdad to the gulf.

The ruins of Palmyra lie two or three days' travel north-east of Damascus. They have often been visited lately, and the danger is not great. Still it is too great to be lightly hazarded. A party, of whom a friend of mine was one, were robbed in an attempt to go there about five months ago. A

slight skirmish took place between them and a large party of Arabs, in which they were overpowered and robbed; some were wounded, but happily none killed. Indemnification has been had from the tribe who robbed them.

An attempt is about being made to establish a regular communication between Damascus and a point on the Euphrates, beyond Palmyra; which, if successful, will throw much more light on the interior of this region, and may make it an easy thing to visit that far-famed river, and the many antiquities that abound on its banks.

Damascus is a famous rendezvous for caravans. The caravans for Mecca, Bagdad, and various other places, either pass or start from this place. Some had come in just before we were there, and others were preparing for their departure. This gave some activity to the business of the place. The shortness of my stay, for the reasons above assigned, did not allow me to see much of them. I had not time to go out to the edge of the desert, where they usually encamp, and there to see the grotesque appearance, the odd mixture, and pell-mell state of things produced by such assemblages of men of all nations, and such herding together of man and beast.

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Damascus, and the region about it, is somewhat celebrated for its fruit of various kinds. The grapes were fine—the apricots good, and abundant—the plums the largest and finest I ever saw, being nearly as large as a hen's egg. I saw but few peaches, they are said to be good—the figs were fine of course—the apples indifferent. The white mulberry-tree is much cultivated in this section of the country, not for its fruit, which is but little esteemed, but for feeding the silk-worm. The silk forms a considerable branch of the Damascus trade, and the manufacture of it carried on to some extent. The black mulberry is found in considerable quantities, and is cultivated for its delicious fruit. The white walnut is with the natives a favourite tree. The nut is rich and of a pleasant taste. The tree gives a fine shade, grows well near the water, and is larger than most of the other trees. The sycamore is found here. The plane-tree is also found, but not very common—this is often called the sycamore with us. There is a very large one in Damascus near one of the gates. We measured it—thirty-six feet around. The karoob-tree is a variety of the locust. The fruit is the husks which the Prodigal Son would have eaten—a bean-like pod with a sweetish meat in it.

LETTER VII.

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Beyroot, Sept. 5th, 1836.

We left Damascus by the same road by which we had entered it, and continued on the same way as far as Zebdane. Having already made some remarks on the characteristic features of this district, I will say no more about it.

From Zebdane, we kept up the valley, which ran a north-east direction. It becomes narrow very soon after leaving that place, the ridges from the mountains on both sides close in and often almost meet, leaving but a small portion of level ground. Passing the sources of the streams, the quantity of water diminishes fast. The trees almost cease except at occasional spots, where care has been taken to plant them. The ground for about an hour's travel is rough; the plain then opens again to a considerable extent, and is more or less cultivated. There are a few houses; but this part is but poorly supplied with water, and without that the regions must be barren and desolate.

We soon found ourselves passing over the highest part of the plain, and beginning to descend. In short, we found that this little plain was at the separating point of the head waters of the Bareda which flows to Damascus, and those of the El-Kanne, which flows into the Bokar through the Anti-Lebanon east of Zahle. We soon came to the head branches of this last stream, which is formed of a set of most noble springs, rising in the middle of the plain. There is quite a cluster of them rising near each other, and throwing off enough water to turn a mill; fine, pure, cool water. As is usual, it is carried in channels through different parts of the plain. There is a little cluster of trees, and the whole district over which the water can be thrown is cultivated, and rich in verdure. A small village stands just below, and we found some females at the spring engaged in washing. For a small present they allowed us the use of their fire to prepare our food; and again a good deal of interest was excited to see the Franks eat.

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The mountains continued very bare of trees, and shrubbery of every kind. In the few places where water rose, there were a few trees, all else was a barren, sunburnt surface. After passing the village, which was poor in its appearance, the plain became more barren and rough, and the cultivated district more and more narrow. At the end of half an hour it terminated at a rough, narrow pass, nearly due west, and directly through the Anti-Lebanon. We followed the waters through this pass. The sides were steep and high, and the rock thrown about in wild confusion. The dip of the rock was very variable at different places. Along the stream were a few trees, and we saw several large flocks of sheep and goats, under the care of shepherds and their dogs.

After following the pass for an hour and a half, it bore to the south-west; we left it, crossed a pretty high ridge to the north-west, and entered the Bokar. On reaching the top, the plain opened to view, and we had been led to expect that we should find Baalbec at the point where we entered the plain. But no Baalbec was to be seen. We found, to our no little discomfort, that we had about two hours' ride northward, along a dry plain, under a burning sun, before we could reach this far-famed ruin.

We passed several most extensive threshing-floors. Their threshing instruments and mode of

cleaning the grain, were the same as has been already described. I might add, that in bringing their grain to the floor, and in carrying away the straw, they use mules and donkeys, and at times the camel. I saw, in no instance, the use of a wheel-carriage. The only wheeled-carriages that I have seen in Syria were those for cannon at Zahle, and ten or fifteen carts which I saw at one time passing a street in Damascus. These carts were of a coarse, strong kind, belonging to the Pasha, and were then employed in carrying materials for the castle which he was repairing.

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Our road lay over the ridges, at the foot of the mountains, along the eastern side of the plain. The soil over which we passed was thin. There was much rock on the surface, and in many places there were wide-spread masses of a very coarse puddingstone, that appeared to have once formed a huge bed of water-worn rock, boulders, and pebbles, and owing to some cementing matter which had come over it, had become a solid rock. As we approached Baalbec this rock discontinued, and gave place to a very thick stratum of massy limestone of a peculiar kind, which is mainly used in the walls of Baalbec.

Baalbec stands near the foot of the Anti-Lebanon, a little above the general level of the plain. The ridges of the mountain lower down gradually, and spreading out, form a general level, which merges insensibly into that of the plain. It is on this elevated level that the ruins stand; about a mile from them, on the side of a hill, is the quarry that has furnished the stone for these stupendous buildings. A little to the east arises the finest set of springs that I have seen in Syria. They boil up over a considerable surface, and send off a stream of water sufficient to set in operation various kinds of machinery, if applied to that purpose.

The ground on which the ruins stand is nearly a dead level; a large district has been surrounded by walls, traces of them remain. The space covered by the ruins of the temple, or set of temples, and possibly theatre and other buildings, is about nine hundred feet long, and six hundred broad. The area is not, however, a regular parallelogram, there are off-sets at some of the towers—towers having apparently been added when the place was fortified, and converted into a fort. A foundation or platform of great thickness, I should say not less than ten feet, seems to have been laid over this large space, and upon this foundation the temples have been reared.

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The stones in this foundation and wall, as in the walls still higher, are many of them of a most enormous size; at the west and south-west corner especially, they are almost incredibly large. Where all were so large, we did not think it worth while to measure very many. In one row, and that one at some distance from the ground, are three stones which we measured, and made them about seventy feet long each, and about fifteen feet wide. The thickness we could not certainly tell, but we inferred it to be about fourteen feet. These stones are much of the same shape and appearance, they are precisely like one which lies nearly cut out in the quarry, which we were, from its position, enabled to measure accurately. It was seventy feet six inches long, fourteen feet two inches thick, and seventeen feet nine inches wide at one end, and thirteen feet eight inches at the other. We were at once struck with its perfect likeness to the three stones in the wall; all of them were wider at one end than the other. I suppose that these four large stones, the three in the wall and the one in the quarry, were originally intended, either for obelisks, pillars, images, or some such thing; that their being now in the wall, is owing to a subsequent arrangement, when the place was converted into a fortress, and those stupendous outside walls put up, which now fill us with wonder.

Under these three immense stones are seven others, which almost equal those above them in width; their thickness also, judging from what is seen at the corner of the building, does not much fall short of a due proportion. In truth, they are upon a most gigantic scale. This row extends along the south-west side nearly one hundred yards, forming a most solid foundation, ten or twelve feet high, which, however, on this side, is not built upon out to the edge, the wall going up about twenty feet inward. The above-mentioned are the largest stones I saw in these ruins; but many others are enormous, and, as a general thing, they are very large. As a sample, I measured one of a large row of stones at the south-east corner of the most perfect building now standing, (it was a corner stone, which enabled me to ascertain the thickness,) and found it to be twenty-eight feet long, six feet six inches wide, and four feet six inches thick. I was not at all certain that I might not, on measuring, have found many still larger.

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The most perfect temple, now standing, is on the south-east side of the above wide foundation. It is one hundred and fifty-seven feet long, seventy-eight wide, and the walls now may be sixty-six feet high. We inferred its height from the length of one of the fallen pillars, with a row of which it was, and still is in part, surrounded. The pillar is forty-nine feet eight inches; the capital, six feet two inches; the entablature and the pediment may be ten; making—say sixty-six feet. These pillars formed a portico all round it—a covered way; the pillars being connected with the temple by enormously large stones resting one end on the pillars, and the other on the walls. The lower faces of these stones were most richly wrought with various devices. The pillars are six feet four inches in diameter at the bottom, and five feet eight inches at the top; most of them are in three pieces. The door of the temple is at the east; the pillars there are fluted; the porch before the door was wider than at the sides—a noble arch was sprung over it, and in the centre, and on the lower face of what is called the keystone, (a stone of most gigantic size,) was carved a majestic wide-spread eagle. This stone has sunk out of its place, and threatens to fall from the arch. A modern wall has been put up, about ten feet east of the door, and at the end of the walls, no doubt for the purpose of defence.

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In the inside of the building, and half sunk in the walls, are fluted pillars, and at the corners they are so cut as to appear double, the piece being one. At about fifteen or twenty feet from the west end, two noble fluted pillars have stood at some distance from the sides, evidently making part of a separation of a more sacred apartment. They are fallen, but enough remains to show that the

sanctum sanctorum stood there. There is no roof on this building, and from the fact that there are no windows in it, and other reasons, it may be doubted whether it ever had one: on this, however, I hesitate to give an opinion.

The south-east row of pillars belonging to this temple range with the wall that rose from the deep wide moat, by which the whole mass of buildings was surrounded. Opposite this temple, on the north-west side of the foundation, are the remains of a still larger temple, or building of some kind. But a small part of it remains; along the north-west wall is a row of pillars, or rather parts of pillars, the spaces between which have been filled up with large stones, forming thus a solid wall. Opposite this, and nearly half way to the temple, on the other side of the foundation, stands a row of pillars, now reduced to seven or eight, the remainder having fallen. They are about the size of those described—possibly they are larger. The foundation on which they stand must be eight or ten feet higher than that of the temple above described. These pillars have the capitals on, and are connected by their richly-carved and magnificent masses of entablature. How they have survived those convulsions which have prostrated their companions, I know not. The ruins which lie about, the broken rows of pillars and walls, show that this edifice has been of great extent. Its sides, I am inclined to think, have not been solid walls, but composed of these rows of columns, and most probably the whole building has been open to the heavens. [75]

There is near the temple I have first described, and but a few yards from its north-east end, a large building with very high and strong walls. It projects out a good deal into the ditch, and has some loop-holes. It is, as the arabesque work about the door shows, an Arabic or Mohammedan building. It is badly lighted; it was used as a granary or magazine for the troops stationed here, and we were thus prevented from examining it.

Around the outside of the whole of the above wide foundation, and on the outer edge of it, a wall of most enormous stones is run up to a very great height; much of it, it is true, is fallen, but it was originally from forty to fifty feet high. At the corners were towers, and in various places loop-holes; at the east end a most stupendous archway ran far in, having its floor nearly on a level with the ground without. Possibly there were two of them originally, but one was partly closed, leaving a small entrance. Such great changes have been made on these ruins, by the fitting them up for a fort, that it is not easy to know what their original plan and uses were. The whole is surrounded by a deep wide ditch, which could be filled with water; it is now much filled up with rubbish.

A wall has originally extended from the south-east, and possibly also from the north-east, across the narrow plain which lies between the ruins and the hill to the east. This wall, much of which remains, has been of great strength. On the side of the hill is a very large pediment, and about it lie many pieces of a stupendous column which once stood upon it. No mortar or cement was used in the construction of these works. The rock has been cut so smooth, and fitted so exactly, that it is impossible to insert the blade of a penknife between them. [76]

I had heard that there were large columns of Egyptian granite among these ruins. I saw some fragments of small columns of that kind, but the large columns were all of the rock which abounds in the quarry near. There is, in an old mosque not far from these ruins, a number of columns of Egyptian granite, but none of them of a very large kind. Still they were large enough to start the inquiry how they could have been brought from Egypt to this place—how could masses of rock, three feet in diameter and ten or fifteen feet long, be brought over Mount Lebanon, which is so steep and high that it is a great labour for man unloaded to pass? That it is the true Egyptian granite, all who know that rock will at once admit—no such rock is found in Syria.

Within the wall, and among the rubbish, is a small village. The houses are indifferent, and the population must be small. The Christians live in one quarter, and the Mohammedans in another.

Rather to our surprise, on reaching Baalbec, we saw to the east of the ruins a number of tents, and other appearances of an encampment. We learned in due time that there was stationed here a body of four or five hundred Egyptian troopers, and that they had made this their head-quarters for several years past. They lodged in tents separated a little from each other, so as to give room for fastening their horses. The tents were pitched in rows and the horses arranged with some regularity. All had a very pretty appearance. [77]

I was interested in the contrivance for feeding their horses. Wood is not to be had here; and it would be labour for a Turk to make a trough for his horse out of stone. They have found a softer material. They take earth, and making it into mortar, form a pile of about three feet in diameter, and nearly the same in height—the sides are then raised, leaving a place within like a mortar, in which the horse's food is placed. There are rows of these horse-troughs, as they may be called, all through the encampment, and the horses regularly fastened to them. As we walked round the ruins one morning to get an entire view, we passed near a tent, before which, under the shade of a tree, sat several Turkish officers. From their dress, and some badges of honour which one or two of them had on their breasts, we took them for persons of some distinction. They kindly called us to come to the tent. They had two very good chairs, which they made us occupy, seating themselves *à-la-turque*. They entered freely into conversation, and made us take a cup of coffee, after which we pursued our walk.

We had intended to take up our quarters among the ruins, but finding so many soldiers near, we did not deem it prudent. We therefore applied to the Latin convent, but on pretence of being full they did not admit us. An offer was made us of a room in a house near the convent, but on examination it was so close, dark, and filthy, that we preferred taking up our lodgings on the top of the house. There we spread our carpets and spent two nights; we found it a very pleasant [78]

place. It was cool and pleasant, and no dew fell worth mentioning. The only inconvenience we experienced was, in dressing we were exposed to the gaze of all those who felt a wish to see how the Franks put on their clothes, shave their beards, and do those other things that are usually done in one's chamber.

Our route from Baalbec was to the far-famed cedars. They grow on the Lebanon, and on the side next the sea. Our road was directly across the plain, as the cedars are nearly opposite Baalbec. It took us about two hours and a half to cross the plain. This, at the usual mode of counting, would make it nearly eight miles wide. We found scarcely any water in the plain; there was indeed a small dry channel, and not far from it a slight trace of water, which was led along so as to water some districts; the quantity was small, and must soon have been exhausted. The noble body of water which came from the set of springs near Baalbec was separated near those ruins: one part was carried to one side, and the remainder to the other; a considerable district through which they flowed was rich with verdure. A pretty line of trees marked for a mile or two the tract of the plain through which the water passed, but at the end of a few miles they appeared to be exhausted. As the trees and richness of verdure ceased, the plain below assumed its dry and parched aspect. In these sunny plains the exhaustion of water must be very great; and I now the less marvel to find lakes which have no outlets, and rivers which are lost in the sand. They become exhausted.

When we had nearly reached the foot of the Lebanon, we saw a large solitary pillar standing in the plain. We saw no ruins near it. We were told by a peasant that it was just like the pillars in Baalbec, but what it was doing there alone he was unable to tell. [79]

The ascent of Mount Lebanon was a most toilsome matter. We had to cross over one of the highest points of the mountain. There is another way which is more easy, but farther; we preferred crossing the highest place, as we might not cross here again, and wished to see the mountain in all its majesty. The first ridge which we ascended had more natural growth on it than any district I have seen in this country. It was pretty well covered with shrubs and low trees—most of them oak. The tops of most of the large ones had been cut off, I suppose for fuel. They appear to pursue a plan here, much followed in some parts of France, Savoy, and Italy, of cutting off the tops of the trees for fuel; and when the branches which shoot out have grown to the thickness of a man's arm, they are again cut off for the same purpose, and the same course still followed.

The rock on this ridge was wholly limestone. As we approached the top of it, and near the foot of the main ridge, the rock was very soft and much broken from the action of the air upon it. This continued to be the character of the rock over most of the main ridge. In some parts it was broken very fine and formed beds of loose rock; in which our mules sunk as if it were a bed of sand. A little up the side of the main ridge rose a beautiful spring of clear water, which served to produce verdure over a small district below. There were a few trees and shrubs scattered over the ridge almost to its summit; but in these upper parts they were few and small, and far between. I saw a few stunted cedars among them. As we approached the top, we passed through several large banks of snow. The face of the mountain was not generally covered with it, but it lay in large masses or spots where, from some cause, the wind had thrown much of it together. Streams of water flowed from them. When on the top we had satisfactory evidence that we were on one of the highest points of Lebanon. The ridge was narrow at this part of the mountain; there was no snow on the very summit, nor was there much on the north-west side—much less than on the south-east, and much less on either than on the Sun-noon, when I was there five weeks ago. The entire upper region was destitute of vegetation, not a bush to be seen, and but a small sample even of the thistle, which of all other plants appears the most tenacious of spreading itself everywhere. [80]

From this eminence we had a most extensive view to the west—the long, irregular slope of the mountain to the sea—the narrow plain along the coast—and the wide-spread Mediterranean, till where the heavens appeared to come down and fence in the waters. But the object which among the first was sought for, was the cedars—the far-famed cedars of Lebanon! where could they be?

The Lebanon, at this place, makes on the side next the sea a considerable bend, having the concave part next the sea. We stood opposite the deep and wide hollow that comes up from Tripoli, and down which flows a stream, the head springs of which rose far below our feet. The mountain, both to our right and left, threw out high and long ridges towards the sea. We had a steep descent before us of, I should think, at least two thousand feet; on the sides of which not a bush was to be seen. Then, there was a small level in which several springs of water took their rise; and from the lower side of this level another deep and rough hollow opened, with stupendous precipices on its sides. Below this, and along the sides, we saw trees and a considerable village. Near the middle of the little plain, at the foot of the steep descent below us, we saw a clump of trees, but they looked too few or too small for the cedars. They resembled a small orchard of evergreens. We found, however, on reaching the plain, that they were the cedars we sought. They stand in irregular groups, spread over several little stony knolls, and may possibly cover eight or ten acres of ground. They are not what with us is called the cedar, but a variety of the pine. It is a resinous tree bearing a cone. The wood is of a white pine-like appearance. We spread our carpets, and spent the night under one of the father-trees of this grove. [81]

It is not easy to decide how many old trees there are; eight or ten have a more venerable appearance than the remainder; still others approach them so nearly in size and marks of age, that it is difficult to say why one should be called old and the other young. I once thought of counting the grove, but from the irregularity of the ground, and the situation of the trees, this

was no easy matter—especially for a man who had crossed the Lebanon the same day. I counted, however, a small section, and am disposed to think that there may be from 300 to 500 trees that are more than a foot in diameter—possibly 150 that may be above two feet—and about 50 or 60 that may be from three to four feet in diameter. A few we measured; the largest was 39 feet in circumference—one 32—one 29—one 28, and one 23: these may serve as a sample. Most of the large ones forked near the ground, and were rather assemblages of trees from the same root than a single tree. Those of the third size had some of them fine, straight bodies, and ran up to a considerable height. We procured some specimens of the wood, and a sample of the cones, and then bid adieu to this much-talked-of grove.

It is pretty certain that this grove did not furnish wood for Solomon. It lies opposite Tripoli, which is two days north of Beyroot, and Beyroot is north of Tyre and Sidon. It lies up far from the sea, and has a piece of country between it and the sea, as rough as can well be found anywhere. The grove does not appear to be diminishing, but rather increasing. I saw no stumps of fallen trees, and young ones are springing up. There is a kind of religious reverence for these trees among the neighbouring villagers. They have a singular appearance standing alone in the midst of a small plain on which no other trees grow, with no other trees above them, nor for a considerable space below. Another singular fact is, that there is no water running among them. There is a stream on the side of the plain, but it comes not near them. The ground appears enriched with the leaves that fall from them, and looks precisely as the soil usually does in a pine grove. [82]

Leaving the cedars, we passed down the valley; a most rough and steep descent. We passed a village well watered, surrounded with mulberry, poplar, willow and fruit trees of various kinds. The state of cultivation on both sides of the valley, for some distance down, was much better than I have usually seen in these mountains. Several villages were in sight.

I noticed that the females here had a new kind of horn. It was only about six inches long, but much larger than those worn at Beyroot and Bru-ma-nah. It was like the crown of a very small hat, with the front part a little enlarged like the mouth of a bowl. It is fastened on the top of the head, but a little back, and has much ornament upon it. In our descent we passed a sandstone formation; there were no pines upon it, as upon those formations near Bru-ma-nah. Near the mouth of this hollow, the rock becomes very irregular, and has the dip much more near the top. This is especially the case with the secondary ridges and the irregular hills which rise between the main ridge and the sea. There is a plain of some extent between Tripoli, which stands on the sea-shore, and the foot of the mountain, interspersed with vineyards, fields, villages, and fine groves of olive. There is much rock on the surface; their mode is to throw the rock out of the fields and vineyards into the road, to the great annoyance of the traveller. [83]

We passed a very high rock in the middle of the plain which had a wide, high, flat face to the south—in that face I counted the mouths of nearly thirty tombs. Most of them were from ten to twelve feet high. There was a house on the top, said to be a convent.

We also passed an old city, which must once have been a place of great strength. The walls are nearly perfect and very strong. There are but few people in the city. It stands there almost alone. Most of the houses within are gone, and cultivated spots occupy their place. It is said to be the city of Gebal, Ez. xxvii. 9, now called Jebail. The plain along the coast is rough—has a few villages—several small rivers enter. On the banks of one, Nahr El-Kelb, or Dog river, which has a good bridge over it, we saw some figures cut on the face of the rock. They are very ancient, and it is said that the Persian arrow-head may be seen. I did not stop to examine them. They are too much defaced to be deciphered correctly.

LETTER VIII.

Beyroot, September 12, 1836.

We have had a very pleasant visit at this place from the American squadron, consisting of the Constitution, the United States, and the John Adams, under the command of Commodore Elliott. The general regret was, that its stay was so short—less than one week. It is seldom that vessels of war, except those of Mohammed Ali, visit this place. The English, although they keep a large force in the Mediterranean, have not sent one ship of war to this coast for several years, and the last one sent was of a very small size. The Delaware, under Commodore Patterson, was here two years ago, and made a very good impression of American character and power. At that time the stay was longer, and I was told by a gentleman of the place, who had the best opportunity of knowing, that he supposed about forty thousand persons visited the ship during Commodore Patterson's visit. A very large number visited the vessels during the few days that they remained here under Commodore Elliott.

I was on board the Constitution on the Sabbath, and present at public worship. Several from Beyroot attended, and it was pleasing to see full attendance of officers and men, and the perfect quiet and respectful attention which the crew exhibited. The youngest child of the American consul had not been baptized, and he expressed a wish to have it baptized on board the Constitution, and by the chaplain of that vessel. This was done at his request, and the child named *Washington*; and thus, as was pleasantly remarked to him, he has now a good *constitutional* child. In the afternoon, the Commodore and some of his officers attended worship on shore at the consul's, where service is regularly performed, usually by one of the American missionaries, or some other preacher of the gospel who may be present. [85]

The commanders and officers deserve great credit for the readiness they manifest to satisfy the natural but almost troublesome curiosity of the many who go off to see the vessels. It is really no little trouble to be employed from morning to night, and that from day to day, in receiving company after company—it may be having three or four companies on board at the same time—taking them through the ship, and showing and explaining to them whatever excites their notice. It is not to be wondered at, that in the public vessels of most of the European powers, this privilege is allowed but to a few. The American commanders have, very wisely, I think, adopted the plan of indulging and gratifying the curiosity of the people, although at the expense of trouble to themselves. The American flag is not much known as yet in these seas; the nation is not much known.

Of the few Americans scattered around these shores, a considerable portion are the missionaries and their helpers, who are labouring to dispel the darkness that rests on these countries; to impart correct knowledge of religion and morals; to break the chains which gross superstition has here laid on the human mind, and to promote all kinds of useful knowledge and improvement. Most of these missionaries are regularly educated men, and all of them of good repute as to morals and religion. From the peculiar state of superstition and bigotry in these countries—from a watchful jealousy of a corrupt and dominant priesthood, it must be expected that a jealousy will be felt towards missionaries, and efforts made to counteract their labours to do good. The occasional visits of the American squadron to those quarters where these benevolent men are labouring, the pleasant and profitable intercourse which the officers may have with the missionaries, and those among whom they labour, has a most kindly influence. So far as I have had an opportunity of learning, and my opportunities have extended to most of the mission stations, the visits of these public vessels have been most grateful to the missionaries. The commandants, and many of the officers, have manifested so much good will to missionaries as individuals, and such interest in the success of their efforts to improve the moral and religious condition of these countries, as encouraged them in their work, and is not without its good effect on those among whom they are labouring. [86]

LETTER IX.

Beyroot, September 20, 1836.

Yesterday, Ibrahim Pasha reached this place in an Egyptian frigate from Tripoli, on his way to the south. He landed about the middle of the day, under a salute from the forts, and was escorted by a body of troops to a large house outside the walls, and near the sands. In the afternoon, the American consul, who was about to call on the Pasha, as is usual with the consuls on such occasions, was so kind as to call and take me with him. We found a company of soldiers before the door, and a number of officers and dignitaries of various kinds, in waiting. We were asked into a carpeted room, with a divan, that is, a low seat covered with cushions, on all sides. The Pasha was seated in one corner; several consuls with their suites were in the act of leaving when we entered. He returned our salutations with an inclination of the head, and a slight motion of his hand to his breast, and pointed us to seats on the divan a few feet from him—the consul on his right and myself on his left. [87]

The Pasha is a short man, but heavily built, and I should judge from his appearance that he has considerable muscular force. He has a coarse, homely, round face, but none of its features can be called striking. His skin is rather rough and coarse, and looks as if it would bear washing more frequently than it receives it, and would not be the worse if some soap were at times added to the water. This was the case also with his hands, which looked as if they had never known a glove. They were fleshy—the fingers short but thick, and indicated a powerful grasp. He wore the Turkish dress, which, as you know, consists of a long robe open in front, and also at the sides from the knees down, showing the large loose trousers worn under them. His outside garment was of a flesh-coloured silk; the second, which showed itself at the breast, was striped silk. His girdle was a variegated Cashmere shawl, forming a bandage round him of a foot in width. This shawl was not of the finest kind. He had a plain red fez on his head, with no other ornament upon it than the usual blue tassel. He wore plain stockings and a pair of red slippers. In truth, his whole dress was far inferior to that of a number of persons who came in and paid their respects to him while we were there. Most of them, however, wore the large Turkish cloak; he was without any. Take him all in all, the man and the dress, and I think that at least one half of those who came in while we were there, were his equals, if not his superiors. He conversed freely, laughed a good deal, and several times very heartily. I could not understand enough of the conversation to know what things had the power of pleasing and amusing him. At times, I thought a sour and severe expression gathered on his countenance. He spoke with interest of the American squadron, and the politeness of Commodore Elliott in showing him everything about his vessel. He was evidently struck with the style and equipment of our vessels. He mentioned with much satisfaction some small present the commodore made him. The visitors were announced by an officer in waiting, and approached him usually one at a time. When they were Turks, and possibly the case was the same with all but Franks, they kneeled on one or both knees, making the Turkish salutation, and kissed his hand, which he held out to them; then rose, repeating the application of the hand to the forehead and breast, and retired to the part of the room or divan to which he pointed them. The more respectable persons were invited to be seated. [88]

One of his objects in coming to Beyroot is, to visit the coal-mines in this vicinity. He referred to this object, saying with a laugh that he was going to Corneil to turn coal-merchant. He has for some time been trying to make the coal-mines of advantage to his close-run treasury; but he is a poor manager, and until he adopts a better plan he is not likely to make a fortune at the coal-trade. He has the mines worked mainly by mountaineers pressed into the service, who are, at the end of a few weeks or months, changed for others; and thus, as soon as they learn how to work, they are changed for those again who must be taught. Ibrahim Pasha is, however, a man of some force of character, and has a mind more fit, it is said, for the department of a soldier than that of a statesman. He has for many years led the armies of his father Mohammed Ali, and, in many contested fields, he has won laurels which do not fall on the head of every general. The regions of Upper Egypt, the plains of Arabia, the land of Palestine, the interior of Asia Minor, not to mention Greece and the Isles, have felt the desolation caused by his troops. It is said, however, that the father is the man who plans—that without him as the head, the son will make but a poor business of it; and those who thus consider the matter, infer, that when the father dies, the wide domain which now submits to his sway will fall in pieces, and become the prey of those who may have the power and skill to come in for the spoil. I know not how much ground for these opinions may exist—but one thing we know, that power acquired and perpetuated by crime, usually terminates in the ruin of those who have wielded it.

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With respect to his private character, I have not learned much; but part of what I have learned is not much to his credit. It is generally admitted that he is a very intemperate man, and often under the influence of strong drink. The Turks, indeed, are, many of them, fond of ardent spirits, and the law of Mohammed to the contrary, will, notwithstanding, take strong drink when they can get it. When among the ruins of Baalbec, a soldier came, and for some time hung about us. We could not tell what the man wanted, at length he asked for spirits. We had none, and told him so, asking him if he was not ashamed to violate his religion in drinking what it forbids? Oh, he said, he could not read,—he did not know what might be in the Koran. I have at other times seen them drink, and do it with a great apparent relish. From all I see, I am inclined to the opinion that Mohammedanism is fast losing its hold on thousands of its followers, all through these regions, and the same holds good with that corrupt system of Christianity which prevails here. There are an increasing number who are having their eyes opened to see the grossness of its superstition—who see and understand more and more the tricks of the priesthood; and most of them, having no idea of pure, Bible, Protestant Christianity, are likely to plunge into scepticism and downright infidelity. There is need of a tenfold increase of active effort, to spread abroad among these communities the pure word of truth—the knowledge of Christ—the healing, purifying doctrines of the Gospel.

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I have heard of several tricks of Ibrahim Pasha's, which show something of the man. It is an object constantly kept in view with him, to increase his army. This is done in great part by seizing persons, mostly young men and boys, and making soldiers of them. This is confined to the Mohammedans. A report got out, however, that he intended to take a number of the Ansairi for soldiers. They occupy a district of the mountains north of Tripoli, and onward to Aleppo. The Ansairi took the alarm, and fled to their fastnesses and strong places in the mountains. His troops, that were in fact sent out as a press-gang to take them, returned with very few—it was a failure. Then did the wily Ibrahim set his trap, and use these few for the bait. He inquired who they were, and being answered that they were Ansairi, he ordered them to be freed, saying that he did not want such—he wanted none for his armies but good Mohammedans. The Ansairi are a mongrel sort of Turks, who have a strange medley of religious notions and practices, which are but partially known, and not, as yet, satisfactorily classed—neither Christians, Mohammedans, nor Pagans, but a little of all. The liberated Ansairi were greatly pleased at their escape, reported it to their brethren, who came down from their mountains, and were taken in great numbers. The person who related the fact saw nearly a thousand of them marched into Aleppo in chains, to be drilled and trained for soldiers.

[91]

The most important religious sects in this region are the Greeks, Maronites, Druses, and Mohammedans. The Greeks are divided into the Greek and the Catholic Greek. The Greeks differ from the Catholic or Roman church in several things. One of the chief points of difference is about the procession of the Holy Spirit, which they hold to be from the Son only, and not from the Father and Son, as held by the Roman church, and in which the Protestant churches are mostly agreed with the latter. The Greek church allows the free use of the Scriptures; rejects images in worship; but are madly set on the use of pictures. They reject the authority of the Pope.

The Pope and his missionaries have long made most strenuous efforts to bring the Greek church to an agreement with him and a subjection to his authority. They have for centuries employed missionaries and agents of all sorts to accomplish this. Nor have these efforts been wholly without effect. Throughout the East, where the Greek church exists, there are a portion who have been prevailed on to admit the authority of the Pope, and more or less modify their Greek notions to a nearer conformity to the popish standard. These are called Greek Catholics. They are pretty numerous in many places, and have a good deal of influence all through these regions.

The Maronites take their name from an individual who somehow contrived to be the head of a party, and to leave it his name as an inheritance. They differ, I am told, but very little from the Roman Catholics; hardly as much as the distinctive character of their name would seem to indicate.

It is not yet fully decided what the Druses are. Some assert that they are worshippers of the calf. They have a secret which is imparted only to a part of their people. This part is what may be called the enlightened—the initiated—the knowing—and they, like the freemasons among us, are

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most careful not to divulge the secret. They form a large part of the population of Mount Lebanon. They appear to be a quiet and well-disposed people, but it is not easy to find out what are their real religious principles and belief. They are charged by some with modifying, or pretending to modify, their opinions to suit those with whom they may be. With a Mohammedan they are Mohammedans, and with a Christian they are almost, if not altogether Christian. But in this they may plead the example of many who have gone before them, and modelled their creed to suit the circumstances of the times.

The Mohammedans are the followers of Mohammed, who lived in the early part of the seventh century, and introduced a new religion. His system borrows some things from Judaism, and some from Christianity, but in many important matters differs from both. Nor is it Paganism, having a most decided aversion to idolatry. It would take more time than I can at present spare, to give a full account of it. It may suffice to say, that Mohammed acknowledged the truth of the Jewish religion—all the Jewish prophets he received as prophets of the Lord.—He admitted that Jesus Christ was a great prophet, yea, the greatest prophet that up to his time had come into the world, and that the religion he taught was the true religion. But he pretended that he himself was sent as the last and greatest of all prophets, and authorized to make such changes in the religion of the Jews and Christians as to justify its being called a new religion—and that his system as set forth in the Koran is now, since he came, the only true religion. He made circumcision a rite in his system. They give much honour to the saints of the Old Testament, the church and the apostles. Their worship is plain. They are wholly opposed to the use of images or pictures. Their chief day of worship is Friday. They pray much, have long fasts, allow a plurality of wives; but in practice this is not as common as many have supposed, and is confined to a comparatively small number.

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One of those things that immediately strikes the notice of a traveller in these regions, is the number of monasteries and religious houses, and the peculiarity of their situation. There may be eight or ten counted from Beyroot; and how many may be within the range of twenty or thirty miles, I cannot well conjecture. From the number I passed in going to the top of Lebanon, and returning from the Cedars by Tripoli, I must suppose them to be from one to two hundred. A friend of mine counted sixteen from a place near Nahr-El-Kelb; and a native assured me that from the top of a mountain near Nahr-El-Kelb, nearly one hundred could be seen. The number of houses for men is much greater than those for women. There must of course be a considerable number of monks, but it has occurred to me that the actual number is not as great as the number of houses would seem to indicate; many houses have but a scanty number of inmates. To the inquiry, which I have often made, whether the monastery system is not losing its hold on the public mind? it has generally been answered, that no very perceptible change could be noticed. I am still, however, of the opinion, that the system is not as favourably received as it was in times past; and I shall be greatly disappointed if it does not, and that before long, appear that the system is wearing out. General developments have been made, which show that these houses are seats of corruption and abomination, and that the best interests of the church and of society would be promoted by the system's coming to an end.

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Beyroot has been the main seat of the Palestine mission. This has been the usual residence of the missionaries, and here and in the vicinity most of their labours have been expended. Good, no doubt, has been accomplished. It has been, however, a hard soil to cultivate. There are peculiar difficulties to be met with in the character, habits, and especially the ignorance and deep-rooted religious prejudices of the people. The Arabic language, which is the one almost universally spoken here, is a language difficult to acquire so as to use it freely in preaching. Of course, some time must be lost before a missionary can so master the language as to do much in clerical addresses to the people. A part of their efforts have been directed to schools, and in this place have made some progress. They had a number of schools, and were through them operating well on the minds of the people. About three months ago, at the same time that the movement was made against the missionaries in Greece, Smyrna, and the adjacent parts, a similar movement was made here, and the effect has been, the suspension of most of the common schools. I have no doubt that is a part of a wide-spread plan to counteract and break up, or render unavailing, if possible, all missionary operations in and around the Mediterranean. I hope it will fail, and I doubt not but that it will. It may, however, make the missionary work more difficult, and, for a time, less productive of its desired fruit. I have no doubt the hand of the Roman Catholics is in the matter—for in all places and at all times they have greatly withstood missionary efforts.

There is a mission press at this place. It has laboured under great difficulties for the want of many things to make complete their Arabic fonte, and from the impossibility of procuring them here, and the delay in getting them from America or Europe. The distribution of books is one of the ways of operating. Something has been done and is still doing; but the watchful adversary is now opposing this mode of working. Much suspicion is excited against their books, and from time to time we hear of some being burned. In a late tour we had some books with us, but found that in most of the villages the people had been warned against receiving them. All these things are to be expected. It is not to be supposed that the enemy will quietly see the light of the gospel poured upon his dark empire of ignorance and superstition. I should not wonder at an effort being made to add more severe measures than burning books and withdrawing children from school. Indeed, there was an effort made about three months since, to drive the mission families from the mountains, where they had gone to spend the sickly season, and were about opening schools for the summer. The prince of the village, at the instigation, as he admitted, of the Catholic priest, forbade his people to have any intercourse with them, to buy or to sell to them, and threatened to burn down the houses in which the missionaries might reside. The American consul laid the case before the Emeer Busheer, the head prince of the mountains, and claimed for

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them, as respectable, well-conducted American citizens, who had for health gone to the mountains for a few months, the right of protection usually enjoyed. The Emeer sent an officer and inquired into the case—reversed the orders of the local prince, and assured them of his protection. It was a lesson which I hope the local authorities will not soon forget. The prince who made the attempt to oppress and oppose them had not long before become a Catholic. The Emeer Busheer who protected them is not a Catholic; he was until recently considered a Moslem, but now professes to be a Maronite Christian. Thus the Lord can raise protectors and helpers from whom he pleases—make of stones children to Abraham.

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A few nights since we had our attention called to a very pretty spectacle. As it began to grow dark, we observed bonfires lighted in the neighbourhood, and other tokens of festivity. We went to the terrace on the top of the house, which commanded a most extensive view of Mount Lebanon, a view of nearly thirty miles. Along the whole range we could see the bonfires glaring. They looked, on the dark side of the mountain, like stars on the face of the deep blue vault of heaven. I made several attempts to count them; but it was much like counting the stars, which, when a boy, I often attempted to do, but almost always abandoned, before I reached a hundred, from a strange feeling of the difficulty of continuing the enumeration, when the objects lay thus without order. These bonfires were of all sizes, and were often marked by fitful blazes of light, as new fuel was thrown on them. Others would glimmer and expire, while new ones would burst forth, and soon attain to the first magnitude, and then die away, or be subjects of those fitful flashes that indicated the addition of fresh fuel.

On inquiry I learned that this was the feast of the Cross, and that these illuminations and bonfires were in commemoration of the finding of the true cross by the Empress Helena. It is said that on her way to Jerusalem she gave orders that preparation should be made that, in case she was successful in finding the cross, the event might be made known by bonfires, and thus the intelligence be communicated to Constantinople. Much of the religion of these people consists in such things. Their fasts—their attending mass—their worshipping and kissing the pictures—keeping the holy days—and counting their beads, constitute the principal part of their religion. As to the pure service of the heart—faith that worketh by love—regeneration by the Spirit—a new moral nature, effected through the word of truth under the agencies of the Holy Spirit, with most if not all the other elements of real genuine piety, they are almost wholly ignorant. It is, indeed, astonishing that a people, who have the book of God in their hands, should so long remain in utter darkness and ignorance of that spirituality which beams forth from all parts of it. This whole region is yet in the dark ages. Let any one who wishes to form a correct idea of the state of things here, read a well-written account of the middle ages—the preliminary dissertation to Robertson's History of Charles the Fifth, and Hallam on the Middle Ages—and he will have before him the leading features of the state of the church and society now found here. The agreement will not, it is true, hold good in all points, but in the main there is a strong family likeness. May the Lord soon raise up reformers!—and may the truth soon go forth as the light, and his revelation as a lamp that burneth! The reformation in Europe was preceded by many things which betokened the coming of day; and there are many things now which bespeak the approach of a time of light, life, and salvation, for these regions that have long lain waste. The last ten years have witnessed great changes, and we hope the next ten will record still greater.

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You have often heard of the Sherock, or Siroc, as it is often spelled. The weather had become much cooler, but this strong south wind has brought it back to its greatest summer heat. It does not usually blow more than two or three days at a time; but we have had it now for four or five days, and it still continues. Many persons complain much of it—"feel it in every nerve." It does not affect me, except as it makes the air warm and oppressive.

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Last night, for some unknown cause, connected probably with the Sherock, (which is made to bear the blame of all sorts of evils, and ought in fairness get credit for some good,) we had the most heavy dew at Beyroot that I have seen in Syria. This is the more remarkable, as the dews have usually been very light. It fell copiously soon after sunset, and this morning the earth looked as if a little shower of rain had fallen. There was also this morning, for the first time since I came to Beyroot, a dense fog—one of the most dense I ever saw—this also is to be ascribed to the Sherock, I suppose.

Yesterday I visited the ruins of Dair-El-Kollah, which lie near a village called Bate-Meiry, about three hours' ride from Beyroot. They are of the same style of building as those of Baalbec, but on a much smaller scale. It has most likely been an old temple. The stones are enormous, but not equal to the largest at Baalbec. Most of the wall has been thrown down, but one or two of the lower rows lie in their places. The stone is put together without cement, and the face, like those of Baalbec, made so smooth, that you could not put a knife in the crack. The pillars before the building were large, but not equal to those of Baalbec. They were composed of three pieces; the lower one, about twelve feet long, alone remains standing. The rock is a coarse marble, and I saw a few fragments of granite. These ruins are on the top of the secondary ridge, about half way to the top of Mount Lebanon; a church now stands on part of them.

LETTER X.

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Jaffa, Sept. 30th, 1836.

I have at length set out to make a tour through Palestine, or at least a part of it, and will send you

some brief notices of what may particularly engage my attention. The great heat which we felt in this country, particularly on the plains, induced me to defer my tour thus long, as I judged it not well to run unnecessary hazard in my eagerness to see the chosen land, and to visit the places referred to in the Holy Scriptures. The great heats of summer are now past, showers of rain have already fallen, and the driving up of clouds at one time from the north, and at another from the south, betoken the approach of those copious showers, which the earth, parched by a whole summer's sun, so much requires, and which man and beast need to refresh their exhausted system.

We went on board a small vessel on the 28th, but the wind was so light that we were only off the sands, and still in sight of Beyroot the next morning. During the next day we had very little wind, and made but slow progress. Towards night, however, a wind sprang up, and we passed Sidon, but at too great a distance to have a good view of it. I hope to obtain this on my return, as my plan is to return by land, for the purpose of seeing as much as I can of the country.

The mountains appear to retain nearly the same height and appearance as those near Beyroot. They seemed, however, to fall back from the sea and leave a wider plain along the coast, and to the south they appeared to decrease in height. Night came on, and shut out the land from our observation. With the night, a fine wind arose, and began to pass rapidly to the south. About midnight we passed Soor, the ancient Tyre: we were thus unable to see it. It would have been pleasant to have seen it from the sea, and to have been able to make some observations on the plains and mountains, by which it is surrounded on the land side. We passed Acre too early, and at too great a distance to see it distinctly. It has a wide plain to the east, and a little to the south-east the great plain of Esdralon extends from the Mediterranean to the sea of Tiberias. Having a most favourable wind, we passed on at a great rate, and just as the sun rose we passed the north end of Mount Carmel. It is a mountain, or hill as we should call it, a straight and regular ridge, eight or ten miles long, running north and south; on the top and side next us, almost wholly destitute of trees, and without cultivation. It has very little rock on the surface except near the north end—much less than Lebanon, and appears favourable for cultivation.

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I should not have estimated Carmel to be more than eight hundred or one thousand feet high. It is, however, usually said to be much higher. This ridge is separated from the branches of the Lebanon by a part of the plain of Esdralon. Indeed, Lebanon has come down from the great loftiness which it has near Sidon, and has spread itself over the country in small ridges. Carmel lies more west than the Lebanon range. At its north end it forms an abrupt termination in a bold promontory. On the top of this promontory, and near the end, is a monastery belonging to the Latins. There are a few monks there, how many I did not learn. It has an imposing appearance, but I could see no other human habitation near it. There is a plain of varied width between Carmel and the shore. It is almost wholly destitute of trees, hardly a bush to be seen unless of a very small size. The plain varies in width from one to two miles. Much of it, especially near the shore, was covered with sand. I saw no human being, or human habitation on it, except a few old ruins. A few miles south of the monastery there were considerable ruins on a sandy point that projects into the sea. It has, probably, been a fort.

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At the distance of eight or nine miles from the promontory, the ridge called Carmel suddenly sinks down, and gives place to a wide-spread plain. Near the south end of the mountain, they point out on the shore the site of the famous city Cesarea, which is often mentioned in the New Testament—the place where Paul was detained a prisoner many years, and made his admirable defence before Agrippa and Festus. It was once a place of considerable importance, rose suddenly to much celebrity, and almost as suddenly declined, and for a long period has been in a state of utter desolation. I saw a few pillars standing, and some other remains of departed greatness. The plain which begins at the southern end of Carmel, is the celebrated plain of Sharon.

We reached Jaffa about the middle of the afternoon, having had a most expeditious sail from Sidon. The wind had served us a good turn, in bringing us so soon to Jaffa, but we now experienced another consequence not so pleasant; it still blew hard, and made the sea so rough that we could not land. The harbour of Jaffa is not good, or rather there is no harbour worth the name. We had to anchor some miles out at sea, where there was a tremendous swell; there was no help, we had to bear it as we could. We landed the next morning, and were most kindly received by the American consul. He did all in his power to render us comfortable.

Jaffa stands on a sandy point, which projects a little distance into the sea. The ground at the point is more elevated than farther back. It is a walled town, with a double wall and fosse in some places, all, however, much out of repair. We saw but a few cannon on the part of the wall which we examined, and those small and in bad order. We passed a number of soldiers in our walks about the town, and found a strong guard at the gate. Most of the houses have a very old appearance, few of them are good; the streets are narrow, crooked, and filthy, as in almost all the Turkish towns I have visited. The houses are much crowded together, and cover a very small space, considering their number. This is the case with most of the Turkish towns in the East, especially their walled towns on the coast. We visited the Latin and Greek convents, and were kindly received, and had coffee and sweetmeats handed us. The bazaars and shops appeared exceedingly poor, and to be scantily supplied with articles of merchandise.

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Jaffa is a place of interest, chiefly, as being the sea-port nearest Jerusalem, and the landing-place of a large number of pilgrims that annually resort, by thousands, to visit the holy places in and about Jerusalem. It has also, in the noble plain of Sharon, a most admirable back country. But what avails a country, however good, if there be not people to cultivate it, and if the government be so unwise and oppressive as to hold out no inducement for industry among the people?

While looking at the city, we went without the walls as far as the grave-yard. I had noticed on the shore, and in the street, great quantities of a small but beautiful sea-shell, and at the grave-yard I found them very abundant, and put to a singular use. They were laid on the graves in great numbers, often forming quite a little mound on the top of the grave, and in many cases, a newly-formed stone, which is found at certain places on the shore, and which is in great part made up of these shells, was set up at the head and foot of the graves. It had a tasteful and pretty appearance. [103]

The place was pointed out to us at a distance, where Bonaparte is said to have shot several thousand prisoners. He has been much blamed for it, and probably not without some cause. If, however, his own account, as I have seen it given, be true, that they had before been his prisoners, and had been set at large on parole, under engagement not again to take up arms against him; that they had broken parole and were again captured while fighting against him; if this were the case, he is, according to the laws of war, less to blame than many have supposed. Not that I would justify him, but bad as he was, his opponents did not give him credit for the good he did, and made the most of his bad actions. Had he lived until the present time, on the throne of France, the state of Europe would probably have been twenty if not forty years in advance of what it now is, in knowledge and arts, in civil and religious liberty. Those who have succeeded to the now divided power, which his powerful arm wielded, have laboured and still labour to hold the people back—to repress the spirit of enterprise and improvement, and especially repress and root out the spirit of freedom.

LETTER XI.

October 5th, 1836.

We left Jaffa in the afternoon for Rumla, which lies about half way from Jaffa to the commencement of the hill country, on the road to Jerusalem—leaving the gate of Jaffa, (and I may add, there is only one gate on the land side,) we took a north-east direction. The point of land on which Jaffa stands, a kind of sandy knoll, is higher than the country back of it. We of course made a small descent, and for a considerable distance passed through gardens, enclosed lots and fields, many of them well filled with trees, as fig, orange, lemon, pomegranate, palm. The Indian fig was much used for forming enclosures, and generally planted on a ridge of sand. It makes a very good fence, as the prickles with which it abounds prevent man or beast from coming much in contact with it. Some of these gardens had wells and water-wheels, many of which were at work, mostly with oxen, raising water for the benefit of the trees and vegetables. There is much sand on the district that borders the coast, and in many places directly on the coast the sand has fairly taken possession—nothing is seen but fields of white sand. [104]

At the distance of half a mile from the shore, the ground is very little higher, I should think, than the surface of the water; and a number of things indicate that this low district was once a marsh, or at least much subjected to water. And now, in the rainy season, much water would collect on it were it not for its loose and sandy character, through which the water easily runs. The abundance of water, found at a very little distance below the surface, may arise from the fact that it is but little below the level of the sea; and the sandy character of the district allows the water to percolate freely, and thus supply what is taken up by man and vegetables.

It may be nine or ten miles from Jaffa to Rumla. The road is good; it is over a plain, and except a little waving of the surface, forming slight elevations and depressions, such as we often find on the sea-coasts, and on the flat districts which border large rivers, one would say it was level. These elevations suggest the idea that the water may have once covered this plain; and in retiring gradually from it, left those graceful elevations and depressions which give a beautiful variety to its surface. But a small part, after passing the gardens, was cultivated. From time to time we passed portions that had been sown with grain—none of it, after leaving the gardens, was enclosed—all lay open. We passed several places where there were a few trees; they formed, however, but little green spots on the face of this wide-spread and noble plain. The greater part was destitute of verdure; the burning heats of summer having burned up the grass; the crops, except an occasional cotton field, being all gathered in. I think I saw no Indian corn, although I had seen it on the Bokar, but of a very diminutive kind. The cotton fields were few and small, and held out the promise of but a light crop. [105]

The plain is highly fertile, and if under proper cultivation would yield largely. The soil is rich, deep, and very free from rock, at least sufficiently so for all purposes of cultivation. We do not, indeed, often meet with a finer district of land; but it is thinly inhabited.

Rumla is a town of considerable size, and has some pretty good houses. It stands on a slight elevation, and commands a fine view of the plain out of which it rises. It is surrounded with gardens, many of which are protected by hedges of the Indian fig. There are some olive groves about the town; other fruit-trees, and the palm, are also to be seen. Around the present town are ruins, walls, cisterns, and other indications that the town was once spread over a much larger space than it now covers. It is supposed to be the ancient Arimathea mentioned in the New Testament, John xix. 38.

The ancient Lydda lies within a short distance of Rumla, not above three or four miles; but I had not time to visit it, as my company were urgent to proceed. It is, I am told, a poor village, and has nothing to give it interest, unless it be the fact that is mentioned of it in Acts, ix. 32, 38. [106]

I ought to have mentioned respecting Rumla, that there is near the town a very remarkable tower, old, and of a singular structure, with some large apartments under ground connected with it. At what time it was built, by whom, and for what purpose, is not now known: probably, however, as a place of defence, and when built, the town extended to, if not beyond it. The history of many things in these regions is lost—irrecoverably lost—until that great day shall come when the whole history of man shall pass in review, and all shall be judged according to their works.

The American squadron left Jaffa only the day before we reached that place. The commodore and a party of officers visited Jerusalem. A large party spent a night at Rumla with the American consular agent, and had made him a present of a large and beautiful flag, with a notice of its presentation written on its border. If what was told me at Jaffa be true, that some of the officers, on their return from Jerusalem, rode from Jerusalem to Jaffa in five or six hours, it was a matter-of-fact proof that the distance is less than the old books of travel have stated. Ten hours was named at Jaffa as the usual time—that would make thirty miles, at the usual mode of counting three miles to the hour: this is probably the real distance.

We spent a Sabbath at Rumla; but as there was no Protestant worship, and I could not have received much if any benefit from attending a service in an unknown tongue, I remained in my room all day, and found, although thus alone, that the Sabbath of the Lord is a most wise and gracious appointment of Heaven for the benefit of man. He needs times which may call his thoughts from worldly things, and consecrate them more especially to God, and the things that relate to the welfare of the soul. I have, therefore, whenever I could, in travelling, rested on the Sabbath day, and found it good so to do. In almost every step I take in this country I find myself on ground referred to in Scripture; and it is with no little interest I walk over places where the events recorded in God's word took place. But even in those scenes I find it good to observe the Sabbath of the Lord. I do not even go out to look at these places on the Sabbath: the other six days may suffice for that. The Lord's day is better spent as a day of rest and devotion.

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We left Rumla on Monday morning for Jerusalem. Our course was still a little south of east. The general character and condition of the plain was much as the part of it already described, with the difference that there was much less sand. Indeed there was little, if any, to be seen—the soil was a fine, rich, black mould. The state of cultivation was rather better, but still only a small part was under the care of man. The country began more regularly to rise as we approached the hill country. The rise was however very gradual. Irregular and rounded hills became more numerous, but none of them were steep. A road could pass over them in any direction; they were rather pleasant swells than hills. More stones and pebbles were mixed up with the soil, but not in quantities that would impede cultivation. In truth, this part of the plain, that is from Rumla to the hills, forms one of the richest and most lovely districts that I have seen. We were above three hours in going from Rumla to the hills, which would make the distance from Jaffa about eighteen or twenty miles. The road however does not cross the plain at right angles, but declined considerably to the south.

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We passed no village worth naming. We did, indeed, pass a few huts at one or two places, but too few to deserve notice. We passed several places that appeared to have once been occupied, and saw several villages at a distance, but they appeared small. In short, the plain—the noble and celebrated plain of Sharon, appears to be almost deserted; and while it has a fertility and extent, were it occupied and properly cultivated, sufficient to sustain a nation, it is now roamed over by a few flocks—has small patches of it cultivated, and here and there a small, poor village to sustain. With regard to trees, &c. the eastern part of the plain was on a par with the western. It was only on little spots, and at a great distance from each other, that a few olive and other trees were to be seen. They were mostly confined to the immediate vicinity of the villages, or where villages have once stood.

While passing over the plain of Sharon, it would have been out of all propriety not to have thought of the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley. I did think of them, and was on the watch for them; and so eager was I to get one, that could I have met with any sort of a flower that would in any fair way have admitted the name, I would most willingly have reported it, *but not one could I find*. I consoled myself, however, with the thought, that I only shared the disappointment which other travellers had experienced. For what traveller in these regions has not sought the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley? And what one has been able to assure and satisfy the public that he has found them?

As we approached the hills, the face of the plain became more uneven; the points of the ridges ran out irregularly, and more rocks began to appear on the surface. The line of hills is however more regular than is usual, and the transition from the plain to the hills is more gradual than is usually found on the borders of large plains. We passed over a low, rocky point of a ridge, and saw some ruins; and at one place the large hewn stones and broken pillars indicated buildings of some consequence. The hills are not continuous ridges, but knobs, not very high, nor very steep; the top rounded over. Many of them are separated from each other almost to the base; but a greater number join at one or more sides, at various heights from their bases. Taking the hollows, and the passages between the hills, (and in some places there are little level spots,) as the level of the country, I should say that the general level, as we pass east, rises; and the height of the hills above this general level, continues about the same for a great part of the way from the commencement of the hills to near Jerusalem. This district is well called the "hill country of Judea." Nothing could better express it. They are usually in books called mountains; but their size, that is their height above the general level of the country, hardly entitles them to that appellation. They are rather hills than mountains.

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As we rode among the hills, we began to see a few small shrubs and bushes of oak. Most of them, however, were small; few as high as a man on horseback. There were also, at some places in the hollows, where, during the rains, water flows, some bushes, thistles, and other kinds of vegetation, but small of size and few in number. As we passed farther in among the hills, the vegetation increased, both as to size and quantity; it however never amounted to much. We saw, from time to time, some orchards of olives, and a few scattering trees; as we approached the higher part of the hilly district, we saw some hills that were to some extent covered with the olives. Still but a small, a very small part of the country was thus made to minister to the wants and comfort of man. As we advanced, the rock became more abundant; it was all limestone, mixed in some places with veins of flint; usually horizontal, and often projecting out on the sides of the hills, and much stratified; and the various strata being of different degrees of firmness, causing them to have a singular appearance. The soft stratum had in many places disintegrated, and formed a stratum of earth, which entirely concealed the rock; while the hard stratum formed a kind of wall, and in many places, from its regularity in thickness and direction round the side of the hill, it had much the appearance of having been the work of man. In some places again, where a hard stratum lay directly over a soft one, the crumbling away of the soft one formed a kind of natural cave under the hard one; places could be seen where a man might find shelter from the rain under rocks thus hollowed out by the wearing away of a soft rock, while its more sturdy fellow above held on to its proper size and shape. A ride of between two and three hours, from the time we entered the hill country, brought us to the higher part of the district. Our road still lay along what may be called a hollow, and on each side of us the hills rose to a considerable size. [110]

We passed on this high district one or two villages. In one of them were some pretty good houses, and an old ruin, which, from its size and form, seemed once to have been a building of some importance. The country around this village was in a better state of cultivation; more trees, figs, and vines, than I had seen since leaving Rumla. From a part of this high ground we had a most extensive and fine view of the seaboard; the deep black sea, till where it met the sky; the white sand-hills along the shore, and the wide and long plain of Sharon, extending as far as the eye could reach, to the north and south, and coming up to the hilly district, on the top of which we stood. The view was interesting, and especially so when we thought how often the pious Israelites, when going up to the house of the Lord, must have stopped at this place, and looked back on that rich and lovely part of their inheritance. The "flocks of Sharon" was a term which then expressed much; but now few flocks feed there, and those of an inferior kind of cattle. [111]

After taking this, as I supposed, farewell-look at the plain of Sharon, the sea-board, and wide-spread ocean behind it, we set forward, and thought we must soon reach a point from which we could see Jerusalem. We found, however, that we had to descend a hollow, wind along it for some distance, and then a long ascent to make, to gain about the same level from which we had taken our farewell-look at the vale and sea behind us. Above half an hour must have been spent in doing this. This is said to be the valley of Elah, where David slew the Philistine. The precise spot where the engagement took place is not known. We now found ourselves on ground which was nearly as high as any near us. We had passed to our right, at some considerable distance, a cluster of buildings on the top of a hill, called the tomb of the Maccabees. It looked like a fort, or place of defence, and was, as I am told, not long since, the residence of Aboo Goosh, who used to make free with the property of other people; in other words, was a notorious robber. But Ibrahim Pasha has taught such gentry a good lesson. He has nearly, if not wholly, put a stop to such practices; he has taken the matter into his own hands. What people have to spare, he himself takes, or has taken from them; and, indeed, much more than they are willing to part with; but as to every fellow who chooses taking for himself, as was the old way of doing things, why that is not now permitted. The time was, when a company could hardly have passed from Rumla to Jerusalem, as we did, without having been relieved of some of their cash, and perhaps clothes into the bargain. [112]

We passed a district where an immense quantity of stone had been quarried and removed; the refuse stone lay in piles, and the excavations showed that large quantities had been procured. The face of the high ridge, or kind of table land, over which we now passed, was almost wholly destitute of vegetation. A few thistles and an occasional small thorn-bush might be seen; but a more naked district I had not seen in the holy land. Several miles to the right, I saw a hill or hills pretty well covered with trees of some sort—olives I thought from their looks; and at a greater distance on our left I saw several patches of trees on the side of a high and long ridge, and a small village or two near them; but more immediately about me, and over the whole face of the ridge which I was passing, all was naked—all was destitute of vegetation, except a small enclosed spot. I was struck not only with the absence of vegetation, but with the enormous quantity of rough rock that almost literally covered the face of the ground. Much of it lay in irregular patches, projecting from eighteen inches to five or six feet above the little earth that could be seen. It really appeared as if the district was *given up* to be *occupied by rocks*, to the exclusion of all other matter. We soon began a slight but gradual descent, and after a little, some towers came into view. These were the parts of Jerusalem first seen. Presently we saw the top of the walls—the minarets, the domes, and the whole city.

Jerusalem stands on the east side of a high, *flattish* ridge, which runs nearly north and south. To the west of the city, and at some distance above, towards the top of the ridge, a small hollow begins, and running south-east, deepens rapidly, and forms the southern boundary of the city. This is the channel of the rivulet Gihon. In it are the pools, the upper and lower; but it is only in wet weather that there is water in them. The lower part is called the valley of the Son of Hinnom. The brook Kedron, or the valley in which the water would run, if there were any water,—for you [113]

must know except during the rains it is a dry channel, runs nearly north and south, and has a deep channel, with high steep banks. The valley or ravine of Gihon falls into that of the Kedron, nearly at right angles, with a high point forming the angle between them. On this point the city of Jerusalem stands. It fills, or did originally, the space that lies between these two ravines, for some distance up both of them. The ground on which the city stands has a considerable declination to the east, and is on the side of a hill, on the lower end of the ridge, when it terminates abruptly at a deep ravine, both on the south and east. The site has other inequalities. At the south-east corner, next the Gihon, was the highest point. That is the hill of Zion. Part of it is now without the walls, and used as a burying-ground. The missionaries have recently procured a small plot on Mount Zion for a burying-place, to be appropriated to Protestants who may die at Jerusalem. A little north of Mount Zion, and close on the bank of the Kedron, is Mount Moriah, or an elevation so called. On this the temple stood, and on the same site now stands the mosque of St. Omar. This elevation was formerly separated from Mount Zion by a considerable valley. It is now nearly filled up, at least that part within the walls, and much so without; still it is very perceptible without the walls, and especially at the pool of Siloam, which lies at the junction of this ravine with the valley of the Kedron. Mount Zion was once connected with Mount Moriah by a bridge or elevated causeway; but the filling up of the ground within the walls has covered it, or supplied its place.

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There is a large space around the mosque of St. Omar which forms a fine promenade, but Christians are not allowed to enter it. They are not allowed to enter the mosque, or at least this is the general understanding. In many cases, however, it has been entered lately; a party of English had been all through it, under the special protection of the governor, but a few days before my arrival. There is little doubt that in a few years, unless some reaction takes place, free admission will be allowed, and many other foolish and unreasonable customs and prejudices of the Mohammedans will pass away.

Jerusalem has a high, strong wall around it, and is occupied by a large body of the Pasha's troops. There are at present but four gates open and used, several having been walled up some time since. The Jaffa gate, by which we entered; the Zion gate being east of the Jaffa, and on Mount Zion; St. Stephen's gate, which opens next the valley of Kedron and north of Mount Moriah; and the Damascus gate, which lies on the north side of the city. The highest part of the city is a little west of the Jaffa gate, at the point where the wall leaves the top of the hill near Gihon, and runs north and north-east toward the Kedron.

LETTER XII.

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Jerusalem, 1836.

One of the first objects that we visited after our arrival was the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It so happened that the day after our arrival was one of the many days, which for some reason I know not what, is called a festa, and this church was opened. This was what we desired, as it is not accessible at all times. This church is said to be built over the place where our Lord was buried; and it also includes the place where he was crucified—that is, it includes that part of Calvary on which the crosses of our Lord and the others who were crucified with him were fixed—and the garden in which Joseph's tomb was placed. It ought, therefore, to have been *without* the city, as our Lord was crucified and interred without the city. Heb. xiii. 12, and John xix. 41. The excuse for its being in the city is, that the city does not now occupy the same ground that it did at that time—its walls were farther west and north—and the present walls take in what the old walls, when those transactions took place, left out. It appears to me very manifest, that the places now shown as the places of crucifixion and interment, must have always been *within* the city. A wall so run as to leave it out, would be located in a way that no wise builder would ever think of in running a wall to defend a city situated as Jerusalem is. These places are not on a hill, but rather in a low place or hollow, and the wall in passing to the east of it would leave so much higher and better ground close to it on the west, and would so straiten the space between it and the ground occupied by the temple, and take so irregular and winding a route to enclose sufficient ground to hold the city, that I must believe that a wrong place has been fixed upon as the spot where those memorable things transpired. It is, however, a matter of trifling importance; we know they took place near Jerusalem. There is no virtue in the spot where they took place more than in any other. But the poor, blind, superstitious people believe, and are taught to believe, that there is great, yea, saving virtue obtained in visiting these places.

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The church of the Holy Sepulchre is a large, and in some respects a good-looking building, especially the circular room with the large dome over the holy sepulchre, as seen from the inside, for it is surrounded with other buildings, and so connected with them without that it makes but a feeble impression. It needs to be large, as it contains a chapel for each of the Christian sects which prevail in the East, as the Greeks, Latins, Armenians, Copts, Syrians.

We entered at the north side. There is a small open space before the door, which once belonged to the church, but most of the pillars are removed. The doors of the church are large, and there is usually one or more Turks acting as door-keepers. As there are always monks and priests in the church to take care of it, attend to the lamps, perform the sacred offices, &c., there is a small opening through the door, by means of which food and other necessaries are passed to them at those times when the doors are shut. Some monks and priests, it is said, spend weeks, and it may

be months, in the church, without once going out of it; they no doubt think this a most meritorious act.

Immediately on passing the door of the church, we came to a large, flat, marble stone, a little elevated from the floor, having small marble pillars at the corners, and an ornamental covering above it. This is called the "stone of unction." It is pretended that the body of our Lord was laid on it while he was anointed, or rather when he was taken from the cross, and rolled up in linen with the spices, by Joseph and Nicodemus. East of the "stone of unction," and within a few yards of it, there is an ascent of several steps, called the ascent of Calvary; and on the top, which is called Calvary, three holes were shown, said to be the holes of the three crosses, on which our Lord and the two thieves were nailed. The middle one stands rather in advance of the other two. Below this, in a cave-like place under the spot where the crosses stood, is shown the split in the rock caused by the earthquake, which took place at his death. These places are, however, so fenced about with metal plates, doors, bars of iron and wire network, that you can barely see and touch them, and that with a poor light; all arranged to prevent too close an examination—all adapted to increase the superstition and blind credulity of the people.

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The Empress Helena, Constantine's mother, was the great patron of all the holy places, and built churches upon them. How she ascertained for a certainty the precise spots is not so clear; but that she selected certain spots and had churches erected on them is admitted. So great an advocate for such matters, ought of right to have some honour shown her. They have, therefore, east of Calvary, and at a few yards' distance, prepared a chapel for her. It is a low, damp place, quite under ground, and does not do her much credit. It was down in this place, however, that she found the true cross, it is said, and an odd thing is told about her identifying it. Three crosses were found, and the question was, to which one of the three was our Lord nailed, for it would have been a fatal mistake to have selected for such deep veneration, amounting nearly to worship, the one on which the thief was nailed, instead of the one on which our Lord hung. Helena was not more zealous in hunting for places and things, than fertile in expedients to identify them. A child, either sick or dead, was brought and laid on the crosses, and strange to tell! it was made well when it touched a certain one. This was ample proof that it was the true cross.

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Another thing was found in this place, now set apart as the chapel of Helena. She found *Adam's skull*, which came out of the rent made in the rock caused by the earthquake. How she identified it, the account, as I received it, did not relate. No doubt she contrived some way to do it. Many such things are gravely told to the poor deluded pilgrims that resort here, and many believe them. And to tell all such folly and nonsense, and to fill their minds with them, is the business of the monks and priests, instead of teaching them the great leading truths of the word of God, and urging the nature and necessity of personal holiness and practical religion.

We returned from the chapel of Helena to the stone of unction. A wall is run up between this and the main body of the church, forming the place in which it lies into a kind of entry or antechamber. Passing a few steps to the west, we turned short to the north, and found ourselves in the body of the church, which is large and nearly circular, with a large dome over it, and lighted chiefly from above. In the middle of this large room stands a small building called the holy sepulchre. It may be sixteen feet by ten, and ten or twelve feet high. It is divided into two rooms. The first, which is to the east, forms a kind of entry, and is entered at the east side. In the middle of this first room is a place or seat, not unlike a little table or stool. This stands on the place where the stone lay, after the angel had rolled it from the door and sat on it. There are twelve or fifteen lamps burning in this room; and through the walls are several holes, out of which the light or holy fire comes, while the bishop plays off that lying miracle to the poor deluded pilgrims. This miracle is performed at Easter. The second room is the sepulchre. On the north side of it lies a large marble tombstone, about as high from the floor as a common tombstone would be. The remainder of the room is not much larger or wider than will allow two persons to pass each other with ease. In this room are about forty lamps, which, with those in the outer rooms, are the property of different leading sects, as the Greeks, Latins, and Armenians. For much as they hate and quarrel with each other, matters are so arranged that each shall have a chapel in the church and lamps in the holy sepulchre.

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East of the holy sepulchre and separated by a slight partition, is the Greek chapel. This is the best chapel of the establishment—is neatly fitted up, and has some pretty good paintings. In the middle there is a kind of pillar, and on the top of that is marked the *centre of the world*. How they found out the precise spot my guide did not tell me, nor who was the happy finder. Possibly the good Helena who found so many things, for she had a wonderful talent for such matters.

To the north of the holy sepulchre lies the Latin chapel. It is richly furnished, and possesses some antiques that are among the curious, such as the sword and spurs of Godfrey of Bouillon. This chapel has also a pretty good organ, and the organist was so polite as to play us several tunes.

At the west end of the holy sepulchre, and in contact with it, is a small chapel for the Copts. It is but a few feet square, and is like a shed or tent-like place, put up against the end of the sepulchre. This chapel stands, of course, within the large circular room in the middle of which the holy sepulchre is placed. To the west, and only separated by a slight wall, is a small chapel for the Syrian Christians. It is a small dark place, seldom if ever used. Adjoining it is the tomb of Nicodemus, a little dark hole quite in keeping with his fear of the day when he came to Jesus by night; but as he afterwards came out openly in favour of his lord, he deserved a better tomb than they have allowed him.

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To the south of the holy sepulchre, but raised so as to permit the entrance to pass under it, is the

chapel of the Armenians. It does not equal that of the Greeks or Latins, but far exceeds the Copts and Syrians'. Thus the large and nearly circular area with a dome over it, in the middle of which the holy sepulchre is placed, is surrounded with chapels, separated from it by single walls, through which they are entered from the large area. All this mass of building is called the church of the holy sepulchre. There are a number of other places pointed out, in and about it, as places at which some of the facts recorded are said to have taken place—as where the centurion stood, who declared his belief that Jesus was the Son of God. But I have said enough about these places. My memory was so burdened with these things, it would not be strange if I should have lost some on the way, and possibly I may have misplaced some of them, not designedly however, in giving this brief detail.

There are nearly twenty convents in and about Jerusalem. The Greeks have, if I recollect aright, thirteen. Most of them are, however, very small. Their large one is directly adjoining the church of the Holy Sepulchre; and the top of the church (not the dome) may be used as a terrace for its inmates. From the top of the convent I passed over most of the top of the church, or of the chapels contained within its walls. This large monastery is able to receive and entertain many pilgrims—this is one design of those establishments. The Latins have a very large monastic establishment. It covers several acres of ground; is so constructed as to be capable of making a good defence; is a strong fort. It is a community of itself, and has within it provision for carrying on all kinds of work. It has smiths, carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, millers, bakers, chandlers, and I know not how many other artisans within it. The Armenians have a large establishment of a similar kind, which is said to be equally capacious, and in good condition. While these establishments no doubt are of use in the way of entertaining pilgrims, they are most corrupting; as it is their interest to promote superstition among the people. From their number, wealth, and influence, they are able to effect almost any object they please, and defeat any one that falls under their displeasure. They will, humanly speaking, be one of the greatest obstacles to all missionary efforts to spread the light of truth in Jerusalem, and dispel those dark and foul superstitions that have long been gathering over these, so called, holy places.

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A few days after our arrival, we set out one morning to make a tour of the city. We went out at the Jaffa gate, which is situate at the south side of the southern corner, and near the edge of the valley of Gihon. Up this ravine, a mile or more, is the upper pool of the fuller's field, mentioned in 2 Kings, xviii. 17. It is made by running a strong wall across the ravine, walling the sides and covering them with a water-proof cement. There was no running water in this ravine at present, nor is there often except in the rainy season. A little east of the Jaffa gate is the lower pool. It is made in the same way as the upper pool. The wall is used as a bridge—the road passing the ravine on it. There is no water in this pool.

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The valley of the Gihon becomes deeper as it passes eastward to where it meets the Kedron. Below the second pool it takes the name of the Valley of the Son of Hinnom or Tophet. It was formerly used for many unclean purposes—some of the most abhorrent kinds of idolatrous worship was once practised here—the burning of children to Moloch, Jer. vii. 31. The valley appears to have been much contracted by the great quantity of rubbish of all kinds which has been thrown into it from the city. A road from the Jaffa gate passes down the valley, dividing at the lower pool. One part passes to the south side, and winding along the top of the bank for some distance, crosses the plain southward to Bethlehem. The other winds down the valley until it reaches the bottom—then along the valley until it meets the one from the valley of Kedron, following the course of the united valleys towards the Dead Sea. On the south side of the valley of Hinnom, and near its junction with Kedron, is the potter's field. It is a small parcel of ground near the top of the bank with an old ruined house on it. There was a small level spot thirty feet below the top of the bank, at the bottom of a thick stratum of horizontal rock. Walls have been made enclosing a part of this—the face of the rock forming the south wall of the building. The roof, which is flat, is on a level with the top of the bank; and in it are a number of holes, through which they used to throw the dead bodies. It is not used now as a place of interment, and is fast going to ruin, part of the walls having fallen in. All along the south side of the valley are to be seen old tombs cut in the rock—some are of considerable size, having several rooms—some are so large as to be used by mules, donkeys, and other animals, as places of refuge from the noonday heat of the sun.

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At the junction of the valley of Hinnom with that of the Kedron, which is nearly at right angles—the Hinnom running nearly east and the Kedron nearly west—there is a level space of several acres, laid out in gardens, and well set with trees. These gardens and trees continue up the valley of the Kedron, which is wider than that of the Hinnom, for some distance; this rich and beautiful-looking spot, watered by the fountain of Siloam, is called the *King's Dale*. These valleys have all steep, high banks. To the east of the Kedron lies Mount Olivet, which runs north and south, and is separated from the hill on which the city stands only by the deep, narrow valley of the Kedron.

Mount Olivet terminates abruptly, or rather a break is made through it nearly in a line with the valley of Hinnom, bearing a little to the south of east. At the mouth of this new valley, which lets off the water (when there is any) to the eastward, is a small pool, and adjoining it is a kind of resting or lounging-place, now much neglected—and close by is the well of Nehemiah, which is very deep, and we infer from indications about it, that formerly it was much used; but it is now almost entirely neglected. This is supposed by some to be the En-rogel in 2 Sam. xvii. 17. Down this valley there are a number of gardens, and fig and olive trees.

Turning up the valley of the Kedron, we passed some pretty gardens and lots of ground well set with the fig and other fruit trees. A few hundred yards brought us to the pool of Siloam. It lies in the mouth of that little ravine I mentioned as separating Mount Zion from Mount Moriah, and is

now much filled up within the walls, which cross it at some distance from its mouth. It has, no doubt, been much filled without the walls, still it is very manifest on the outside, and near its mouth. There is quite a high bluff on the Moriah side, near the pool. This valley was formerly called the valley of the Cheesemongers. It was over this valley that Solomon is said to have made that splendid ascent to the house of God from Mount Zion, where his palace stood, that struck the Queen of Sheba with so much astonishment. 1 Kings, x. 5. The pool of Siloam is small, not more than twenty or twenty-five feet long, and ten or twelve wide. It may be eight feet deep, with only eighteen or twenty inches of water in it. It is fed by the fountain of Siloam, which rises about three hundred yards farther up the valley, and is taken under ground through the point of the hill which projects into the valley from Mount Moriah, and comes out at this place. The water passes through the pool, and is conveyed by a channel to the edge of the valley of the Kedron, (for the pool is a little up the valley of the Cheesemongers, say twenty-five or thirty yards,) then it passes through a set of troughs, where the people come to obtain water for themselves and their cattle. [124]

A considerable part of Mount Zion, the part which forms the point of the angle between the valley of Hinnom and that of Kedron, is not now included in the city. The wall no doubt formerly ran down the valley of the Gihon to the point keeping close on the edge of the precipice, up the valley of the Kedron, crossing the valley of the Cheesemongers at the mouth, and keeping on the precipice, passed Mount Moriah. The remains of the basement of the wall that crossed the mouth of the valley of the Cheesemongers may yet be seen, south of the pool of Siloam, near the large trough into which the water flows from that pool. The present wall of the city leaves the edge of the bank of the valley a little east of the Jaffa gate, and traversing for a little space the higher part of the hill of Zion, but leaving a large part of it to the right, takes nearly a straight course across the upper part of the valley of the Cheesemongers to Mount Moriah, leaving out most of this valley, and also the angle of Mount Moriah, which is between the valley of the Kedron and the valley of the Cheesemongers. Much of this space is now made the depository of rubbish and filth of all sorts. The whole face of the hill, both on the Gihon and the Kedron side, is evidently much enlarged, and made to project into the valley, from the quantity of rubbish thrown over it. Once it must have been a high and almost, if not altogether, a perpendicular bank, but now the rubbish has almost wholly hidden the face of the rock, being visible only in one or two spots; thus forming a steep but sloping bank of rich, soft earth. Some parts of it are planted with trees, and portions are used for cultivating vegetables of various kinds. The present walls were, if I mistake not, built by Caliph Omar, the successor of the celebrated Saladin, who warred so bravely against the Crusaders, and wrested Jerusalem and most of their possessions in Palestine from them. We saw in the lower part of the wall on Mount Moriah, many rocks of a very large size; but none that equalled those at Baalbec. The style of building in the walls at Jerusalem reminded me of those parts of the walls of Baalbec of a more recent erection, especially that on the east side and adjoining the great temple. [125]

A few hundred yards north of the pool of Siloam, we came to the fountain of Siloam. This is a small spring on the city side of the valley, and nearly opposite the corner of the city wall, where it meets the precipice, and includes the space occupied by the temple. Milton therefore was nearly right when he spoke of [126]

"Siloah's stream, that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God."

This fountain is in a place like a cave, artificial, however, as all the appearances indicate. You descend eight or ten steps which lead down into the side of Mount Moriah—there you find a stream of indifferent water. The quantity of water is not large, and it is said that it has more water in it one part of the day than in the other, more, for example, in the morning than in the afternoon. What is the cause of this is not certainly known. Possibly it may be the syphon form of the passage through which the water flows. There are many cases of syphon springs. It may, however, arise from some connexion which this fountain has with the water, brought by an aqueduct to the mosque of St. Omar, on Mount Moriah. The quantity of water brought is too great to be all used in the service of the mosque, and as none flows from the platform, it has most likely some passage under ground, and may possibly find its way to the fountain of Siloam. The depth of the fountain below the surface of the ground does not allow the water to flow off. A passage is cut on a level with the fountain, large enough to admit a man to walk erect for some distance. It passes into the hill, and under that high point of Mount Moriah which lies between the valley of the Kedron and that of the Cheesemongers, and comes out at the pool of Siloam. When this work was done is not known.

The part of Mount Olivet near and opposite Mount Moriah, is very much covered with Jewish graves. It is the favourite Jewish place of interment. The rock is horizontal, and in many spots next the valley, much of the face of the rock is bare. Parts of the stratum are sufficiently thick to allow tombs to be cut in the face of it, and by hollowing the softer stratum, caves have been formed for the deposit of the dead. There is at one place a little village almost entirely made up of old tombs that have been altered more or less. Near the fountain of Siloam, are several sepulchral monuments of more distinction than the mixed multitude that cover the side of the mountains. The most remarkable are, the tomb or pillar of Absalom, as it is called in 2 Sam. xviii. 18, that of Zechariah, and Jehoshaphat. The tomb of Absalom is in the form of a house about twelve feet square, hewn out of a solid rock, except the top, which has a round cover of stones, neatly put together, and rising like a short cone. It is hollow, and appears originally to have had but one small entrance, high up in front, which was probably stopped with a stone made to fit it. Several large holes have been broken through the sides. The side walls appear to have been from eighteen inches to two feet thick, leaving within quite a neat little room. It was probably designed [127]

as a place of interment for himself. He found one, however, in a very different place,—in a pit, and, instead of resting in the neat stone chamber he had prepared with so much care, he had a great pile of stones thrown on him. We saw here a striking sample of the Arab custom of throwing stones at the graves of persons whom they abhor for their crimes. There are large piles of stones in and about this monument, which persons in passing have thrown at it, to express their hatred of Absalom for his unnatural rebellion against his father. The stratum of rock at this place is much more thick and compact than is usually met with in these regions.

The tomb of Zechariah is much like that of Absalom, and stands but a short distance south of it. [128] The style of architecture is not precisely the same—there is no door to it that I could find, and of course could not ascertain whether it was hollow. There is behind it, in the open space that has been cut between it and the rock from which it is separated, a hole, which descends, but so winding that it is soon lost. It was so filled up that we could not descend it. It may have some connexion with the inside of this building, and have been intended for a secure place of interment.

About half way between the pillar of Absalom and the tomb of Zechariah, is the tomb of Jehoshaphat. The same compact rock is made use of, but it is of a different order of building. In this case, several large rooms are hewn out of rock connected with each other. A large front door or opening separated by pillars, and enriched with carved work, is cut in the face of the rock, eight or ten feet from the ground. The way of access is through a small, low hole, *at the outside*, near the tomb of Zechariah. After entering a few feet the space becomes larger, soon you can walk erect. The passage ascends a little, and opens into a fine large room, in the front of which is the large door that I have described. This room is of course well lighted, and would make no uncomfortable habitation. From this front room, doors and passages lead to others that lie farther in the hill, and of course are dark, except the little light they may receive from the antechamber. I wonder that this place is not occupied as a residence, as it must, I think, be much better than any of the tombs a little to the south, that are thus occupied.

Three or four hundred yards north of Absalom's pillar we came to the place pointed out as the "Garden of Gethsemane." It lies on the Mount Olivet side of the valley, not far from the bottom. [129] There are four or five acres at this place, partly in the valley and partly on the foot of Mount Olivet, that have been laid out in gardens, and some of them are still cultivated. There are a number of olive-trees, some of them old and large. They point to one of the enclosures, as the Garden of Gethsemane, where our Lord was in agony, and where Judas led the band who took him. As is customary, the priest will tell you the precise spot where the disciples slept—where our Lord withdrew—and where Judas betrayed him. That somewhere here was the place where those transactions took place, is not unlikely, but it is all idle folly to pretend to be able to designate the precise spots.

A little north of this is a chapel under ground, said to be the tomb of the Virgin Mary. It is near the valley, a little on the Mount Olivet side. A small part of the top of the building is above ground, but the great body is below. We descended a wide, noble flight of steps for ten or fifteen feet, and then we had a great display of lamps and other rich ornaments, with a large altar in front. At our right was a recess or little room, shown as the tomb of Mary; and about half way up the steps were recesses on both sides, said to be tombs of—I forget whom—Anna, perhaps, and other females mentioned in the Gospels. When this place was made, or by whom, I am not able to say. It is, however, one of the best pieces of under-ground building that I have seen, and is in good keeping. But how all these good people were found, after centuries had passed away, is not for me to tell.

The gate of St. Stephen is nearly opposite the tomb of Mary, and a road leads up from near the tomb to the gate. About two-thirds of the way from the gate to the bottom of the valley, they point out the place where Stephen, the first martyr, was stoned. It is rather singular that they have erected no monument over it. It is designated by a ledge of rocks, which projects from the ground. [130]

Mount Olivet is higher than most of the ground on which the city stands—higher than Mount Moriah, and about as high as the ground above the Jaffa gate on the top of the ridge. There are a few olive-trees scattered over the mount, but not as many as I had been led to suppose. There is a mosque near the top of it, nearly opposite Mount Moriah, and what is singular, there is a small church *in the inside of the mosque*. The mosque is not used at present, and was probably a part of the church formerly. The church is said to be built on the spot from which our Lord ascended; and they gravely showed us what they said was his track, or the print of his foot. We know, however, that the ascent was nearer Bethany, which lies on the east side of the mount. Luke xxiv. 38.

While the Jews chose Mount Olivet as their burying-ground, the Mohammedans love to inter their dead on Mount Moriah, outside the wall, and as near as they can to the mosque of St. Omar. They extend these interments beyond the gate of St. Stephen, as there is more room outside the walls, north of this place, for this purpose. Thus the Jews bury on Mount Olivet, the Mohammedans on Mount Moriah, and north of it along the outside of the city walls, and the Christians on Mount Zion. There may be other burying-grounds occupied by each of these classes of persons; but these appear to be the ones most in use at present.

The north and west sides are the most assailable parts of the city. The wall there runs on ground nearly level; it is, however, high and strong. The rock for making it appears to have been raised from a space twenty or thirty feet outside the wall, and thus a pretty deep ditch has been formed, which gives much strength to the wall as a means of defence. There is north of the city an [131]

extensive grove of olives, and a few other trees. It seems to me almost certain, that the city must once have extended farther north and north-west. The old ruins and cisterns indicate that buildings have extended in that direction.

I had often heard of the Sepulchres of the Kings, and took this occasion to visit them. They are about a mile north-west of the city wall. Instead of being on the side of a hill as I expected, I found them on a level part of the plain. That part of the plain, as indeed is usual, is based on a horizontal stratum of rock. At this place the rock is more firm and compact than usual. A space, perhaps forty feet square, has been cut down fifteen or twenty feet, perhaps originally twenty-five or thirty feet, and the whole of the rock removed, leaving the sides regular and smooth, like the walls of a house. Parallel to the south side, and at the distance of eight or ten feet, a graduated road has been made fifteen or twenty feet wide, on a moderate descent, which brings it down near the south-east corner, to nearly the same level with the floor within. A noble archway is hewn through this wall, wide enough to admit three or four men abreast. The whole is evidently much filled up—enough remains to show that it was well planned and well executed.

Within this house-like place that I have described, and at the western side, about eight feet of the upper part is covered with sculpture of various kinds, wrought on the face of the rock. It is rich, and of admirable execution. The part under this is hewn away, and a kind of portico made, twenty feet long, ten or twelve feet wide, and twelve feet high. I give these as the probable dimensions, as I did not measure them. At the south end of this portico, the rubbish, which had accumulated several feet, has been removed, and an opening was found cut through the solid rock. Only so much of the rubbish was removed as would enable a person, by creeping, to enter. After creeping a few feet, we entered a room of considerable size, say twelve feet square. From this room doorways opened to another room, and from this to others; most of them on the same level, but some of the passages lead to rooms below, and, in one place, the hollow sound which the floor gave clearly showed that there were yet other excavations beneath. These rooms had niches all around for receiving the dead. [132]

Originally these doorways had stone doors, with stone hinges. The place for hanging the doors was obvious, and we saw several of the broken doors made of a single stone slab. In one of the inner rooms we saw some richly carved covers of a sarcophagus; the sarcophagus itself was gone. The door of this room was lying there nearly entire; it was richly carved, and wrought in a kind of panel-work. The stone hinges were like those wooden hinges which we often meet with in cabins, stables, &c. On one side of the stone a piece is left at both ends to project out a few inches; holes are cut in the doorway of such a size as will receive these projections, the upper one made deep, the door put in, and made to turn on these points. These tombs, although called the Tombs of the Kings, are not believed to have been the place where the kings of Judah were interred. We are told that they were usually buried in the city of David,—that is, on Mount Zion. 2 Chron. xxiv. 16. We know not why they are so called; possibly because they are the most remarkable sepulchres that are known in the vicinity.

Learning that at the distance of a mile or two to the north-west, on the same plain, there was a remarkable set of sepulchres, called the Sepulchre of the Judges, we concluded to visit them also. There are extensive beds of rock in this part of the plain, and in many places its upper surface is six, eight, and ten feet above the level of the soil. The rock is softer than that at the sepulchre of the kings, being of that soft, friable limestone, which, from the ease with which it is worked, is so much used in building. I could see that in all directions it had been quarried and removed. [133]

Advantage was taken of a place where the rock rose eight or ten feet above the ground. It was cut so as to make a plain, smooth front. Then a little porch-like place is hewn out, not unlike that described at the sepulchre of the kings, the rock being left above for a cover. A door was then cut in, with some rich carving over it. This led into a large room, around which were a number of niches for depositing the dead. Doorways opened at the three sides to other rooms, and around these were niches—from these again to others. Passing down through a hole in the corner of the first large room, we found that there was one under it of nearly the same size. It was in a less finished state than any of the others. It is usually said, that there are seventy or seventy-two of those niches for corpses—the number of judges in the Jewish sanhedrim. We could not make out that number. We found sixty-eight or sixty-nine, if my memory be correct.

Many ruins are to be seen on this plain to the north and north-west of the city. There are many olive-trees scattered over it; and wherever the massy, compact limestone rises to a height and size that will admit of it, you are almost sure to see tombs cut in it.

There are several pools in the city. About half way from the Jaffa gate to the church of the Holy Sepulchre there is one of large dimensions; it is surrounded by houses, and is, I think, called the pool of Hezekiah. [134]

An aqueduct can in part be traced from the upper Gihon to the city in the direction of this pool, and possibly it may be the work of Hezekiah, mentioned in 2 Chron. xxxii. 30. "He stopped the upper water-course of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David."

The pool of Bethesda lies near the gate of St. Stephen, and almost adjoining the large open square, on which the mosque of St. Omar now stands. It is now dry, and has not the appearance of often having water in it. It is a small place. Several arched places are shown at one end, as a part of the five porches mentioned in the Gospel.

In truth, Jerusalem is badly, very badly supplied with water. Most of the houses have cisterns for rain water, but there is but little of good spring or running water. The fountain of Siloam, which is small and not good, is the only spring I have seen in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Water is

brought in for the use of the mosque of St. Omar in pipes from the pools of Solomon, not I think for general use.

The streets of Jerusalem are narrow and filthy; the houses have an old and weather-beaten appearance. There is one peculiarity about them which is rather singular. I saw something of it at Jaffa and at Rumla. The *dome roof* is almost universal. To me it has a pretty appearance, and is a much better defence against rain than the flat roofs which are so universal at Beyroot, and all the towns and villages in the northern part of Syria.

This mission find their chief employment in distributing books and conversing with the people, and find a good deal to encourage them in their work. There is an increasing disposition among the Mohammedans to have intercourse with them, and to converse with them on the subject of religion. This is a promising circumstance. [135]

LETTER XIII.

Jerusalem, October 10th, 1836.

We left Jerusalem early on the morning of the 8th, for a visit to Hebron. Being informed that there might be some danger of robbery or evil treatment on the road, we applied to the governor for a guard, and received an order to the commandant at the pools of Solomon, the place where the dangerous district begins, for a guard.

We left the Jaffa gate, and crossing the valley of Gihon, passed down a pretty plain to the south of Jerusalem towards Bethlehem. This plain is very fertile, but does not appear to be under cultivation to any great extent. On several parts of it we saw orchards of olive and other trees. When near Bethlehem we took the direct road to Hebron, intending to visit that place on our return.

In the vicinity of Bethlehem is the tomb of the beloved Rachel. It is a high, oblong mass of masonry, of an old and venerable appearance. A neat stone building with a dome has been erected over it.

We saw an encampment of soldiers under the olive-trees to the west of Bethlehem, and learned that Ibrahim Pasha had attempted to disarm a powerful tribe of Arabs that reside near the Dead Sea; that they had proved refractory, and that he had ordered a considerable force to the neighbourhood, and directed some of the powerful tribes that acknowledge his authority to aid in the work. There were in the vicinity of Bethlehem several thousand men, and the disarming of the tribe was going on. [136]

The whole district about Bethlehem is exceedingly rocky; more so than usual in this rocky country. This continued the case most of the way to the pools. The country to our right, that is west of us, rose higher, and on the side of the ridge were several villages; most of them had pleasant groves of trees near them, and there were extensive districts abounding with the olive, and plains finely adapted for cultivation.

The pools of Solomon are situate about three miles from Bethlehem, on the road to Hebron. They lie in a ravine that runs east from a little plain surrounded on all other sides by moderately high hills. A small spring rises in this plain, and the water from it was probably made, formerly, to pass through the pools. At present, the water from the spring, or from some of them,—for there are probably more than one, although sealed up and conveyed away under ground in such a way that the water can be seen in but one or two places,—is conveyed in earthen pipes, set in rock, and under ground along the side of the pools, until it passes them, and is then made to unite with the old aqueduct that took the waters from the pools to the city. Most probably the temple was supplied with waters in this way, and that the pools were made for this purpose. The distance direct is about nine miles, and must be increased by the windings necessary to find a water level. Ibrahim Pasha, since he took possession of this country, has had the aqueduct repaired. The pools are called the Pools of Solomon, but it is not with certainty known that he made them. They are in plan and structure much like the pools in the valley of Gihon, called the upper and lower pool. They are three in number, and lie one below another; each may be about six hundred feet long, and three hundred broad. There is a large building adjoining them, which may have been intended for a khan. It is now occupied by the guard of soldiers that are usually stationed here. [137]

The order for a guard was safe in our pockets, but on reaching the place not a soldier was to be found—what were we to do? There were, counting our servant and muleteer, and one or two persons who had joined us on the way, as we supposed for the sake of enjoying our protection, six or seven of us and two brace of pistols—we did not therefore hesitate to push forward without a guard; and saw no cause to regret it. The district we now entered was more rough, rocky, and hilly, with less cultivation and more wood upon it, than any we had yet seen. The trees were small, not much higher than a man's head when mounted on a good horse. It looks much as if it had been stripped of its trees and the sprouts allowed to grow unmolested for about two years. Much of the fuel that is used in Jerusalem is obtained from this district. We met many mules and donkeys loaded with wood going to the city, and this, I may add, is the usual mode of transporting wood through this country. Everything is packed on animals. Wheel-carriages they have none. We also met a number of *females* with *large parcels* of wood on their backs, making their way towards the city. In some cases they must have to carry it from six to ten miles. What a labour for females! It is now, as in the days of old, the women and children sink under the wood.

From many of the hills over which we passed, we had repeated views of the Dead Sea lying in a long narrow strip from north to south. For about two hours we passed through a district hilly and very rocky, and mostly covered with bushes. In many places these were so abundant as to justify the use of the word *thicket*. These are the places which are considered the most dangerous, as the robbers can conceal themselves, and thus with more ease perpetrate their crimes and escape pursuit. This whole region has once been under cultivation, and a portion of it is yet. That portion, however, is small. On the sides of the hills were the remains of terrace-work, and in many places old buildings and mounds of rock, which showed the labour of man. We saw several villages in the distance, and far to the east on a high hill, towns and other indications of inhabitants. We passed one of the largest and best springs in Palestine. It rises at the foot of one of the thickest and softest strata of white limestone rock that I have seen. A number of tombs were cut in the face of this rock, which may have been eight or ten feet thick. On first seeing them I thought, from the soft character of the rock, that they might lead to extensive excavations, but on examination found this was not the case. We were now within an hour or two of Hebron. The face of the country improved, more pains were taken to collect the loose rock into piles or fences, and more ground was under cultivation. Many villages were seen, at a distance from our road.

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When about three miles from Hebron we turned a little off our road to the west, to look for an old ruin which was said to be worth seeing. This led us on higher ground; and gave us a more extensive view of the country; and I was not a little surprised and pleased at having a fine view of the whole district to the west, embracing a part of the hill country of Judea, the southern part of the plain of Sharon, and the wide-spread Mediterranean sea beyond it. I was, in fact, on the highest ridge of the hill country, which runs north and south, and could see below me the secondary ridges and hills, which extended about half-way to the sea, becoming lower and lower as they approached the plain—then the plain beyond, and the white sand-hills and banks along the shore. I fancied that I could see the south-east corner of the sea near El-Arish, where it turns to the west—possibly this was fancy. The view, however, was most extensive and interesting, as I knew that my eyes were ranging over, not only a large and rich portion of the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, but also part of the land of the Philistines, those inveterate and powerful enemies of the people of God. Oh! how often has the district which I now beheld, witnessed the mustering, and marching, and warfare of the Philistine against Israel, and the Israelite against the Philistine.

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We now entered a gently declining valley. The soil did not appear better than usual, but much care and labour had been bestowed on it, and evidences of this increased as we passed through to the south. The stones were gathered off—good stone fences were made along the road—the ground was well set with vines, and for miles we had nothing on either side of the road but a succession of vineyards loaded with the most delicious grapes. Surely, thought I, this must be the valley of Eshcol. It was here the spies procured the vine loaded with clusters, which they carried into the wilderness to the astonishment of the whole camp. If my conjecture was not entirely correct it was nearly so, if the Jews of Hebron are to be believed, for this, if not the valley of Eshcol, terminates in that valley about a mile from Hebron. This valley through which we passed became wider and more rich in its fruits until it joined the other valley, which comes in more from the west. This second valley is the widest, has a considerable breadth of level, rich soil finely cultivated, interspersed with trees, and covered with vineyards. This is called Eshcol, as we learned from the Jews with whom we lodged, and who took us out to see it. About a mile up this valley is pointed out the tree under which they say Abraham received the angels, Gen. xviii. 4-8. It is the largest tree in the vicinity, is of the oak kind, which here grows low and sends out many branches, and looks at a little distance not unlike a large apple-tree. If it be the self-same tree under which Abraham entertained the angels, it must have attained a good old age. I am, however, slow to believe it, although assured of it by a descendant of the patriarch. It may be a descendant of that tree thus honoured, either direct or collateral, but that it should have lived until now, does not agree with the great law of mortality which spares no living thing, neither man nor beast, animal nor vegetable, since death entered this world. These, however, are the plains of Mamre, and the good old patriarch long sojourned, and somewhere on these plains his tent was pitched, his altar raised, and his worship went up with acceptance to the God who was "his shield and exceeding great reward." How many generations have passed away since that time, and yet his name is known, is dear to the people of these lands—seeing the "memory of the righteous is blessed!" Abraham had his trials—he was ordered from the land of his nativity, and, although Canaan was promised him, he was made to live as a stranger in it, and at the sufferance of others—while he saw the nations which possessed it building cities, increasing their defences, and using means to secure it as an inheritance for their children, he was not allowed to secure a foot of it, except a burying-place for himself and family; and although he was promised a numerous posterity, yet he saw himself and wife getting old, passing the age in which men become parents, and not one son born to them. Yet he believed and loved and served God, and the event proved that not one word of God's promise fell to the ground.

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Following this united valley a little to the south-east, we came to Hebron. The country about it is better cultivated than any district I have seen. There are many enclosures and vineyards; olive groves and fig-trees abound. As we drew near the town, we passed several wells; these, we were told, were, one the well of Jacob, one of Isaac, and one the well of Abraham; so each of the patriarchs has one. It at least shows their regard for the memory of these good men. Hebron stands in the valley; but at a place where the two ridges, which bound it on either side, are not uniform, but rather like separate hills placed near each other. While most of the town stands in the valley, its edges rise in a small degree on four of the hills by which it is surrounded, but in the

greatest degree on the hill to the south-east. The town has a very old appearance; the streets are narrow and dirty, and to a great extent arched over, especially the bazaars. Few of the houses look well; they are placed uncomfortably close to each other, and are badly aired and lighted. The bazaars appeared poorly supplied with goods and provisions; and, on the whole, it was a poorer place than I was led to expect, from the improved state of the country around it. Much the largest part of the population is Mohammedan. There are few Christians in Hebron; we were told, but one family, and that was the family of the secretary of the governor. We had a letter to him, and expected to find lodgings with him, but to our regret he was not at home. While inquiring for him, the governor passed, and ascertaining that we were travellers, and were recommended to his secretary, he sent a soldier with us to introduce us to a respectable Jewish family, who were ordered to take care of us. We were kindly received and provided for. They showed us the synagogue, which was near our lodgings. We found a school in operation in the synagogue; the scholars were reading in the Hebrew Bible. They showed us a most splendid roll of the law, which they had recently received. It was fixed on two rollers, so as to roll off the one as it rolled on to the other, leaving such a part exposed as might serve for the lesson to be read. The whole put nicely in a case, and fastened with clasps, and laid away in a closet not far from the reading-desk or pulpit.

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A few years ago, when Ibrahim Pasha's troops took Hebron, they committed great outrages on the Jews, by plundering them of all they could find. They broke into their synagogue, and opened all parts of it in which they thought anything could be found, mutilated and tore their roll of the law, and perpetrated many other enormities. Hebron is esteemed by the Jews as a sacred city; and they think it a great privilege to live here. They pretend that persons, when old, if they come and live at Hebron, can renew their age. They need not go far for materials to correct the opinion; for some of them had about them ample proof that old age and all its infirmities come upon people at Hebron as certainly and as fast as at other places.

The great mosque, which was probably once a Christian church, stands over, as we were told, the cave of Machpelah. We were not allowed to enter it. It is a very large building, and the lower part contains stones of a very large size. It stands on the side of the hill, at the south-east part of the city. The palace of the governor joins it; and it is not improbable that the palace in which David reigned for seven years was in that quarter. Near the mosque is a very large cistern, which the Jew, who was our guide, pretended was Sarah's bathing-house. It was, however, of much more modern formation; the declaration of the Jew to the contrary notwithstanding.

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At the south end of the town is a fine pool. This is the pool, as is supposed, over which David hung the hands and feet of Rechab and Baanah, the murderers of Ishbosheth. 2 Sam. iv. 12. It appears to have been formerly fed by a stream through a small aqueduct, that comes into it; but the stream is now dry, and the aqueduct out of order. A short distance to the north of this pool, is another of a smaller size; but the water in it does not appear as good, nor is it as much used.

While rambling among the olive-trees that almost cover the hill to the south-west of the town, we came to the ruins of an old building, which must have been a place of some consequence formerly, but is now wholly deserted. Our guide took us into it, and in one of the rooms showed us a small hole in the wall, which he told us was the tomb of Jesse, the father of David. The Jews, who were with us, certainly showed much reverence for the place, pulling off their shoes, and performing other acts of regard. Whether this be the grave of Jesse none can tell, nor is it worth much inquiry. It is not impossible that Jesse may have died at Hebron, notwithstanding Bethlehem was his usual place of residence. When David came under the jealousy of Saul, and was obliged to flee, his family fled with him, and David had to provide for and protect his father and mother. 1 Sam. xxii. 1-4. It is not unlikely that while he reigned in Hebron, and the sons of Saul over the rest of Israel, his family may have resided with him; Jesse, who was an old man when David was anointed, may have finished his days while his son lived and reigned at Hebron.

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I could not but notice in passing, some piles of wood of a larger kind than any I had seen in Palestine. It was pine, and cut into pieces of four or five feet in length. Many pieces were from a foot to eighteen inches in diameter, which, in this country, is large growth. I noticed also over their shops, and at other places, pine branches used as a protection from the sun. On inquiry I was told that, a few hours to the south-west, there was much wood of that kind. As the pine, in these countries at least, is seldom found except in sandy districts, there must be a sandstone formation in that quarter. Hebron, indeed, lies far south in Palestine, and on the borders of the wilderness, and probably the limestone formation terminates not far south of this, and gives place to the sandstone, which accounts for the immense regions of sand which are met with in that district. Had time allowed, I would gladly have made a tour of a day or two to the south, and taken a glimpse of that waste, howling wilderness in which Israel, for their rebellion, were made so long to wander. The peculiar circumstances of my companion, Mr. B—, whose aid I needed as interpreter, imposed on us the necessity of limiting our time. There is a pretty good road from Hebron to Gaza and El-Arish on to Egypt, which may be traversed on a dromedary in four days.

We wished on our return from Hebron to take a route more to the east, and pass Tekoah and the region of the Dead Sea. We learned, however, that that district was now in a troubled state, as the population on it were among those whom the Pasha was disarming, and some of the more desperate were for keeping out of his reach, and might, in their ill-humour, injure those who fell in with them. As we had no guard, we thought it the part of prudence to keep out of harm's way, and accordingly returned as far as the pools of Solomon by the same route we had traversed in going to Hebron. From the pools we went down the hollow in which they are situate, and followed the course of the aqueduct. This led us over a new district, and brought us to Bethlehem on the other side. The district over which we passed was exceedingly rough and rocky. The

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hollow, along the side of which we passed, became deep, rough, and had very little level space at the bottom, and the sides of the hills that bordered it really appeared given up to rocks and stones. The little earth, however, that was to be seen, was fertile, for the rock was a soft limestone, which always forms a good soil.

About half way from the pools to Bethlehem, we passed a place where the valley spread out so as to leave, for a few hundred yards, a strip of level land from twenty to fifty yards wide. This was divided into lots, and walls made across it to prevent the washing away of the earth. Trees and garden herbs were planted, and the whole had a most pleasing appearance among the wilderness of rock by which it is surrounded. On the adjoining hill were a few low huts, some of them more in the ground than above it, where the owners of this green spot dwell.

The hills in the immediate vicinity of Bethlehem were finely terraced, and many olive and fig trees planted. I could not but notice the number and beauty of the watch-houses or little towers, which were placed in the vineyards—some of them were round and some square—made of stone, from ten to fifteen or twenty feet high. These serve as places from which a watch is kept on the vineyards during the season of the grape. It is common to watch in this way their gardens and fruit-trees, as otherwise they might be pillaged. Reference is made to these towers in Scripture, [146] "as a cottage in a vineyard,"—"as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers," Isaiah i. 8; "built a tower in it," (*the vineyard*,) Matt. xxi. 23. The ground on which Bethlehem stands is rough and uneven. It is a poor-looking place, and has but a small population. It was swarming with the Pasha's troops when we were there, and that, as well as other reasons, made our stay short.

The principal object of attraction here is the Church of the Nativity. This is a large establishment, and includes in it both a monastery and church. It properly belongs to the Latins, but is, in part, a joint concern, as the Greeks have a chapel in it, and probably some of the other Christian sects. They pretend to show you the place where our Lord was born, and the manger in which he was laid. The church is built over them. They may be said to be under the level of the ground, and in a grotto, as almost all their holy places are. You descend ten or twelve feet, and approach the place of nativity through a narrow passage, which is paved, and the sides faced with polished marble. The place itself is small, and used somewhat as an altar,—a little recess in the wall. It is almost filled with lamps, which are kept always burning. The manger is a few yards to the right, on the other side of the passage. It is also very richly ornamented, lined in part with silk, and illuminated with many lamps. From these places a way leads into the Latin and Greek chapels.

No sooner was our arrival announced than we were beset by a number of persons with all sorts of trinkets for sale, crosses, large pieces of mother-of-pearl, with the likeness of some holy person or thing carved on it, beads, and snuff-boxes. They followed us into the church, waylaid us in the passages, and beset us in the streets. A great part of the population are engaged in [147] manufacturing such things, and they form the chief article of trade at this place. They were really troublesome in their efforts to induce us to buy, and they took care to ask a good price.

When about to start, some of our party were detained in the church after I came out. I waited on my horse, and, as the day was hot, and the sun beat down with great power, I spread my umbrella over me. This excited the curiosity not only of the boys and common soldiers, of whom the place was full, but of some of the inferior officers. They gathered about me in crowds, and looked at the umbrella on all sides—wished to understand the mechanism for raising and letting it down—tried it, and held it over them. They examined my clothes, especially my shoes, and on the whole, gave the Frank a pretty close examination as to his exterior. They exhibited great good-nature in doing it, and appeared much pleased with my willingness to gratify their curiosity. After leaving the town, we passed many soldiers and horsemen under the olive-trees which abound in the vicinity. One of the horsemen joined us in the ride, and took a hat from Angelo, which he put on his own head, and caught hold of the umbrella of one of the company, and spread it over him, assuming in pleasantry great dignity, to the no little amusement of his companions. I have heard it said that the Turks seldom laugh, and I believe they do laugh less than Franks; yet I have met with several samples of the humorous and droll among them that was not a little amusing.

On our return to Jerusalem we learned that a French prince, one of the sons of Louis Philippe, the present king, had just arrived, escorted by the governor of Rumla. The governor of Jerusalem and a number of important personages had gone out to meet and welcome him; the Catholics were [148] especially assiduous in their attentions—as the French king, infidel as he is, is considered the protector of the Catholic church in the eastern part of the Mediterranean. There has also been a little excitement lately between the Catholics and the Greeks, as the Catholics have attempted to take possession of some holy places (they say, only get back) which the Greeks claim. The Latins had contrived to get an order from Mohammed Ali, it was said, in favour of their taking them; but the Greeks were not disposed to yield willingly what they had long possessed and considered as of right belonging to them. The presence of the son of Louis Philippe at such a time was important.

The great quantity of rock on the surface, and the little earth that is at times to be seen, must at first strike the observer as a great objection to this country, and may lead to the inquiry, how could such a rocky land be called "the land flowing with milk and honey"—the glory of all lands? There are many districts that are sadly encumbered with rock, yet the soil among these rocks is of a very superior kind, and were the rock somewhat broken up, the large pieces piled and the small mixed with the soil, it might be made very productive. There is very striking proof of this in some districts, as that about Hebron, which abounds with rock, and yet is covered with the most productive vineyards. As to such a rocky country being so spoken of in the days of the patriarchs, I suppose that it was in truth, at that time, the finest of lands; that the rock which now lies bare

in so many places, was then all covered with earth of the richest kind, which has gradually disappeared in the wastings, and tillage, and pasturage, of four or five thousand years. The more I see of Palestine, the more I am persuaded that it was once one of the first countries in the world. The time was, I doubt not, when all these rocks were covered with a fine vegetable mould.

LETTER XIV.

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Jerusalem, Oct. 13th, 1836.

We have just returned from a visit to Jericho, the Jordan, and the Dead Sea, and I now set myself to the work of giving you a short account of these places. If you wish for a full and detailed account of these celebrated places, I must send you to books and the makers of them. My object is to give you such brief notices, as I have time to commit to paper. The Rev. Mr. Lanneau of the Jerusalem mission joined us, and made a very agreeable addition to our party; we took also two soldiers as a guard, this district being notorious for robbers.

We left Jerusalem by the gate of St. Stephen, passing between the chapel of the Virgin Mary and the garden of Gethsemane. We crossed Mount Olivet a little to the south of the church of the Ascension, where there is a slight depression in the mount; the part south of this is called the Mount of Corruption. On it Solomon built places for his heathen wives, to practise the heathen rites. They point out a place where they say he had a large establishment for these "*strange women*." The Mount of Corruption! very well named, when put to such uses; a very corrupt business it was—bad enough at any place, but still worse at the holy city, and by the ruler of the chosen people! Solomon was, no doubt, a very wise man in some things, but he did not show it in his relation to females. In that respect he behaved very foolishly. It is the dictate of wisdom for a man to have one wife, it was thus intended by his Maker; and he will be the happier and even the better man, all other things being equal, for being thus connected. If he uses a little wisdom in making his choice, and a little more in treating and taking care of his wife, as every good man [150] ought to do, he will find, nine times out of ten, that his wife will be a great comfort and help to him, and do him good all the days of his life. But what is to be expected of the man who is so very foolish as to gather them about him by the score, yea, the hundred? And then, what a selection from all the idolatrous nations within his reach! I doubt not they were a *bad set, a very bad set of women*; but what right had he to expect a better from the quarter whence he obtained them? Had he gone to some good old pious father of his own people, and married his well-raised, virtuous, and pious daughter, and confined himself to one wife as a wise man ought to do, and a good man would do, he might have been happy in the married life. But behaving as he did, there is no wonder that he was unhappy. It is not at all courteous and gallant in him, in these circumstances, to show his spite in making hard speeches about the ladies, as if there was no fault on his own side.

Mount Olivet, where we crossed it, had a few trees on it, and a portion was laid out in gardens and vineyards, but a great deal of it evinced neglect. It has a wide, flat top, over which we passed for some time, before we began our descent. We had a pretty good view of the northern end of the Dead Sea, the valley of the Jordan, and the mountains of Moab, which run north and south, not far east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. These mountains do not appear to be very high; I should judge them to be about the height of the hills to the west of Jerusalem. My attention was arrested by the apparent straightness of the range, and the uniform height of the ridge. The top of it, from the south to the north, as far as it could be seen with distinctness, appeared almost perfectly level. It forms a most beautiful eastern horizon to a person on the high grounds about [151] Jerusalem.

On the eastern side of Olivet, a little on the descent, is Bethany, where Lazarus and his sisters lived. It is a low, miserable village, containing only a few families, and most of these live in the lower rooms and cellars of old buildings. Not one good house did I see in the village. It is little else than a mass of ruins. An old ruin is pointed out as the house of Martha. We were shown the grave of Lazarus; it is an excavation in the rock, narrow at the mouth, barely allowing a person to enter; we descended eight or ten steps, and there found a small room, in which was a place that served for an altar, on which service is at times performed. In one side of this room is a small *hollow place*, rude enough certainly, in which we were told the body of Lazarus was deposited. The whole concern is certainly a very poor one, much less like a place of interment than many we had seen, but may have been intended for that purpose.

Our course was now nearly due east. We had a very steep descent to make on the eastern side of Olivet. We found some cultivated ground, and a few olive and fig trees. Among the limestone on the surface we saw many masses of silex, much of it of a variegated and fine kind, which had the appearance of the coarser kinds of agate. We passed from the Mount of Olives into a deep hollow, which runs east towards the valley of the Jordan. Near the head of this hollow is a spring of water, with a ruin in the vicinity, which appears to be a great stopping-place for those who are passing to and from Jerusalem and Jericho. We found there a company of Arabs and muleteers. Our road led us down the valley. The hills on both sides were steep, and the valley narrow. From this place there is a change in the character of the rock, and a corresponding one in the [152] character of the soil and the aspect of the country. The rock becomes a friable limestone of the softest kind. This continues most of the way to the valley of the Jordan. It is easily disintegrated, and of course but little of it appears on the surface. A fine-looking soil covers the face of the

country, the hills are rounded over, and but few rocks are seen projecting out. Those veins of silex, which I have mentioned, form an exception; and there are several of them, one above another, at a greater or less distance. They vary from two or three to twelve or eighteen inches in thickness; and, in some places, form a kind of cord-like appearance round the hills. While, however, the land looks more favourable for tillage, it does not show the evidences of it—far otherwise—we saw less and less of its surface under the care and cultivation of man, and fewer traces of a resident population; no villages, no houses, no vineyards nor olive trees, and but occasionally a spot that had been made to yield grain. About half-way from Mount Olivet to the plain of Jordan, we passed a district that exhibited rather a singular aspect. The rock on both sides of the narrow valley down which we were passing, was thrown much out of the horizontal position, which is the general state of the rock in this district, and forced up in the middle, a rod or two it may be, and made to have much the appearance of a regularly-formed arch. It was manifest especially in the siliceous stratum before-mentioned. In some places you might count many of these arches along the side of the hill, on both sides of the valley, and in part corresponding with each other. They had all the appearance of having been formed by the action of some great force from below, acting partially on small locations. I noticed the same, but on a more extended scale, on the road by which I returned from the Dead Sea, which lay considerably to the south of this. It was, however, as far as I could judge, about the same distance from the valley of the Jordan. It is, indeed, the same district, and may possibly exhibit a similar appearance both north and south to a much greater extent. It deserves an examination from some one who has leisure and the desire to gain a perfect knowledge of the geology of Palestine.

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The west side of the valley of the Jordan is bounded by a very high hill; it might well be called a mountain. It cannot be less than from 500 to 800 feet high. The rock of these hills is limestone, so very soft and white that I hesitated whether it did not more properly belong to the chalk formation. As the valleys approach this abrupt border of the plain, they cut deep into the earth, and some of them form most tremendous chasms. They reminded me much of the mouths of the streams in some parts of Kentucky, and on the Kanhawa. They are all destitute of trees, and hardly a bush is to be seen that would shade a goat. This nakedness of the banks and precipices gives them a wild appearance. On the sides of these deep chasms you occasionally see ledges of rock jutting out, and caves, either natural or artificial, entering under them—a noble place for thieves and robbers. The descent from the hills to the plain of Jordan is abrupt and steep. To our left was a most tremendous gorge, with a small flow of water in it. The face of the hill towards the plain, was almost entirely destitute of vegetation, and deeply furrowed, from the washing of its soft and yielding soil. Directly before us, and a short distance from the foot of the hill, we saw some ruins, and the remains of a wall which enclosed a considerable district. Whether this was the remains of some old village or city, we could not tell, as our road turned north of it, towards Jericho, and we had not time to visit it and examine it more minutely. We crossed the rivulet flowing out of the deep gorge to our left, as we descended the hills; on its banks were some old ruins, and, to our right, was a large and very high mound, which, from its regularity, had the appearance of being artificial, and was much like some of those large mounds that are seen in the valley of the Mississippi.

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A few small trees adorned the banks of the rivulet within the gorge, and marked its course through the plain. This noble, wide-spread plain lay almost as much at waste, especially toward the hills, as if there was no man to till the ground. It had the appearance of having been fertile, and not wholly deprived of its fertility, but as worn a good deal with former usage. There was, as is usual with plains near water, a scattering of water-worn pebbles over it, but not so many as to be at all in the way of tillage. As we entered more on the plain, we passed some spots that bore marks of having yielded grain not long since.

After travelling about three miles, we reached the village which is called Jericho. Just before entering it, we crossed a small brook which flows from the north-west, and has its rise in the fountain pointed out as that which Elisha healed. 2 Kings, ii. 21. About this brook, and spreading out over the plain, were a number of bushes, mostly of the thorn kind, and not unlike what I have heard called the white thorn in some parts of the United States. The largest of them were about as high as a peach tree, but were rather a clump of branches growing out of one root, than branches from the same stem. They have many very sharp thorns on them. Some of them bore an apple, of a whitish colour, larger than a grape. There was also another bush with prickles on it, which grew from four to five feet high. It bore a yellow fruit, about as large as the apricot, that looked very rich and pretty, enticing the appetite, but the taste was unpleasant and indescribably nauseous. When cut, they were soft and watery.

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The village called Jericho, may stand about mid-way from the hills to the Jordan. It is one of the most miserable villages that I ever saw. The houses are low, dirty, miserable places, hardly deserving the name. Piles of rubbish, ashes, and filth, lie all about. There is one building now occupied by the soldiers stationed there, that has high and strong stone walls, but is much out of repair. The village has, however, some gardens about it, and a number of fig and other fruit trees. Of the many palms which may once have decorated this city, but one remains. We encamped near the house used as a fort by the troops, under some fine spreading fig trees. There were some cattle in the village, but we were not able to procure any milk that was fit to drink; a small vessel which they sent to us, being so bad that we would not have it, but sent it back to the owner. We have usually found it difficult to procure milk.

We set out in the morning to visit the fountain of Elisha before we went down to the Jordan. It lies about three miles north-west of Jericho. As our guide did not know the way, we tried to engage a person from the village, and on inquiring for a boy, they told us they had no boys; all

their boys and young men were taken for soldiers. They are all Mohammedans in this village; and it is only Mohammedans, or Druses and Ansairi, who are next-door neighbours to them, that the Pasha honours with a forcible incorporation into his army—a happy deliverance for the Christian. After some inquiry, a woman engaged to be our guide so far as to put us in the right road. The spring is a fine large one, near a small hill, half a mile in the plain. There were some appearances of ruins in the piles of stone that lay about its head. The water is clear, but not cold; there is a considerable spreading of the waters by means of small channels, and also from the level character of the ground. This district is for some extent covered with the thorn-bush I have mentioned, together with some intermixture of other growth.

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Mount Quarantania, which is one of the highest and roughest parts of that range of hills that border on the plain, has a peculiarly desolate appearance, and is full of holes and caves. This is the mountain into which, as the monks tell us, our Lord was led, after his baptism, to be tempted of the devil. Between its base and the fountain are a number of old walls and buildings, which indicate that a place of some consequence may once have been situate there.

The French prince whom I have mentioned before as on a visit to Palestine, we learned, had spent the night at the fountain with his retinue. He had come the day before from Bethlehem to the Dead Sea, and from thence came up past Jericho to the fountain of Elisha, and was off this morning for Jerusalem before we arrived. It would seem that even to unbelievers this land has a most intense interest; and well it may, for what land ever witnessed such wonders as have taken place in Palestine?

We took a south-east direction across the plain, which differed but little from the district we had already passed over, in the sterility of its aspect. This appearance may in part have been owing to the circumstances, that we were now at the close of the summer, and these plains had been parched with a six months burning sun, without the protection of a good covering of vegetable growth, and not favoured with a shower of rain. This was enough to parch the life out of almost anything. Parts of the plain had been under tillage, and on some spots the stubble on the ground showed that a crop of grain had been gathered, but the greater part lay untilled. It no doubt serves, as much of the best lands of these regions do, for pasturage—a matter, in the estimation of the people of this country, equally, if not more important than land employed in tillage. This is not the season for flocks to be seen on the plains, as they are too much burned up; and I know not where they can find districts at present that are not. At the distance of a mile and a half from the Jordan we made a descent of eight or ten feet. The descent was rather irregular, the edge of the strata much washed, and there were many irregular parcels of earth along the edge, that had resisted the wastings which had removed the strata to this extent. The whole surface of this part of the plain was very destitute of vegetation. At the distance of nearly three quarters of a mile we made another descent, nearly as great as the former; the edge of it had much the same washed and irregular appearance. The land on which we now entered had many of these irregular mounds of earth that I mentioned as lying along the water edge of the former descent. It looked as if the whole plain had once been on a level with the part above the first descent, and that a sweeping torrent, extending out to where the first bank is, had passed over it, and swept away about ten feet of earth, except a few hard spots near the edge; then, that another torrent had come down, reaching out only to the place where the second bank is, and within its range had carried off about ten or twelve feet of earth, leaving a large number of spots that resisted it; for the mounds between the first and second banks nearly agreed in height with the plain above that bank, while those below the second bank agreed in height with the land between the first and second banks. In the space between the second and third banks much of the ground looked as if it was often covered with water, like the dried mud on which water has long lain; this was not the general character of this district. There were at places many small bushes, and on some parts of it a pretty considerable crop of dry weeds. We made a third descent near the stream, of about the same depth. On and near this last bank, down to the water's edge, there were many bushes of various kinds; among them considerable quantities of the willow, "the willow of the water-courses."

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The Jordan, where we visited it, may be twenty or twenty-five yards wide. It is, however, very various in its width, but I should think what I have given embraced its common width. It had a strong current at this place, and was very muddy; whether this is its usual colour, or was in consequence of a considerable fall of rain two days before, I am unable to say. After amusing ourselves in the water for some time, we thought it would not do to come away without crossing it. We swam to the other side, and cut some rods from the willows, on "the other side of Jordan." We could have waded across, if it had not been for the rapidity of the current, which swept over a gravel bar into a deep hole. Many lives, it is said, have been lost at this place. We, however, swam over and returned in safety. I gathered twelve stones from the Jordan, and cut half a dozen stems from the willows that grew on its banks. We looked at the water, and the banks again and again, as if we were fearful we might forget how they looked; and at last, yet with reluctance, set off for the Dead Sea.

We saw the Jordan at the place usually visited by the pilgrims, three or four miles from its mouth. Its course makes it enter the Dead Sea somewhat east of the middle of the plain. It may be that some visitors follow the course of the stream, and see it at its entrance; we, however, did not do this, but made for the Dead Sea, at a point about midway from the entrance of the Jordan to the western side of the plain. I may here remark that the valley of the Jordan appears to be very uniform in its width. The ranges of hills which border this valley or plain, run nearly parallel to each other. The Dead Sea fills up this valley nearly from ridge to ridge, leaving but a small border of land along its shores.

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In going from the Jordan to the Dead Sea, for a considerable space, not a blade of grass or vegetation was to be seen. It was so soft and dusty, that the horses sank to their fetlocks; and in some places it was rendered uneven by the irregular mounds—many of which did not seem to know what vegetation is. Whether this peculiar barrenness was owing to the unfavourable nature of the soil I know not; possibly this may be the case. I did not see any other indication of salt, which has been reported as found on the surface of the ground, until very near the sea. Between this barren district and the Dead Sea, there was an evident change in the aspect of the ground—we found some dry grass and small bushes; and as we came nearer the shore the bushes increased in size and number, and some spots might be called thickets. We saw also a cane brake and a variety of other growth. To my very agreeable surprise, I found the shore fine, smooth, gravelly, and deepening very slowly, so that a person might wade in for some distance. There was along the shore drift-wood, most of it small, but still larger than any I had seen on the Jordan. This would seem to indicate that somewhere on its shores there is more timber than we found in the spot we visited. The water was not only very salt but exceedingly bitter, as much so as most travellers have stated. The great density of the water was amply proved by its power to bear up the body. There is some truth in the saying, that it requires an effort to keep the feet and legs under, so as to use them with advantage in swimming. Some writers have, however, stated the matter in rather too strong terms.

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I could lie on my back in the water, with my head, hands, and feet, all out at the same time, and remain thus as long as I pleased without making any motion whatever; this I could not do in any other water that I have been in. Still it is carrying the matter too far and beyond the truth, when it is said to be so heavy, or so dead, that it never rises in waves, but always lies smooth and unruffled, let the wind blow as it will. The drift-wood thrown out is evidence to the contrary. The shore exhibited proof that but a day or two before the waves had run high; but the best proof of all was the ocular and sensible one that they were then chasing each other out on the shore, as they do in all other seas—true they did not run high, but then there was not much wind to make them. The water was so clear that the bottom could be seen with great distinctness. In wading in there was, at some places, more softness at the bottom than I was led to expect from the firm character of the shore. There were, however, some spots on the shore where the soil gave way under our feet, and exhibited a kind of quicksand, as I demonstrated by getting into one of them over my shoes. Still the bank, the water, and the bottom, so far as I saw and tried it, had much less of the terrible, fearful, and unnatural, than I had expected. Instead of that dark, gloomy, and turbid spread of water, that from my childhood I had imagined, it struck me as a very pleasant lake. It reminded me of the beautiful lake of Nice. As to the deep and fearful gloom which many writers describe as hanging over it, I must think that it is mainly found in their imaginations. It is not wonderful that a place, which, for its great wickedness, was doomed to such a fearful catastrophe as were the cities which stood on this plain, should be long looked upon with fear and horror. It is a wise provision of our nature that it should be so. It operates, and no doubt is designed so to do, as a check to that fearful wickedness that calls down such a doom. It is not an uncommon thing for people to think that there is something fearful and gloomy in places where they know awful crimes have been perpetrated, and on this principle, perhaps, we may account for the fact that so many travellers have dwelt on the deep gloom which hung over the water, and the fearful desolation that reigned over the whole region. Now to me it did not appear thus; the shore, the waters, and the lake, had a natural and even a pleasing appearance—the more so as, from my old habits of thinking, I expected something of the fearful, if not terrible. The district was, it is true, rather destitute of trees and vegetation; but not more so than many districts that I have seen; not more so than the district from Mount Olivet to the plain of Jordan, and a very large district near Damascus, which I noticed in a former letter. There are more small trees, bushes, canes, and other vegetable growth, for a quarter of a mile along the shore, than there are on some districts north-west of Damascus, perhaps ten miles square, leaving out the narrow slips of land irrigated by the water of the Bareda. There is quite a cluster of small trees or shrubs at a point on the edge of the water, where it is soft and swampy. The question whether there are any living things in these waters is one that I am not able to decide from my own observation. I saw none.

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There is a small island fifty or a hundred yards from the shore, rising six or eight feet above the level of the water, and appears to have some stones at the upper part of it. We thought we could see most distinctly another island, far to the south. As similar statements have often been made, and again contradicted, we looked at it the more carefully; and our conclusion was, notwithstanding all the declarations to the contrary, *it must be an island*, and one of considerable size, unless connected with the other shore by a very low neck of land, which the great distance prevented our seeing: this time will show. It is a singular fact, that a piece of water, which for ages has excited more intense interest than any other in the world, should yet be so little known, and so few should have been found who have made a serious attempt to explore it. There has not, as far as I know, been but one boat on the waters of the Dead Sea for ages, if from the days of Abraham; there may have been in the days of the Jewish nation, but I have not seen it confirmed by any writer. Last year an intelligent Irishman took a boat across from Acre to the lake of Tiberias, and after amusing himself with it on that lake, he passed down the Jordan to the Dead Sea, and spent some days in exploring it. How far he went to the south, and what discoveries he made, is not known. He had the misfortune to be taken sick, owing in part, it was supposed, to his imprudence and useless exposure. With much difficulty he got back to Jericho, and was then carried to Jerusalem, where he died. He had taken but few notes, which were unintelligible to all but himself. When inquired of concerning his expedition on the Dead Sea, he declined answering until he should recover, when he would tell them all about it. But death closed up the communications for ever. The boat was taken out and carried up to Jericho, as I have since

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learned. I did not know it was there, or I should have ascertained its fitness for another voyage. Were some one, acquainted with navigating a small vessel, and capable of taking soundings and making a proper survey of the lake, to spend a month or two in doing it, and to publish a full account, with a correct map of the sea and the coast, he would confer a very great favour on the Christian world. It would be so easy of execution, and of so universal interest when done, that I wonder that none of those men who long for public fame have not before now thought of it. It would be a curious matter, were some of the ruins of those ancient and devoted cities yet to be seen. Several of the old authors have mentioned them as to be seen in their day, and it is a current report among the natives that they are now to be seen beneath the water. Travellers now begin to pass to the eastern side of the Dead Sea, and visit Kerek at its south-east corner, and Petra the capital of ancient Edom.

On our return we took a course much more to the south, than the road by which we went down—having in view to visit and spend the night at a celebrated monastery, the San-Saba, which lies south-east of Jerusalem, and on the borders of the Engedi region. We therefore ascended the hills near the north end of the Dead Sea. Several beds of torrents lay in our route, which, although now dry, exhibited evidence that they do at times carry much water into the Dead Sea.

We had a striking proof of how little the people here knew of the country out of the common track. In ascending the hills, which were high and steep, and of the same soft yielding character before described, we had near us, on our right, a very deep gorge. It struck me that this might be the Kedron; and on asking our guides they at first hesitated, but after consultation, agreed that it was. We, however, found to our satisfaction before we reached Jerusalem, that this could not be the case, as we left this hollow far to our right in passing over the hills; and still found that the Kedron was on our left as we approached Jerusalem. I could not but often think during the tour of the expression, "going up to Jerusalem," and "going down to Jericho." It is down, down, all the way to Jericho; and up, up, all the way to Jerusalem.

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Having reached the top of the first steep ascent from the Dead Sea, we entered on a more gradual one, which continued for several hours' travel. Our course was south-west—the Dead Sea lay to our left, and could be seen extending far to the south. The district we were passing over, was almost wholly without trees. There was a little grass, and some thistles, and an almost innumerable multitude of snails about the roots of the weeds and small thorn bushes.

This district appeared to be used only for pasturage. We saw signs of sheep and goats, and passed one or two wells, that had recently been used for watering flocks. This whole district appeared fertile. The rock was a very soft limestone; but I saw no signs of cultivation, and not a village was to be seen.

Before we reached the monastery, the night came on—and our guides became doubtful as to the way. We passed a grave-yard, but when the people had lived, who had been interred, no one could tell. After hunting our way for some time, we concluded that we must be wrong, although our guide still insisted that we were going in the right direction. We ought to have yielded to him. The majority, however, were so confident that our course was wrong, that we turned back, and took another road, which we had passed; after following this for some time, we came to a full halt, as our muleteers affirmed that it was not the right way. While we were debating the merits of the case, the horse of one of our guard, who had alighted, got his foot fastened in some part of his harness, and taking fright at it, made a most ludicrous affray. The Turkish soldier, who was previously out of humour with the guide, on account of his not knowing the way, now lost all patience; and while his horse was like to break his neck in floundering, he fell to beating the guide with the but-end of his gun.

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Our whole case was unpleasant. We were lost, and our guard was likely, in his fury, to injure our guide. We loudly commanded the peace, and after a little, things began to look better. The horse broke the straps that had alarmed him. The soldier ceased beating our guide, and a muleteer, who had gone out to explore the road, returned with the assurance that he had found the right one, and that we were not far from the monastery.

We again set out, and soon reached San-Saba; but there new trials awaited us. It was now near midnight, and the gates were shut. We knocked loud and long before any one took notice of us; at last a small window, above one of the gates, was cautiously opened, and inquiry made who we were and what we wanted.

It was too dark for them to see us distinctly; and in our eagerness to get the gate opened, we all talked and urged our suit, each in the language which he could best use—English, Italian, Turkish, Arabic, and Greek, were all put in requisition. The good fathers were evidently in doubt of us—who we could be, and wherefore come at such an untimely hour! All our entreaties did not move a bar of the gate. We pleaded, which was true, that we were suffering for water. A small jar of water was let down by a rope. This was soon emptied—it was let down a second and third time. This, in some degree, satisfied our present wants; but our animals were not supplied, except the horses of our guard, who poured water in their red caps and gave it to them to drink. The jar was drawn up, and the window shut, all our entreaties to the contrary notwithstanding.

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We had no alternative but to wait until morning. We were hungry, but our provisions were exhausted. We could not cook, for we had no water. We felt a good deal of displeasure at the fathers who thus refused us admittance. We lay down at the gate and waited for the morning. About sunrise, after seeing that we were Franks, and but few in number, they opened the gates and gave us admittance. The superior apologised for their refusal to admit us in the night. He said most of the monks were absent, it being the season for making their wine—that there were but a few old men in the monastery—that the district about them was in a disturbed state—and

they did not know who we were—they knew not but that it might be a stratagem of some freebooters to get in and rob the monastery—that had we sent them word from Jerusalem that we were coming, they would at once have admitted us. I thought that there was much reason in what they said; and this, together with the readiness with which they provided us refreshments, and showed us all parts of their establishment, made me cordially forgive their seeming rough treatment in refusing to admit us before.

The monastery of San-Saba stands on a narrow, deep ravine. It takes in part of the ridge on both sides, and has a very high and strong wall, which crosses the ravine at two places, so as to include the valley for a considerable distance. In the valley within the walls, is a small spring, the only one that is near. On the hills are towers connected with the walls. There are many buildings within, and rooms sufficient to hold several thousand persons. There are a number of chapels, several of which are richly furnished, and they, as well as most of the Greek monasteries in Jerusalem, have lately received rich presents from Russia. Above twenty boxes were lately sent to the Greek church in these regions, filled with rich chandeliers, censers, crosses, altar cloths, and priests' garments. They showed us a chapel, in which was a pile of human skulls, said to be of monks and martyrs. There was an altar before them, on which religious service seemed to be at times performed. [167]

Most of the chapels had many pictures in them. The Greeks make much use of pictures in their worship. I was especially struck with a picture of the Last Judgment. God was represented as an old man—a fiery stream came out from before Him. The apostles were acting as judges—the dead were rising, and a halo of glory was around the head of the righteous—Peter was opening the gates of Heaven to the righteous, and the fiery stream was beating on the wicked, and forcing them into the mouth of a monstrous serpent.

There were many artificial caves in the sides of the ravine on which San-Saba stands. These were formerly inhabited by monks, it is said, but their number now not being great, they can find accommodation within the building.

With the history of this monastery I have very little acquaintance. It is an old institution, but still in good repair. The whole district about San-Saba, and from that to the Dead Sea, and I may add from that to near Jerusalem, is unusually destitute of vegetation. [168]

In several places the rock had the dip, and not unfrequently veins of flint were seen in the limestone rock, and in many places the rock was nearly as white and soft as chalk. The whole district from the foot of Mount Olivet to the plains of Jordan, and from the end of the Dead Sea to Jerusalem, past San-Saba, seems not to have been cultivated, at least in modern times. The soil appears good, but from some cause it lies neglected; while west and north of Jerusalem, where the soil does not seem better, and where there is much more rock on the surface, there are many villages, and much of the ground is under tillage.

To the south of San-Saba, we saw the Frank mountain. It rises much above the neighbouring hills—has a sugar-loaf appearance, and is said to have many ruins on and about it. Still farther to the south, lie Engedi and Maon, and a second Mount Carmel, the one referred to in the life of David. 1 Sam. xxv. 2.

LETTER XV.

Nazareth, October 17, 1836.

We left Jerusalem, and passed northward; and having in view to visit Nabloos, Samaria, Tiberias, Nazareth, and many other interesting localities, on our return to Beyroot.

Our route led us near the tombs of the kings, and I could not but notice the immense quantities of loose stones that lay over the district west and north-west of Jerusalem—most of them are small. They often form immense piles. What may have caused such banks of them is not known. Possibly they indicate that buildings were once spread over this district—or it maybe that much rock has been taken from the upper stratum, and these piles are the refuse rock—or it may be that in the many sieges which Jerusalem sustained, the besieging armies may have collected them for embankments, or for the purpose of defending their camps. To the north of Jerusalem there are some fine orchards of olives. The country is rolling, but not too much so for cultivation; and we passed a succession of small plains, which were fertile and under tillage. [169]

At the distance of about six miles, we passed Rama, the city of Samuel the Prophet. It stood to our left, and on one of the highest points of the hill country of Judea. It is now a poor Moslem village, surrounded with groves of olives and other fruit trees: the Mediterranean sea, and a long stretch of the plains of Sharon, may be seen from Rama.

Near Rama, and north-west of it, stands Gibeon, the city of the ancient Gibeonites, who made peace with Israel under Joshua, and practised a deception on them. (Joshua ix.) It stands on the top of a small sugar-loaf hill, and is capable of being made a strong place. It is now a poor village—several other villages lay to our left, the names of which I do not now recollect.

To our right we passed several villages, but most of them lay at some little distance from the road—as Anathoth, the town of Jeremiah, now a poor Mohammedan village—Geba, and Gibeah of Saul—Michmash, where Jonathan defeated the garrison of the Philistines—Rimmon, in which the Benjamites found refuge when Gideon was destroyed. (Judges xx. 45.)

At the distance of ten or twelve miles from Jerusalem we came to Beer, the town to which Jotham is supposed to have fled from his brother Abimelech. In approaching it, we passed over a fine plain, a part of which was under cultivation; near the town were orchards of olive and other fruit trees. [170]

We had intended to spend the night here, but we found several thousand Turkish horsemen encamped on the plain near the town. They were spread over the whole district adjoining the springs; and men, horses, camels, and donkeys, mixed together in the most irregular manner. Some of the officers and men had tents, but the majority of the army either had none or did not think it necessary to pitch them. The town, which is not large, was overrun with troops. We thought it, on the whole, not best to lodge with such company, and passed on to Ain-Brood. This led us past ancient Bethel,—there is now a small village there, and many ruins that show that it has once been a place of considerable size. It stands near the top of the ridge, and commands a fine view of the adjacent country. It was here that Abraham pitched his tent soon after entering the land of Canaan—and from this place he was made to look north and south, and east and west; and was assured that all the land he saw should be given to him and his seed. (Gen. xii. 8, and xiii. 3-14.) And here Jeroboam set up one of the golden calves, and induced Israel to worship before it. (1 Kings, xii. 29.)

The precise situation of it, which lies a little to the east, is not known. There are ruins in several places, but a doubt remains as to which is the site of the city first taken by the Israelites on the hill country.

The country about Bethel is slightly diversified with small plains and ridges; it is fertile, and well adapted to tillage—olive orchards, fruit trees, and vineyards are more numerous than in most parts of Palestine—the country is, moreover, better watered than the parts of the hill country that lie more to the south. [171]

It became dark before we reached Ain-Brood (*Cold Spring*). The village of that name stands a little off the road, on the top of a hill. It is a small place, and has nothing that distinguishes it, unless it be the excellent vineyards, and olive-orchards, and fruit trees with which it is surrounded: to which may be added that a good deal of labour has been expended in gathering off the stones, which abound on the surface, and forming low walls around these vineyards. In some places the rock had been broken up about as fine as would suit for a Macadamized road, and earth mixed with it, and thus lots are prepared that produce fine grapes and fruit trees.

As the night was clear, which is always the case in Palestine during the summer, we did not take the trouble to hunt for lodgings; but getting over one of these low stone fences with our horses, we spread our carpets, and made our beds under a large fig-tree, and there spent the night.

Knowing that the company of troops that we had left at Beer were moving northward, we concluded we would make an early start, and try and keep before them. In this, however, we were disappointed. We had not gone many miles before we saw some horsemen not far behind. We whipped up our animals, but it would not do; they gained on us continually: and in a few hours we had them pouring by us in all the confusion of the Turkish march. They, however, were perfectly civil, and some of their officers entered pleasantly into conversation with us.

They had been to the south of Bethlehem, disarming a tribe of Arabs that frequented the country near the south end of the Dead Sea; and having accomplished that service they were returning to the north, where most of them lived. [172]

They were much scattered, and altogether regardless of order on their march; and it was several hours before they all passed us. Between ten and twelve o'clock we descended a long steep hill into a plain of some extent. Near the foot of the hill was a spring, and when that came in view there was a kind of rush made for the water; and it was a striking spectacle to see such a body of horsemen pouring down the hill, each trying to be the first, or at least not the last, to water his horse, and obtain a portion for himself.

We were willing to let the men of war be satisfied before we approached. They then rode to a fine growth of olive-trees that covered a part of the plain, and then separating themselves into small companies, dismounted and placed themselves and horses in the shade to pass the heat of the day.

We pursued our journey and passed several villages, and one or two of a larger size than are usually met with. The country was more hilly, and intersected with deeper valleys, than it had been near Jerusalem; but on the whole it was fertile, and a considerable portion set with vineyards and orchards, or bearing marks of cultivation. Passing over a ridge from the plain in which we left the troops, we entered a wide plain, which ran north and south. The hills which bounded the plain on our left were of considerable height, and had several villages on their sides. On the east side of this plain, the hills were lower, and appeared to become still more so as we proceeded north. After several hours' travel along this plain, which was a fine one, and partly set with cotton, we reached a place where a small plain came in from the west at right angles. The hill on the north of this small plain is the Ebal, and that on the south the Gerezim, of the Scriptures; and this is the place which Moses pointed out as the place at which the Law was to be read, while six tribes stood on the one side to say amen when the blessings were read, and six on the other side to say amen when the curses were read. (Deut. xxvii. 12-14.) [173]

I do not understand it as meaning that all the people stood on the top of the mountains; I suppose they were divided into two parts—one part stood on one side of the priests, who probably occupied the middle of the plain, and the other part on the other side, and occupied the sides of the mountains as far as might be necessary. The place is most admirably adapted for such a

thing; possibly a more suitable place could not be found. In this plain the ancient Sychar or Shechem stood. It is now called Nabloos. It may have 6,000 or 8,000 people; the most of them are Moslems.

At the mouth of the small plain is shown the piece of ground Jacob bought when he came from Padanaram, and which he, at his death, gave to his son Joseph; (Genesis xxxiii. 19; John iv. 5.) There are some sepulchral monuments on it; and nearer the city they show what is called Jacob's well. A little east of the town is a spring, the waters of which flow eastward; and close to the town, on the west side, is a fine spring, the waters of which flow west, and fall into the Mediterranean. There are fine olive orchards, and other fruit trees about the town, and some fine gardens, especially on the west of the town.

I saw at the gate of Nabloos eight or ten lepers. They were covered with spots that looked like raw flesh; had a most disgusting appearance; they seemed to be shut out from the city, and were most importunate as beggars. They were the only lepers that I recollect to have seen in Palestine. [174]

There are remains of an old Christian church here, which must have been a most splendid building. The pillars, and other parts which remain, have a richness of workmanship about them that excels anything that I saw in Palestine. Not much of them, however, remains. There are many indications about the town, and on the mountains, that a large city once stood here.

Passing west along the narrow plain for a few miles, we then turned due north, and at the distance of eight or ten miles, we came to the site of ancient Samaria, the capital of the kingdom of Israel. The country around it is rocky, but very fertile. The rock is the soft limestone, which disintegrates so easily that very little is seen on the surface. There are about it more extensive orchards of olive and other fruit trees than are usually met with, and the whole aspect of the country is fine.

Samaria stood on a low, broad, sugar-loaf hill. It seems to have been terraced all round, and all the way to the top; but the terraces were so wide as to admit a row or rows of houses, and a street. These rose one above another, and, when filled with houses, must have had a fine appearance. All are now gone but a few ruins, piles of rock and rubbish, and a few pillars. This hill is surrounded with a narrow plain, except at the east side, where a low ridge connects it with some adjacent hills, which, at a little distance, border this plain.

Samaria was the seat of great wickedness while the capital of the kingdom of Israel, and now it lies desolate. It deserves notice, that the capital of both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah stood on the hill country, and distant about forty miles from each other, and each of them about midway from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. Jerusalem is on the highest ground, but Samaria on the most fertile. [175]

North of Samaria, we passed over a high hill. There is more brushwood on this hill than is usually met with, and among it some small oaks. On the north of this hill, the country presented a variegated, rolling surface, with more natural growth than usual, and a number of small villages and ruins. Many of the small plains were very fertile, and we saw some fields of cotton.

As it grew dark, we reached a fine spring of water, and about it grew a good many fig and olive trees. We spread our mats and made our beds under one of them, and there spent the night. A number of other travellers encamped at the same place, and all slept under the trees in the open air.

Next morning we pursued our route three or four hours northward, to the plain of Esdralon; we passed over two or three plains of considerable extent, separated by hilly districts. The plains were very fertile, and on some of them cotton was growing. The hills were low, and on some of them were small villages, and ruins indicating that villages or towns had once stood there. In much of this district the rock was of that soft kind which I have often mentioned. Many of these hills exhibited remains of the ancient terrace-work, and showed that, in days past, more labour was expended on them, and much more of them were cultivated, than at present.

We at length approached the great plain of Esdralon. A row of low hills, with small spaces between them, separated a strip of the plain to the south. This portion was especially rich; a good deal of it had the appearance of having once been under water. It looked like the bottom of a lake, from which the water had been removed. It being the latter part of the long dry season, the ground was so shaped in many places, that I really felt a fear that my animal might step in some of the cracks and fall, or break a limb. The soil, as seen in the edge of these cracks, seemed as rich as soil could be. [176]

We reached the edge of the great plain at a considerable town called Jeneen. It stands on the point of a ridge, a little above the level of the plain. The similarity of the name made me think it might be the ancient Jesreel. Its distance from Carmel would agree with this supposition, as Ahab passed from Carmel to Jesreel in a part of a day, when Elisha ran before his chariot. (1 Kings, xviii. 40-46.) There are ruins about the town which indicate that it may have been larger in time past than it is now.

There is near this village a large garden spot, well inclosed, and planted with various trees, which grow so thriftily as to show how easy it would be, with proper care, to raise trees of various kinds, in such quantities as greatly to contribute to the comfort and advantage of the population of this country.

We passed from Jeneen north-east across the plain. But a small part of it is cultivated—around its edge a few villages were to be seen, with their vineyards, olive and other trees about them. We saw some flocks and herds on the plain, but not in as great numbers as I had been led to expect.

To our right the point of a ridge ran out considerably into the plain. This is Mount Gilboa, on which Saul and his sons fell in battle against the Philistines. Bethshan, the village to which the Philistines fastened their bodies, lies a few miles north-east of the end of this hill. The battle seems to have begun on the plain, and when overcome, Israel fled to the hill, and then Saul and his sons fell. I could not but notice, while looking on the mount from the plain, how it accorded with the statement, that the chariots and horsemen followed hard after Saul on Mount Gilboa. The ascent from the plain is such that horsemen and chariots might pass up even to the top of this hill.

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The plain of Esdralon may be thirty-five or thirty-six miles by forty. Our course led us to the east of a rough and very rocky hill, that rises in the plain a little south-east of Mount Tabor. As soon as we passed the south-east corner of this hill we entered on a district that was evidently volcanic. The lava was very old, and much disintegrated, so as to make a most excellent soil. This continued all the way to the edge of the lake. We did, indeed, for a short distance, as we passed close by the foot of Mount Tabor, get off, for a short distance, the bed of lava. Mount Tabor did not to me appear volcanic. I did not, however, ascend it. It was Saturday afternoon, and wishing to reach Tiberias to spend the Sabbath, I had not time to make the ascent. We, however, wound round nearly one-third of the mountain at its very foot, and examined the stone that crompt out, and the stone that had rolled down from its sides, and saw no signs of its being volcanic. How the matter may appear on its top I know not. There are ruins there, and as much lava lies on the plain a little east of Tabor; and as it is used in the buildings of several villages, the fact that some of it may be found on the top of the Tabor would not prove that the mountain was volcanic. It may have been taken up as building stone. Tabor is a sugar-loaf hill, and rises to a considerable height. It is supposed that our Lord was transfigured on this mountain.

A small branch of the Kishon rises north of the Tabor, flows east of the mountain, washing its foot, and then runs south and west, and falls into the Mediterranean Sea at the north end of Carmel. The Kishon is at best a small stream; and the branch which we crossed at the foot of the Tabor was about the size of a good spring.

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Near Tabor we passed a small village called Nain, the place where Christ brought to life the widow's son.

Leaving Mount Tabor, we passed over a high part of the plain, covered with disintegrated lava. Part of this plain had been cultivated. It is, perhaps, the most fertile district in Palestine. In many places the weeds were nearly as high as a man's head, a thing of rare occurrence in the East.

The descent to the lake from the level of the plain is very considerable—I should think from five hundred to eight hundred feet, opposite the town of Tiberias; at the southern end of the lake of course it is much less, as the plain lies like an inclined plane towards the south.

It was night before we reached the town; but we were readily admitted by the guard of soldiers who kept the gates. We found some difficulty in finding a place to lodge in. After employing several persons to look for a place, and waiting some time, we were conducted to the court of the Greek church, and told we might lodge there. It might be called a church-yard. It was a space before the church, inclosed with a wall, with a gate to it; but all open to the travellers. It was in part at least paved with rock. We found other travellers there, with their animals. As the air was mild, and there was no danger of rain, the case was not as bad as some might suppose. We had slept out every night since we left Jerusalem—and in places not more comfortable than Tiberias. It did indeed appear rather hard that in the heart of a walled and garrisoned town we could not find a house to lodge in.

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We found a great merry-making going on in the town. Nearly the whole population were gathered before what we learned was the governor's palace. On inquiry we were informed that the merry-making was in honour of the circumcision of the governor's son. The Moslem religion has borrowed the rite of circumcision from the Jews; and they perform it on all their male children—at the age of thirteen, if I remember right. They usually honour this occasion with some festivities. They had various kinds of musical instruments—some that were bad enough in all reason. They had dancing; and some, especially the women, made a singular noise, somewhat like a short, shrill whistle. I was especially struck with one thing which took place. It was a procession of a considerable body of persons, who bore torches. I was told that they were Jews, and did it in honour of the occasion. It reminded me of the parable of the virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. (Matt. xxv.)

In the morning of the Sabbath, before we had dressed and finished our breakfast, the people began to come to church. Our situation was even worse than it had been at Baalbec, where we had to make our toilette on the house-top, in the face of all who chose to look at us. Here we were, with men and women, and children, all crowding about us, and looking and thinking more, I fear, about us than they did about the church-service that was going on. We hurried and got things put to rights as soon as we could, and deemed it proper to be present at their service, although we could understand but little of it. It consisted of a great variety of prayers, and crossings, and bowing before the pictures and kissing them; and reading portions of God's word.

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There was a great want of reverence in the worshippers; and, for the most part, the reading was so hurried and indistinct, that not much of it could, I should think, be understood. The whole of the service was not performed by the priest himself; from time to time he called on some one to read portions of the service. At its close, the priest and a number of his people remained for some time, in part to look at us and talk to us. We asked him why he did not preach to the people, and instruct them in religion? He seemed surprised that we should think this necessary. We reminded him that the apostles preached and taught the people; at this he shrugged up his shoulders, and

said somewhat significantly—"Oh! that was before the church was regulated as it now is." This was getting out of the difficulty with more tact than we had expected from him. It must be a bad regulation, however, that sets aside the preaching of the gospel!

As we were a good deal annoyed with the multitude of people that came into the court to see us, and as our baggage was not altogether safe unless we kept a watch over it, we requested the priest to allow us to take up our quarters in the church; which he permitted, on our engaging that we would take care that nothing was injured.

This church is said to be the house of Peter. It is an old building, with an arched roof, but has no just claims to an origin so early as the days of the apostles. There is, I think, another reason given why it is called the house of Peter, that is, it stands on the place where our Lord appeared to the disciples, and put the searching question to Peter—"Lovest thou me?"

Among those travellers who spent the night in the court of the church, was a sick man for whom we felt most deeply. He lived near Constantinople, and had visited the Holy Land as a pilgrim. He had left a family at home; was well dressed; rode a good horse, and travelled with a company of the better sort of pilgrims. He had been unwell for several days; but as his company could not or would not stop, his great unwillingness to be left induced him to travel on, when under a raging fever. On Sabbath morning he was utterly unable to rise—and seldom have I seen a person that more needed medical aid. We tried to do what we could for him; but I had not the medical knowledge which his case called for. While I stood over him and felt his pulse, he gazed on me with a brightening countenance; no doubt in the hope that I might give him relief. He tried to make me understand the nature and seat of his pain; but he spoke modern Greek, and we had no one that could interpret; and, moreover, his case was one that was utterly beyond my skill. Never did I feel so deeply my need of medical knowledge; never did I feel more deeply how impotent is man to save his fellow-man. When I turned from him in despair of doing anything that would at all benefit him, he seemed to read my feelings; and never did I see a deeper disappointment than was expressed in his looks. It seemed to say, You see I am dying, and yet you do not save me. [181]

We gave him some simples, which might possibly afford momentary relief. His company had left him. We prevailed on the Greek priest to take him into his family, and had him conveyed there. What became of him I know not. There was little prospect of his living.

The lake is a pretty sheet of clean, fresh water, about twelve miles long and six miles broad, of an oval shape. The water deepens very gradually on the western side where I visited it. I saw many small fish in it; but saw no means for taking them. It is said, however, that the Jews have a fishery at the southern part, and take a good many. I saw but one boat on the lake. It would hold eight or ten men—it lay off the town—but I saw no one in it during the time I was there. [182]

The banks of the lake were more precipitous on the eastern than on the western side; and as it seems to have been on the eastern side that our Lord healed the demoniac, and permitted the devils to enter the swine, I could not but think that it did argue that the swine were possessed, that the whole herd should leap from the top of such a precipice into the sea.

The town of Tiberias stands on the western side, about mid-way of the lake, and on the edge of the water; it is walled, and has a small garrison in it. The population is but a few thousand, possibly not above 3,000. Most of these are Moslems; there are a few Christians of the Greek church, and a small number of Jews.

The whole district about the lake, as far as I saw it, is volcanic. The walls of the town, and of most of the houses are built of lava, and most of the rock that lies about the town, and the bottom of the lake is lava. There is a mixture of limestone among it; for the whole district is based on limestone. The volcanic district extends north of the lake, and also far to the east of the Jordan, according to my best information.

There were originally many towns about this lake—most of them have disappeared; and the very sites of Chorasin, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum, on which the Lord pronounced a woe, are not with certainty known.

The Jordan rises some distance to the north-east of Tiberias, and passes through another small lake called the waters of Merom. It was by it that Joshua defeated the second confederacy of kings. (Joshua ii. 5.) Passing through this lake, the Jordan enters the lake of Tiberias at the north-east corner, and leaves it at the south end, and passes through the plain of Jordan from sixty to eighty miles, and falls into the Dead Sea. There is no outlet to this sea. The waters are carried off, as is supposed, by evaporation. [183]

There is a fine district of country, it is said, about the waters of Merom, and formerly the towns of Cesarea and Philippi stood there.

North of lake Tiberias, and on the top of a high mountain in sight, stands Safet, a town of considerable size. This is one of the sacred cities of the Jews; and more Jews are found here than in any place in Palestine. The whole district about it is volcanic, and has been a good deal disturbed by earthquakes. On the western side of the lake, and a mile or two south of the town, are some copious springs of warm salt water. They are so hot as to require to be tempered when used for bathing. There is a good bathing-house, and a considerable resort here for that purpose. On the east side of the lake, and a little from it, is another spring of warm water; and, if I was rightly informed, there is another west of the lake, and I think on some part of the hills near Mount Tabor. The whole district is a good deal subject to earthquakes, and gives evidence of internal fires.

The road from Tiberias to Nazareth runs nearly west; and the distance maybe about twenty or

twenty-five miles. At the distance of six or eight miles, we passed a low hill to our right, with two little elevations on it; this is called the Mount of Beatitudes. It would afford a very good place to take a seat and address a large assembly collected on the plain below. We cannot be certain, however, as to the sermon on the mount having been preached here.

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Our road passed north of Mount Tabor, and the range of hills called the hills of Nazareth. The plain over which we passed was fertile. It was uneven on its northern side, where the ridges of the Anti-Lebanon shut it in. We passed several villages, both to our right and left, but most of them were at a distance, and their names did not accord with those of the Bible. But a small part of the plain was cultivated. A few miles before reaching Nazareth, we came to Cana of Galilee, the place where our Lord turned water into wine. It is a small village, and has nothing that gives it much interest, except the above fact.

At a large well below the town, we saw a fine sample of their mode of drawing water, and pouring it into troughs, and allowing their flocks and herds to come up in succession and drink. Thus the shepherds were engaged as we passed the well. They allowed us to ride up, and let our animals drink of the water which they had drawn.

Cana lies on the north side of the hills of Nazareth, and Nazareth lies on the south side, a mile or two farther to the west. This range of hills is not high, and Nazareth is built on the side of it, and, in part, on a little level space that is somewhat elevated above the small plain that spreads out before it. A ridge of the hills runs to the south-east, so as nearly to shut out Nazareth from a view of the great plain in which it stands.

Nazareth is one of the best built towns that I saw in Palestine. At its east end, and on the edge of the little plain that lies before it, is a spring or well; and here, it is said, the angel appeared to Mary; and here she often came, accompanied by the infant Saviour, to draw water for family use.

There is a church over the place that is shown as the house of Mary, and adjoining it is a Latin convent. We lodged in this convent, and were kindly entertained. There was a paper in our room, stating that the convent was authorised and required by the Pope to receive all persons who were devoutly visiting the holy places, and entertain them three days; after which, it was expected, that such persons would pass on their way. The church was the best we saw in Palestine; the organ was good, and well played; and the religious service was, on the whole, better conducted than any one I had seen in Syria.

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Near the middle of the church, a wide flight of stairs descends for about twelve or fourteen feet; there stands an altar. Passing a door, we entered a small room, in which is another altar. On both of these, religious service appears at times to be performed. Passing through another door, we were in a low cave, that has been hewn out of the soft limestone rock. The wall on all sides is rough; made so, perhaps, by the pilgrims breaking off pieces of the rock to carry home as holy earth. This is shown as the room in which Mary lived and raised the infant Saviour. It did not appear to me a comfortable place for a residence; and I could not but think that Joseph must have loved his wife, and prized the privilege of raising the Messiah, to such a degree as to have induced him to provide for them a more suitable place. The whole appearance of the place was, in my view, against its being the true locality. We know they lived at Nazareth, but as to the precise spot, the Bible is silent, and we are left in doubt.

They show the synagogue in which our Lord read the law; and, a little out of town, they show the precipice over which the enraged people wished to cast him. The situation of the town on the hill, and the height of the hill, agrees with the account recorded, but which is the precise spot may not be perfectly certain. They show also the shop in which Joseph followed his trade, with some other things that need not be specified.

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LETTER XVI.

Beyroot, Oct. 23d, 1836.

We left Nazareth by the same road that we entered it; but on reaching the top of the ridge north of the town we took a north-west direction into the plain which we had left, which is here broken with hills, and can hardly be said to be continuous. Some of these hills are very much covered with rocks. After a few miles we passed, on the top of a hill on our left, the ruins of Sefora, which was at one time a place of note. There is more natural growth on these hills than on those more to the east. This district is stony; but appears to have had more labour bestowed on it than most of those that are better adapted for cultivation. The plain of Zebulun, a little farther on, is separated from the great plain by some hills, which are, however, not very high. It is a most lovely and fertile district. On one side of it were many olive-trees, and a part of it was cultivated with cotton. The cotton appeared to have had but little labour bestowed on it, and promised a corresponding small return, notwithstanding the fertility of the plain. Between this place and the plain on the coast, and lying between Acre and the hills, we crossed a considerable distance that was hilly; the hills were not very high, but spread pretty generally over the face of the country. Most of them have more or less rocks on the surface, but, as a general thing, they are not so rocky as the country about Jerusalem. From this low hilly district we entered the plain which lies east of Acre, and spreads along the coast. This is a noble plain of considerable extent, and is generally exceedingly fertile. On entering this plain we saw Acre, nearly before us, on the shore of the sea. A little to the right of the city, and out near the middle of the plain, were some good-

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looking buildings with gardens about them, and others partly finished. I have seldom seen a finer set of orange and lemon trees. There is an aqueduct that brings water from the hill, across the plains, to Acre. This water is used for watering the gardens, which, we were given to understand, belong to Ibrahim Pasha. At some distance to our left, we had the north end of Mount Carmel in view, with the Latin monastery on the top of it. Between us and that point was a fine spread of plain, which might be called either the plain of Acre or the plain of Esdralon. This plain, as I have before stated, crosses the whole district from the lake of Tiberias and the Jordan to the Mediterranean. It comes to the coast directly at the north end of Carmel, and there the plain is a wide and noble one. The plain of Esdralon, on the eastern side, is higher, except at the south-east corner near Gilboa. It lies toward Safet, a high, rolling table land, most of which is exceedingly rich. The Lebanon, or rather the Anti-Lebanon, (for I think the Lebanon may be considered as terminating north of the river Leantes, which comes out of the Bokar near Soor,) lowers down at the high points near Safet, and spreads its still lowering ridges towards the middle and western part of the plain, between the lake Tiberias and the Mediterranean. There are various hills, rather separated from each other, on the plain, which may be considered as belonging to it,—the Tabor, the mount south of it, and the hills near Nazareth; but the terminating ridges are more continuous, north and north-west of Nazareth, and run down south, so as to narrow the western side of the plain of Esdralon. I doubt not, indeed, that the mountains which rise south of the plain, and cover the whole middle district, from north of Sebaste to south of Hebron, forming the hill country of Israel and Judah, may with propriety be considered as the southern continuance of the great Lebanon chain. It is there lowered down much, and is more spread out, and more like an elevated table land, with many low hills covering its general surface.

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It would have been highly satisfactory to me could I have proceeded to the north of Safet, far enough at least to see the southern end of the plain of the Bokar, and ascertain how the mountains, Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, dispose of themselves and their branches at that place, and in their further progress south. I am inclined to think, that our usual maps are not very accurate in their delineations of this northern district.

Acre stands on a sandy point which projects out in the Mediterranean. It is strongly fortified, having a most stupendous wall, and a deep ditch. It is a place of great strength, and is under the keeping of a considerable body of the Pasha's troops. There was some shipping there, but not much. The city is much crowded together; and to be comfortable ought to be spread over twice or thrice as much ground—the streets narrow and filthy—the bazaars poor, and badly supplied with goods. There is a large open square within the city, which appeared appropriated for the use of troops and cavalry. A new bazaar was pointed out, which was said to have been put up by the present pasha. It was, compared with the others, pretty good; but needed that comparison to make it pass muster. Acre is interesting from its location on the coast—has a fine back country, and, under a proper government, might become a place of some importance. A great effort was made by the French, under Buonaparte, to take this place. He attempted several times to carry it by assault, and it was mainly owing to the efforts of Sir Sidney Smith that he failed. The name of Smith is still held in great respect by the natives of this region. They say of him, that "his word was like the word of God—it never fell to the ground," that is, he always did what he said he would do. So true is it, that while people tell falsehoods themselves—and the people of this country have no little propensity that way—they still have a regard for those who are known to adhere strictly to the truth. This place was long held by the Crusaders, and was one of the last places in Palestine that was wrested from them; and there may be, and no doubt are, ruins in the town and vicinity that may be referred to the period of their power. I had not time, however, to make much research respecting them. The pasha has some public works going on here. We saw a good deal of timber in an open square, but did not learn the use it was intended for—probably for the building of a vessel, from its size and appearance. We lodged in the Latin convent, which is a place of some size, and would contain many persons, though much out of repair. We found only two or three monks, and a lay brother, who appeared to act as steward, servant, factotum, &c.

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From Acre we went along the coast, towards Soor, the ancient Tyre, which lies about twenty-five miles to the north. The first part of our route was over the noble plain by which Acre is bounded on the west. It is, as to its general character, good; and ought, and would, if properly cultivated, richly supply Acre with bread-stuff and many other necessary articles. Much of it, however, lies in a neglected state. In several places there are small districts, that are more improved—a few garden spots that are beautiful, and several elevations near Acre that have buildings or ruins on them, and were, probably, in the days of warfare, places of much more importance than they now are. About three hours' travel brought us to the termination of this beautiful plain, and we began to ascend a high promontory called Capo Blanco, or White Cliff, from the whiteness of the rock of which it is composed. This is made up of the softest limestone I have ever seen, interspersed with nodules of flint. It was well for our nerves that a barrier had been left between us and the precipice, for sometimes there was a perpendicular descent from the road above, to the sea below, which was dashing and foaming at its base. From this point, or ridge of hills, we entered the plain of Soor. This plain is narrow at first, but gradually spreads out, and presently has a wide extent, with a gentle rising of its eastern side into hills, with mountains towering beyond. The soil is rich and productive. There are some villages, on the hills, but none of any size. We passed several places near the shore where there had evidently once been villages; in one or two of these there were remains of walls and other relics of former habitations. As we approached Soor, the mountains and hills fell back, making a kind of amphitheatre; rising more or less, as it approached the mountains; but forming a rich and valuable back country to this former mistress of the sea. Night came on before we could reach Soor, and a small part of the district nearest the town, was, of course, not subjected to that close inspection which, under other circumstances, it

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would have received. We passed a fine flow of water, on which there appeared to be mills or other buildings; but it was too dark to allow us a clear view of what they were. There are, it is said, several remains of ruins on the south of the town, which the darkness prevented our seeing. As we approached the town, there was a much wider border of sand along the coast. [191]

Soor stands on the point of a projection that runs out, it may be, a half or three quarters of a mile into the sea. Its outer part is broader and less covered with sand than the neck of land that joins it to the main land. About half way from the main land to the extreme point, a wall crosses the isthmus, and through a single gate in that wall, you enter the village which stands on the extreme point. The site of old Tyre was, as we learn from history, on the main land. When hard pressed, the inhabitants, availing themselves of their shipping, moved their more valuable articles to this point, which was then an island, and there built a town, and escaped the capture which threatened them. This first capture of Tyre, and the escape of the people with their riches to the island, is referred to in Ezek. xxix. 18; where the army of Nebuchadnezzar is said "to have served a hard service, and yet to have got no wages"—failed to obtain the wealth of the captured city. The new city was also taken in after-times by Alexander the Great; and his army had a hard service. Being on an island, and having command of the sea through their vessels, they braved the power of the Grecian king for a time. But he resorted to a stratagem which was successful. He constructed a wide causeway from the main land to the island, and thus made a way for his soldiers, who soon took the city. For centuries past, as all travellers during that period assure us, it has been almost completely desolate. The old site on the main land is so now—not one house, and scarcely a vestige remains to mark the spot. It is scraped as a rock, and probably was thus treated by Alexander, to get materials for the stupendous causeway he made. The city, on what was once an island, was also almost wholly forsaken, as many travellers assure us, and thus the prophecy has had its fulfilment. There is, however, a new village growing up on its site. It has much increased within a few years. There may be between one and two hundred houses, the quarter part of them very miserable things, but a few tolerably good for this region. The pasha has established some factories here, and the place is evidently reviving. Three or four of the European powers have consuls residing here, and the Americans have a consular agent. The old harbour, which once contained the first trading ships in the world, lies on the north side of the town, and was once surrounded by a strong wall, some small fragments of which still remain. The harbour is much filled up, so that only vessels of small burden can come within it. It does not, indeed, appear to have much trade of any kind. The water at the extreme point of the island is very shallow—a considerable space barely covered with water. There are some ruins on a part of this, and some fallen pillars—whether it was once covered with houses, I am unable to say. To the south, the water is deeper, but still so shallow as to oblige vessels to lie off at a considerable distance from the shore. The neck which joins the island to the main land is little else than a bed of sand. The part next the village, and without the wall I have mentioned, is full of old walls, mounds, cellars, and all the indications of having once been covered with houses. There are, indeed, one or two huge old buildings still standing on it. The part of this neck adjoining the main land is so low as to have considerable pools of water in it. We passed a number as we coasted along the edge of the sand from the south, on approaching the village. There is all the appearance that the water once came out to the steep bank at the edge; but the passage between the island and the main land being stopped, the sand, both to the north and south, has been thrown up so as to form a wide, flat beach, extending out near the island as far as what was formerly the east side of the island. The whole space here shows great changes. [192]

The most remarkable and interesting relic of antiquity which I saw at Soor, was the remains of the church of Origen. It stands at the south side of the village, and makes part of the wall at that place. Much the larger part of it is fallen and removed. The remaining fragments show that it has been of very great size. There are a few small huts on the ground on which that part of the church that has been removed stood. There is some richly-wrought stone in the walls and about the stairs that run up at one part of the building. The stone is the soft spongy limestone which abounds on this coast, and I may add, through most of Palestine. It is a stone that works easily, but wastes away under the action of water, and is especially liable to be saturated with water, and to form damp walls. No part of the ruins of this old and celebrated church more interested me, than the stupendous granite pillars which were once connected with it, but now lie on the ground, and some of them almost buried in it, and by the ruins which covered this quarter. These pillars were of the fine Egyptian granite, of great length and thickness. They formed masses of stone of a most enormous weight. We seldom saw pillars of a larger size. There must have been some regard for Christianity at Tyre when its citizens erected this splendid edifice. But oh! what changes have passed over these lands since those days, when Origen ministered here, and raised his voice to the thousands which this church was capable of holding. A deep darkness now rests on all these regions—the Moslem rules, but his pride is humbled—his strength broken—and he appears conscious that the day of his glory is past, and not likely again to return! The few Christians that are now found in these regions have lost the spirit of Christianity. It is with them a body without a soul—a form, and a greatly altered form, without the spirit and power which makes it a transforming principle among mankind. But the darkness is passing away—rays of light are breaking upon these regions—and we doubt not the day is not far remote when the religion of Christ will, in its enlightening and transforming power, revisit these regions, and make them revive and flourish like the garden of the Lord. [193]

From Soor we made our next stage to Saida, the ancient Sidon, which is so often mentioned in connection with Tyre—"Tyre and Sidon." It is a day's travel distant. We found the northern part of the plain of Soor not much different from the southern, which we have already described. In many places along this coast, there are old mounds of rubbish, or piles of stones, that bespeak [194]

former buildings. On the whole, ancient Tyre had a fertile district adjoining it, and was, no doubt, more or less the seaport for the lower part of the great valley of the Bokar, through the passage on the borders of the river Leantes, which flows out of that valley and passes into the sea a little north of Soor. The district of mountains that border the plain must also have contributed its share to the market of this port; for in these countries and among these nations, the mountain districts are often better cultivated than the plain, and are occupied by a more enterprising and efficient people. About midway from Soor to Saida, a ridge of hills comes into the shore, much like the one [195] between Acre and Soor. The plain is superseded by a rough and hilly district. It is, for a short distance, exceedingly rough and rocky, and for a still greater space, the level along the shore is narrow and much covered with sand. Gradually the plain opens, and spreads out to a considerable extent, and becomes one of the finest plains, when taken in connection with the low ridges of hills that bound it, and from the rising ground towards the mountains, that I have seen on the coast. The several ridges of low hills that lie between the level space along the shore and the high mountain range, are finely covered with a soft, rich soil; and have scattered over them more trees than we usually see on this part of the coast. The plain about Soor was rather barren of trees—this was one of its greatest defects—that of Saida is much better furnished. We passed several streams of water and some small villages, on the low hills to our right. The mulberry-tree, which we had but seldom seen to the south, here made its appearance. We passed some considerable districts covered with them. This shows the limits of the silk-making district. The culture of the mulberry, and raising the silkworm, is a main business all through these mountains about Beyroot; how far north it may extend, I am not able to say; but we had ample proof in our tour that it is not much, if at all attended to in the land of Palestine, properly so called.

Back of Saida, among the low hills that border the foot of the Lebanon range, Lady Hester Stanhope has her residence. She was engaged to be married to Sir John Moore, who fell near Corunna, in the Peninsular war, in the contest which the English had with the French. That Lady Hester Stanhope felt the affliction most deeply, may well be supposed; other matters tending to [196] alienate her affections from England, she came to the East, and has for many years made her home in the mountains near Saida. She has gained the affections of the native population, and has had great influence over them formerly; her power is now on the wane. She is occasionally visited by foreigners, but does not see all who would call on her, as some of them have made statements about her that gave her displeasure.

Saida, like most of the towns on this coast, stands on a sandy point that projects out a short distance into the sea. It is surrounded with gardens, and has more fruit trees about it, and a greater extent of groves, than any of the towns on the coast south of this, that I have visited. The plain about it appears peculiarly adapted to fruits. The town is walled, and has a garrison of soldiers. The houses are old, as you may suppose; the streets narrow, crooked, and dark, from the fact that many of them are, in many places, arched over; so much so, that you are nearly one half of your time passing under arches, which shut out all the light but that which comes in from the end of these narrow, crooked streets. I have often mentioned narrow, crooked streets, and once more repeat it, with the addition of *dark*. The bazaars and markets are much as those at Soor and Acre, poor, and badly supplied. On the whole, while the outside of the town had a most lovely appearance, the inside was the reverse. The harbour appeared mean, and not such as would give any recommendation to the place. The distance from Saida to Beyroot is between twenty and twenty-five miles. For some miles north of Saida, the road is much covered with sand, and the whole district, until near Beyroot, resembles that already described, some parts rocky, and others good, and well adapted to tillage. A few small villages are scattered along the coast. [197] As we approached Beyroot, we took a road through the olive-grove, and not by the sands. This gave me a more perfect knowledge of the extent of the plain, south-east of Beyroot, and of the large orchards that lie in that quarter, covering miles, and bordering the lower part of the hills. The plain is more fertile, and more thickly settled, than I had at first supposed.

We found our friends at Beyroot well,—the mission families had returned from their summer residence on the mountains, and were engaged in carrying on their various operations in and about Beyroot. At first view it appears a rather untoward circumstance that they have to resort to the mountains during a part of each summer. It must, no doubt, in some degree interrupt the thread of their operations; but the climate makes it necessary, especially until they are well acclimated. The evil, however, is not so great as might be expected. The mountains are full of villages; indeed, the mountains of Lebanon are the most populous districts in these countries. The missionaries take their station in some of these villages, and when their number will admit they occupy two or more. There they usually open schools, mix with the people, distribute the Scriptures and other books, talk and preach, as the nature of the case will admit. Thus village after village becomes personally acquainted with the missionaries, and persons are brought within the hearing of the truth who might never be reached by the sound of the gospel were the missionaries always to remain in Beyroot. Thus what in one respect may seem an evil and a drawback to their work, in another is beneficial, and contributes to the furtherance of the gospel.

I have much reason to bless God for his kind care over me during the tour I have now finished, and hope that I shall be led by it more and more to realise that it is only His hand that keepeth me, and maketh me to go out and come in in safety. [198]

LETTER XVII.

I think I have mentioned in several of my letters, that the mulberry tree is much cultivated in this region, principally for the raising of the silk-worm. At times vegetables are raised on the same lot, but generally nothing else is allowed to grow among them, and the weeds are carefully removed. The trees are planted in rows, and the plough is passed among them several times in the year. I now find that the tree serves another purpose, and one of some importance, though secondary to the making of silk. They gather the leaves from the trees in the fall and beginning of winter, to feed their sheep and cows. The first crop of leaves is eaten by the silk-worms; by the time the worms begin to spin their silken shrouds, the trees are nearly bare; the branches are then all cut close to the body of the tree, and used for fuel. In a few days new branches shoot out, which are soon covered with leaves. They gather the leaves with their hands, put them in baskets, and give them to their sheep and cows. They appear, indeed, to be the chief food of these animals for many months in the autumn and beginning of winter. The entire absence of rain during the long hot summer burns up what grass may have been on the ground in the spring and early part of the summer, but the mulberry trees, which have much care taken of them, and watered, when it can be done, by a channel from a stream, or by the hand, retain their greenness, and serve the important purpose of food for the cattle. So far as I have observed, they were always fed with the green leaves, at least I have not seen any dried and preserved in that state, excepting the fibres of the new leaves, that the silk-worm rejects, which are carefully collected and preserved for the animals. The mildness of the climate causes the leaf to retain its freshness much longer than it would in the northern and middle parts of the United States. We have entered on the month of December, and yet the leaf of the mulberry is as green and fresh as it was in midsummer; true, most of the trees near us are nearly bare, not, however, by the fall of the leaf, but by their having been gathered for the animals. The horses, mules, and donkeys, are fed with barley and straw, which is cut fine by their mode of threshing out the grain. For a few weeks in the spring of the year they are kept on the green barley. I have generally seen the camel fed on weeds, which are gathered for that purpose.

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I mentioned that some rain fell, about the time I set out on my tour to Jerusalem. The showers were light, and but few of them. Small showers fell from time to time during the month that I was travelling, but not in such quantities as to give us much annoyance. This was a matter greatly to our comfort, as we had to sleep nearly every night out under the canopy of heaven, and as we wished to travel without much incumbrance, we did not carry a tent with us. During the month of November there was a great increase of clouds and cloudy weather, but not much rain. There were, however, occasional showers, and some of them fell in snow on the upper parts of Mount Lebanon. It was not until the first part of the present month that it began to rain in good earnest, and for some days it has rained as if the "windows of heaven" were opened; great quantities of water have fallen, and the earth, thirsty from the long, dry summer, seems to drink it in as if it would never say—It is enough. Still, I have not yet seen a long, cloudy period, as we often have in the United States, of many days and weeks, in which the sun is seldom seen. Not a day has past in which it has not contrived to find some opening in the clouds through which to show itself. Indeed, the rain generally comes in showers; large masses of black clouds are driven over us, often with strong winds accompanied with thunder and lightning, and pour down water as if from buckets; then there is an intermission, and possibly the sun shines forth, and then comes another cloud loaded with water, which it pours out and passes away. Thus, "the clouds return after the rain." For a day or two the rains have ceased, and the weather is fine, a little colder and more chilly, as might be expected from the great fall of water, but not to the degree that I expected. The higher parts of Mount Lebanon are covered with snow. They have a singular appearance, two or three thousand feet of the top, especially the highest peak, called the Sunneen, is covered with snow, while the lower parts are bare. Snow may be found at all times on some of these high points, from whence it is brought down during the summer in considerable quantities, for the use of those who will pay the pretty good, though not unreasonable price, that is asked for it. The rains have caused the grass to spring forth, and whole districts that were before dry dust, or stubble, are now fresh with verdure. The face of the land looks like spring, so wonderfully does the rain operate to give beauty and fertility to the earth. The heat without the water will not do it, nor the water without some degree of heat; but when both are united, they make vegetation spring forth, and give food for man and beast.

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The troops which marched from this place to the Houran, a few months since, have returned. It is now said they were sent there to aid in killing the young locusts, which had appeared in great numbers, and threatened to destroy the crops. Last year the troops were thus employed towards Aleppo, and with great advantage to the country. It is, however, a new kind of warfare for a regular army to be engaged in.

It would be inexcusable in me to omit mentioning honey, an article still to be obtained in abundance, and which deserves notice for its delicious flavour. Bees are kept in various parts of the country. Milk can generally be obtained without much difficulty, although it may be said of it, as of honey, that the land does not literally "flow" with it. The Arabs, I think, do not often use milk in a fresh state: they convert it into an article called lebban, not unlike bonny-clabber, and eat it with rice, bread, &c. Some cheese is made, but of an inferior kind; it is generally white, and made in small pieces. A considerable quantity is imported from Cyprus. The process of churning in skins I have before alluded to; most of the butter thus produced is boiled, and thereby converted into more of an oily substance. It is much used in cooking, but the Arabs do not spread it upon their bread, as is our custom. In the spring, the produce of the churn can be procured in Jerusalem and its vicinity without having been boiled; this, by picking out the hairs, washing thoroughly, and salting, can be made very palatable.

The Irish potato, as it is usually called, is grown about Tripoli, and succeeds well. It is of a good size, dry, and of a good flavour. The sweet potato is not known in this country; this is much to be regretted, as there is reason to believe that the soil and climate would suit it, and it would be a most valuable addition to the vegetables already cultivated. I hope that some one will make an effort to introduce it. The principal vegetables are the cabbage, cauliflower, onion, cucumber, lettuce, and radish, which are all of an excellent quality; the coosa, a small kind of squash; beans of an inferior kind; hammey, a mucilaginous pod, which, when cooked with butter and the juice of a lemon or pomegranate, forms a very pleasant article; addice, a kind of bean much used in a dried state; turnips of a diminutive size and an inferior quality; bateinjan, a kind of egg-plant much esteemed by the natives; beets of a superior kind, and tomatoes of a rich and fine flavour. The first notice that I ever met with of the sugar-cane was in the account of the crusaders, who found it on this coast, and it is *here yet*. Below Sidon, there are places where it is cultivated, but not for making sugar. When ripe, it is cut and brought from time to time into the towns, and sold in the stalk. The people buy it and chew the stalk; children especially are fond of it. Boat-loads of it are brought up to Beyroot, and sold in the market. Much of the sugar used here comes from France, and is the fine loaf-sugar made from the beet, and is sold cheap; brown sugar, the product of the West Indies, may be occasionally procured. The flour which is used here comes in part from Damascus, but more from the plain that lies between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. Some of the wheat is grown on the mountains, and a good deal comes from about Acre, and from some other quarters. Much of the flour, however, is ground in the neighbourhood, and the bran separated from the flour with a common sieve. I know not that there is such a thing as a bolting-cloth in the whole country. Meal made of Indian corn is usually found in the market at Beyroot, and is called smeed. It is much used in the Frank families, not, however, in the form of bread, but in that of hasty-pudding, here called smeed. Very good French flour may at times be had, and sometimes wheat is brought from Constantinople, raised probably about the Black Sea. Rice forms a considerable article of diet, and is brought from Egypt. [202]

The principal meat used is mutton, which is certainly the best I have ever eaten. The beef is poor, and is not much prized by the natives; and pork is an abomination to most of the people in this land. I have seen a few swine, but am told they are kept by foreigners. The chickens are mostly small, and not much encumbered with fat. Geese and turkeys are exceedingly rare. Great quantities of sparrows are found in the towns, and they sometimes visit the houses, and build about them to such a degree as to become an annoyance. The singing of birds is not often heard in Palestine; there are a few species of birds with a gaudy plumage, but their notes are not melodious. The sweet, plaintive note of the nightingale is sometimes heard, but oftener the harsh cawing of the crow. But few wild animals are now found in the country, excepting the jackals, immense numbers of which are found in this vicinity. They are gregarious, and a most noisy animal. They are like a small dog, with short, upright ears, and a short tail; all that I have seen were of a light-brown colour. We often hear them in the gardens and near our houses. [203]

The natives have a taste for flowers; the females cultivate a variety in pots, and are fond of ornamenting their turbans with them. They are generally decked with a profusion of them on their bridal days. They also place them about and upon the dead bodies of their friends, as mementos of affection. It is a common saying, that, in making their visits, they never go empty-handed. At such times, it is not uncommon for them to take from their pockets, an appendage with which each person seems to be furnished, either an orange, a sweet lemon, a few nuts, a piece of sugar-cane, or something of the kind, and present the person visited. At other times, they will bring you a beautiful nosegay of rosebuds, carnation pinks, geraniums, jessamines, &c., which they arrange and tie together very tastefully. A rich profusion of wild flowers are found in the spring. [204]

It is amusing to one not accustomed to the sight, to observe how partial the people are to a sitting posture. You may see the blacksmith sitting and hammering his iron; the carpenter sitting and hewing his wood, or planing his plank; the merchant sitting and selling his goods; and the women sitting and washing their clothes,—not sitting on chairs, or on benches, but *à-la-turque*, with their feet folded under them.

Having remained in Palestine as long, and even longer than I originally intended, I was about preparing to leave this place for Egypt, when Mr. W. M. Thomson, one of the missionaries, called on me as a committee, in behalf of the station. He informed me that he had held a consultation with Mr. Hebard about carrying on the mission work, and had come to the conclusion that part of it must be suspended for the present, unless I remained to assist them. They had little expectation that Mr. Bird, then in America, from the peculiar circumstances of his family, would be able to return; that Mr. Smith, then in Smyrna, would probably visit the United States before his return to Beyroot, and could not be expected back under a year or two; that he himself had just begun to preach in Arabic, and that the labour of preparing for it, superintending the press, with other necessary calls, gave him full employment; that Mr. Hebard had the High School to superintend, and wished much to give a course of lectures on natural science, which the opposition now made to the school made it very important he should do; but that he could not do this, and keep up the English preaching, which many circumstances rendered it important should not be suspended; and in this state of things, they laid the case before me, to see if I would not remain and assist them. I considered the case as a strong one; and after looking at the whole matter, I have concluded that I will remain for a time. I may, therefore, write you again from this place. [205]

LETTER XVIII.

Beyroot, May 29th, 1837.

On the first day of the new year, (the orientals follow the old style, which is twelve days later,) about four o'clock P.M., while we were assembled at the Mission-house, and engaged in celebrating the Lord's Supper, there was a very severe earthquake; at first a sudden shock, then a momentary pause, then a rocking motion, so that the arms of nearly every person were involuntarily extended to preserve their balance. It was preceded by a dull murmuring sound. The sound and motion seemed to proceed from the north. There had been for several days a haziness of the atmosphere which is unusual; no rain had fallen since the first of December, and the ground had become dry for this season of the year. The haziness increased considerably about the time of the first shock, and part of the sky was covered with a fleecy cloud, in some places of a dark appearance. This was very unusual in the region. There were several slight shocks during the night. It did not do much injury in Beyroot, excepting cracking some of the houses; but Safet, Tiberias, and many other villages were almost entirely destroyed, and many lives lost. A meeting of the Franks was held, to see what could be done for these suffering villages; a collection was made, and Messrs. Thomson and Calman appointed as a committee to visit and aid them. I would gladly have accompanied them, and made observations for myself, but the circumstances of the mission rendered it inexpedient for Mr. T. and myself to be absent at the same time. Slight shocks of earthquakes were frequent for ten or twelve days, and the people were much alarmed. Many have feared to sleep in their houses. A Jew at Damascus prophesied that the whole coast from Sidon to Antioch would be destroyed. The governor, believing, very properly, that he was an impostor, had him confined, and threatened to punish him if his predictions were not fulfilled. Most of the Jews left their houses, and encamped without the city.

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The attention of the English government has, for several years past, been much turned to the opening and maintaining a passage from some port in Syria, through the valley of the Euphrates to the East Indies. Two steam-boats, the *Euphrates* and *Tigris*, were taken across from the Mediterranean Sea, near Scanderoon, to the Euphrates, at Beer. They were carried in pieces on camels, and put together at Beer, and the expedition, under the command of Colonel Chesney, proceeded, on their exploring tour down the river. The *Tigris*, which was the smaller boat, was lost in a tornado; the *Euphrates* continued on her route, and the river was explored. The matter did not succeed quite as well as some of its more ardent advocates expected, but well enough to prove that it was practicable. Large quantities of bitumen are found in that region, and the experiment was tried of substituting this for coal, as there is not much wood in the vicinity. It would not answer; it melted too rapidly. A person is now engaged in examining whether coal may not exist there. In the meantime Mr. Farren, the Consul-General at Damascus, using the great influence he has gained over some of the Arabs, opened a direct communication with Bagdad through the wilderness. He made use of dromedaries, and the mail passed in six or eight days. Since Mr. Farren's recal, the post is continued under the present consul. There is thus a regular communication from Beyroot to India, viâ Damascus and Bagdad. In a few years, I doubt not that steamboats will run regularly on the Euphrates, and that a great travelling route will thus cross the most interesting part of the great valley of the Euphrates, the ancient seat of early cities, kingdoms, and civilisation. This will, as it may be hoped, prepare the way for the spread of the gospel in the interior of Asia.

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I have attended, by special request, an Arab wedding, the parties being members of the Greek church. The men and women were in separate apartments. In both rooms there was music from a rude drum, and the women kept up a singular hallooing, or kind of shrill cry. I was taken into the female apartment, and introduced to the bride. She was much adorned with gold and gold foil, her face and hands painted in the most fantastic manner; she kept her eyes closed, or nearly so, which she must do for several days. They made her put on cob-cobs, a kind of sandal nearly a foot high, and dance before us, or rather walk very slowly backwards and forwards, keeping time with the music; her hands were held up by an attendant, to be seen and admired. They then took her into another room to eat, after which the marriage ceremony commenced. The priest read the marriage service, during which he put a ring on the finger of each, with many crossings, and touching the head and breast, and afterwards he changed the rings; he then put a chaplet made of an olive branch with its leaves on the head of each, and after a similar crossing and touching the head and breast, the chaplets were changed; he then took a cup of wine, and made them both drink of it: this, with the priest's blessing, closed the marriage. The bride was then made to follow her husband to the place where the horses were fastened. Her attendants led her, and her walk was as slow as you can well conceive,—a step, then a pause, then a very slow moving of the foot forward; she must show great reluctance, and be forced after her "well beloved." He seemed to give himself no trouble about her, but mounted his horse, and waited with his back towards her, until the signal should be given for starting. At last, by half carrying and half pushing her, the bride reached the horse brought to take her to her new home, and was mounted astride, as is the custom for females to ride here. The signal was given, and the bridegroom moved forward, accompanied by most of the male guests, while the females surrounded the bride, some on animals, others on foot. The music and screaming were kept up, and "the friend of the bridegroom" danced and played all sorts of odd tricks before him. It was his business to make sport for them. A pomegranate was given to the bride, which she breaks as she enters her husband's door, thus showing that she promises to be an obedient and dutiful wife. About dark, a few weeks ago, we were somewhat startled by a discharge of artillery from the castles about the town, one of which stands very near us. We were, however, soon told that it was meant to signify the commencement of the fast of the Rammedan, a fast of the Mohammedans. During the

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continuance of this fast they are not to eat, drink, or smoke, from sunrise to sunset. They may, however, eat and drink during the night, and they make amends for their abstinence during the day. Many of them turn day into night, night into day, eating at sundown, midnight, and just before sunrise, and after making it a time of great revelry and wickedness. This fast is a moveable one, and passes round to all seasons of the year. When it falls in midsummer it must be a sore trial to abstain from water in these thirsty countries; they have, however, various ways of getting round the law of the fast, and in some degree modifying the deprivations it would cost them. All the systems of religion in the eastern world lay much stress on fasting, and with many it is carried to an idolatrous extent. They make a saviour of them. That this should be the case with systems that do not take God's Word for the rule of their faith and practice, would not surprise us; but that those who call themselves *Christians*, and profess to found their faith on God's Word, and appeal to it as their rule, should do so, may well grieve us. It is true, that while the Bible is in a general way acknowledged as the Word of God, they do not appeal to it, but to the authority of the church; they have left the word of God,—have rendered it void, that they may "follow their own devices,"—that they may "keep their own traditions." The fasts of the Christian sects are rather a distinction of meats, an abstinence from animal food, than fasts properly so called. The Greeks, in accordance with all the Oriental churches, observe Wednesday and Friday of each week. The Papists, Friday and Saturday. In addition to these weekly fasts, they have others of many days in succession. During one of forty days' continuance, they are not allowed to eat until after twelve o'clock at noon. It is astonishing with what rigidity even small children observe these seasons.

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A few days since, some dervishes, or Mohammedan priests, who have been on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, returned. They came back as holy men, and great crowds went out to see their wonders. I was assured by several persons who witnessed its performance, that boys threw themselves on the ground, in a row as close together as they could lie, with their faces to the earth, making a row of forty or fifty yards, and one of the priests paced his horse over them, the horse literally stepping on their backs. The boys jumped up very briskly, though some of them showed what they were unwilling to acknowledge, that they were slightly hurt. The fact may seem strange, but Christians have tried the experiment, and succeeded as well as the Moslems. Some of the priests thrust spears and swords through their cheeks—a most unnatural thing. The people consider such things in the light of a miracle.

I had a very pleasant interview not long since with Dr. Wilson, of Scotland, who has just returned from a tour through Palestine, and who went south as far as Petra. At Hebron he made a special contract with a Sheik, who for about one hundred and fifty dollars took him and his party to Petra and back, and left his own brother as a hostage with the governor, until they returned. Petra is in a very rough district. The El-Ghor is a wide valley, but much more elevated than I had supposed, much more so than the Dead Sea, possibly a thousand feet at the highest part. It is very destitute of vegetation, and this is especially the case with the country about Mount Hor, and Petra. There is a district more to the south that is more fertile, and has a good many inhabitants on it. The antiquities at Petra are most wonderful; a town hewn out in a sandstone rock, only one house of any size built above ground, and that a church. This building has been slightly injured by the late earthquake. There are most extensive excavations—a considerable town under ground; the tomb of Aaron on Mount Hor is an excavation. The mount is a round sugar-loaf hill, with a small level on the top.

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We have had fearful accounts of the prevalence of cholera at Jerusalem, Aleppo, Malta, and some other places; much fear is felt that it will visit us; may the Lord preserve us from its ravages!

A few days ago, a moolah, a Mohammedan priest, died at this place. He was one of those who last spring made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and on his return rode over the boys in the plain outside the town. After his death, the other priests pretended that his body would fly off to heaven, if they did not prevent it. They, therefore, had ropes tied to his body, and fastened them to other things, that the body might not get away. They held on to the ropes as they took the body to the grave-yard. On their way the bearers stopped several times, and would pull this way and that way, as if some invisible power would not let them go forward, and the pretence was, that the dead man was not willing to go that way, or to be buried. They at length, however, got him to the grave, put him in, and made great lamentation over him. This is a sample of the tricks they play to delude the people.

I spent an hour on the 17th of last month, very pleasantly, with Lord Lindsay, who has travelled extensively in these countries. From Egypt he passed Mount Sinai and the Elanetic Gulf—visited Petra, Bosrah, Gerash, and most of Palestine and Palmyra. He says there are many ruins about Bosrah; a Roman road thirty feet wide runs from that place towards Bagdad. It is in a good state of preservation, but not used. Lord Lindsay had the affliction to lose a brother, who travelled with him; if I mistake not, he died from what is called a stroke of the sun. Means were used to preserve the body, and he took the corpse with him in the same vessel to England.

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LETTER XIX.

Beyroot, October 14th, 1838.

Yesterday I returned with my family from the mountains, where we had been to recruit from the effects of the warm weather. For you must know, that after knocking about in a very extempore way for some time, I concluded it was better to go into partnership, and accordingly we commenced house-keeping for ourselves, early in March last. In doing this, I showed all my

partiality for my own country, by passing by all the dark-eyed beauties of the East, and selecting one of the daughters of my own people.

Bhamdoon, the village at which we spent the summer, stands high on the mountains; only on one occasion before had any Franks lived among them. About two-thirds of the people belong to the Greek church. The remainder are Maronites. We found the people friendly, but the Maronites were less disposed to have intercourse with us than the Greeks. We distributed a number of books in that and the adjacent villages, and almost every night some of the people came in to hear the Scriptures read, and to be present at evening prayers. This was usually followed by conversation, which often lasted an hour or two. Sometimes the number was so great, as to fill the room. Hykel, my teacher, was almost always present, and took part in the conversation; not unfrequently curious and puzzling questions were asked, as what that light was, which is spoken of as separated from the darkness, in the first of Genesis; and how the day and night were measured before the sun was made? They often showed a good deal of intelligence. To vary the exercises, I sometimes gave them tracts to read, and generally very good attention was paid to the reading of them.

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The old priest of the village was blind, and there was a monk assisting him, who was better informed than any of that order that I have met with. He visited us frequently, and read portions of the New Testament with us, and commented on them. He often gave exhortations, or preached to the people. He, as well as the people, seemed to consider this as a matter that did him some credit. My knowledge of the language was not sufficient to enable me fully to understand all he said, but from what I could understand, I thought he was fond of giving curious and far-fetched interpretations. Both he and the people seemed to rest on the outward form of religion, and to be strangers to its inward and spiritual power. The Greek church stood near our house, and we often saw travellers in passing the church ride up to it, touch it with their hand, put that to their heads, cross themselves, and then pass on. The same was done by the villagers, and they would often kiss the stones a number of times. I witnessed a rite in this church that was new to me. I had been informed by one of the leading men, that our friend, the monk, would preach the next morning. I considered the information as a kind of invitation to attend, which I did. His sermon, as far as I could understand it, was not very instructive, but rather of the spiritualizing kind. It was, however, delivered with earnestness, and listened to with attention by a full house. At its close, prayers were read, and some bread produced and broken into very small pieces, and handed to the people in a plate. It was sought for with great eagerness, and many of the little boys were particularly pressing to receive it. I supposed at first that it was the Lord's Supper, but was told afterwards that it was not, but a representation of the body of the Virgin Mary.

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I made a second very pleasant trip to Baalbec with Mrs. P. and our two little girls. We had many opportunities of distributing books and tracts along the road. In most instances, as soon as it was known that we had books, our tent was surrounded by persons importuning for them. As soon as one was supplied, he would withdraw to a little distance, and set himself to reading in good earnest. The success of some encouraged others, and each had some particular reason to urge, why he should be supplied before the others. We were absent five days, and on our return, were welcomed with great joy by our good friends in the village.

Bhamdoon is surrounded with vineyards. The vines are, for the most part, allowed to lie on the ground. In a few places peculiarly situated, they are trained on supports, which raise them several feet above it. The grapes are of various kinds, most of them white and large. We are supplied with them most generously and munificently by the people. There are several houses that seem to be common property, where they express the juice of the grape. They have, along one side of the house, a row of large vats, into which the grapes are thrown; and beside these, stone troughs, into which the juice flows. Men get in the vats, and tread the grapes with their feet. It is hard work, and their clothes are often stained with the grape. The figures found in Scripture, taken from this, are true to the life. "I have trod the wine-press alone;" "I will stain all my raiment;" "The wine-press was trodden without the city." The juice that was extracted when I visited the press, was not made into wine, but into what is called dibbs. It resembles molasses. They take the juice from the troughs, put it into large boilers, and reduce it to one-half, possibly one-third of the original quantity. It is then removed to large earthen jars, and subjected to a process, not unlike churning, which is repeated for a few days, until it thickens. When properly churned, or beaten, but little separation of the particles takes place. It forms a very pleasant article for table use, and is decidedly preferable to molasses.

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We witnessed the process of making raisins. The grapes are collected and dipped in a weak ley, with which a small quantity of olive-oil has been mixed. They are then spread out on the ground, and several times a day this mixture is sprinkled over them. This is continued, for six, eight, or ten days, according to the dryness of the atmosphere, until the raisins are cured. They are then taken up, and while warm from the sun, put into jars and pressed down hard, and thus preserved for use or sale. There is, however, but little wine, raisins, or dibbs exported. Most that is made is kept for family use.

The salutations of these people are very similar to those of ancient times. In passing persons at work, as in cultivating their vineyards, or thrashing out grain, the usual form is "*Salam-alaykoom*," Peace be unto you; and the answer is, "*A-laykoom-issalum*," Upon you be peace. On entering a house, it is Peace be upon you, or "*Olloh makoom*," God be with you. In giving orders to servants, or requesting favours of friends, the answer generally given is, "*A-Jah-rass-ee*," On my head be it. The women, in taking a quantity of flour from their store for a batch of bread, will precede it with a "*Bismillee*," In the name of God. As a general thing the Arabs may be said to be a polite people. The morning and evening salutations are always passed among the inmates of the

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same house; they will seldom pass you in the road without some kind word. When lights are brought, the servants will say, "Good evening to you," and the company will say the same to one another. They have a great variety of salutations, forms of expression, and compliments suited to all the various circumstances of life, and these are familiar to all; to the youngest and the poorest, as well as to the prince.

Several bands of gipsies at different times visited our village. They came in companies of from ten to thirty, men, women, and children, mostly mounted on donkeys. They encamped in a thrashing-floor near by, which gave us an opportunity to observe their motions and learn their habits. They carry with them a few utensils for cooking, and a few articles with which they cover themselves at night. They will occasionally put up a rude tent to shelter them from the sun. Some of them manufacture a few things, which they dispose of in their rambles. Attached to each company are two or three who play on musical instruments, and amuse the people with their feats of jugglery. They have a language of their own, with which they converse among themselves, but are familiar with Arabic. They are great beggars, and notorious thieves. The people are careful to secure their chickens and donkeys when the gipsies are in the neighbourhood. They do not remain long at one place,—here to-day and gone to-morrow. They stroll over the mountains in the summer, but remove farther south in winter.

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April 18, 1838.—On the first Sabbath of the present year, a Druse family was baptised by the missionaries at this place. They had for two years been attentive to the instructions of the missionaries, and both the parents gave evidence of piety. They, with their six children, were baptized at the mission-house at the close of the Arabic service. It was an interesting occasion, and excited a good deal of interest among those who are in the habit of attending the Arabic preaching. There are several other Druses, who are constant in their attendance at the Sabbath school and Arabic preaching, and profess a great desire to become Christians.

You are, no doubt, familiar with the account of Asaad Shidiak. I have learned several things about him lately, which to me, at least, had a considerable degree of painful interest. I have seen several persons who, as they declare, saw him during his imprisonment, and one who saw him after his death. He was of the Maronite church, and from his intercourse with the missionaries he came to understand the corruption of his church, and the nature of true spiritual religion. This brought on him the displeasure of the dignitaries of that church. He was a man of learning and talents, and, with the truth on his side, he was too much in argument for any of them. After various attempts to bring him back to their corrupt system in vain, he was seized and imprisoned, and subjected to much cruel treatment. He held fast to the truth which he had learned. His faith was built on the Bible. One of the individuals from whom I gained information about him said, he had a long conversation with him while in prison. He was shut up in a small room only a few feet square, the door walled up so as to leave but a small opening, like a window. He was loaded with chains, and his food handed to him through this small opening. He assured this person that his religious faith rested alone on the Bible.

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His confinement was so close that it had become, with people generally, a matter of doubt whether he was dead or alive. Thus it had been for some time before the Egyptian government took possession of this country. Some of the Franks felt an intense interest in his fate. Immediately after the fall of Acre, which event secured to the Egyptian government the control of this part of Syria, an English merchant of this place by the name of Todd, waited on the Pasha, and made known the case of the imprisoned Asaad, and asked and obtained authority to examine the convent where he was confined, and have him set at liberty if he were alive.

Todd visited the convent, and made some search, but Asaad was not found. He was informed that he was dead, and was shown what was said to be his grave; this confirmed the opinion that he was dead. This movement on the part of Todd was well meant; it may, however, be doubted, whether it was well managed. The news got out that he was about to visit the convent, and search for Asaad. It was known on the mountains before he reached Cannoben. It is now declared, and pretty generally believed on the mountains, as I am told, that Todd was overreached in the matter, that Asaad was then alive, but concealed when the examination was made. Todd spent but a few hours in the convent, and that at night, and left the place with the full impression that Asaad was dead.

After this, it is said that the high ecclesiastics, fearing that the matter might be divulged that he was still living, had him destroyed. A sheik, who lives near the place, and who has since had a quarrel with the patriarch, has declared lately that Asaad was destroyed not long after the search by Todd, and that he saw the dead body before it was interred. How much truth there may be in this I know not; for truth is a thing that does not abound among this people. From the fact, however, that a wide-spread opinion on the mountains places his death subsequent to the search by Todd, and ascribes it to violence, there is much reason to believe that it is correct.

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His case has evidently made a great impression on the people of the mountains. When I went to Bhamdoon, I was almost immediately inquired of for the little book that told about Asaad Shidiak. I sent to Beyroot, and procured some copies of a small Arabic tract, written by Asaad himself, giving a short account of his change of views, and discussions with the priests, up to near the time of his imprisonment. These were sought for with more eagerness than almost any book I had. The solicitations for it came principally from the Maronites. It is, however, proscribed by their church; still I found that some of them would read it. A good-looking young man, who was evidently a pretty good scholar, would come to my room and read the book by the hour. He would not take it away for fear of the priest. And this reminds me of a case that was rather amusing, that took place not long before we went to the mountains. Some of the Maronite princes were down from the mountains, and one of them procured the tract containing the account of Asaad

Shidiak, and a priest saw him reading it. This being strictly forbidden, the prince had a penance assigned him, as did also the servants who were within hearing at the time the book was read. He was directed to fast so long; make so many prostrations; and pay such a sum of money. The prince replied:—as to fasting, it made him sick, and he could not do it; and as to the prostrations, they gave him the back-ache, and he could not perform them; that the priest might, if he chose, make the attendants do it—and there was some money, throwing down a part of what was called for, which they might do what they pleased with. There are a good many indications that the power of the priesthood over the people is beginning to give way. The time, I hope, is near, when more of the people will dare to think for themselves, and follow the dictates of an enlightened conscience. [220]

A few months ago, a heavy conscription, as it may be called, was raised over the most, if not the whole of Syria; and out of it has arisen the present war in the Houran. This is the name now used to designate an extensive district east of the Jordan. It embraces the country occupied by the tribes that lived east of that river—Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; the country of Bashan, Moab, and a district to the east, that is not much known to Europeans. It is said to be a high country, and abounding with remains of cities. The Egyptian government extends over this, but how far to the east I do not know.

In raising soldiers, the Pasha sent a body of troops out among these towns and villages, to take such as were fit for soldiers. The people, who have much of the Arab character, did not like this, rose on the soldiers, and destroyed several hundred of them. The Pasha then sent a considerable body of troops to destroy the towns and chastise the people. The people left their towns as the soldiers approached, and joined the Arabs of the desert. They were joined by many from other parts of the country, and in all made a pretty imposing force. Taking advantage of the rough and mountainous districts, they did not allow the troops of the Pasha to bring them to a fair fight; and attacking his army in a situation that gave them the advantage, they have twice beaten his army; and on the last occasion, with a great loss to the Pasha, both of men and munitions of war. The army of the Pasha had to retreat towards Damascus. There is much discontent with the Pasha; and it need not cause much surprise if other movements of a rebellious character should follow the affair of the Houran, especially if it be not soon put down. Some slight indications of the kind have appeared at Damascus; but several, suspected of causing it, had their heads taken off with little ceremony, and the matter seems to be stopped. Should the Pasha subdue the Houran, it will produce a safer state of things to the east of the Jordan than what has heretofore existed, and throw open a vast region that must have peculiar interest to the traveller, from the multitude of ruins that exist there, as well as the connexion which it has with many of the events of ancient and sacred history. [221]

On the evening of the first of April, we witnessed a most wonderful flight of locusts. They came like a dark cloud, filling the air for a long distance. The greater part of them were above the tops of the houses; but many flew lower, and passed through the tops of the mulberry trees. There had been a strong south-east wind for about twelve hours. They came from the east, and must, of course, have crossed the Lebanon. Their course was west; but as they approached the sea, I thought they varied, and passed more south-west, as if not willing to go out of sight of land. For about half an hour the air was full of them; afterwards their number decreased, but it was a long time before the last straggler had passed. About three days afterwards, we had them again from the south-west; the wind had changed, and now came from that quarter. They now seemed disposed to stop: the gardens and sands were full of them. They did not seem to eat anything, but were employed in depositing their eggs, which they place in the sands or earth. An acquaintance of mine, who has just returned from Tripoli, states, that all the way from Ji-bail to the river Beyroot, a distance of nearly twenty miles, the locusts are thrown out on the shore in such numbers as to lie from eighteen inches to two feet deep—they have been drowned in the sea. The old locusts do not do much injury; it is the young ones, which will come out in a month or six weeks after the eggs are deposited in the sands, that eat so voraciously, and destroy all before them. I understand the Emeer has issued an order for each person to collect about a quart of their eggs, as a means of destroying them, and thus preventing the destruction which the young locusts would make. [222]

LETTER XX.

Jaffa, May 21st, 1838.

Having concluded to return during the ensuing summer to the United States, and made my arrangements accordingly, I took passage from Beyroot to this city, in a Greek vessel, April 20th. The families of Rev. Messrs. Thomson and Hebard had preceded us, to attend the annual meeting of the mission, which was to be held at Jerusalem. It was not without feelings of sorrow that I left Beyroot. For about two years I had considered it my home, and excepting while making tours, which I occasionally did, I had remained there and on the adjacent mountains. I had preached a good deal to the English congregation at Beyroot, and aided, in all the ways I could, the mission work. I had become acquainted with many of the natives, more particularly with those who maintained a friendly intercourse with the mission. I had enjoyed the acquaintance and friendship of the consuls and English residents, and could not bid them a final farewell without strong emotion. But circumstances made it indispensable, and we parted, expecting to see each other no more. [223]

We reached this place on the 22d, after a moderately short but rough passage. To our great discomfort, we found that the plague had broken out a few days before; the city was shut up, and we were not allowed to enter. At first we were not permitted to land; but after some entreaty we were permitted to land at the Lazaret, under the watch of the health officers, who took us and our baggage into that building. There were some cases of plague in the Lazaret, and it was the last place we wished to be in; and, moreover, our room had literally nothing in it. I wished to send word to the American consul, whose hospitality we had more than once experienced; hoping that he would be able to place us in a more comfortable situation, and was told that he was at his country-house, about two miles from town, and that we might go there if we chose; but that we must walk, as all the animals had been used by the pilgrims, who were returning in great numbers from Jerusalem, and might be infected. After a most laborious walk through the sand, with our children—two of whom we were obliged to carry—we reached the house of the consul, but he was not there; his family being still in town and his house shut up. It was too late to return to the Lazaret; and there was no alternative, but to lodge, without bed or supper, on the floor of an unfinished room that was designed for a kitchen.

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In the morning, the consul came out with his family, and our situation was made more comfortable. Through his aid we had our baggage landed and conveyed to a place of safety, excepting what we wished to take with us; and having procured animals, we set off for Rumla about sunset, which we reached about ten in the night. For once we resolved to make trial of the camel, and we all rode on them; but before we arrived at Rumla, we were satisfied that the horse, the mule, and the donkey, are each and all to be preferred to the camel, as a riding animal. The motion of the camel is a long swinging motion, with rather a sudden stop at each step; for a little while it is pleasant, but soon becomes tiresome and at last painful.

We were on our way at an early hour on the morning of the 25th, and reached Jerusalem about five in the afternoon, where we were kindly entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Nicolayson. We found the friends well. The sessions of the missionary meeting were drawing to a close. Professor Robinson, and the Rev. Messrs. Smith and Adger, had arrived some days before from Egypt, *via* Suez and Sinai.

One object I had in view in revisiting Jerusalem and its vicinity before I returned to the United States, was to correct, as far as I might be able, any errors that might exist in my former descriptions, and supply any defects which a second visit might suggest. I have not seen much that deserves special notice in the way of correction or addition.

It struck me at the time that I visited the plain of Jordan and the Dead Sea, that the descent from Jerusalem to them was greater than that from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean. It is now a pretty well ascertained fact that the Dead Sea is lower than the Mediterranean; and as the water of the latter sea is above thirty feet lower than the Red Sea, it must follow that the Jordan never flowed through the El Ghor into the Elanetic Gulf. Count Barteau, who has just returned from a visit to Petra Acaba, and an examination of the district between the south end of the Dead Sea and Acaba, states that a high district crosses the El Ghor, and causes the water to run north and south from it. Dr. Wilson and Lord Lindsay gave me substantially the same information. From some experiments it is estimated that the level of the Dead Sea is several hundred feet lower than those of the Mediterranean. If a passage then were made connecting the Red with the Dead Sea, the waters would flow into it, so as to cover all the plain of the Jordan, and even raise the level of the waters of Lake Tiberias. The question will naturally be asked, where did the waters of the Jordan flow to, before the destruction of the cities of the plain? what outlet did they find? The more common opinion heretofore has been, that before the overthrow of those cities there was no lake on the south end of the plain of Jordan. The Bible does not, however, say so, but rather intimates the reverse. The Salt Sea is mentioned before the account of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. It seems to me most likely that there was a lake at the south end of the plain, and that those cities were situate near its borders; their destruction was followed by the enlargement of the lake, and the ruin of some part of the plain on which they stood. It is indeed an almost universal opinion among the Arabs, that some of the ruins of these cities may yet be seen. Costigen found ruins, as his servant declared, which he took for the ruins of those cities; and Count Barteau states, that he saw at the south end of the lake old cisterns, and other things that indicated the former existence of towns. There is now not much doubt that we shall in due time have the facts so examined into and certified, as to add another proof to the many which have lately been given, of the verity and accuracy of the Scriptural account of things.

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While at Jerusalem, I had occasion to visit Jaffa. I rode down past Rumla, and reached Jaffa in about ten hours. My horse was not a good one; the day was warm, and I did not ride fast. I infer, from the time spent on the road, that the distance must be at least thirty-five miles, and possibly forty.

I returned by a road which separates from that of Rumla, a few miles from Jaffa, and passes over the plain farther to the north. It led us past several villages on the plain, among which was Lydd, the ancient Lydda, where Peter healed Eneas. It is a small village, but contains some better buildings than we usually meet with in such small towns. It is surrounded by extensive gardens and orchards of fruit-trees; and on the east side of the village is a good well, much resorted to for water. The plain of Sharon on this road was very fertile, and more of it had been cultivated than is usual. The harvest was going on, and men, women, and children, were out in the fields: some reaping with the common reap-hook—some pulling up the grain with their hands—some binding up the grain in bundles—some carrying it on their shoulders, or on donkeys, or mules, or camels, to the thrashing-floor—and some thrashing out the grain by driving the cattle over it. They use a thrashing instrument not unlike a harrow. In its under side they have pieces of stone or iron

fastened which serve as teeth. These instruments are dragged by the oxen over the grain, and thus separate it from the straw. [227]

After leaving the plain, our road followed a ridge for a considerable distance; a little west of the highest ground we passed two ruined villages at some distance from each other, that were called Beth-horon. They are, I doubt not, the upper and the nether Beth-horon. This opinion is, I think, confirmed by the account given of the defeat of the kings that were confederated against Gibeon. It is said that Israel "chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon; and it came to pass that as they were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord threw down on them great hailstones from heaven." Josh. x. 11, 12. Beth-horon lies on the west side of the ridge, and Gibeon lies on the east side, and at the distance of several miles from the top. The flight began from Gibeon, and was first up to the top of the ridge on the road towards Beth-horon; and from the top of the ridge it was down to Beth-horon, and on this last part of the way, that the hailstones fell on them. Until I saw the ground, I never understood the "*up*" and "*down*," as used in the record of this flight and pursuit. Near Gibeon I saw some sandstone, singularly mixed up with the limestone. It lay about in large masses, but I saw no continuous rock of it. The ancient Gibeon is now a small-village, inhabited by a few Mohammedan families. It stands on the summit of a round hill, and from the steepness of its sides is capable of being made very strong. There are various old ruins and some arches of great size running into the sides of the hill, forming rooms, in which various labours are now carried on. A little out of town is a spring in a cave, and below it, on the side of the hill, the remains of an old pool, which is probably the one beside which Abner and Joab, with their men, sat down before the battle in which Asahel fell. [228]

The plague made its appearance in Jerusalem shortly after our arrival. We did not pay much attention to it, excepting that we were more careful in passing about the city not to come in contact with the people. The monks from some of the religious houses left the city, and took refuge in other places. We found the monks at Bethlehem keeping quarantine, and there was plague in some of the convents in the country.

A health officer from Jaffa visited the city on the 16th, and declared his intention to shut up the gates and prevent egress or ingress, until the plague abated. He gave us permission to leave, provided we would do it early the next day. Having no wish to be shut up even in Jerusalem, for a month or two, we made all possible haste to get ready to leave town the next morning. We found some difficulty in procuring animals, but at last succeeded, and bidding farewell to all our kind friends, and the missionary brethren resident there, we left the city and bent our course to Rumla. Our animals proved miserable creatures, and one of our muleteers gave us the slip and returned, leaving us to make our journey as best we could. We had been informed at Jerusalem that we would not be permitted to enter Rumla; but supposed that we should arrive in season to consult with the consular agent, and obtain lodging in the old tower, or some place in the vicinity. Our mules were so intolerably bad, however, that it was dark when we approached Rumla. To our frequent inquiries of the muleteer, as to where he was taking us, we received the reply, "to the water," and supposing that we would halt at some watering place near the town, we allowed him to proceed. Finding from the length of the way that we must be taking the road to Jaffa, we insisted on coming to an understanding of the matter. He had no idea of stopping, but intended to land us safe at Jaffa that night; after a great deal of noise on both sides we prevailed on him to halt. He took us under an olive-tree near by, saying, what he supposed was true, that if he took us to the town they would cut his head off. Angelo set off immediately, to see if he could gain admittance within the town. The children, worn out with the fatigue of the journey, had lost all patience, and were crying for their suppers. I seated them on the ground and began to search about in the dark for the remains of our luncheon, which there was much reason to fear the muleteer and his boy had eaten. Presently Mrs. P. began to shake with an ague fit, and called out to me that she should die with the cold if relief was not soon obtained. I had procured some wine at Jerusalem, which I was taking home as a sample of the wines of Palestine; and thinking this was a time, if ever, when its use would be justifiable, I succeeded in disengaging a bottle from our baggage and administered a quantity of it to those "who were ready to perish." Drawing a small carpet from the saddle of the mule on which I rode, I covered up my little family, and with no enviable feelings waited the result. It was not long before the well-known voice of Angelo hallooing in the distance broke upon my ear. He came with one of the consul's sons, who welcomed us to his father's house, assuring us there was no obstacle in the way of our admittance. Thus our difficulties were removed, and we were most hospitably lodged for the night. The next day we arrived at the country-seat of our very kind consul at this place, who has furnished us with a room, and is assiduous in his attentions to promote our comfort and happiness. [229]

LETTER XXI.

Alexandria, June 21st, 1838.

We left Jaffa on May the 24th for this place. It was not without trouble and delay that we were able to obtain a passage. On our arrival at Jaffa, in April, we found many vessels there. They were, we were told, waiting for pilgrims, who were at that time returning from Jerusalem, where many attend during the great feasts. They were at that time coming down in crowds, and going off to the vessels: but before our return from Jerusalem, in May, they were gone, and hardly a vessel remained at Jaffa. Possibly the fear of the plague, which prevailed at Jaffa, had driven

some away, and at the same time prevented others from coming. Our wish was to take passage to Damietta, and ascend the Damietta branch of the Nile to Grand Cairo, and come down the Rosetta branch to Alexandria. We found a vessel that was willing to take us to Damietta, but before we had completed our bargain, the Russian consul, whose family had lost many members by the plague, made, in his great eagerness to get away, so large an offer, as induced the captain to change his course, and immediately sail with the consul for Smyrna. As we passed Damietta, about a week afterwards, we spoke the same vessel, and learned that, soon after sailing, the consul took the plague and died, and the vessel put in at Damietta. The consul fled from Jaffa, but not from the plague or death—both met him on the way—how little do we foresee what a day may bring forth! After some delay a vessel came from Beyroot, which offered to take us to this place, but asked about four times the usual price—there was no help—no other suitable vessel offered— [231] and the captain said, which was true, that he would have to perform a long quarantine. A letter came to the consul, from several other travellers, to engage them a vessel, as they would be at Jaffa in a few days; and it was agreed that I should pay one-half of the required sum, and those travellers the other, and the engagement was closed.

Through the kind attention of our consul, who spared no pains to promote our comfort, our arrangements were made, our baggage put on board, and our provisions and stores laid in. The plague added much to the trouble of doing this. On going on board we found it was a Turkish vessel, and a Turkish crew. The captain seemed to be much of a gentleman for a Turk. He was polite, silent, and would sit all day smoking his pipe, and watching the working of his vessel. The crew also were sober, silent, and appeared to move about as if they had no care but to mind their own business. We had stipulated to have the sole use of the cabin, provided we should prefer it. On examining the premises, however, we decided on taking up our quarters on the deck, as plainly the cleanest and most comfortable place. The captain readily yielded to our wishes, and fitted up the long boat, which was on the deck, spreading a sail over it, and making quite a tent—in this we took up our abode.

When the travellers referred to came on board, we recognised them as a party we had met a few miles this side of Jerusalem. They had come from Egypt to Palestine through the wilderness, and were on their way to Jerusalem as we left it. Their cavalcade had attracted our attention, being all mounted on camels; and what looked rather oddly, two were on the same camel, in what are called baskets, sitting back to back—one facing to the right and the other to the left. The party [232] consisted of two German officers, who belonged to King Otho's army in Greece—a Frenchman and a Swiss. The fact that we had no common language prevented our having as much intercourse with them as we should otherwise have had. They also took up their quarters on deck, the captain having put up an awning. As there was no danger of rain, the deck was decidedly the most comfortable place. While we could not fully understand the subject of their discourse, we were not a little amused during our voyage with the long and almost continual debates of our fellow-voyagers. It was all in great good-humour, but a set of more everlasting talkers and disputants I have seldom met with.

There were several others on board, who came in without paying their part of the expense. This is almost always the case when a Frank charters a vessel. I have heard of a captain, who had especially engaged not to take any one on board except the Franks who had chartered his vessel, stowing away privately in the hold nearly a dozen who were never to be seen on deck. The captain of course gets a fee from such—it is so much clear gain. He first asks and gets a full price for his whole vessel, and then stows away as many persons and things as he can, on such terms as may be offered. We had a Greek sea captain as a passenger—he was one of the most silent Greeks I recollect to have met with, for, as a general thing, they are a talking, noisy people. He hardly ever spoke a word, and had little intercourse with any one except a Greek servant. There was another, "old Dominico," as we called him, who, oddly enough, passed himself off as one of my party, and not only went rent free, but ate of my bread. On reaching our consul's from Jerusalem, we saw there a middle-aged man, who had much the appearance of a domestic, but in [233] a Frank dress. He seemed to turn his hand to anything—at times he was in the garden directing the water to the trees and plants—then again he was going with a mule or donkey and bringing home loads of grass for the animals—at one time called here and another there. On first seeing him, it struck me he might be a Scotchman—but he knew no English—I then thought he must be an Italian—he proved to be a Genoese. He had been at Jerusalem, and was living on the consul until he could get a passage from Jaffa—and the consul, very properly, to keep him from rusting through mere idleness, was employing him in all sorts of ways, as occasions offered. When on the point of starting, the consul, who was probably willing to get clear of him, requested that Dominico might so far be considered, as belonging to my party as to secure him a free passage; and, according to his own rule for managing such cases, advised that I should keep the old man in employ as far as I had anything that he could do. Of course I assented. After getting all on board, and under sail, and the time for eating had come, Angelo reported old Dominico as minus all sorts of provisions for the voyage. I was fairly in for it. He belonged to my party, and must not be allowed to suffer. This however was an appendix to the matter that I had not looked for; and in laying in stores, for each party found themselves, (old Dominico excepted,) I had not counted him—and no small eater was he. Angelo was directed to give the old man his rations from my stores, and advised that he should give him something to do—make him cut the wood, kindle the fire, watch the coffee—do anything that would keep his hand in: for I hold that perfect idleness is not good for man or beast. And finding that the old man had a pretty good knack for pleasing [234] children, many an hour were they permitted to while away with him, to his own as well as their amusement.

The Moslems are in their way a religious people. They are regular in saying their prayers at the

prescribed times. They usually pray, wherever they may happen to be, when the proper time arrives. They do not retire to a secret place, but spread a small mat, and kneel and prostrate themselves on it—touch the ground with their forehead, facing towards Mecca, and repeating at the same time, in a low and almost unintelligible voice, their forms of prayer. The fore-part of the deck was the place at which they performed their devotions.

Our winds being light, we did not lose sight of Palestine for nearly twenty-four hours after we embarked. We had a pretty good view of the south part of the plain of Sharon and of the hill country that rose behind it. Several villages were seen, surrounded with their olive-trees, vineyards, and gardens. The land at last disappeared, and nothing but water was seen on all sides. Our course brought us within sight of Egypt, east of Damietta. The coast was low, and seemed to be a bed of sand. To the south-east we saw some large buildings that appeared to rise out of the water. We learned that they were forts at the mouth of some inlet. As we passed to the west, our course brought us nearer the shore, and gave us a better view of it. The water had a greenish colour, and such a current set to the east, that during a calm that took place we had to cast out an anchor to prevent our being swept far to the east.

In passing Damietta, we saw several vessels lying off. The shallows and bars at the mouth of the river are such as to prevent vessels from entering, and cause much trouble and delay in loading and unloading at that place. Large lighters are used in passing produce and merchandise to and from the shore. We could not see much of the town. It lies a little back, and the sand hills near the coast tended to prevent a good view of it. From all I could learn, it is a small place, and much on the decline. There are some strong forts at the mouth of the river, and so placed as to command the entrance. The implements of war are everywhere to be met with in the dominions of Mohammed Ali. [235]

Groves of date-trees began to be seen on the coast. This is the tree of Egypt, and is everywhere in Egypt to be met with in greater numbers than any other tree. It has a singular appearance, and not unlike a spread umbrella. The stem is long, and of the same thickness, and has no branches until you reach the top,—then a large cluster of branches, which bend out and hang down their tops, so as to look much like the top of an open umbrella. They often are found together in groves or orchards, and make a very fine appearance.

Along the coast, and near the water, are many sand-hills. They almost line the coast—are of various shapes and sizes. Most of them are composed of white, fine sand, and are utterly destitute of vegetation. In a few places I could see some small bushes about the base of some of them; and through the openings between the sand-hills we could see groves of palms in the interior. In a few places we saw villages; for the most part they appeared small. Some of them had minarets, which indicated Moslem places of worship; and in several places we saw the top of minarets where we could see neither the village nor the mosque to which they belonged.

The minaret, I may here remark, is to the mosques what a steeple is to the church. Instead of a bell to call to worship, the moolah (the Mohammedan priest) mounts the minaret, proclaims the hour, and calls his people to prayer. The minaret rises higher above the mosque than the steeple usually does above the church. It is always white, and has a stairway up in the inside, by which the moolah ascends to the place from which he proclaims the hour and its accompanying duty. Near the top is a door through which he comes out. A little platform runs all round the minaret, fenced in with a low railing. There is a cover over the top, which protects them in time of rain. If I may compare a small thing with a great, I would say that a minaret is much like a tall candlestick, with a long spermaceti candle in it, and an extinguisher on the top of the candle. They have a very pretty and tasteful appearance. [236]

The whole coast from east of Damietta to the west of Rosetta, bends like a bow, the convex part being next the Mediterranean. It is caused, no doubt, in part at least, by the immense deposits which the Nile makes of the mud, with which its waters are loaded. There are, however, some very deep bays on the coast, as the bay of Aboukir.

The coast about Rosetta did not differ much from that about Damietta. The mouth of the river is obstructed with bars, which is much in the way of its commerce. The town lies back, so that we had not a good view of it, at the distance at which we passed. There were once, I am told, many good houses here; the trade was much concentrated here; but since the canal has been made from Atpi to Alexandria, the trade has taken that direction, and Alexandria has been built up at the expense of Rosetta. All along this coast the current seemed to set eastward.

We reached Alexandria on the first of June. It stands on a point of land that projects considerably into the sea, and has a part that turns west like the upper part of a capital T. On this west point stands a palace of the pasha, to which he resorts in summer. There are two harbours, one on the east and the other on the west side of the town; and in each harbour is a Lazaret. [237]

We had hoped, that as we had kept quarantine at Jaffa—as our vessel had little intercourse with the shore, having come from Beyroot, and as the health-officer promised he would state this on our papers, that we would have but little, if any, assigned us here. But we found that all availed not. We had twenty-one days assigned us, and all our entreaties availed not to lessen the number. The Turks, for the most part, take things patiently, and in few things is it more wise to imitate them than in this. We had our place assigned us in the Lazaret of the eastern harbour, and early the next morning the captain had us and all our baggage conveyed there. Our fellow-passengers were all assigned to the same place, while the captain and his crew were allowed to perform their quarantine on board their vessel—one soldier being put with them to see that none left the vessel, and none entered it; while another soldier was assigned to us to have a similar watch over all our doings.

On reaching the Lazaret, we were a good deal disconcerted at finding that all men, women, and children, masters and servants, were to be put in one and the same room. Who ever heard the like! I protested against it, but of what use to protest! We were told the rooms were scarce, and that this was their mode, to put all who had come in the same vessel in the same room. The room was large—about sixty by twenty. Several years' experience had satisfied me that there was more trouble than profit in trying to get Turks and Arabs to think and reason as we do. I therefore set myself to make the best of the case, and set off to examine the premises. At and about the door of the room—for we were not in the open court before it—I met several of our voyagers, who, with much earnestness, urged me not to go in. Angelo, who had just come out, earnestly advised me not to enter, and let me know that the place was literally overrun with fleas. I found them there in great numbers truly. But after having it swept again and again, and using other means to destroy them, we took possession. I had a strong cord stretched across, so as to cut off about one-third, and made a room about twenty feet square. On this cord we hung sheets, and blankets, and bed-spreads, and thus made a private and comfortable chamber. We procured a frame-work of palm wood that was a very good substitute for bedsteads—and some other articles of the first necessity, and did very well; for our room, as we found it, had not an article in it.

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Our fellow-voyagers took possession of the other part of the room, and renewed their discussions and debates, which for a little had been suspended.

The Lazaret has a set of large rooms, formed into squares, and surrounded with high walls. Attached to each room is a court, rather larger than the room, and open to the heavens. There is a tank of water in this court, and at one side, what is called a parletorio—a place with a kind of wood grating, through which they may see and converse with friends who call on them. Those in quarantine have, during the day, free use of the court attached to their rooms, but at night they are locked up in their rooms, their guardian with them, and the key taken to the room of the head of the quarantine.

There is a kind of market in the Lazaret, or rather a shop is kept there, at which most of the common necessaries may be had, and at about a fair price. I engaged a man to send us bread and milk daily, and was well supplied. Angelo as usual cooked for us and had the general management of our table, and continued to have it nearly as well furnished as when we were at Beyroot, and at about the same expense.

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We were a few times allowed to walk out as far as the sea-side, but not without our guard. Nor were we allowed to go more than a few rods from the walls. We much wished to take some walks in the vicinity, but this was not allowed. There was, however, nothing rude in their mode of denial.

The Lazaret is a new building, and not yet finished, and the work is still in progress. It is made of a soft limestone, which is brought in vessels and landed near the building. I observed that females were almost wholly employed in unloading the stone from these vessels, and the attendance on the workmen was chiefly, if not wholly, done by females. There were small companies of girls, from twelve to sixteen years of age, who carried stones and mortar. They usually went together, and sung and kept a kind of time. Their singing was in a kind of response to each other, and was evidently, in part at least, extempore; as they often alluded to what they saw, and to what was taking place about them. It reminded me of what is called the corn-song, as sung by the slaves in the southern States. They seemed cheerful, and are said to receive some wages for their service.

Soon after we were in the Lazaret, Mr. Gliddon, U. S. consul, called on us, and kindly tendered his aid in any way that might add to our comfort while thus shut up in the Lazaret. To be twenty-one days shut up in a room was tiresome, but not so much so to us as might be expected. We had books—we read and wrote, and through the kindness of our consul and others we received files of papers, which let us know what was going on in that much-loved land, from which we had been so long absent, and to think now we were about to return.

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Alexandria stands on the site of the old town of that name. The point of land which I have before mentioned, is pretty much covered with houses. The houses of the older part of the town are very inferior, but many of the buildings lately put up are in European style, and very good, and some splendid buildings. These stand, at least most of them, near the eastern harbour, and on a long street that runs south-east across the town. Many of these new and elegant houses are occupied by Europeans, of whom there are a considerable number in Alexandria. There are many Frank shops, and stores, and artists; and almost all kinds of European articles and goods may here be obtained.

A little to the east of the Frank quarter, as it may be called, stands Cleopatra's Needle. It is a granite obelisk—near it lies another on the ground. There is a large space on the south-east side of the city, that is not built on. It is a bed of ruins. In many places excavations have been made, and curious antiques found. The city is surrounded by a high and strong wall, with a deep fosse on the outside. The gates are always guarded with soldiers. The Navy-yard and Custom-house are on the western harbour; and in that harbour ride some noble vessels, and others are being built. The pasha and the sultan seem running a race in ship-building, and certainly each has done a good deal within a few years past. A little south of the town, and on a small elevation, stands Pompey's Pillar. It has so often been described that I may well pass it over, with the remark, that it is a large and beautiful shaft of solid rock.

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Alexandria has been much revived of late, and is now the chief seaport of Egypt. Having selected it as the place for his navy-yard, and through the canal of Mahmudieh opened a direct communication between Alexandria and the Nile at Atpi, the trade has almost all centred at

Alexandria, to the ruin of Rosetta. The population of Alexandria may be from 30 to 40,000.

The district about Alexandria has, with few exceptions, a dry and burnt-up appearance. In a few places the date and the acacia trees are seen, but a large part of the surface has almost nothing on it.

The pasha has shown a commendable degree of zeal for introducing the arts and improvements of Europe into his dominions. He has manufactories, and artists, and schools, at Alexandria and other places. His leading object in the whole seems to be, to promote and confirm his own power over the people that he now governs. He has intelligence enough to see that arts and improvements have given a decided advantage to those who possess them, and for the sake of those advantages he desires to be possessed of them. This has led him to employ many European artists and masters—has induced him to send a number of youth to Europe to be educated there, and instructed in the various departments of useful knowledge.

LETTER XXII.

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Cairo, June 29th, 1838.

Wishing to make our tour up the Nile as soon as we were relieved from quarantine, we had in part made our arrangements when that took place. On the 21st, we were called down to be inspected by the man of medical science, and were declared free from all suspicious symptoms, and entitled to mingle with the good people of the country, and travel where we pleased. It was farcical enough to see the man stand at the distance of ten or fifteen feet, and inspect our tongues, and make us move our arms, and then gravely decide that we were free from infection. Our keepers, who, on the whole, had been kind and attentive, but careful not to touch us, now approached and gave us a cordial shake of the hand, and their congratulations on our restoration to freedom. Each had to pay a small rent for the room. We had also several small fees to pay—as the board of our guardian. Through the aid of our consul a boat had been engaged, and some other preparations made for our trip up the Nile: deeming it best, after so long a delay, to lose no time in making our visit to this place. We found the boat in readiness, with such stores as were necessary; and the American flag floated in the air at the mast-head. This was to make known to all whom it might concern, that the boat was mine *pro tem.*, and not to be searched or molested while under my protection. We were soon in readiness to leave. Several persons, however, whose animals we had used in riding from the Lazaret to the boat, and some who had brought us various articles, were to be paid. As I knew not what the usual prices were, I requested a Janissary to give each what was right. He soon settled the matter, and paid them about one-third of what they demanded of me. Thus, almost perpetually, these people try to extort from travellers more than is due, and especially if the traveller be a stranger among them.

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Alexandria does not stand on the Nile, but near thirty miles west of the Rosetta branch of that river. A canal (the Mahmudieh) connects the town on the western harbour with the river, not at its mouth, but at Atfi. This place may be nearly sixty miles from Alexandria, but not so far from the mouth of the river. This canal is the work of the Pasha. Owing to the bars and shallows at the mouth of the river, much difficulty was found in loading and unloading vessels; and the trade of Egypt, which was carried on mainly through that branch, was much impeded. Possibly a wish to build up Alexandria, which was the best harbour for his navy, may have had its influence. The Pasha resolved to open a canal from some point of the Rosetta branch to Alexandria. Atfi was fixed on as the point. The course of the canal marked out, and multitudes of people from all the adjacent towns and villages, marched down to different parts of the line and set to work. The greater part had nothing to work with but their hands; but the soil was soft and no stone in it. In a few months the work was done, but it is said, many lives were lost through the hardships to which the people were subjected. Sail-boats are used on the canal; but as the wind is not always fair, they at times use the tow-line, but men, and not animals, pull it. The boats that are on the canal do not pass into the river, nor those of the river into the canal. There must of course be another boat taken at Atfi, and the baggage changed from one to the other. This consumes time and is attended with some expense.

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The country through which the canal passes is nearly a dead level, and, in some places, I should think, lower than the level of the river. The banks of the canal were from eight to twelve feet above the water. They were too high to allow us to have a good view of the country over them. At some places, however, they were lower, and at others, by stopping the boat, and ascending the bank, we had fine views of the rich meadows of Egypt. For many miles after leaving Alexandria, we passed a succession of houses and gardens, along the canal, that had a very pleasant appearance. Several of them were fitted up in Frank style, with glass windows, and other fixtures indicating European society. They may have been occupied, possibly owned, by Europeans. Connected with several of these houses, were extensive gardens, and in a good state of keeping. In addition to the palm tree, which is the tree of Egypt, there were several other kinds along the canal, as the acacia. It is low, and not unlike the olive in its shape and size, but its bark and leaf approach more to the locust. It is pretty as a shady and ornamental tree, but I know not its other uses.

There are, all along the canal, water-wheels at work, raising water for irrigating the adjacent gardens and fields. The mode of making them is simple: a channel is cut into the bank, so deep that the water will flow into it; a wheel is made to turn in this cut, being suspended over it; a

rope, with a set of jars, passes over this wheel, and is turned by it. This is long enough to allow the jars to pass through the water and come up full, and, in turning, the water is poured into a cistern, and thence conveyed by small troughs to the place where it is needed. The wheels are usually worked by oxen. The number of wheels is very great, and most of them are constantly in motion through the day. [245]

We passed some villages near the canal, but none of much size. There were some of a larger size at a distance, as we concluded, from the minarets which we could see. In several places we saw water at a distance that looked like a lake. In passing up the canal, and the same was true after we entered the river, I could not but notice how the people and the animals loved to be in the water. The children and youth were seen in it, and the cattle seemed to have a passion, not only for wading in the water, but for lying down in it, so as often to cover their whole bodies, except a small part of their heads. This may, in part, have been to keep off the flies, but mainly, I judge, to enjoy the coolness which the water imparted to them. I never before understood the force of the expression in Pharaoh's dream, where it is said, he "saw seven kine coming up out of the river." It is true to the life. They lie in the water until satisfied, then come up and feed on the low grounds or meadows near it.

We had often heard dismal accounts of the annoyances met with in the boats of the Nile; we were now to have a proof of them. On entering our boat we observed that it had recently been painted, and hoped that this betokened a deliverance from those gentry that so annoy Frank travellers. But in this we were mistaken. No sooner were our lights put out, than they came upon us from their hiding-places in such numbers, as to make it one of the most trying nights we had ever passed. And especially did they assail our children. And whether it was that they liked their young blood better, or that the children, in their sound sleep, made less resistance, I know not, but so it was, that in the morning their faces were disfigured with bites, and their eyes so swollen that they could hardly see. Fortunately, we were not doomed to spend another night in this boat. We reached Atpi during the following day, in time to transfer ourselves and baggage to a river boat, which was about leaving for Cairo. This boat was happily less infested with the gentry above referred to, and we made out pretty well as to sleeping. [246]

Atpi is a small village at the place where the canal leaves the river. It has grown up since the canal was made. There are some stores and shops, and a number of persons who attend to the produce and goods that pass and repass from the canal to the river. We here procured a boat, and made other necessary arrangements. In all these boats we had to provide for ourselves, from the beds we slept on to the fuel with which we cooked our food. As necessary articles are not to be had at all places, and especially as the boat may not stop when you find yourself minus in some needful article, the only sure way is to keep a good stock on hand. We had our flag, as before, flying at the mast-head, and could not but feel a little national pride at the notice which it attracted.

Near Atpi, on the eastern side of the river, is a considerable town, with some pretty good buildings, and among them some occupied as factories. There was also a large building on the western side, where the red fez, now so much used throughout Turkey, are made. These manufactories are, we were told, public property. The government monopolizes all things in this land. The policy may well be questioned. Possibly in no other way could they be so soon introduced.

The average height of the banks of the Nile may be from twelve to sixteen feet. Fields of corn and sugar-cane were seen on the banks, but not in as great numbers as I had expected. This in part, however, was accounted for by the fact, that the time of the rise was at hand, and their crops were gathered off. [247]

The productiveness of Egypt depends on the annual overflowing of the Nile. The Nile is the river, and the only river of Egypt; and beside it, it is said, there is not a brook, not a spring, of running water in Egypt. There are wells; for by digging down to nearly the level of the water in the Nile, water may be obtained at any place. There is no rain in Egypt. Near the sea coast, as at Alexandria, light showers may fall, but up in the country there are none. There may be cloudy weather during the winter, but no rain. Once every year the Nile rises so as to cover the greater part of the country. It begins in the latter part of June, and gradually continues for nearly two months, then gradually falls to its usual volume of water. The rise has now begun, but it is perceivable only to those who are acquainted with the river. The cause of this rise is supposed to be the great rains, and possibly melting of snows, in the high country in which its main stream rises; but the matter is not certain. As the Nile falls, the grain is sown on the wet ground, and produces most abundantly.

There are many canals, from four to six and eight feet deep, and wide enough to convey a considerable body of water. These pass off from the river, and from these, smaller channels pass in various directions, so as to divide much of the surface into lots or small fields. These were much more observable at some places than at others. The design of these channels, probably, was to bring the water more generally over the ground than it would otherwise come; or when the Nile did not rise high enough to cover the field, the water, by means of these small canals, would pass in so many directions through the district, as, by percolation, to moisten the ground more generally than it otherwise would do. [248]

There were along the river a great many water-melons, cucumbers, and other vegetables. It reminded me of the complaint of Israel, in the wilderness, that they were deprived of the melons and cucumbers of Egypt. Num. xi. 5.

The Nile winds a good deal. It has many of those long sweeps that characterise the Ohio and

Mississippi; and as the whole country is alluvial, the water at those turns washes away the banks against which it strikes, while, on the opposite side of the river, a shoal or a sand bank is formed. In these places, and they increased as we ascended, considerable districts lay along the edge of the water, and only a few feet above it, and on them the vegetables above named, with many others, were raised in great numbers. There was usually a small place in these garden spots built to protect a person from the rain, whose office it is to prevent pillage, and sell the vegetables to boat-men and passengers; for almost all the travelling from Alexandria to Cairo is done in boats on the Nile. It reminded me of the "cottage in a vineyard,"—"a lodge in a garden of cucumbers." A little more than half-way, from Alexandria to Cairo, on the western side of the river, we saw the end of a new and much larger canal, now being made in a more direct course to Alexandria. It will probably intersect the Mahmudieh canal, at some point south of Alexandria. The southern end is near where the sands have almost covered the district west of the Nile. Whether it will pass into the sandy district, and thus reclaim some of it, and prevent the farther encroachments of the sand, I know not. There is no doubt that tillage extended much farther to the west, in some places, formerly, than at present. The canals and means of irrigation have been neglected, and the sands have spread over considerable districts; some of these might no doubt be reclaimed, were a proper mode followed with respect to them. This will hardly be done at present, as there are large parts of Egypt now irrigated, that lie neglected; the population, with their idle habits, are not sufficient to cultivate the whole. For a considerable distance on the west of the river the sands from the desert covered the banks, and ran down to the edge of the water; it was a very white, fine sand, and easily moved by the wind.

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A little below the junction of the Rosetta and Damietta branches of the Nile, which takes place twelve or fifteen miles below Cairo, the Pasha has begun a great work for the more perfect irrigation of the Delta, or the district between the rivers which is thus called. The plan is to make a strong dam across both branches of the Nile, and throw the water into a new channel, the bed of which shall be much more elevated, and thus bring the waters nearer the level of the country, and of course greatly facilitate the irrigation of the land at all seasons. The greater part of the most valuable land of Egypt lies between the rivers. This part is called the Delta from its likeness to the Greek letter of that name, which is of a triangular form. A district of land on both sides of the triangle was cultivated and productive as far as the waters of the Nile could be made to reach it; but beyond that, the long burning suns scorch up vegetation, and convert all into a waste of barren sand. At some distance in the interior, both to the east and west, water is found, and there vegetation exists, but these places are not in the valley of the Nile.

Most of the villages we passed were poor and small; the houses for the most part made of mud or unburnt brick; sometimes the brick had straw in it. We saw several places where they had establishments for hatching eggs. This practice has long prevailed in Egypt. They spread the eggs in layers on the floor; and have a way of subjecting them to such a degree and uniformity of heat as perfects the process of incubation. Their fowls seemed to me to be inferior both as to size and flavour.

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The Nile seemed to me to be about as large as the Ohio at Cincinnati. It was, however, at its lowest state when I saw it. The rise began while I was at Cairo, but at first it is so slow, that a person not acquainted with the river would probably not observe it for several days. Our boat, which was not as large as a common steam-boat, grounded several times in ascending the river. The boatmen would readily get out in the water and push her off. This was easily done, as there were no rocks in the river, but mud and sand banks. The boatmen are a shameless set and were often, and especially when in the water, in a state of perfect nudity, and this was the common condition of the multitudes which we saw bathing in the river.

We had a daily wind up the river, which at times blew pretty strong. It usually began soon after sunrise, and increased as the day advanced. Towards night it began to abate, and nearly ceased soon after sundown. The causes which give it this regularity we leave to be explained by those wise men in philosophy who feel bound to give reasons for all the phenomena of nature. During one or two months in the year it is said to change its direction, and blow the other way.

I had several times in the south-west a fine view of the whirlwinds of the desert; several of them could often be seen at the same time. A thick column of dust and sand seemed to run up to the clouds, and then gradually disappear; at times they would pass with considerable rapidity; and while thus in quick motion, had a pretty, but rather singular appearance. While considerably below Grand Cairo, we had a view of the pyramids. Their tapering points ran high in the air, and broke the smooth outline of our southern horizon.

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Grand Cairo stands on the western bank of the Nile, and at the distance of above a mile from the river. One of its large suburbs, called Bulack, is on the river, and may be considered its port. There the boats lie, and there much of the business of the town is transacted. For several miles before we reached Cairo, we were passing gardens and country-houses, some of which are of a superior kind. Cairo is rather an assemblage of towns than one great and continuous city; its parts lie contiguous to each other, as chance and caprice may have decided. Close to the south-east side of it a range of hills rises, the first and almost the only hills that we saw in Egypt—those back of the pyramids of Gheza excepted—on a part of these hills the citadel is situate, which commands the city, and is a place of considerable strength.

Between the town and the river there lies a large open space—immense piles of rubbish disfigured some parts of it. The Pasha is making improvements here that will add much to the beauty of this open space—he is levelling it, and with the rubbish filling up low places, and making wide, elevated roads across it in various directions, and having it planted with trees. A large canal crossed this place; many people were employed in cleaning it out, and putting it in

order to receive the waters from the Nile. There is also within the city, and before the palace, an open space of considerable size, which has lately had much labour bestowed on it. Elevated roads or causeways are made round it and through it, and their edges set with trees, which give the whole a pretty appearance. The water from the Nile, when at its height, is let into this square; but the elevated parts are designed to be above the waters, and afford pleasant walks for the idlers and loungers, which are found even in Egypt. [252]

The pyramids, so much talked of, lie near Grand Cairo, and it would have argued a great want of curiosity not to have visited them when so near. A few days ago, we made a visit to those of Gheza, which lie on the west side of the Nile, and in full view of the city. We set off about six in the morning, and rode up the river to the upper part of old Cairo; this took us about an hour. We then crossed the Nile in boats, to a small old village called Gheza, which gives its name to this cluster of pyramids. We then had the wide river bottom of the Nile to cross; this took us about two hours. The river being low, there was no water in the several deep and wide canals that pass through this river bottom, and we were able to cross them. This shortened our ride much. We passed several remains of villages on this plain. As we drew near the last village, which seemed little better than a pile of ruins, several Bedouin Arabs came out, with nothing but a long shirt on, and ran as hard as they could until they met us, and urged us to employ them as our guides. It now appeared, that it was a race among themselves, on the plan that those who first reached us, were considered as having the right to be employed as a guide and get the pay. As we had a cawass with us, whom we brought from Cairo to manage all such matters, and among other things to save us from the annoyance which these Bedouins at times give travellers, we left it for him to make such a bargain with them as he thought best. He engaged one or two, and let the remainder know that we did not need their aid. We saw, at a distance on our right, a line of arches on the plain, and a bridge-like place over them, the uses of which we could not ascertain. [253]

The pyramids stand on the first rise after leaving the river flats. The ridge of that place may be from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet. The ground on which the large one stands (the Cheops) is nearly level. The pyramid is square, and stands to the four cardinal points. Each side, its base is said to be seven hundred feet, while its height is only six hundred. It seems to be a solid mass of rock, excepting the small rooms which I shall presently mention. The plan on which it is built is singular. A large platform is laid down, seven hundred feet square—this is the first row; the stone is nearly three feet in thickness. A second row is laid on of a similar size. This row is not laid out to the edge of the other, but falls back all round about eighteen inches. The third and fourth and following rows are laid in the same manner—forming stairs. There are about two hundred rows of stones, which average nearly three feet in thickness, and terminate in a small flat at the top of about thirty feet square. The ascent is usually made at the north-east corner. About half-way up there is a small room, which seems designed as a resting place. There have evidently been some stones thrown from the top, a part of one row being left, and possibly one stone of a second row at the south-east corner. It took me not quite half an hour to ascend; this included the several stops in order to rest. From the top I had a most splendid view, as to space—Grand Cairo and all the villages and gardens about it; the valley of the Nile far to the north; the several groups of pyramids, and the palm trees that lay to the south, and in the region of ancient Memphis. The descent required about as much time, but was attended with less difficulty than the ascent. The whole, with the time spent on the top, occupied about an hour, and did not seem to have half the peril or labour that some have represented. The entrance to the interior is on the north side. We went to the mouth and examined it, but, on the whole, concluded we would not go in; the descent is long, and nothing to be seen within, but one or two empty rooms. While the rocks of which the pyramids are built, are limestone of the secondary formation, as is manifest from the shells in it, the passage is lined with polished Egyptian granite; the same is said to be the case with the rooms. The entrance of the passage may be fifty feet above the ground, but it descends as one enters. [254]

A little to the south-west is a second pyramid, nearly as large as that of Cheops. It is sharp at the top, and cannot, with ease, be ascended. To the south is a small one. There were in all directions tombs, many of them of most enormous size. The pyramids are in the midst of a large grave-yard. We went up the hill to the north-west some distance, and visited several rooms that were full of hieroglyphics. Passing round the southern side of the pyramids, we examined several places where excavations had recently been made. Some old monuments, that had been covered with sand, were laid bare; and, from the bottom of some deep well-like places, several most beautiful sarcophagi had been raised—two of black porphyry, beautifully polished, and covered with hieroglyphics, lay on the ground; others had probably been removed. We then visited the Sphynx, and took our lunch under the shade of its head. It has a lion's body, in a couching posture, with the head and face of a Nubian female, and is of most enormous dimensions. The head about ten feet in diameter. The height from the ground, and the length of the body, in proportion. It is hewn out of a rock, which is the soft limestone, and has much disintegrated; the features are much injured. The back is almost wholly covered with sand, which has blown in from the desert. As we crossed the low grounds to the river, on our return, we had a fine specimen of that wonderful phenomenon called the mirage. From some cause, the air near the ground assumes the appearance of water; the similarity is such, that persons are often deceived, and are confident that it is water, when seen at a little distance. We had crossed the plain about nine or ten o'clock A.M., and there was no appearance of water; but now, between one and two P.M., there were many places, at some distance, that had the precise appearance of water. In some cases, the spots that had this appearance were but a few inches, or one or two feet in width, and looked precisely like puddles of water after a rain: at other places whole acres seemed covered with water, and on several occasions, it was round the roots of trees; which seemed growing out of it. I had, on one [255]

or two occasions, seen the same as I came up the Nile. At a considerable village on the western side of the river, just below where the sands come in so near the river, our boat stopped, and while the captain and part of the crew went into the village, I ascended the bank, and walked to a place at a little distance that was more elevated than the other parts of the plain. It gave me a fine view of the face of the country; but I was surprised to see, towards the north-west, an extensive portion, as far as the eye could reach, that appeared a lake of water. In several places there were clusters of palms growing out of it. I had not seen on any map a lake marked in that place, nor had I heard of any such thing. I wondered if it could be the mirage; the appearance was so perfectly like water, that it was hard to believe it could be anything else. On returning to the bank, I inquired of some one if it was water that I had seen, and was assured that there was no water in that direction, but that it was a curious appearance in the air. I will leave it to the philosopher to explain this matter. The ruins of what is said to be ancient Heliopolis lie but a short distance from Cairo; we did not, however, visit them; the remains above ground are so few, as hardly to repay the trouble of a ride to them. The sandy deserts are to the east and south of Cairo, and the whole way from that city to Suez on the Red Sea, a distance of about sixty miles, is a cheerless waste of barren sand. The remains of an old canal can be traced, it is said, most of the way from the Nile, a little south of Cairo, to Suez, and it is supposed that it might be reopened. Much has lately been said about the Pasha's making a railroad from Cairo to that point, and I was assured some materials for that purpose were brought from England; but nothing as yet has been done, and probably years will pass before the plan is carried into effect.

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We had several pleasant interviews with the mission families at Cairo; less, however, than we had hoped, and would have had, but for the sickness of some of their number. They are mostly Germans, in the employ of the Church Missionary Society. Their attention is principally, but not exclusively, directed to the Christian sects in the country. Miss H. has lately, at the special invitation of the Pasha, opened a school in the harem, and is giving instruction to the females of the Pasha's family. Thus far it has been well received; what may be its result, time alone will show. About the time we reached Cairo, several of the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, who had for some years been labouring in Abyssinia, returned from that country. Some difficulty had arisen, growing out of the intrigues of persons unfriendly to them, which made it advisable for them, for a time at least, to leave that country. It was hoped that before long they would be able to return and resume their labours.

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The Pasha has a number of schools at this place, and various manufactories and establishments, which no doubt are doing good. Whether the good will equal what has been expected from them, may be doubted. His improvements and innovations are certainly tending to produce changes in the Moslem manners, habits, and modes of thinking, which will in part remove the obstacles in the way of introducing the gospel among them; "but he meaneth not so, neither does his heart think so." While the great body of the Egyptians are Moslems, there are a number of the Christian sects to be found here—as the Armenians, Greeks, Copts, Latins, and perhaps some others. The state of all these sects is much like what it is through the East—the life and power of the gospel is not known. The Church Missionary Society have for many years maintained a mission at Grand Cairo; they have distributed the Scriptures and other books, published at their mission press at Malta—conducted schools—talked and preached to the people. Their success has been but moderate. At present, their schools are in a pretty prosperous condition, and their field of usefulness seems more encouraging.

Grand Cairo is much the largest town in Egypt, but its precise population is not known. A fire broke out in the Frank quarter, (the place where most of the Franks live,) a few days before we arrived, and destroyed several hundred houses and much property.

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The Copts have a curious custom about making their Patriarch. He is always taken from a particular monastic establishment. When chosen, he refuses to serve, and they literally beat him until he gives his consent. The Abyssinians receive their Patriarch from Egypt; and after having been chosen, and even gone into Abyssinia, he will refuse to serve, and deny that he is the person sent to be their Patriarch, until they give him a sound drubbing, when he will agree to receive the office. There is a strange mixture of childish folly and weakness in such a practice.

I was much struck with the immense numbers of water-carriers, employed in bringing water from the Nile; some to deal out to individuals by the cupful, some to sell to families by the load, and others to water the streets before the houses of their employers. There were hundreds, and possibly thousands, thus employed. The common goat-skins, taken off nearly whole, and sewed up, excepting a small place, was the usual vessel. This they generally carried on their backs, but some used donkeys, and others had camels, with enormous leather bags, made much like saddle-bags, that would carry a barrel or more of water.

The range of the thermometer at Alexandria was from 74° to 76°. There was great uniformity, except when a sherack prevailed, which raised it several degrees. We had one while in the lazaretta, which covered us with dust, and increased the heat six or eight degrees; it did not last long. As we ascended the river, there was a considerable rise of the thermometer; and at this place it stands from 92° to 94°; and it is not so warm now, I am told, as is usual at this season.

LETTER XXIII.

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Alexandria, July 14.

A little before we left Cairo on our return, I had a disagreement with the captain in whose boat I had gone up from Atfi. On reaching Cairo, I was induced, in part owing to the fire which was raging in the Frank quarter of the town, to think I had better not take rooms in that quarter, as otherwise I might probably have done. The captain, who had been wishing to engage to take me back to Atfi, expressed his willingness that I should remain in his boat, retain the use of his cabin, and he would take me back for what he received for bringing me up; and engaged to be ready to start back at the time I named. When the time drew near at which we were to set off, I found that he was not likely to be ready to go, as he had not discharged the loading which he brought up. It came also to my knowledge, through Angelo, that he intended to make a special charge for the use of the cabin, which I fully understood was a part of the accommodation he was to find me. On inquiry, I found that thus it was; and the prospect was that I would be detained, as well as greatly overcharged. I told him, as we had misunderstood each other, we must have a new bargain. I would agree to the bargain as I understood it; but not as he now explained it. He declared he would not agree to it but as he understood it. I let him know I would leave his boat, paying him for the time I had used the cabin. On inquiry I found another boat was about to start at the time that I had fixed on, and made my arrangements to leave him. This took place near night, and the captain changed his tone, and declared I should not leave his boat. He would not allow his men to hand my baggage; forbade the men of the other boat that was hard by to set foot on his deck. The English consul was fully engaged with taking care of the effects of the Franks who had been burned out; and, moreover, night came on, and we had no way to get word to him. I threatened the captain with a complaint through the consul; but he let me know he cared not for the consul. Poor Angelo was in a great fright. He always had a fear of the Turks, and now all his fears came over him. I did not myself feel altogether comfortable. There I was with my wife and three little children, in the cabin of a boat, the captain and crew of which were Turks, and had not only abused me, but positively refused to let me leave it. I had but one servant, and he was much frightened. There was no alternative; we had to stay and did stay that night, and that without any molestation. At the dawn of day, the crew were at work unloading, and getting ready to set off. I had no intention, however, of remaining in the power of a captain who had shown me so little respect. I found means to get word to a cawass of the consul's, who was often employed near where our boat lay; and through his interference had my baggage landed per force, paid the captain what the cawass said was right, and went on board the other boat with my family. When the captain found that leave him I would, he, Turk-like, submitted to it with more quietness than I had expected. We were all glad to get out of the boat, after the dispute, and none of us more so than Angelo, who did not seem to think his head was safe on his shoulders, until he was safely on board another boat.

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The vessel in which we took passage to Atfi had two giraffes on board, destined for the United States. We did not see them until we went on board the boat. They are a mild and inoffensive animal, and feed on dates, bread, and hay. They were under the special care of a mustapha or janissary of the U. S. Consul, who had engaged to accompany them to the United States. He had with him two Arabs, for the twofold purpose of waiting on himself, and taking care of the giraffes.

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The wind up the river was so strong, that we found it much more difficult to get down than we had found it to ascend; and but for the energetic character of Mustapha, who had special orders to be in Alexandria by such a day, we would, in all probability, have had a long passage. He hurried, and scolded, and used his cowskin freely on the crew, hardly sparing the captain, with whom he had some terrible quarrels. The wind was much against us, and we had a few days that were most oppressively hot. At times we were obliged to lie by, and the wind covered us with dust and sand. We at last reached this place, but it took us nearly half as long again as it did to go up. We did not get back, however, without experiencing some of the evils of travelling in Egypt. The hot winds and dust met with on our return, had given sore eyes to all our children. Some of them could hardly see; and Angelo, who had been our factotum in all our travels, was entirely laid up with the same complaint; and under this affliction his heart began to fail him as to the long voyage on which we were about to enter; and he fairly intimated that he felt like changing his purpose, and remaining in the East. He had lived with me above two years. In all my journeys, and travels, and residences, Angelo never left me. He knew enough of English to understand the directions I gave him, and enough of Arabic to have intercourse with the people. I always found him honest, and faithful, and attentive to my wants and interest. I tried again and again to teach him to read, but it really seemed that his talents did not lie that way; after going over the same lesson twenty times, he still could not make it out; and without losing his book, he gradually fell into the way of not using it. He was raised a Catholic, as most of the Maltese are, but had fallen out with his priest before he left Smyrna, and seemed not inclined to have much to do with his church. He generally attended family worship, and either the English or Arabic preaching, but showed a disposition to let little things keep him away. On the whole, he had less religious feeling than his advantages ought to have produced. He always showed much attachment to our children, was a good nurse, and the children loved him. From the early part of our acquaintance, he declared his wish to accompany me home; and up to the day of our reaching Alexandria, I did not doubt that he would do so. I did not indeed see how we could do without him. But now his heart seemed to fail him; his eyes were grievously sore—and, possibly, as the time drew near, he may have had an increase of fears as to how he could live, where no one could understand his language. I am not sure, indeed, that a more special cause existed. He had manifested much kindness of feeling for a young female servant that had spent some time in our family before we left Beyroot. I could not but think that the thoughts of having so many thousand miles between them, had an influence which he did not own, and possibly hardly admitted to his own mind. However that may be, he expressed a desire to remain, and we were able to make such arrangements as allowed of it. He continued his attention to the last day we stayed, and

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carried with him our best wishes and prayers, that he prove as good a servant of Jesus Christ as he has been to us; and meet us again, where all is love, and purity, and peace.

THE END.

Bradbury and Evans, Printers, Whitefriars

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