

The mode of living at Assalt, and the conveniences and comforts of the people, as well as their manners, are much vuder than in Egypt, low even as the people of that country must be ranked in

“The Lake (Asphaltites) breedeth no living creature. Nothing will go down or sink into it. It exceeds 100 miles in length, is 25 miles over at the broadest part, and six miles at the narrowest. On the east are the Arabian Nomades, on the south Machærus, a fortress next in importance to Jerusalem. On the same coast there is a fountain of hot waters, called *Callinchoe*, esteemed wholesome and medicinal. Along the west coast lived the Esseni, a people living without women or money, having community of property, and aiming at an extraordinary degree of purity in their lives and manners.” — *Plin. Nat. Hist.*, book v. c. 16, 17.

“The Lake Asphaltites lies in the midst of the province of Edom, and stretches forth in length five hundred furlongs, but in breadth it is but three-score. The water is very bitter and stinking, so that neither fish, nor any other thing used to the water, can live in it. And though many remarkable rivers of very sweet water empty themselves into it, yet it remains as corrupt and unsavoury, both to the taste and the smell, as ever it did before. Every year rises out of the middle of it great massy pieces of bitumen and pitch, sometimes bigger than three plethras (of one hundred feet each,) and sometimes little less than one. And upon that account the barbarous inhabitants call the larger pieces *bulls*, and the lesser *calves*. These pieces of pitch and brimstone, floating upon the water, seem, at a distance, to be as so many islands. There are evident signs that forego and give notice of the casting up of this bituminous matter at least twenty days before; for a horrid smell of brimstone and pitch infects the air round about the lake at many furlongs distance; and all metals, whether of gold, silver, or copper, near the place, change their natural colour, which presently returns again, as soon as the brimstone is exhaled. The places bordering on it are so burning hot (by reason of the sulphur and brimstone under ground), and cast forth such an horrible stench, that the inhabitants are very unhealthy and short-lived. Yet the country thereabouts, being watered with many pleasant rivers and refreshing springs, bears abundance of palm-trees; and in a certain vale near to this place grows that they call *balm*, from which they raise a great revenue, inasmuch as this plant grows in no part of the world beside, and is of excellent use among physicians, for the healing and curing of wounds and other distempers. The inhabitants on both sides this lake are so eager to carry away this brimstone that they fight one with another, and they bring it off in a strange manner without shipping. For they cast in huge bundles of bulrushes fastened close together, upon which three or more of them place themselves; two of which ply the oars, which are fastened to the bulrushes, and the third carries a bow and arrows to defend themselves against such as attempt to make up upon them from the other side, or that offer them any violence. As soon as they come to the brimstone they get upon it and hew it in

* This does not correspond with the position of the ruins now so called.

the scale of happiness and ease. They have here, as on the banks of the Nile, a very fertile and productive country; and though the one is a flat plain of alluvial soil, and the other is mountain and valley interspersed, yet each would, with proper cultivation, produce abundantly all the fruits of the earth, for which the climate is favourable. In Egypt, however, they are most severely taxed, which might account for their general poverty; but at Assalt they are free of all burdens, and the slow progress made by them in the acquisition of wealth and improvement must be attributed mainly to their ignorance, and their excessive love of idleness and gossiping from house to house, to hear the news and acquaint themselves with every man's business, at the same time that they neglect their own. This is indeed more or less the case among all the Turks and Arabs that I have ever yet seen, and materially assists, conjointly with the destroying influence of despotic governments, to keep them in the low state of civilization in which they remain. The Christians in Syria, who are really oppressed by heavy burdens and odious distinctions, however much they may be inclined to indolence, do not generally indulge it, but lead a very active and busy life. The Christians of Assalt, however, being free of all such hardships, instead of profiting by that freedom to increase their strength, wealth, and respectability, waste more than half their time in idleness, and instead of advancing beyond, seem really to recede behind, their Christian brethren on the coast.

pieces with axes, as pieces of stone out of a soft rock; and so, loading the bulrush boat, they row back. If any fall into the water through the deficiency of the boat, yet he never sinks as in other waters, though he knows not how to swim, but lies upon the water as if he were the best swimmer in the world. For the lake naturally bears any thing that has either a vegetative or an animal life, except such things as are solid, and seem to be without pores, as silver, gold, lead, or the like; and even these are much longer and slower in sinking than when they are cast into other waters. And this profit and advantage the barbarians reap from it: they transport this pitch into Egypt, and there sell it for the use of embalming of the dead; for if they do not mix this with other aromatic spices, the bodies cannot be preserved long from putrefaction. — *Diodorus Siculus*, Book xix. c. 6.

The people here rise early, and after prayers at home sally forth as if in quest of society, often halting at the door of the first house before which they may happen to find others assembled. Here they remain to smoke and drink coffee sometimes till eleven or twelve o'clock, when perhaps they go home to dinner. After this they must have tobacco and coffee again; and then an hour's sleep, or even two, is a common indulgence. By the time they awake they feel disposed to take another stroll from home to hear the news; and this ramble from house to house continues until sunset, when they return home to supper, and even after that often go out to join some assembly, at whatever house they may have met to pass away the evening. Except the mere cultivators of the soil, and men who live by the work of their own hands, no one seems to labour; and with the small traders and shopkeepers, as well as those who are proprietors of land or animals, however inconsiderable the amount of their rent or produce, they scarcely apply an hour a day to the transaction of business: all the rest is given up to going about from house to house, or indulging in the most unprofitable indolence, leaving the females of the family at home to do all the drudgery of the household work, while they either sleep or smoke away their lazy existence. Not a single interval is filled up by reading, either on religious or any other subjects; and of writing they do as little as possible, it being thought troublesome to pen even a common letter of business when really necessary. Their information on all subjects of general knowledge is extremely confined, and their enquiries, when prompted by curiosity to make any, are so ill-directed, that it will be long before these alone extend their knowledge to any good or useful purpose.

The Christians of this place being all of the Greek church, are great admirers of the Russians, who are the only people of any great nation that are of the same faith. They constantly speak of their prowess, and consider them the first people in the world. The sovereigns of Europe they consider bound to unite together

for the purpose of rescuing the Holy Land from the infidel grasp of the Turks ; and they understand the Holy Alliance to have no other aim in view. Buonaparte is their favourite hero ; and not even by his warmest admirers in Europe was he ever so extravagantly eulogized as he is here. They all believe that *his* only object was to rescue the holy sepulchre from infidel hands, and give to the Christians of the East a complete deliverance. The French army, and the battles fought by them in Syria, are therefore frequent themes of conversation, and are never spoken of without the greatest exaggeration ; though it must be admitted that a mere handful of the French often defeated and dispersed thousands of Turks and Arabs combined. Facts, indeed, and those too notorious to be controverted, would furnish them sufficient food for admiration ; but not satisfied with this, they relate events which none but those who believed in the existence of modern miracles could for a moment credit.

Assalt, Wednesday, February 28. — My Nazarene guide, Malim Georgis, not being so well acquainted with the road from hence to Karak as with the first part of our journey, it became advisable to procure a person who not only knew the way, but was acquainted with the Bedouins of the country through which we had to pass. The man who was deemed best qualified for this journey was soon brought to me ; and Abu Fārah, for that was his name, pleased me much at our first interview. From his general appearance and manner I had taken him for a Mohammedan ; but I had occasion to learn soon afterwards that he was quite as much a Christian as a Moslem ; his faith and practice being so equally balanced, that he might be taken for a connecting link between the two. He had all the manners of a Mohammedan, though his profession was that of a Christian ; but he was by nature so constituted, that his feelings would be always on the side of whichever religion afforded him the greatest privileges ; as, in the present instance, he regarded his confinement to one wife as a very painful sacrifice, though

enjoined by his faith, and consoled himself, as well as he could, for this restriction, by rejoicing that he was at least permitted to eat pork and drink wine whenever he could obtain them, a pleasure denied to those who could exceed him in the number of the females of his harem.

As the morning appeared to promise us a favourable day, I was determined to set out in prosecution of my journey ; but, as usual, new difficulties were started, and new objections moved. So common is it, however, to be interrupted in the most reasonable designs and ordinary occupations of life, by the busy idlers who throng round every one setting out on a journey of any distance, that I conceived their objections less worthy of attention than perhaps they deserved. Some were of opinion, that, if we should get to Karak in safety, it would be difficult at any time, but quite impossible at the present, to make a journey from thence to Baghdad, from the hostile operations of the Wahabi Arabs extending over the intervening country. A still greater number thought we should not even reach Karak, in consequence of the Beni-Szakher Arabs often coming in upon the borders of that town, and making the road dangerous to all passengers, but particularly to strangers. Abu Farah, my new companion, was well known, however, to all the Bedouins, whose small encampments lay between the places on the road, and we hoped by this means to make our journey good. An objection was next raised by my guide himself, as to our setting out to-day, he insisting on it that *Youn-el-Arbaah*, or the fourth day, was the most inauspicious day of the week on which to commence a journey. It was a long while before he would be prevailed on to start until to-morrow ; but the threat of procuring another guide, if he declined, removed his scruples, and our departure was accordingly determined.



CHAP. IV.

JOURNEY FROM ASSALT TO THE RUINS OF AMMÂN.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 28.— It was about ten o'clock in the morning when we mounted our horses to set out on our journey. On leaving Assalt, we passed down by the foot of the hill, on the side of which the town stands, and watered our horses there at a large trough and well, at which the women of the place were washing garments. From hence we passed on through a narrow valley, which runs eastward of the town; and, after continuing about a quarter of a mile in that direction, turns off to the south-east, and grows wider and wider till its termination. Near the town, on this its eastern side, the hills that enclose the valley are laid out in vine-beds. In the rocks are grottoes, which particularly abound on the northern side of the valley, and many of these are, even

now, inhabited by shepherds, who feed their flocks on the neighbouring hills, and retire to these caves for shelter at night.

On turning to the south, in which direction we soon proceeded, the valley became more fertile, and appeared to be well wooded and watered throughout its extent, being capable of a much higher degree of cultivation than it is likely to enjoy for a long time to come, and of sustaining five times the population that now inhabit the town and neighbourhood. From the eastern extremity of this valley we ascended a steep hill, from the summit of which we enjoyed a fine view of the castle and town of Assalt to the westward. Our course from this lay south-east for the first hour, on a rugged and stony road. In our way over this we saw the Dead Sea, about five leagues distant to the south-west, and the town of Bethlehem in the mountains of Judea, bearing by compass W. S.W., distant, perhaps, in a straight line, about thirty miles.

On reaching the end of this elevated and stony plain, we descended over the brow of the hill in which it terminated, and alighted at a place called Anab — no doubt the same as that enumerated among the various cities and towns in Joshua (chap. xv. v. 20.). The word itself signifies “grapes,” a fruit with which the whole of this region abounds, and which it appears to have possessed in the earliest ages; for this is the part of the country into which the spies were sent by Moses, when encamped in the wilderness of Paran, to spy out the land, and from whence they brought back a branch with a cluster of grapes, as a proof of the fertility of the soil, or, in the figurative language of those days, of its “flowing with milk and honey.” (Numbers, xiii. 23. 27.)

Anab is still inhabited by about one hundred persons, but these all live in grottoes or caves excavated in the rock, which were probably more ancient than any buildings now existing. Their preservation, however, offers the strongest proof that the very earliest of their occupiers must have been men of the ordinary size of the present generation, and not giants, as described by these

emissaries from the camp. Their exaggeration of the size of the cities, which were said to be "walled and very great," might be pardoned in those who were born during the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, in which they had never seen any towns; though such a description could not have been given of any of the places of the Amorites, by those who had seen Memphis, and others of the many really "great" cities in Egypt. But their exaggeration with respect to the men is not so easily accounted for, as they must have seen men of as good stature among their own race as any that inhabited the land of Canaan. As the men who related these extraordinary facts respecting the country they had been sent to examine were condemned to die of the plague *because* of the "evil report" which they brought up of the land, it is fair to infer, that this *evil* report was a *false* one, as death would be an inappropriate reward for fidelity of description; and there is, therefore, reason to believe that there was no truth whatever in their assertion, that the people of the country were giants, in whose presence they themselves (the spies) appeared but as grasshoppers. (Numbers, xiii. 33.)

The size of the caves now inhabited here, and which are undoubtedly of very high antiquity, confirm the opinion that their original occupiers were of the same size as their present possessors. These are chiefly shepherds, whose flocks browse on the steep sides of the hills near them, and who, in the severe nights of winter, take shelter in the caves, with their attendants. Some of the inhabitants of the caves are, however, cultivators of the earth, and till and plant such detached plots and patches of the soil, among the least steep parts of the ascent, as may be most favourable for the fruits or grain. The grottoes themselves are all hewn out by the hand of man, and are not natural caverns; but, from their great antiquity, and the manner in which they were originally executed, they have a very rude appearance. Nevertheless, the persons who occupy them fortunately deem them far superior to buildings of masonry, and consider themselves better off than those who live in

tents or houses, so that they envy not the dwellers in camps or cities. They are certainly more durable and less likely to need repair than either ; and, with the exception of a chimney, or some aperture to give an outlet to the smoke (a defect existing in all the buildings of these parts), they are very comfortable retreats, being drier and more completely sheltered from wind and rain than either house or tent, besides being warmer in winter and cooler in summer than any other kind of dwelling-place that could be adopted.

We found none of the milk and honey with which this land is said to have flowed ; and were, accordingly, regaled with less agreeable food, the dish from which we made our dinner being composed of boiled wheat, mixed up with sour milk and oil, a mess to which nothing but excessive hunger could reconcile an English appetite, and of which I made a show of eating, though it was impossible to do more.

We set out from Anab about noon, and descended into the valley below it, called Wādi Lizerack ; passing over the bed of a torrent, now dry. On the banks of this bed were sloping moles of masonry, and vestiges of ancient work, similar to those seen on the banks of the Zerkah, and described in the journey from Jerusalem to Jerash. Both are considered to be remains of ancient works existing in the earliest ages of the Jews ; but whether the brook that ran here was the Eshcol of the Scriptures, from whence the grapes were taken by the spies of Moses, and these buildings were meant to commemorate that event, or not, we could not learn ; nor could we, indeed, from the vagueness of the historical account, easily fix on any features by which to identify it.

The hill that rises above this, to the eastward, is so steep, that we were obliged to dismount and lead our horses up its side. The dress of mounted Arabs is so unfavourable to freedom of motion in the limbs, that walking a very short distance in it is fatiguing. I was extremely tired, therefore, on reaching the summit of this hill, but was amply repaid by the fine wooded scenery,

with large masses of rock, and spots of grass and turf, through which we passed.

In about an hour after leaving Anab we arrived at Fahaez, a ruined town, said to have been formerly peopled by Christians. In this place we observed the remains of at least a hundred dwellings, all built of stone. In their construction the Roman arch was very prevalent, which induced a conjecture that it might have been a settlement of Roman colonists, or of original Greek Christians of the Lower Empire, who lived separate and apart from the native Syrians, or the Arabs of the country. It must, however, have been merely a private and obscure station, as there were no traces of any public buildings remaining; and neither columns, sculpture, nor any other mark of architectural care, were to be seen among the ruins.

From Fahaez we proceeded in a more easterly direction than before, and again ascended a rising ground, which was covered with a fine red soil, and exhibited every where traces of former cultivation and great fertility. On the summit of this hill the wood scenery was beautiful; and the fresh and full foliage of evergreen trees, contrasted with the snowy beds out of which their trunks sprung, was at once new and striking. In the open grounds below we had seen several herds of gazelles; and here, from among the woody thickets by which we were surrounded, rushed forth two large boars, nearly black, and seemingly ferocious. Their appearance was as wild as I ever remember to have seen any before, so that we were pleased at their dashing across our path without attempting a stand; particularly as our horses, untrained to the sport of hunting the mountain boar, were evidently much terrified at the sudden and unexpected sight of these animals.

In our way from this place onward we passed four ruined villages, the names of which were mentioned to me at the time, but soon forgotten; and about two o'clock we reached a place called Deer-el-Nassāra, or the Convent of the Christians. This is a ruined town of greater extent than Fahaez, and apparently of greater

antiquity. I should infer this from the larger size of the stones of which the buildings were constructed, and the general appearance and deeper hue of age spread over every part ; but even still more from the circumstance of its earlier and more complete destruction. No one edifice among the whole remains perfect ; and in some the dilapidation is so complete, that soil has collected over and between the fallen heaps of stones, in which large trees have taken root, and nearly the whole of the site is now covered with wood. There were no fragments of columns among the fallen heaps, but the stones were smoothly hewn, the masonry of the best kind, and the work bearing all the usual appearance of being Roman in its construction.

From Deer-el-Nassāra we soon entered a thick forest of large trees, the greatest number of which were evergreens : one of these, the most numerous of the whole, was as tall as an English elm, of equal girth to full grown trees of that kind, with crooked branches and small leaves ; it was called, by Abu Fārah, my guide, Sedjer-el-Finjān, or the Finjān tree. Among those which had cast their leaves, there was one whose branches were covered with thick brown moss ; this he called Sedjer-el-Fush, or the Fush tree. Another kind, of a smaller sized trunk and branches, with a beautifully large and light-green glossy leaf, and the bark of a red colour, he called Gaegob. All of these were in great abundance, besides which, were a variety of smaller trees and shrubs, presenting every shade of colour and hue, from the palest yellow to the deepest green.

We proceeded through this forest in an easterly direction for about a mile ; this being its breadth in the part in which we crossed it, though its length from north to south was evidently much greater. On clearing it, we came out on a fine plain covered with rich green turf, and passed by a ruined town on our right. The name of this place was Daboak ; but as we did not halt to examine it, I had no opportunity of judging whether it was ancient or

modern: all that I could learn was, that it had long since been abandoned and in ruins.

The country that lay before us in our route, though now become bare of wood, presented a great extent of fertile soil lying entirely waste, though it was equal to any of the very best portions of Galilee and Samaria, and capable of producing sustenance for a large population.

In our way we passed another ruined town, called Oom-el-Semāk, where there were foundations of a circular wall of enclosure still visible; and around us in every direction were remains of more than fifty towns and villages, which were once maintained by the productive soil over which they were so thickly studded. As their names were mentioned to me by Abu Fārah, my companion, I recognized many of those contained in the list drawn up by me at Assalt; but when I suggested to my guide a halt for a few minutes to take their respective names and bearings, his surprise was extreme; and I could plainly see, by his impatient manner, that, if I pressed this point, I should lose his good-humour, and good-will too, for the rest of the day, so that I relinquished the attempt, strongly as I desired to bring away with me some clue to the positions of places, the names and existence of which are unknown in Europe.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when we came in sight of Khallet-Ammān, which then appeared about four or five miles to the eastward of us, standing on a round hill below the level of the plain, across which our route lay. This plain was covered with fine green turf, daisies, and a large scarlet flower, in great abundance; and the soil was extremely rich, with a slight intermixture of small silicious stones. On our left, soon after, appeared the mountains of the Druses, near Lebanon, with the hills that border the Hauran on the north. So elevated, however, was the level on which we now stood, that the plains of the Hauran seemed sunk in an abyss, while the mountains I have mentioned, including Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, whose summits were sheeted

over with unbroken snow, appeared rather below than above our present elevation, though they must have been somewhat higher, at least, as no snow rested on the high plain from which this view was taken. This accounted for the continuance of winter in these high regions, and the severity of the cold which accompanied the winds from the northern and eastern quarters. In the open air the thermometer was at 26° ; but the dress of a Bedouin, in which I was clad, is so ill calculated to protect the wearer from cold, that I suffered from the weather more than I had anticipated.

Continuing eastward over the plain, and gradually descending, we passed, on our right, a circular building of a large size, called Khallet-Melfoof, leaving it at a distance of a mile at least. Although we were still two miles from Ammān, pieces of broken pottery began to appear, strewed over the ground, and the quantity increased as we went on, indicating an approach to the ruins of a great city, of which these fragments of domestic vessels and utensils are almost always the first vestiges seen; because, from their very use and nature, they were liable to be so much more widely scattered about, than larger masses of more ponderous materials. As we drew nearer to the immediate precincts of the city, the soil still retained the same appearance of a light red earth; but it was deeper and more abundant the nearer we approached the town, and bore more evidently the appearance of former cultivation, the smooth turf having now given place to a rougher surface, with the marks of having been loosened and furrowed by the plough.

Approaching Ammān from the westward, we entered on a broad road, bounded on each side by stone enclosures, and soon after came to the remains of a large building of excellent masonry, with sculptured blocks scattered near it on the ground. It was, probably, an outer gate of the city, or a triumphal entrance; for, like the outer gate or arch at 'Gerash, it had no appearance of having ever been connected with walls on either side, but stood isolated and alone. On the left of this, on a rocky patch of ground, I observed the cover of a sarcophagus, differing from those of

Gerash and Oom-Kais, being convex at the top, instead of angular, or pent-roofed, and the ornaments at the corners being repeated at the sides also. On passing down over the brow of this hill we saw several grottoes, which were, no doubt, ancient tombs, and this the place of interment without the city, there being near the grottoes one sarcophagus, of the usual size and form, complete.

We had now before us the large enclosed ruin called Khallet-Ammān, or the Castle of Ammān, which appeared, indeed, more like a fortress than a city, and occupied entirely the summit of a small steep hill. The exterior walls of this fortress had their foundation laid considerably below the level of the dwellings within the enclosure, and on the side within view; the western face, where the wall ascended like a sloping mole, formed a kind of case-work to the hill itself. The masonry of this was of the best kind, the stones being squarely hewn and nicely adjusted at the edges, with the centre left to form a rough projecting surface, like those in the castle of Assalt, and the tower of the Pisans at Jerusalem, after the manner of the rustic masonry of the Romans.

We went up over the steep ascent to this ruined mass of buildings, passing large heaps of fallen stones in the way, and at length reached the eastern gateway, by which we entered. Near to this, on our left, stood a building, the masonry of which was not only much inferior to what we had observed on the outside, but it was evidently constructed of materials gathered from the ruins of other and older buildings on the spot. On entering it at the south end, we came to an open square court with arched recesses on each side, the sides nearly facing the cardinal points. The recesses in the northern and southern walls were originally open passages, and had arched doorways facing each other; but the first of these we found wholly closed, and the last was partially filled up, leaving only a narrow passage just sufficient for the entrance of one man, and of the goats which their Arab keepers drive in here occasionally for shelter during the night.

The central square open court appeared to be not more than twenty feet across, but on each side of it was a range of covered buildings equally divided into three portions, the central one being a covered recess, and on each side of it a vaulted room. There is no appearance of the central square court having ever been roofed, as all around the top of the walls on each side is a bed of grassy turf, forming a walk on a level with the upper part of the building. The arches of the covered recesses, as well as of the vaulted rooms and passages of entrance, are all of the pointed form; yet at the same time there are lines of small niches in the walls all around the inside of the building, which are entirely formed of the Roman arch, supported at each spring by a small Doric column. The ornaments of these small recesses, which are all very shallow, were of various kinds. In some of the largest of them I noticed bunches of grapes and vine-leaves well sculptured, and in others that indefinite kind of pattern called Arabesque. There were no traces of an inscription in any language, as far at least as my hasty search could discover, by which the age of this building might have been determined. The form of a Greek cross, which the divisions of the interior may be said to retain, induced me at first to think it might have been a Greek church; but on the other hand, its being originally open at the top, and at the north and south ends, while closed at the east and west, with the style of its ornaments within, and the entire absence of all Christian emblems, either of painting or sculpture, rendered it very doubtful to what purpose it was originally applied. The masonry of the interior is of a much better kind than that of the exterior; but the whole is evidently of a more modern date than the fortress itself, as it is built from the fragments of some older buildings, which probably occupied its present site, or were at least within the walls of the fortification.

On the east of this building, and at the distance of a few paces only, was a large circular reservoir for water, well built, and originally surrounded by a moulding or cornice at the top. The descent into it was by a flight of stone steps: its depth was about

twenty feet, and its circumference fifty-two paces. This reservoir stands between the square building first described and the eastern wall of the fortress, which at this place presses close upon it.

To the north of this, and still within the enclosed space on the summit of the hill, is a wall, running across the fort in an east and west direction. In the southern face of this wall are concave niches of the Roman arched form, and on the north front of the same wall are continued recesses, of the same kind as those described in the open court first mentioned. In the concave part of these, however, are cut short spears, the triangular heads of which are shaped like the Greek Δ , and these are so deeply hollowed out that they appear to have served for lamps, resembling exactly the niches for lamps seen in the sepulchres of the kings at Jerusalem, and in the tombs at Oom-Kais.

Not far from this, to the south, is part of a building, the undestroyed portion of which contains Saracen or pointed arches, though the fragments of the destroyed portion, which are scattered round in every direction, are all of Roman work, as may be gathered from the style of the sculpture and ornaments seen on the blocks that lie on the ground.

At the eastern end of the wall already described as having Corinthian doorways in its southern face, and smaller recesses on its northern side, there are considerable remains of some large edifice, of which this wall, probably, once formed a part; and among these remains are seen Corinthian pediments, cornices, capitals, pilasters, and fan-topped niches like those in the temples and theatres at Gerash.

From this spot we returned to the reservoir for water, before described; and passing again through the square open court, we descended over the southern brow of the hill on which the fortress stood. Here, among other ill-defined remains, we found the ruins of a magnificent edifice, too much destroyed for any plan of it to be taken, but showing, by its broken fragments, evident marks of its former grandeur. The pedestals of the pillars that formed a

colonnade along its eastern front, were still standing in their original positions, and many fine Corinthian capitals were scattered near them. The shafts were of a greater diameter than the length of my musket, or at least five feet: they were composed of several pieces raised one above the other, having a square hole in the centre of each piece for the reception of a central iron rod, by which the whole were kept together. Some of these blocks seem to have been marked with Greek characters, but whether for the guidance of the workmen in uniting them, or for any other reason, it was not easy to determine, though the former is the most probable, from the marks becoming hidden as soon as the column was complete. On one of these blocks, which was half buried in the earth, the letters in the margin could be distinctly seen. The characters were deeply cut, and not at all worn by exposure to the atmosphere or any other cause. There might, perhaps, have been other characters on the side of the stone that was buried in the earth; but as it was already sunset I could not stay to examine it.

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As my guide stopped for a minute or two, farther on, to light his pipe, I copied from a fine Corinthian architrave of a doorway, apparently belonging to the ruined temple last described, but now partly buried in the earth, the following fragment of an inscription:—

ΙΕΘΩΝΕ ΧΑΙ CAIΩ
L . . . N

the second line having only these two letters distinct.

We continued to descend over the brow of the hill for a short distance beyond this, and passed out of the southern gate of the fortress, when the valley beneath it suddenly opened on our view, and displayed at once a profusion of magnificent ruins. The most striking of all these objects were a splendid theatre, fronting our view, with a Corinthian colonnade, a temple, and other buildings, on each side a clear stream which flowed from the eastward, and ran westerly through the centre of the valley occupied by these interesting remains.

As we had before dismounted to descend on foot the steep southern brow of the hill, I now suffered my horse to find his own way down, as I remained stationary, to enjoy, in stillness and silence, the prospect which had burst so suddenly and so agreeably on my view. The night was now set in, and the young moon scarcely afforded sufficient light to guide us on our way. I proposed, therefore, to my guide, that we should lie down amidst these ruins and take our rest there for the night, in order that I might enjoy a more distinct and perfect view of the whole at sunrise on the following morning. Abu Fārah could not comprehend, however, the nature of the pleasure I proposed to myself by such a step, and accordingly made no hesitation in expressing his fears that the search for treasure (which he supposed to be my only object in examining these ruins) had already made me mad; and that he ought not to indulge it any longer. Absurd as this objection was, I was obliged to yield to it, or risk the loss of those cordial services which a future occasion might, perhaps, render still more important to possess than at present.

We accordingly crossed the stream of the valley and ascended the opposite hill, where we found, encamped in a hollow behind the top of the theatre, a tribe of Bedouins; and with these we made our halt for the night. Our horses were taken care of by one of the Arabs, our arms received for the same purpose by another, and the khordj or bag, in which whatever may be wanted on the journey is contained, was received by a third. We were then received into the tent of the principal Arab of the camp, a young kid was prepared for our supper, our horses fed, and coffee burnt and pounded for immediate use. We supped; indeed, sumptuously, as far as excellent appetites, plain wholesome food, and a hospitable welcome could constitute a sumptuous meal; and the evening was passed agreeably to all parties, in smoking and recounting the news of the day; when about midnight we lay down with the young goats and sheep around the embers of the evening fire.

Ammān, Thursday, March 1.—During the night, I was almost entirely prevented from sleeping by the bleating of the flocks, the neighing of mares, the barking of dogs, and the hourly interruption of some one rising to feed the fire, another to smoke a pipe, and a third to answer some question proposed, which often led to their rising and talking of matters as loudly as if no one was near them. I therefore watched the rising of the morning star with impatience, and when the day began to dawn I stole from the tent unperceived, and hastened down to the ruins in the valley, under the hope of being able to catch a momentary view of the remains there, and return again before my absence should have excited any enquiry.

Before I descended into the valley, however, I sketched out, from the brow of the hill, a rough ground-plan of the whole of the ruins in sight from hence, filling up the space within the fort on the opposite hill from the recollections of the preceding evening. It can be regarded only as a bird's eye topographical map of the relative situation of the principal objects, and has no claim to accuracy in the details, which is not indeed to be attained in the mere view of a moment. It served, however, to assist the order and arrangement necessary in giving an account of the buildings themselves, and to correct errors that might otherwise escape in regard to their bearings and distances from each other.

On a reference to this plan it appeared that the principal edifices among these ruins stood in the valley now called Waadi Ammān. This valley is extremely narrow, apparently not more than 200 yards across, being bounded on the north by the hill on which the fort stands, and on the south by the hill on which the theatre is built. The valley runs nearly east and west, and is traversed by a fine clear brook of excellent water, in which are, to this day, abundance of fish, some of them of a silvery appearance, and upwards of a foot in length. On each side of this winding stream are remains of noble edifices, of which I could only obtain a hasty view; but I set down the remarks that occurred to me at the

time, on following the separate edifices in regular order, beginning from the eastward and going west.

The first of these is a square building, the northern front of which, towards the stream, was ornamented with a Corinthian colonnade; while the southern part was a plain solid wall of rustic masonry. The eastern side I could not examine, but the western side had, I think, three doors and four concave niches, one between and one behind each doorway. The interior of this building presented the appearance of an amphitheatre, but whether it was originally open at the top, or covered in with a roof, it was difficult to determine, as the upper part of the building was entirely destroyed, excepting only a high piece of solid wall at the south-west angle. In the centre of this square building was a circular space of about fifty feet in diameter, now full of ruined blocks. At the southern end of this was an arched opening, as if for a passage or outlet for beasts. It could not have been intended as a passage for men; for, though of a convenient breadth, it was too low to admit of the passage of the human form erect. Around this circular space, commencing from the top of the arch, and leaving below it a portion of solid masonry about six feet high, ran circular rows of stone benches, with *cunii* or flights of smaller steps intersecting them, exactly as in the theatres. There are two distinct divisions of these benches still remaining on the south side, over the arched passage supposed to form an outlet for the beasts, each intersected by *cunii*, the upper one having only five steps left. On the east and west sides the circle can be traced completely; but on the north it is less distinct, from that part being more covered with the fragments of fallen masonry than any other. The blocks there heaped together, appear, however, to be those of the destroyed benches themselves; and it can be clearly seen, that the lower blocks rested on the arches of a covered piazza running round the whole of the building. I could not well understand how the entrance of the spectators was effected, unless it was by flights of steps, leading up from the exterior of one of the fronts of the

square building, and now perhaps destroyed. From the bottom of the circle within, or the arēna in which the beasts must have fought, up to the lowest range of benches, which was a height of about six feet, I could see no steps by which an ascent could be made from thence. It is, therefore, probable, that the spectators ascended on the outside of the building, and entered the amphitheatre from above, descending by the smaller flights of steps to such parts of the benches as might be accessible or agreeable. The arched piazza, or covered way, that ran around the arena, was probably appropriated to the beasts selected for the games or fights. This arrangement of the several parts of the building would account satisfactorily for the doors of entrance at the west front, the closed wall of the northern one where the colonnade stood, and for the high solid wall at the back on the south, where the dens for the wild beasts probably were, as the low-arched outlet into the arena leads from thence, and the height from it to the commencement of the seats for the spectators, about six feet, would be a sufficient security to the audience from the fury of the wild animals engaged below. The order of the architecture observed in this building is Corinthian; the execution of the work is of the best kind; and its whole appearance excited in me a very lively regret that I could not command time to make an accurate plan of it upon the spot: but, anxious as I was to effect this, other and higher considerations rendered it impossible.

Next to this in order, to the westward, and on the same side of the stream, but a few paces only to the south-west of it, is a grand theatre, superior in size and beauty to either of those at Gerash. It is built in the natural hollow presented by the side of the hill, against which it may be said to rest. It faces towards the north, and thus has the cool stream that winds through the valley running before it, being sheltered, also, by the same happy position, from the heat of the southern sun. The front of this fine theatre was originally open; the pavement of the stage still remained perfect; and before it, instead of a wall, ran a fine Corinthian

colonnade, supporting a double-beaded architrave and cornice. Eight of the westernmost pillars of this colonnade, including the double pillar which terminated the row, were still standing, and from this ran off a range of smaller columns, leading northward to the stream. The pillars of this colonnade in front of the theatre were about five feet in diameter, and stood five paces apart from centre to centre; the whole length of the front measuring one hundred and eighteen paces.

The theatre itself has three distinct divisions or classes of seats, as if intended for persons of different orders, each separated from the other by a wide space for the passage of the spectators from one part of the theatre to another. The first division of these benches, or those nearest the stage, contains thirteen rows of seats, intersected by five flights of smaller steps for ascending and descending, going up like rays from the centre of a circle. In the interval of separation between the first and second division of benches are doors and deep recesses, at regular distances from each other. The second division contains fifteen ranges of seats, intersected by seven flights of steps similar to those below; and in the interval of separation between this division of benches and the one above it are seven doors at equal distances. In the last, or upper division of all, are seventeen ranges of seats, intersected by five flights of *cunii*; and in the broad pathway that runs round the whole at the top is a deep square recess, entered into by a fine Corinthian doorway with an architrave and pediment, having concave niches on each side, as if for the reception of statues.

The Arabs call this building *Serai-el-Sultān*, or the King's Palace, and think the only use of the range of seats around was to serve as flights of steps for the ascent of persons of much greater stature than the present race to the recess above, for the sake of enjoying the cool shade of the summer, and the pleasure of the view, which, it must be confessed, is from hence at once beautiful and interesting. As the benches or seats are about two feet in breadth and depth, and the intervals between each great division

are at least six feet, the perpendicular height from the stage to the central recess at the top must be upwards of 120 feet, and the distance from the stage to the upper range of seats nearly 200. The circuit of this upper range was 200 paces, and the diameter of the semicircle below, or the distance from the stage to the first row of seats, was 52 paces, as measured on the spot. There are two arched stage doors, facing each other, at the ends of the semicircle, communicating with a vaulted passage from below the seats. Some of the benches are broken, and the colonnade in front is partly destroyed: yet on the whole it may be considered as an unusually perfect monument of Roman luxury,—for a very slight repair would make it available for its original purpose.

While literally *running* over this theatre, scrawling the few notes I could make of it, in secret, beneath my outer garment, and looking behind me at every step, in the apprehension of being perceived and interrupted, anxiety for my own safety did not prevent my being forcibly struck with the passion of the Romans for public amusements and for architectural grandeur. At this place, Ammân, as well as at Geraza and Gamala, three colonial settlements, within the compass of a day's journey from each other, (not to mention Scythopolis, Tiberias, Sebasta, the two Cesareas, and other cities, all within a short distance,) and each much inferior in importance to Baalbec and Palmyra, there were five magnificent theatres and one amphitheatre, besides temples, baths, aqueducts, naumachia, triumphal arches, &c.; while, throughout all India, an empire in itself, and far richer than any colony of Rome in the days of her greatest splendour, we have not a public monument, even in the capitals of the several presidencies, equal to the least of these: the theatres at Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, being inferior even to many of the provincial houses in England.

Following the course of the valley westerly, the next object seen beyond the theatre is on the opposite side of the stream, consisting of the remains of a colonnade, and the front of some large edifice, with steps descending from it to the water. On the side of the

hill on which the fort is built, and just above this edifice, a number of arches are seen, probably belonging to private dwellings of different dates, for some were of the Roman and others apparently of the Saracen form ; unless this last was occasioned by the falling together of the sides of the arches, a point I could not determine, from not being near enough to decide. To the westward of these, but still on the north of the stream, and at the foot of the hill, is the portion of a very large edifice which looked like a temple. I could not cross the stream to examine it, but saw several columns standing, many others fallen, and a part of the northern wall, with a doorway, pediments, cornice, and other ornaments, still perfect.

Continuing westerly, the valley widens to the north ; and on the north, the hill on the side of which the theatre is built, presses close on the stream, which runs, in this place, beneath a lofty cliff of yellowish stone. A broad arch is here thrown over the brook, the concave or under part of which is smooth, but the upper part of it rough and broken ; as if some building had originally been built on the arch, the brook itself being not more than 15 or 20 feet wide.

After crossing over this arch, I came to a large edifice, presenting a semicircular front towards the stream, built of rustic masonry, with large solid stones of an oblong form, closely joined without cement. In the exterior of the southern front, there are appearances which would seem to indicate that water-works of some description had been used here, probably for some purpose connected with the fortification of the hill. On the interior are columns that once stood around the concave part of the semicircle, some still standing and others fallen, with broken fragments of the building, extending for many yards in a northerly direction. The pediments of the recesses, the cornices, and other ornaments around this interior face of the southern wall, do not appear to have been finished ; as many parts exhibit only the preparatory stages of the work, in which the larger parts required to be removed are first roughly hollowed out, and the remainder left for the finishing

chisel of the sculptor. The capitals of the columns were, however, finished, and some even seemed in a state of great decay; one of the shafts still standing had also been cleft down the middle, apparently by lightning. The general form of this edifice was oblong, presenting a semicircular end towards the stream on the south, and the order of the architecture was Corinthian.

To the south-west of this is a larger and more perfect building, with Roman arches, and a square tower arising from it. I dared not go over to examine this, however, as I had already been absent more than an hour, and in the vicinity of the building itself I saw Arabs with their flocks, so that I could not have passed among them without observation. I therefore ascended the hill from hence to the S. E., and on reaching its top observed other buildings and columns on the side of the opposite hill to the N. W., with arches over the stream to the westward, at the distance of about half a mile. The stream is said to run from this westerly, inclining sometimes northerly in its course, winding frequently until it joins the Zerkah, when it falls with it into the Jordan, and is ultimately lost in the Dead Sea.

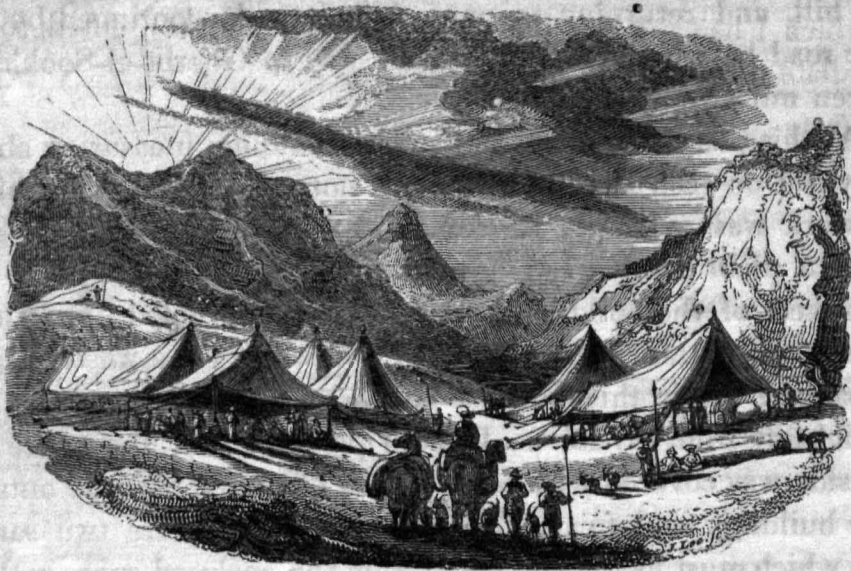
On returning to the tent from which I had stolen away to make this unperceived visit to the ruins of Ammān, I was surprised to find Abu Fārah and my horse departed: I enquired whither; and it was answered, in search of me. The fact was, that the nature of my occupation had rendered me insensible to the progress of time, and the sun was now three hours high, while no one knew where I had wandered. The sheikh, Abu Sulimān, coming into the tent, accosted me with a very angry look, and accused me of being a Muggrebin magician, come here to raise the treasures which belonged to him as lord of the place. He insisted on my producing my instruments and writings. I declared that I had none. He laid hold of me by the arm, and said he would search me. I resisted; though there was no one near on whom I could rely for assistance, and even my musket and dirk had been taken away by

Abu Fārah, along with my horse, in the hope that he might discover me, and render it unnecessary to return again to the camp. I was determined, however, though quite alone, to resist any violence offered to my person, and in the struggle I fortunately prevailed. I was then questioned as to where I had been? I replied, to wash myself in the stream. It was asked, why? I answered, because I had been defiled by unholy dreams. Where was my country? Stamboul. Was I Muslim? "Ul humd al Illah — La Illah ul Ullah" was my reply; but the rest of the sentence was cut off by quick demands of where I was going? what was the object of my journey? &c. &c. At length, finding all his questions readily answered, the sheikh tried softer means, and endeavoured to persuade me, that as lord of the palace of Solomon the son of David the prophet, he had a right to at least half the treasures found within the ruins; and then by entreaty strove to extort from me the confession of my having really raised such treasures, by the aid of incantations and charms.

While this controversy was carrying on betwixt us, two women entered the tent. These were the sheikh's wives, both of whom had gone in search of me, without gaining any trace of my steps; which the sheikh insisted could not have happened, had I not been a magician, and possessed the power of concealing myself from the sight of others.

In the midst of this unpleasant discussion, which I could only maintain by opposing denials to accusations, my old guide, Abu Fārah, returned to the tent, exclaiming, as he entered it, "Ya, Hadjee Abdallah," and upbraiding me with all the real anger of one grossly offended at my indiscretion. I said not a word, but remained silent till his rage had spent itself in imprecations, angry questions, and self-suggested replies, when I found it necessary to set up the same excuse as I had given the sheikh, for washing in the stream. This, however, did not satisfy him; for he continued to believe that I really went to the ruins for the purpose of raising

treasures, and accused me of ingratitude, as well as injustice, in withholding from him his due portion, as the guide of my way and the companion of my fate. •This conviction was too deeply rooted to be easily removed. I therefore submitted to it as an evil which I had not the power to remedy, and consented to an immediate departure on our journey.



CHAP. V.

FROM AMMĀN TO AN ENCAMPMENT OF ARABS NEAR DELILĀT.

IN leaving Ammān, we ascended the hill to the S. E. of it, and passed several excavated tombs in the way. The entrance to one of these had a richly ornamented doorway, but I dared not halt for a moment to enter it. Sarcophagi were also scattered about in different spots, so that there must have been a necropolis or burial place, both on the north and on the south of the city, one on each of the respective hills that bounded it in these quarters.

Our course from hence was nearly S. S. E., and we went for an hour and a half over a wide public road, limited on each side by large stones still remaining, and similar to the great road by which Ammān was approached from the west. The plain over which

this road extended, was covered with a fine green turf, and the soil was deep, light, and fertile. We turned off for a few minutes to the left of our path, to see the ruined village of Khahāf, on a small hill, and returning to our original track, continued by the public road before mentioned, all the way to Gherbt-el-Sookh, at least ten miles from Ammān.

At this place was a low and square building, measuring about twenty feet on each face, and the walls not more than ten feet high. The work was evidently Roman, and the masonry smooth and good. A plain cornice ran around the top, but there were no appearances of the building having ever been roofed; and there was only one entrance, by an arched doorway on the western face. The passage within this entrance appeared to descend; and without alighting from my horse, I could perceive that the space on the inside was covered with large blocks of stone. On the outside of the building, and near the western doorway, were two sarcophagi, which must have been taken from the enclosed space within. No doubt remained, therefore, that this was a mausoleum; perhaps of some distinguished family, or appropriated to the governors of the adjacent town.

This town stood on our right hand as we proceeded to the S.E., and was not more than a furlong from our path. It was not without much regret, therefore, that I passed it unexamined; but, besides the anger of my guide, who was not yet sufficiently appeased to hear of any deviation from the beaten track, there were Arabs sheltering their flocks amidst the ruins, which would have made a visit of mere curiosity dangerous, and perhaps fatal to our future progress. At this distance I could perceive, however, that the ruins were very extensive, that many Roman arches were still remaining perfect, and that several large columns were standing erect; so that some considerable edifice must have existed there, and the town itself must consequently have been an important station. It was connected with Ammān by a broad public

road, leading all the way across a fine plain of fertile land; and had many smaller settlements around it.

In about an hour from hence, still going to the S. S. E., we came to Yedoody, where we saw tombs excavated in the rock, and many sarcophagi near them. It would seem that a portion of the rock in which these sepulchres were hewn, must have been broken away; or else, which is not so probable, the tombs must have been originally open. At present they stand in the side of a low quarry, facing to the eastward, and present a series of arched recesses, about three feet high, six feet broad, and one foot and a half deep. Underneath each arch is a sarcophagus, cut out of the rock, which is exactly as long as the arch is broad (six feet), as broad as the recess is deep (one foot and a half), and as deep as the recess is high (three feet.) The grave is thus within the surface of the perpendicular wall, with the arched recess over it; and was perhaps originally covered so as to appear like a bench or seat in the wall itself. The large detached sarcophagi of stone, are at the distance of about 100 yards east of these sepulchres, on the edge of a small lake of water: but these could not have belonged to the same burying-place, unless, as before suggested, it was originally a cave with these recesses within it, and the outer part of the cave had been so broken away as to leave them now open. I saw no vestiges of a separation near, but the portion broken off might have been used for building, as this place presents all the appearance of a stone quarry, from which materials for that purpose had been more largely drawn. Such an explanation, if correct, would give a very high antiquity to these sepulchres of the dead; as no town has been built from the stones here since the time of the Romans, and that people would hardly appropriate the tombs of their own dead to such a purpose. The style of the recess, with its excavated grave beneath, resembles those seen in the sepulchres of the kings at Jerusalem. There were in all about five that I observed; but my view of the place was so hasty and imperfect, that there might be many others which escaped my notice. Close by these tombs

are the remains of a large town, the buildings in which are all constructed of large stones, and the style of architecture Roman.

We still continued in the direction of S. S. E., and pushed our way over a continued tract of fertile soil capable of the highest cultivation. In about an hour after leaving Yedoody, we came to a place called Mehanafish. On entering this, we passed a large square excavation, sunk down in the rock beneath the level of the soil. Through an opening, occasioned by the breaking in of part of the roof of the excavation itself, I observed that it led into a cave; but how far this extended I could not learn. I could see, however, through the same aperture, a large column supporting the superincumbent rock, exactly after the manner of the Hindoo caverned temple at Elephanta, near Bombay; the column here resembling those at that place, in its size, characters, and proportions; a coincidence that struck me forcibly on the spot. At Mehanafish are the remains of a still larger town than at Yedoody, with arches, columns, and sarcophagi, all of Roman work, though none of the buildings remain quite perfect.

We had now arrived at a very elevated part of the plain, which had continued fertile throughout the whole of the distance that we had yet come from Ammān to this place, and were still gradually rising as we proceeded on, when we came to an elevation from which a new view opened before us to the south-east, in the direction in which we were travelling. This view presented to us, on a little lower level, a still more extensive tract of continued plain, than that over which we had already passed. Throughout its whole extent were seen ruined towns in every direction, both before, behind, and on each side of us; generally seated on small eminences; all at a short distance from each other; and all, as far as we had yet seen, bearing evident marks of former opulence and consideration. There was not a tree in sight as far as the eye could reach; but my guide, who had been over every part of it, assured me that the whole of the plain was covered with the finest soil, and capable of being made the most productive corn land in the

world. It is true, that for a space of more than thirty miles there did not appear to me a single interruption of hill, rock, or wood, to impede immediate tillage; and it is certain, that the great plain of Esdraelon, so justly celebrated for its extent and fertility, is inferior in both to this plain of Belkah, for so the whole country is called, from the mountain of that name, the Pisgah of the Scriptures. Like Esdraelon, it appears also to have been once the seat of an active and numerous population; but, on the former, the monuments of the dead only remain, while here the habitations of the living are equally mingled with the tombs of the departed, both thickly strewn over every part of the soil from which they drew their sustenance.

From hence we began to descend slightly, though the many undulations were still too inconsiderable to deprive it of the continued character of a plain, and soon after arrived at Burrazein, where we halted to refresh our horses and ourselves at noon.

We found the ruins of Burrazein inhabited by several Arab families, who said they belonged to the tribe of Beni Hassan, which was encamped to the southward. These were, indeed, a detachment of them, sent here to avail themselves of the shelter which the ruins afforded to the young kids and lambs during the cold nights of this excessively severe season. They had come here on the first commencement of the heavy falls of snow, and intended to remain, with the tender portion of their flocks, until the severe weather should abate, and the early signs of spring appear; but as the commencement of the winter had been unusually tardy, the past year continuing warm and dry up to December, they apprehended that its continuance would be late, and that the rains and snows, which usually fell in the first month, January, might now be expected to fall in the third; though, in ordinary years, the severity of the winter generally begins to relax in March.

A party of Arab horsemen, to the number, as it appeared to us, of from fifty to sixty, were suddenly observed coming down the gentle slope of the plain to the eastward of us. A cry of alarm was

immediately raised, and it was re-echoed from one part of the ruins to another, that the Khyale Beni Sakker were coming. This is the name of a very powerful tribe ranging the eastern Desert, generally mounted on fine blood-horses, but rarely on foot; and as their own districts afford them but scanty fare, they come down in large bodies, and covering the plains of the Hauran, and the heights of Belkah, carry off the large cattle of the former, and the smaller flocks of the latter, as their spoil. The horses of this tribe are praised as beyond all price; and for mares of the same breed, the large sum of a thousand Spanish dollars has been refused in the country itself. Although the Beni Sakker are generally mounted, there are now and then small parties of the tribe that go down on foot into the valley of the Jordan, and steal off with such of the flocks and herds as they can seize; while the horsemen make their depredations in larger bodies, and in a more open manner, as legal and honourable warfare. I observed that these horsemen rode generally in a line, and, even in their ordinary march, approached with a broadly-extended front, like a troop of cavalry advancing to the charge. My guide remarked, in answer to some enquiries of mine on this subject, that the Arabs invariably rode side by side, with their cloaks wrapped closely round them, and their arms always ready for an attack; and that there was nothing of which they more frequently expressed their contempt than of the practice of those who were not of Bedouin blood, who rode one after another with their cloaks open, and their arms often not loaded, and scarcely ever primed, so as to be ready even to make a defence. The mounted Arabs are called *Khyāli*; those who move on foot are called *Zellemi*; and the peasants, or cultivators of the earth, are known by the term *Fellahcen*. The mixed race, between those who live in the uncultivated Desert, and those who inhabit the cultivated parts of the country, partaking also of the occupations of both, in tending flocks and tilling the soil, while they have neither houses or tents, but chiefly inhabit grottos, ruins, and caves, are called *Bedowec*: but it is those only who dwell in the Desert, and

live perpetually in tents, that are called, by way of distinction, *Arabs*. In all cases of enquiry I had uniformly heard it used to designate this class only; as thus, my guide would ask, "Whean el Arab?"—"Where are the Arabs?" The reply was, "Fee Arab und el Waadi Themed!"—"The Arabs are encamped in the valley of Themed." Then followed the expression, "Be howul und el Arab."—"We will alight and halt with the Arabs:" in all cases meaning only a camp of Bedouin Arabs (as they are called by us), and never using the term *Arab*, except to those who live always in tents. In no instance, that I could discover, was this name ever applied to any other class of people; though, as a proof that the term is thus meant to distinguish the Bedouins as the *original* Arabs, in contradistinction to the various branches and mixed races into which they have ramified, the Arabic language is still called "Ulsaan Arabi," or the tongue of the Arabs; the whole country of Arabia, from the Desert of Palmyra to the south coast of Yemen, is called "Belled Arabi," or the country of the Arabs; and a man born in that country, of pure blood and unmixed descent, is always called "Arab ibn Arab," an Arab and the son of an Arab. Tents are only distinguished from houses by an epithet expressive of the materials of which each is composed; "Beeout Hadjar," or dwellings of stone, being the name given to all buildings, large or small; and "Beeout Shaar," or dwellings of hair, being the name given to all the tents of the Bedouins, which are almost universally made of a black or brown cloth of hair, made in the camp, from sheep's, goats', and camels' hair, in various proportions.

To avoid the risk of falling in with this large party of the Beni Sakker horsemen, we quitted Burrazene in haste, and gradually ascended a gently rising ground on our way to Menjah, at which place we arrived in about an hour after our last halt. This had been the site of some large town, of which the ruins still remained, and among which were seen arches, columns, large cisterns or reservoirs, and deep wells, with an abundance of broken pottery, scattered around in all directions. The still more extensive ruins of Hhezbân (the ancient Heshbon of the Scrip-

tures) were only a little to the westward of our route. To the east, at a distance of about five miles, we saw a large castle, apparently still perfect, the name of which was Geezah; and, a little to the south of this castle, the ruins of another town, called Gustul, were plainly visible.

The view of the country to the north and east of our present position was very extensive; and we could now see, for the first time, that the plain (for it still preserved that general character throughout) was bounded toward the east by a range of bare hills, running nearly north and south. Beyond these hills the country is said to be quite desert, and to be very thinly peopled by Arabs, excepting only at the few stations which are planted at convenient intervals on the "Derb-el-Hadj-el-Nebbe," or the road of the pilgrimage of the prophet, this road lying beyond, or to the eastward of the hills. This name of "Derb-el-Hadj" is exclusively applied to the road leading from Damascus to Mecca: all other public and well-frequented roads from any one place to another, are called "Derb-el-Sultani," or, literally, the king's highway.

From Menjah we continued our way, going in a S.S.E. direction, and gradually descending to a lower level. As we proceeded, I remarked that the soil became more mixed with clay and silicious stones, and grew less fertile as we advanced. In about an hour after quitting Menjah we came to Jelool. At this place we found the ruins of a larger town than any we had yet passed, with the exception only of Ammān. The position is a favourable and commanding one, occupying the brow of an elevated ridge of the land, and looking over an extensive space to the southward of it, of a lower level than the great plain by which we had approached this spot from the northward. The ruins of Jelool, at present, form two divisions, an eastern and a western portion; between which is a bare space that does not appear to have been ever built upon. In passing over this bare space, and through the respective masses of ruins, neither of which I could afford time to examine, I thought I observed in one of the dwellings a solid stone door, similar to

those used in the tombs at Oom Kais, and which, I learnt from my guide, were frequently met with in almost all the ruined cities of the Hauran. Amid these ruins there were several columns and heaps of large hewn stones, belonging to the edifices of the town, with a number of cisterns, grottos, tombs, and sarcophagi, all now entirely deserted, and exhibiting a melancholy example of the wreck of former opulence and power.

As we proceeded onward, I remarked, that the surface of the soil was covered with small patches of a yellowish white substance, like powder of brimstone, or sulphur ; a fact remarked also in the valley of the Jordan, near the head of the Dead Sea, and almost in a line with this to the westward, at the distance of about thirty miles. The taste and smell of this powder were highly sulphureous ; and my guide observed, that the same substance was seen in abundance all around the shores of the Dead Sea. It is beyond a doubt that these regions, from the Lake of Tiberias southward, to the termination of the Lake Asphaltes, have, at some very remote period, been subject to volcanic convulsions ; and it is probable that the hot springs of Tiberias, the bitumen of the Sea of Lot, and the sulphuric powder on the plains near it, all owe their existence to one common origin. The swallowing up of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, whether rightly attributed to Divine vengeance or not, may well be an historical fact, and accomplished by means of some great volcanic operation, of which the whole course of the Lake of Tiberias, the River Jordan, and the Dead Sea, bears so many indications. It would be an investigation well worthy the attention of some mineralogical traveller ; and it is to be regretted extremely, that the lamented Dr. Seetzen, who made a complete tour of the borders of this sea, and was considered to be eminently qualified for such a task, should not have lived to give to the world the result of his observations on this interesting excursion.

Proceeding onward, without even alighting to examine the ruins of Jelool, we started a strange animal from his retreat ; and a

cry of pursuit being set up by Abu Fārah, we loosened our reins, and spurred our horses for the chase. It ran with such speed, however, that it gained upon us considerably at first, but we soon came up with it, and, coming near, each discharged his musket, but without success. At the sound of this, the animal turned sharp round, and ran towards my horse, uttering, with open jaws, a sound like the hissing of a goose, excepting only that it was rougher and much louder. The horse was frightened at this attack, and became almost unmanageable: but on loading and discharging a second piece with ball the animal fell. It was called in Arabic, according to the information of my guide, "*El Simta*;" and was said, by him, to live chiefly by preying on the bodies of the dead, while it was naturally so ferocious, that it always turned on the living when attacked, and seldom even took flight at first as it had done with us. The whole length of this animal did not exceed five feet, including a short head and neck, and a bushy tail of about a foot long; its legs were short, its belly fat, and its whole height from the ground not more than eighteen inches; its nose was rounded, its head small, and its mouth wide; the colour of all the lower part of its body was black, but over the back and tail it had a broad grey patch, which, at a little distance, resembled a dirty white cloth, tied over the animal to shelter it from wet or cold; its hair was long and coarse, its back slightly arched, like that of the hyæna, and its general resemblance nearer to the badger than to any other animal to which I could compare it.

About an hour and a half after our quitting Jelool we came to another ruined town called Oom-el-Keseer. It was nearly equal in size to the one we had last quitted, and of the same style and character, the architecture in each being evidently Roman. Between these towns the soil had continued fertile and highly capable of cultivation, though the quality of it differs, from having a larger proportion of clay. Beyond Oom-el-Keseer it appeared to grow progressively inferior, though still capable of cultivation. The

face of the country became also more unequal, and the level descended.

In half an hour after passing through Oom-el-Keseer we crossed over a torrent in a ravine called Wādi-el-Keseer, over which there appeared to have once been a bridge, the ruins of which I thought I could perceive about a mile to the eastward of the spot at which we crossed the stream. The water was shallow, and consequently everywhere fordable, even on foot. The course of the stream is generally west, with occasional windings to the southward, until it joins the stream of the Wādi-el-Themed to the south-west, when both run together into the Dead Sea.

Ascending from hence to a higher level by a gradual rise, we came in half an hour to another ruined town, called Oom-el-Weleed. It stands on the top of one of those ridges of land so common in these parts, not deserving the name of hills, though breaking the general smoothness of the surface; rising like a very high swell of the sea arrested in its progress, and running for miles in the same direction: the course of the present being east and west, with a small vale on each side to the north and south. The remains of buildings here at Oom-el-Weleed appeared to me to be more extensive than even those at Jelool. The blocks of stone, of which the buildings were constructed, were also much larger. Roman arches were still remaining perfect at many of the entrances to private dwellings; but throughout the whole, neither columns nor fragments of sculptured work any where met my view.

To the south-west of this, at a short distance, Abu Fārah pointed out to me four ruined villages, called collectively Delilāt, the plural of Deleily, which is the name given individually to each. There was a large encampment of Arabs, probably the Beni Sakker, near to these villages, which was one powerful reason for our not visiting them; but besides this, the lateness of the day rendered it imprudent, as it was already near sunset. We accordingly descended into the valley on the south, where we found half a dozen tents belonging to a friendly party of the Bedowee, or half

shepherds and half cultivators, pitched in a hollow between two closing eminences, with an opening to the eastward, where we determined on halting for the night.*

Riding up to the back of these tents, and passing through them, we were received in the most friendly manner by the oldest man of the party, our horses were taken from us by one of the young lads, who took as much care of them as if they had belonged to their own parents, and we found a hearty welcome in the tent of the sheikh, in which all the rest were soon assembled to greet us. While the flocks were driving in, after sunset, I noticed among them some fine fat sheep, resembling the African breed that I had seen at Mokha, where they are brought across from Zeyla, near the entrance of the Red Sea. They had the same short, fat, broad tail, with a little excrescence at its extremity about an inch long, like a short pig's tail, growing out of the larger one above it. They differed from the African sheep in this particular, that while the Zeyla breed were covered with hair, these of Belkah had a thick coat of wool. Both, however, had the head and neck invariably of a different colour from the body itself, the latter being quite white, while the former were either black or brown. One of the lambs of this breed was killed for our supper; and though it could not have been improved for an European palate by the mess of sour milk and corn with which it was stewed, yet it furnished an acceptable meal, of which we all heartily partook.

The conversation of the evening turned on the motives of our journey, as well as the events of the road, and the place of our destination; to which I listened attentively, though I was disposed, for strong reasons, to take as little part as possible in the discussions to which they gave rise. As there were many evils to be apprehended from a detection of my being a European, and as there would be a great risk of this in a long interview with Arabs, had I assumed to be one of their countrymen, my cautious guide, Abu Fā-

* See the Vignette at the head of this Chapter.

rah, represented me as a Turk going from Accha or Acre to Karak, to see a relation there, but wearing the Bedouin dress, as better adapted to long journeys than the Turkish, and equally proper with the other for all true Mohammedans. From my previous excursions in Egypt, and during my subsequent experience in Syria, I had surmounted the chief difficulties in the way of travelling as a native of these parts, in having acquired the language sufficiently well for all ordinary purposes; and a practical ease and correctness in conforming to the manners, the attitudes, and the way of feeding common to all, which last is certainly the most inveterate of all obstacles to an Englishman; but my beard was yet short, and the parts of my body usually covered with clothes, but now exposed to the sun, were whiter than those of the people among whom I journeyed; my eyes had not that fiery blackness of the genuine Arab; and, indeed, the whole cast of my countenance and complexion was more like that of a Moor from Barbary, or a Turk from Asia Minor, (of which there are many that could not be distinguished from Europeans except by their dress only,) than a son of the Desert. Accordingly, whenever we halted among Arabs, there never failed to be some questions put, arising from these differences of appearance. Those who had seen me at Assalt, and who remembered Mr. Burckhardt's person, conceived, from that common resemblance which persons of nearly the same stature, with the difference of the hair, eyes, and complexion, which distinguish the European from the Asiatic race, bear to each other, that we must have been brothers; and here the Arabs of the party received without scruple the assertion of Abu Fārah, as to my being a Turk, since they had seen many Turks of the same colour, features, and general appearance as myself; while all approved the judicious measure of travelling in a Bedouin dress on a journey of this nature.

I was asked whether I had seen Jerash? I replied, "Yes." "And Ammān?" continued my host. I answered, that they were both in our road. "Ah!" said the sheikh, "these were both

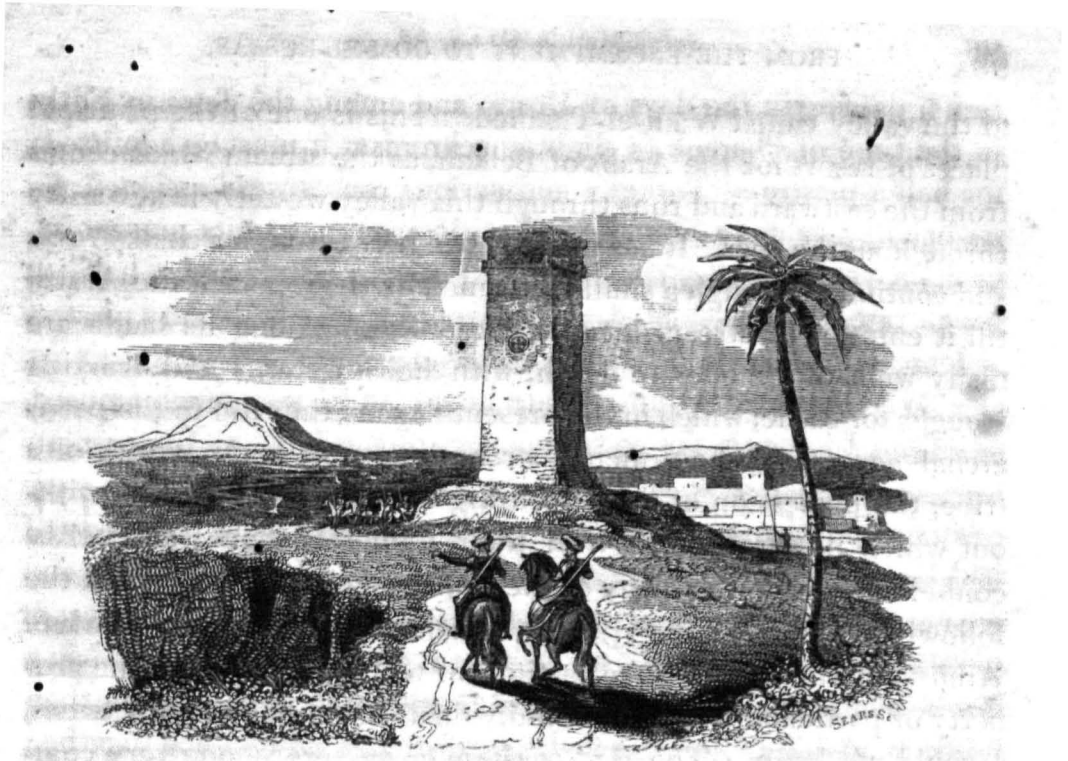
princely cities once; but as the times are always growing worse, so these have come to nothing at last; as indeed was prophesied concerning them of old." I asked him when and where their destruction was foretold? He replied, "These, O Abdallah, (that being the name by which my guide always addressed me,) were both the works of Solomon, the son of David the Prophet, who lived at El-Khōddes, the Holy (the Arab name of Jerusalem). One day, (he continued,) when Solomon, the son of David, paid a visit to the prince of Ammān, the king of Jerash was also present: and as they ascended together the steps of the great palace (meaning the benches of the theatre at Ammān), to the summer seat of the sovereign of that city, Solomon, the son of David, exclaimed, 'O! Princes! our empires are on the decline; our cities must soon decay, and our realms be deserted and depopulated.' They expressed a hope that, under the blessing of God, that period was still far distant; when the King replied, 'Be not deceived, the sign of destruction already approaches, for, behold! even oil hath risen to the price of three paras a skin!'" I had listened with all becoming attention to this pompous tale, and had great difficulty in commanding my countenance at the close of it; but remembering that there are many men even among the most learned of our own country, who really believe mankind to be degenerating with each succeeding age, though they might adduce graver reasons to support their opinions, I did not attempt to combat a position which might be so easily illustrated on the spot, by a mere comparison of the splendid cities of which they spoke, with the miserable habitations of those who now possess the same country.

After this conversation, some of the party ventured on corresponding calculations. "If oil were then at such a low price (about two-pence for a hundred pounds weight), how little labour," said one, "must have been sufficient to obtain a good living; and how fat men might get even upon slender gains." Stories were told by others of the Spanish dollar (Aboo Tope), of the pillared pat-

tern*, passing in the days of Moses; and among the Jews in Egypt in the time of Pharaoh (a slight anachronism it must be admitted), for half a piastre of Turkey; and various causes were assigned for its having gradually risen from that time onward to its present exorbitant value (as they considered it) of six piastres and a half; at which rate, they calculated, that it would rise to be twenty piastres at least before the world came to an end.

We continued up until a late hour; and I was much amused, as indeed I have always been in parties of this kind, by the earnestness of conviction with which the most extravagant stories were related, and the easy credulity with which they were received. I had also occasion to regret the impossibility of remembering and noting much that passed respecting the positions and names of places, which are far more difficult to retain in the memory than a connected story; and though more desirable to possess, from their utility to geography, become, if numerous, so confounded together, as to be soon forgotten altogether.

* Abou Tope, literally the Father of the Cannon, — the pillars of the dollar being considered by the Arabs to represent two great guns.



CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE ENCAMPMENT TO OOM-EL-RUSSAS, AND RETURN TO ASSALT.

FRIDAY, March 2. — We left the camp at daylight, while the ground was covered with a thick hoar frost, and although we put ourselves at once into brisk exercise I suffered much from the cold. As we advanced to the southward the soil became more mixed with clay, and the face of the country more unequal and broken by greater elevations and depressions than it had hitherto been; silicious stones became also more abundant, though there was still a green turf covering the surface of the earth.

In about an hour after we set out, we passed a ruined town called El Hherry, of the general size and character of those already described; and in two hours more, after going over steep but low hills, gradually becoming more and more stony and barren, we came

to the valley called Wādi-el-Themed. This is one of the principal places of resort for the Arabs of Belkah, as the stream which comes from the eastward and runs through this valley, westerly is never dry throughout the year. It has worn its bed here through a chalky rock, and continues through a similar channel, by the report of the Arabs, till it empties its stream into the Dead Sea. Along its banks are many wells of a moderate depth, with hewn cisterns and flinking troughs for cattle, which in the present day, as they did in the patriarchal ages, form the principal strength as well as the wealth of a tribe, the possession of these securing the necessary supplies, without which no Arab camp, with their numerous flocks and herds, could long exist. On many of the wells and cisterns I observed the following characters, 𐤀𐤌𐤁𐤏𐤁𐤏, which are said to be the work of Arabs, but whether for mere pastime, or with a view to mark the property of particular tribes, or of individuals belonging to such tribes, I could not learn. The first of these characters is one very commonly seen among the hieroglyphic signs of Egypt, and generally thought to mean the key of the waters of the Nile, being generally held in the right hand by Isis; the second and last are similar to some of the old and unknown characters found in the caves of India, both at Salsette and in the southern part of the Peninsula. It would be worth an enquiry to ascertain whether any of the sculptures on the Jebel Mokattub, or Written Mountain, near Mounts Horeb and Sinai, supposed at one time to have been the work of the Israelites during their forty years of wandering in the Desert, and to be in the lost Hebrew character, resemble in any manner the marks scattered about on the wells and cisterns of these parts; as they might then be considered the work of the same people and the same age. The wells here must have been nearly coeval with the earliest occupation of this tract of country by the several tribes among which it was divided, and may have formed the portion of several successive races, as well as the bone of contention between opposing tribes, from the days of Abraham and Lot up to the present period; and the characters on them, which belong to no

known language, may be nearly as ancient as the wells themselves ; since there is nothing in their appearance that would indicate a more recent date.

We ascended the hill to the southward of this stream, and passing for half an hour over a chalky and barren soil, we obtained a distant view of Oom-el-Russās, about eight or ten miles off, to the southward of us. The only conspicuous object which presented itself to our view at this distance was a high tower, looking like a monumental column standing alone. We continued our way towards it in nearly a straight line, over a gently rising ground, with an improving soil, and reached it about noon.

On entering the site of this ruined town we came first to some smoothly hewn cisterns in the rock, with marks of a large quarry from which abundance of stone had been taken away for building. Beyond these, and on a higher level, we found a portion of a square building, resembling the remains of a small fort, the walls of which were pierced with long and narrow loop-holes for arrows or musketry. A few paces south of this stood the tower which had shown itself so conspicuously at a distance.* This tower was not more than ten feet square at its base, and from thirty to forty feet high ; the masonry in it not being remarkable either for its strength or elegance. On the shaft of this square pillar, for so it might well be called, was a sort of square capital, cut off from the body of the tower by a shelving moulding, raised at the corners like the covers of the Roman sarcophagi scattered so abundantly over the country. At each corner of this square capital was a plain Doric column, small size, supporting a florid cornice, sculptured with an arabesque pattern, and curved outwards at the corners in the most fanciful manner. On the north, the east, and the west sides of this tower, and about midway between its base and summit, a Greek cross was sculptured in relief, and contained within a circle ; but on the south side this emblem was not to be

* See the Vignette at the head of this Chapter.

found. In various parts of it were many marks like those already described on the wells and cisterns of El Themed ; and as this tower is unquestionably of a date much posterior, to the days of the Israelites sojourning in these parts, and of Greek or Roman work, in the decline of these empires, the marks are most probably those of the Arabs. The enquiry suggested would still be useful, however, inasmuch as if the characters on the Written Mountain were found generally resembling these, it might be concluded that they also were the work of Arabs, and not of the Jews during their wandering in the Desert of Sin.

To the eastward of this tower, a few paces only, are remains of ruined buildings, and to the southward are seen foundations, with broken pottery, and other vestiges of former population, extending for more than half a mile to the first division of enclosed dwellings belonging to the town. This is about 200 yards square ; the walls are low, but are constructed of large stones, and the interior of this space is filled with ruined buildings, the arched doorways of which are the only parts remaining perfect. These arches are all of the Roman shape ; and I observed amongst the ruins, in several places, appearances of stone beams having been laid on the walls, so as to reach from side to side and support entirely the roof of the dwelling.

Close to this first division of enclosed dwellings, and on the south of it, is the second division, the wall of enclosure remaining quite perfect all around. Its shape is nearly an oblong, and the space occupied by it not more than half a mile. Like the former, the interior of this is filled with ruined buildings, all, however, of a small size, and unadorned by architectural ornament of any kind, though constructed of very large stones. In many instances, where all the rest of the building is quite destroyed, the Roman arch of the door of entrance continues quite perfect ; and here the stone beams that extended from wall to wall, and sometimes wholly formed the roof of the dwelling, are distinctly seen. The streets, though at right angles with each other, were extremely narrow, and the whole appearance of the buildings was small and unimportant,

though the masonry was unusually solid for such works, and calculated for great duration.

We found some Arabs of the same tribe as those we had seen in the Wādi-el-Themed encamped near this spot, the sheikh of which party was here amid these ruins alone, for the purpose of looking out, and warning his companions of the approach of strangers; the tents being generally pitched in hollow valleys or at the foot of hills for shelter, while the eminences above form posts from which the whole of the surrounding country may be surveyed. As our party was small, consisting only of Abu Fārah and myself, we were kindly welcomed, and alighted here. We had not been seated long, and had scarcely got into the train of the enquiries I desired to make, (and these, whatever their nature, and particularly when betraying anxiety, must be introduced in a most circumlocutory manner, and quite incidentally, to avoid suspicion and all its train of consequences,) when a small party from Karak arrived from the southward, and alighted here for the same purpose as ourselves, to learn the state of the road, as far as it could, be gathered from the sheikh who was on the look out at this spot. Our conversation was very general and desultory, as neither party were willing to tell the other frankly what was their immediate object or pursuit. Amidst much that was irrelevant, however, I learnt to my extreme regret and disappointment, not only that the road from hence to Karak was so unsafe as to afford little chance of escape from plunder, (for as our informants had braved this successfully, I might hope to do so too,) but that it was perfectly impossible to proceed from that town across the eastern Desert to Bagdad, as I had been led to hope. From all that I could learn, the intercourse between these places, if it had ever existed, which seemed at least doubtful, had been suspended for many years; but even should the nature of the country admit of such a journey, in which there could be no more difficulty than in the way between Damascus and Bussora across the Great Desert, as often practised, the whole of the upper part of Arabia, from Medina

and Derrayah up to the eastern borders of the Haurān, and even to Palmyra, was covered with the 'Wahabee, to which sect nearly the whole of the Arabs in the heart of the Desert had become converts, and were increasing and spreading themselves in every direction, so as to interrupt, if not altogether suspend, the intercourse between friendly tribes and towns, without the escort of a larger force than Karak could furnish or my limited means admit of my paying for. A single individual, or a party of four or five on dromedaries, each carrying his own supplies, might perhaps have effected the journey with ease, as the distance from Karak to Bagdad cannot be much farther than from Damascus or Aleppo, from which cities messengers go on dromedaries in eight or ten days; but it would be nearly impossible to perform such a journey alone without a previous knowledge of the several passes, if the country be hilly, or watering places, if a plain; such as is possessed by all the Arabs employed in carrying dispatches; and therefore for me, however much disposed to risk the dangers of the way, it would be indispensable to have one person at least as a guide, or I should be nearly certain of losing myself in the trackless Desert that intervened between this and the place of my destination. To all my enquiries on this head, I received the most unequivocal assurances that no single individual in Karak would, in the present state of things more particularly, accompany me as escort or guide on such a journey; though they might at any other time venture a small caravan, if the object promised them an adequate reward. Thus circumstanced, proceeding farther would be encountering a needless risk without even a hope of benefit resulting from the attempt; and painful and vexatious as such a retracing of my steps would prove, I was compelled to submit, consoling myself with the assurance that I had done my best to accomplish the end in view, and that the disappointment arose from causes beyond my power to controul.

In the course of the conversation held with our new companions, I learnt that Karak, which is considered to be the ancient

Pella, is about twelve hours south of Oom-el-Russās, and that the eastern shore of the Dead Sea was, both from thence and from our present position, about eight hours or thirty-two miles to the west.

Karak Shaubak is another place, about two days' journey to the southward of Karak, and inferior to the former in size and importance.

Wādi Moosa, or the Valley of Moses, is a resort of Bedouin Arabs, similar to Wādi-el-Themed, and is about a day's journey to the southward of Karak Shaubak.

Between Wādi Moosa and Mount Sinai there is no water, so that the route from Karak to Mount Sinai is a circuitous one, and made by passing first from Karak to Gaza, on the sea-shore of the Mediterranean, and from thence, going round the southern edge of the Dead Sea, to Tor, on the shores of the Red Sea, from whence the ascent to Horeb and Sinai is short and easy.

At Gaza, there are extensive ruins, with towers, walls, and cannon hewn out of granite, projecting from them.

At Ascalon are innumerable red granite pillars and long streets, the pillars mostly fallen. Lady Hester Stanhope is said to have dug up at Ascalon a fine statue without a head, probably of Greek or Roman workmanship; but it was broken up by the Turks and Arabs, to whom graven images are as objectionable as they were to the Jews of old.

At El Arish there is a monolith inverted from its original position, and now used as a watering trough; it is of granite, and had a pyramidal top. It is said to be covered with hieroglyphics within and without, the crocodile being a very prominent object among the figures. It is represented as quite perfect, and from its small size might easily be removed from its present place by any traveller desirous of taking it to Europe. The origin of this is clearly Egyptian, and from the traces of the manner in which a door was formerly hung to it, there can be no doubt but that it was used as a cage or temple for the sacred animal the crocodile. Its description corresponds almost exactly with that of a similar mo-

nolith which I had myself seen at Gau Kebeer or Antæopolis, in Upper Egypt, excepting only that this last was of marble, and the one at El Arish is said to be of granite, which makes it Egyptian in material as well as in purpose and design.

At Pelusium are ruins of great extent, but not remarkable for any object of grandeur or beauty. Among these are some temples, but they are plain and without sculpture, either in hieroglyphics or other kind of ornament. Pelusium is approached by marshy ground, extending for several miles; and amidst the ruins themselves are seen some of the earliest and rudest kind of iron cannon, made from a number of iron bars heated, and beaten and forged together with iron hoops.

In the route to Egypt, not far from Pelusium, is a valley of salt, extending nearly a day's journey in length, the quality of the salt being equal in fineness and purity to any known.

These facts, many of which I had heard before, were confirmed to me by the testimony of some of the Karak party, whom we met here, several of them having, in the course of their peregrinations on business, visited the places mentioned.

Oom-el-Russās, the place of our halt, was considered by all present to have derived its name (which, in Arabic, is literally "the Mother of Lead,") from the circumstance of there having been dug up here, at some former period, leaden cases containing treasure. This, however, is so prevalent a notion, and is applied so indiscriminately to all places in which ruins of former days exist, that it deserves little attention. At one time, I thought it probable that the vicinity of this town might have furnished lead ore, and that some traces of this might be found to account for the name, but I could learn no facts which tended to confirm this conjecture.

The party from Karak were going down to Jericho from hence, and ultimately to Jerusalem. They determined to halt here, however, for the day, and pressed us to remain with them, to which my old companion, Abu Fārah, was strongly inclined, and, as usual,

complained bitterly of my foolish and, to him, unaccountable haste and impatience in pressing our departure from a spot where we had shelter and food, and where we might, therefore, repose ourselves in safety. As we could not proceed, however, it was useless to waste the remainder of the day here; and I accordingly insisted on our resuming our route of return.

It was about an hour after noon when we quitted Oom-el-Russās; and in our way back we went over an old Roman road, nearly perfect all the way from this place to Wādi-el-Themed, and from thence again northward to the ruins of Zeineiba, a place not inferior in size to Oom-el-Russās. In our way we saw an abundance of hares and wild pigeons, with numbers of large birds like the grouse of Scotland. We left the ruined heap of El-Heurry on a hill to the west of us, and at sunset reached a small encampment of Arabs near Oom-el-Weleed, about a mile distant from the camp at which we had slept on the preceding night. We halted here to repose, and on alighting were received with as much cordial hospitality as ever.

Saturday, March 3. — We left Oom-el-Weleed before the day broke, and on ascending the hill to the north of it, we could see, as the sun rose, the position of Oom-el-Russās, to the southward, its tower rendering it conspicuous at the distance of from fifteen to twenty miles. In two hours after setting out we passed Oom-el-Keseine; the face of the country over which we rode being now unequal, and the soil much mixed with clay and covered with a short heath. In about two hours more, going in the direction generally of N. N. W., we came to Jelool, in riding over which I remarked an abundance of broken pottery of a fine red kind, differing, in this respect, from that in more ordinary use.

Proceeding onward in the same direction, we approached the ruins of Hhuzbhān or Heshbon, which are about two hours distant from Jelool. As we drew near to these, and at least a mile before entering the ruins themselves, we came on a ground strowed

over with broken pottery of the ribbed kind, and of an excellent quality ; most probably a manufacture of the ancient town from the clay of the neighbouring plains. The soil here, in the immediate vicinity of the site, was a fine red earth, on which young corn was now growing ; but even over the tilled portions of the surface the broken pottery was seen, though not strewed so thickly as on other parts of the soil that had long lain undisturbed by the plough.

This town or city of Heshbon is seated on so commanding a position that the view from it extends at least thirty miles in every direction ; and to the southward, where the prospect is most extensive, the eye ranges, probably, a distance of sixty miles in a straight line. " The space occupied by the buildings of this town is about a mile in circuit, and this is now covered with heaps of ruins. At the west end of this space the portion of a very singular building still remains. It appears, in many parts, to be extremely old ; and yet there must have been still older works here, as this very building is formed out of the fragments of some earlier one that must have been in ruins before this was begun, as among the stones used in its construction is seen a sculptured block, apparently a piece of the cornice of some old edifice then in ruins ; and yet, in contrast to this proof of high antiquity in the materials, a modern addition has been made to the building by the insertion of a Saracen or pointed arch into the work. There were several columns originally belonging to this edifice ; but they have all fallen on the ground. The diameter of these was about three feet ; but the mode in which the pieces of the shafts were united offered a peculiarity that I had never before observed in any other pillars. These pieces, instead of being united by means of iron or lead in the centre, after the usual manner, were locked together by the upper part overlapping the lower, as the cover of a snuff-box without hinges overlaps the bottom part ; there being a correspondent elevation in the upper centre of the lower piece to fill up

the space hollowed out in the lower part of the upper piece, the one fitted nicely over the other; and the joints were so fine as to warrant the belief that, when new, they were almost imperceptible. The capitals of these pillars were also of a very unusual kind, and such as I had never seen elsewhere. They were nearly square in shape, with a large leaf at each corner, the central stem of the leaf running up exactly on the sharp angle of the square, and the broad edges of the leaf folded back so as to meet in the centre of each face. There were many sculptured blocks of stone scattered about, near this edifice; and the masonry of the remains bespoke them to be of a higher order than most of those seen in the neighbouring towns through which we had passed.

On the summit of the hill on which Heshbon stood, and nearly in its centre, are seen the remains of an edifice, the pavement of which is still perfect, as well as four pedestals of columns occupying their original positions in the plan: these last are square below, with the usual circular mouldings above, and appear to mark the site of a portico to the building which fronted to the south.

The view from this commanding position is fine and extensive. On the north are seen many grottoes in the side of a hill near the town, perhaps the ancient tombs of the original inhabitants of this old settlement. On the west is a deep hollow; and beyond it, in the same direction, but much deeper still, is the valley of the Jordan, distant, apparently, from six to ten miles only, in a straight line. The city of Jerusalem is just perceptible from this elevated point, bearing due west; and Bethlehem, more distinctly visible, bears W. $\frac{1}{2}$ S. by compass, distant, perhaps, from twenty-five to thirty miles in a straight line, though the inequality of the roads between would make it four good days' journeys of twenty-five to thirty miles each. The western shore of the Dead Sea is also seen, bearing south-west, about fifteen miles off; and to the east and south the view is almost boundless. The tower of Oom-el-Russās is visible from hence, bearing S. S. E., distant from thirty to forty

miles ; and the castle of Assalt is also seen, bearing north-west, about fifteen miles in a straight line, and from five to six hours of brisk walking pace on horseback.

On the low ground to the south of the town, and about half a mile from the foot of the hill on which it stands, is a large reservoir for water, constructed of good masonry, and not unlike the cisterns of Solomon, near Jerusalem, to which this is also nearly equal in size. If Hhuzbhān be the Heshbon of the Scriptures, of which there can be little doubt, as it agrees so well, both in name and local position, these reservoirs may probably be the very fish-pools of Solomon, to which that monarch compares the eyes of his love, in the Canticles, ch. vii. v. 4.

Descending from the summit of this hill to the north-east, we saw a sculptured cornice among a heap of ruins, from which I copied the following fragment of an inscription : —

Γ Ε Κ Ε Χ Ο Ε Ι Α Ι.

It was about an hour after noon when we quitted Hhuzbhān, from whence we gradually descended to a lower level, and went in a north-west direction. In an hour after setting out we rode through a narrow pass in the rocks, called Bab-Hhuzbhān, or the Gate of Heshbon, which led to a deep valley called Wādi-Hhuzbhān ; the town being of sufficient importance to give its name to these two spots in its vicinity. In the descent beyond the pass we saw the remains of what appeared to me to have been a fort or an elevated mound ; and reaching the foot of the hill over a steep declivity, we came to a fine stream of water, which has its source to the eastward of this, and runs westerly into the Dead Sea. On the banks of the stream were several pieces of sloping walls, as at Zerkah, and portions of aqueducts encrusted with petrifications, as at Tyre ; with the remains of a small stone bridge, and broken pottery extending along its edges for upwards of a mile ; so that there appeared good reason to regard this as the site of some ancient town.

As we ascended on the opposite bank of this stream, we had on our right a ruined village, called Khallet-el-Sumia, and on our left an apparently new building, called Shufammer, resembling exactly the central enclosed building of Shufammer seen in the road from Acre to Nazareth; this on the east of the Jordan being, however, uninhabited.

After ascending for about two hours, and enjoying, through the whole of our way, the most romantic scenery that mountain, wood, water, rock, and glen could furnish, we came to the summit of the hill up which we had directed our course, and from thence again descended into a valley called Wādi Esseer. Over the rocky cliffs to the north of us, and close to our path, was a waterfall, the only one I had ever seen in these parts. Its stream was small, and the whole descent, which was repeatedly broken, about thirty feet. It fell into the stream now before us, and ultimately discharged itself into the Dead Sea. As the view that opened upon us here presented several new positions, we halted for a moment, while I alighted to take the following bearings by compass, and the distances, in a straight line, as well as the eye could estimate them : —

Head of the Dead Sea		W. by S.	9 miles.
Rama (under a hill)	-	W. S. W.	5 miles.
Cufferein	- - -	West,	7 miles.
Rihhah or Jericho	-	W. by N.	8 miles.
Burdj-e-Hadjela	-	W. by N.	4 miles.
Nemereen	- - -	W. N. W.	7 miles.

Continuing to descend from hence, we reached the foot of the hill, over an extremely abrupt declivity, after an hour's ride, and then halted to wash and refresh. From hence we again went up, over a steep hill; and after passing through some of the finest woods that could be seen, we came to a deep glen, in which some

ancient caves were pointed out to me as we rode along. The entrances to these caves were by large square apertures, unquestionably hewn out with great care; and the interior of each was said to contain stone sarcophagi and inscriptions. I had the strongest desire to visit these, if only for a hasty glance; but as this fertile glen is a scene of constant contention among the shepherds who feed their flocks here, and each encroach on the other's supposed prior right, nothing that I could say would induce my guide, Abu Fārah, to consent to my turning a foot out of our path, and accordingly, to my great regret and vexation, I was compelled to relinquish my desires, and submit to forego their gratification.

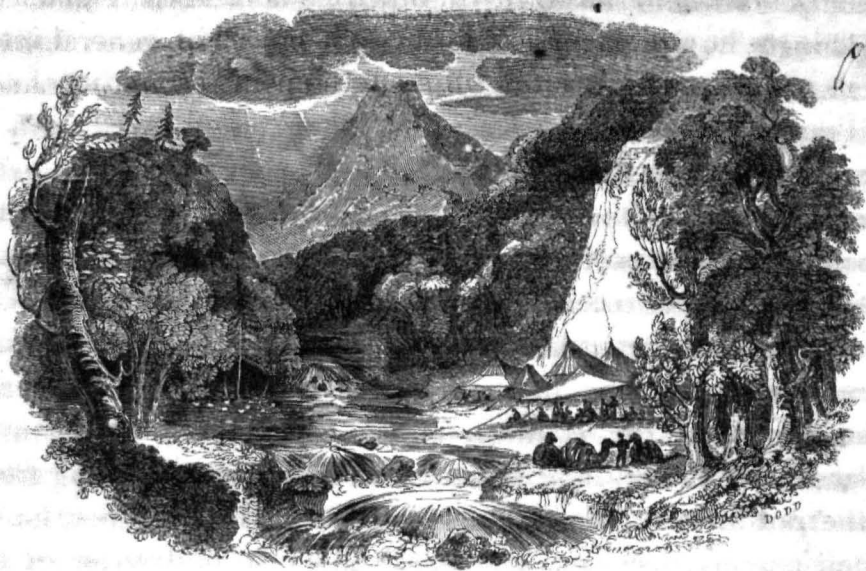
From the summit of the hill we again saw the castle and town of Assalt, as well as the head of the Dead Sea; and descending for about an hour over corn land, now cultivated, we came to the modern tomb of Mar Georgis, or St. George, the tutelar saint of the neighbouring town of Fahaez:—the structure has nothing remarkable in it, being like the ordinary tombs of Mohammedan saints, so plentifully seen over every part of the East.

In a quarter of an hour after this we came to Mahuss, a large ruined village, and in half an hour more, passing over cultivated grounds, we reached Fahaez; the valley of the Jordan, and the head of the Dead Sea, being always in sight on our left as we rode. From hence we descended by the steep hill over which we came on our way out, crossed the Wādi Lizerack, where we observed grottoes in the rock, and remains of walls of stone; and, lastly, ascended again to Anab, where we alighted to take some food.

Our route of return from hence to Assalt was the same as that by which we had first come from that town to Anab; and, proceeding briskly on, we reached it about sunset. On approaching it from the eastward, the huge castle looking doubly large through the haze of the smoke ascending from the town, the small dwellings barely seen by the glimmer of the lights burning in them, and the aid of a faint moonlight, the hum of population, the barking of

dogs, and the general effect of the surrounding scenery, all combined, was powerfully impressive.

We were well received by our friends at Assalt; and, as the adventures of our excursion formed an object of general interest, we were kept up by visitors till a late hour in recounting them.



CHAPTER VII.

FURTHER DETENTION AT ASSALT, AND A THIRD VISIT TO JERASH.

ASSALT, Sunday, March 4.—It was necessary to remain at least a day at Assalt, for the purpose of giving my horse some repose, as well as to think of what steps it would be most advisable to pursue under existing circumstances, and how I could best further the ultimate object of my journey.

It being a day of freedom from business, (though to me, at least, far from a day of rest,) as soon as the morning service of the church was over, which was at an early hour, the house in which I lodged was filled with visitors; some professedly to know the reason of our return; others probably out of a desire to see us, and ascertain that we were well; and some, certainly, because they had nothing else to do, and thought it the least tedious method of passing away a tiresome day of idleness and gossiping.

The adventures of our way were recounted twenty times in succession to every fresh visitor by my guide, Abu Fārah-el-Semaan-ibn-Semaan-ibn-Daood (for so he called himself); and although he interlarded his narrative with the most solemn exclamations, such as, "Salat el Nebbé! Ya towal Oomruck!" &c. "Pray to the Prophet! May your life be lengthened!" and similar expressions, yet he was a perfect Falstaff in progressive exaggeration, and every time that he repeated the same incident, it became magnified in importance by the additional embellishments which it was certain of receiving as it passed through his hands.

It may be remarked here, that nothing is more fallacious, or less worthy of being implicitly received, than the information of the people of the country, either with regard to the inhabited places near them, their distance and direction of bearing from each other, or as to the site of ancient ruins in the neighbourhood, with their extent, position, or present state. In illustration of this uncertainty on topics like these, we had a long dispute among our morning visitors on the question whether Karak, and Karak Shaubak, were one and the same place, or whether they were distinct and separate from each other. One would have imagined, that in a town so near to these as Assalt, and inhabited, too, by a people frequently making journeys in the country around them, as well as being occasionally visited by persons from Karak, such ignorance as this could not well happen; yet some among our party contended warmly, that to the south of Karak there were neither towns nor villages of any kind, the people all living in tents; while others maintained as stoutly, that two days' journey to the south of Karak was a place called Karak Shaubak; and a day further on, in the same direction, was a spot called Wādi Moosa, in which were several other smaller villages.

Of the remains of ancient cities in this district of Belkah, many of the inhabitants of Assalt did not even know the existence; others confounded names and descriptions in such a manner as to render both unintelligible, from the details given as descriptive of

one place proving much more applicable to some other. Many of the party went so far as to say, that Deer el Nassāra, at which there is not a vestige of architectural grandeur or beauty, was a far more interesting spot, and more worthy of a stranger's visit, than either Ammān or Jerash, two of the finest groups of ruins on the east of the Jordan. Some of our visitors asserted, that at Irak-el-Emir, which we had passed without entering, were stone doors, sarcophagi, subterranean chambers, galleries of undetermined extent, and inscriptions in unknown characters graven on the doors and walls, a description that would lead one to expect Egyptian tombs like those of the kings at Thebes. Others contended that there were neither stone doors nor large chambers, but sarcophagi only, and these sunk deep into the earth; and others again insisted that there was neither writing over the doors nor sculpture of any kind; though all admitted the existence of the stone boxes, or sarcophagi, which were large and numerous.

The unaccountable part of these discrepancies and total want of agreement is, that each of the speakers swore he had seen the place spoken of at least twenty times, and knew every part of it as well as his own dwelling, yet all were equally positive in maintaining the accuracy of their statements, and no one person would submit to acknowledge himself as even probably in error.

The fine remains at Jerash and Ammān, which my guide had often seen, were scarcely at all esteemed by him; while, in describing the shapeless masses at Jelool, Hhuzbhān, and Oom-el-Russās, which he had only seen at a distance before, and had never entered or examined until during our late excursion, in which we took them in our way, he exclaimed, "Never were cities in the world like these three; — there is no counting the number of the houses, and every house is as big as the castle of Assalt! the pillars are larger round than the circle of the whole company; the writings are so numerous that no one could copy them; and the tower of Oom-el-Russās is as high as a mountain!"

'After every allowance that I was disposed to make for oriental

exaggeration, this style was so extravagantly hyperbolic, and appeared so ridiculous to me, who had but so recently viewed the objects described, that I could not refrain from laughter. I have recorded these facts, however, because they not only illustrate the character of the people here, and of human nature generally, among all people in a similar state of civilization, but they will also serve to show how little dependance can be placed by travellers on the relations and descriptions of the native inhabitants of these countries, and how much more frequently they are liable to be tempted to visit an uninteresting spot, than to pass by any considerable one. Mr. Burckhardt, who had been unable to visit Oom-el-Russās, but had collected such information as he could obtain from the Arabs respecting it, had been assured that there were green columns at that place; which induced a supposition that these might be columns of verd antique, and that the ruins existing there might correspond in magnificence to the costliness of such a material; but the remains seen at Oom-el-Russās, are so far from the description given of them in the instance mentioned, that there was not a single column, nor even the fragment of one, visible to us in our late visit to that spot.

In the evening we repaired to the house of Aioobe, where a new pack of German picquet cards were introduced for the amusement of the company; and the noise and confusion to which this Sunday evening's diversion gave rise, was almost distracting. In the course of our stay there an incident occurred which was quite new to me, and curious enough to deserve mention. The salutations usual in many ancient and modern nations, offered to persons after sneezing, are well known*; but salutations after an act by which nature relieves a person oppressed with flatulencies, are certainly uncommon. On this occasion, the infant child of Aioobe being in its mother's arms, and alarming the company by a sound unusually loud and distinct for an infant of its tender age,

* Hobhouse's Travels, page 512.

the father exclaimed, with great gravity and evident satisfaction, " B'ism-Allah, el Rakhman, el Rakheem, ya towal oomruck, ya Ibraheem." " In the name of God, the mighty, and the merciful, may your life be lengthened, O Abraham !" and not a smile was excited throughout the company by this extraordinary introduction of salutation and prayer on so unusual an occasion. Niebuhr has a very extraordinary story respecting an Arab who encouraged a competition for excellence in this respect in a bath at Senna ; and others are told by him, to show the extreme abhorrence which Arabs in general have for even the inadvertent escape of what had here excited the solemn exclamations adverted to. Niebuhr also mentions, that the former part of this exclamation is used by all pious Arabs before the consummation of connubial rites ; so that the name of God is invoked on the most opposite occasions, and associated, in the most unseemly manner, with the gravest as well as the most frivolous events.

The conversation of the evening took a political turn, and the general belief and opinion was, that all the sovereigns of Europe would soon unite to re-possess the sanctuaries of the Holy Land. They even ventured to mark out the divisions that would certainly take place when the apportionment of the territories to the respective sovereigns should be determined on. In this division, Russia, they conceived, would have possession of Constantinople ; Austria would receive Asia Minor ; England the whole of Syria ; and the French, Egypt. In reasoning on the probable consequences to which such an occupation of the Turkish territories might lead, nothing could surpass the absurdity of their speculations, arising from their utter ignorance of geography, as well as of the resources and character of the several nations thus enriched by their donations. In this I took but little part, and avoided contradiction as tending to protract a conversation already tedious from its length and inutility ; and by thus remaining passive, an interval occurred which enabled me to change the topic to one of

more immediate personal interest to myself, as well as one on which their opinions might really be of some value.

In considering the steps most advantageous for me to pursue, under the circumstances of the moment, it was the unanimous opinion of those present, that as I could not effect a journey across the Desert to Bagdad or Bussora without a change of affairs among the Wahabee Arabs, which there was no ground at present to hope or expect, I should best effect my object by going from hence straight to Damascus through the Hauran; and on my arrival at that city, I might more easily determine on the best mode of further prosecuting my journey to Aleppo, and from thence, by the ordinary caravan route, to India. In every point of view in which this subject was debated, it appeared to me not only the most eligible, but really the only mode left for me to pursue; I accordingly consented to this arrangement, and our kind entertainer, Aioobe, undertook to write letters of recommendation to several of his friends and correspondents on the road, to facilitate my progress as much as it might be in their power to do so. My Nazarene guide, Maalim Georgis, and my Assalt guide, Abu Fārah, each solicited also to accompany me thus far on my way. They declared that, in offering their services, they were influenced by no motives of gain, but wished, out of pure regard, to be my companions as far as Damascus at least: and though I could hardly give full credit to this profession of unusual freedom from selfishness, yet I readily yielded to their wishes, as guides of some description or other were indispensable, and more trustworthy ones than these I could hardly hope to find. The arrangement was therefore concluded; and though I doubted their entire disinterestedness, and knew moreover that they were too poor to be able, even if willing, to serve me without reward, yet I was reluctant to show any distrust of their zeal or attachment, and therefore suffered all mention of such reward to be suspended for the present, till a fitting time and opportunity should render it more acceptable to all parties.

My clothes having been washed for me during the afternoon, I remained up till past midnight, after my companions were asleep, to dry them in the smoke of the embers that still remained from the blazing fire, around which we had all passed the evening.

Assalt, Monday, March 5.—The morning broke with a heavy gale of wind from the S. W., accompanied by torrents of rain, so that it was impossible to set out on our journey. Independently of the vexation caused by this unexpected delay, the manner in which I was compelled to pass my time was both tedious and unprofitable. All those whose occupations were carried on within the house were as idle as ever, and those whose business was in the open air were driven to their several dwellings for shelter. By this means our house was crowded with visitors during the whole of the day; and however thankful I might have felt towards particular individuals of the place for their advice and hospitality, I could not but feel impatient to quit a scene where nothing new or useful remained to learn; while indolence, ignorance, and bigotry were perpetually presenting the most revolting pictures to my view.

Assalt, Tuesday, March 6.—The rain of the preceding day had ceased with the S.W. wind during the night; but after a short interval of moderate weather, this was succeeded by as strong a gale from the northward, bringing with it snow and sleet, which rendered it equally impracticable to proceed on our intended route; I had therefore the prospect of another tedious day before me, and was already weary with the anticipation of the tiresome task of passing it.

Besides the usual circle by which our abode was certain of being visited during the day, and who were also certain of entering on the threadbare topic of the Christian sovereigns dividing the Turkish empire and giving the Greeks the pre-eminence, there

came a party of Mohammedans to see me, as the stranger of whom they had heard much to excite their curiosity. The head of the party was a green-turbanned descendant of the Prophet, originally from Egypt; but having, after the pilgrimage to Mecca, taken a wife of this part of the country, he had settled here as a trader. Another of the party was an Arab doctor from Damascus, who had been at Cyprus, at Alexandria, and at Tunis. Being themselves great travellers, they had come, as they expressed it to me, to see one who had the courage to leave his mother's home, and come so far away from it as this to see the world. Each of these having performed the journey to Mecca as pilgrims, were called Hadjee, and as this title is sometimes conceded to Christians who have visited their holy city, Jerusalem, they flattered me by this compliment, affixing the address of Hadjee to the name of Abdallah, by which I was usually known. The Christians, here, were not pleased with one of their own faith bearing a name so purely Mohammedan as they considered this to be; though in other parts there are even Arab Christians not unfrequently bearing this least objectionable of all appellations, "the Slave of God," and which, one would think, all sects and religions might be equally proud to adopt.

If I had before been disgusted with the religious hatred and contempt existing between Mohammedans and Christians generally, (though it is less offensive in its appearance at this place than I had before seen it elsewhere,) I saw enough in the morning's history to revive that feeling with redoubled force. I was asked innumerable questions by each party, and requested to relate what I had most admired among all the various wonders I had seen through life; but when I recounted an incident which tended to portray in strong colours the great advantages of universal philanthropy and toleration, or spoke of some deed which taught or illustrated the value of religious charity and mutual forbearance among persons of opposite opinions in matters of faith, no one assented; on the contrary, the Mussulman proudly exclaimed,

“ La Illah ul Ullah, wa Muhammed el Russook Ullah,” and the Christian as haughtily crossed himself, counted his beads, and muttered his profession of faith, each seeming most heartily to despise the other. When I was asked, why I travelled, the Egyptian trader said, before I made any reply, that it must no doubt be to increase my stock of knowledge; the Arab doctor from Damascus said, that being wise enough already, it was more probable that my object was to collect information in the country of the Turks to transmit to my sovereign, to be serviceable in some meditated conquests; while the Christian contended, that it must be also with a view to enquire into the state of Christianity in these parts, with a view to the ultimate purification of the faith of the Church.

The Christian visitors at length dropped off one by one, and I was left alone with the Mohammedans, who, though more proud, from a consciousness of superiority, were neither so ignorant nor so bigotted as their Christian neighbours, and were therefore much more agreeable companions. Not long after this, they again came in one by one as they had left, and general conversation was resumed, in which political subjects were most prominent. The Egyptian affected to despise Napoleon for having abjured his faith and made a public profession of Mohammedanism at Cairo, which he thought was as unwise as it was contemptible, since it could have deceived no man of sound judgment or orthodox Mussulman. The Christians admitted that this was at least a doubtful virtue; but they thought him entitled to the highest praise for his attempt to rescue the Holy Land from infidel dominion. Both parties agreed only in one thing, that of extolling the English; yet the Mohammedans considered them unjustifiable in their attempts to restore the old King of France, whom they understood to be an idiot; and the latter thought they had done wickedly in dethroning the Emperor, to make room for the Bourbons, since the eyes of all the Christian world had in their estimation been directed to Buonaparte, as the only hope left for the redemption of Jerusalem.

The weather began to abate in severity towards the evening, and promised a fair morrow. After our party broke up, therefore, I made arrangements for our rising early, in the hope that the next sun would see us on our way.

Wednesday, March 7.—We arose early, as the weather was now fine, but from the delay always inseparable from the first starting on a new journey, it was eight o'clock before we had mounted our horses to set out. I was accompanied on this occasion by Mallim Georgis, my former guide from Nazareth, and Abu Fārah, my late escort towards Karak; and as we moved from the door of our dwelling we received the good wishes and parting benedictions of all the people of the town, both Christians and Mohammedans.

On leaving Assalt, we went up to the northward, through a beautifully wooded country, passing in our way an armed troop of thirteen Arabs on foot, just going out on a plundering excursion, and in half an hour we gained the summit of the hill that we had been ascending. From this point we had a fine view of the Valley of Jordan, which is called by the Arabs of this part, Ghore, and Wādi Stezibān, and the river is still called El Shereeah.

Descending from this eminence, but still going in a northerly direction, we passed the reputed tomb of Osha-el-Nebbê, or Joshua the Prophet, leaving it a little on our left. Seven ruined villages, a hewn cistern or reservoir for water, and other marks of former populousness were seen by us also in the early part of this route. In half an hour from the commencement of our journey we came to Zey, a ruined town, in which were some few pillars, many private buildings originally constructed of large stones, but now completely demolished and grown over with trees, with a very perfect sarcophagus, ornamented with sculpture and of the usual size. Near to this spot are an abundance of pines growing in a clayey soil; and I was assured that this was a favourite haunt of wild boars, which I could easily credit, as there were a number of places

then visible in which they had but very recently muzzled up the fresh earth in search of roots as food.

In the course of our descent, the position of a small building called the tomb of Ooda-el-Nebbê was pointed out to me on the top of a hill which hangs over the valley of Jerash, and bore from us N.E. by E. by compass, distant probably about fifteen miles in a straight line.

An hour's ride from Zey brought us to Ullān, a Christian town, very recently deserted; as it was the town in which Aioobe the merchant of Assalt was born and brought up to manhood:—it is now, however, entirely in ruins. Near it are some old caves of burial, as well as hewn quarries, which probably furnished the stone used in the dwellings, all of which are built of that material. On the west of this, and at the apparent distance of two miles, we saw Kufr Ulm, another town also recently deserted and fallen into ruins. The whole of this tract is called Belkah, until it reaches the river or brook of Zerkah, when the district ends, and to the north of it commences the district of Jebel Adjeloon. Ullān appears to have been an ancient site, from the abundance of fine broken pottery scattered around it, of a quality far superior to any in modern use in these countries, and one of the most frequent and unerring indications of an early and populous settlement. The spot is now used as a place of burial for the Arabs of the surrounding country, who live in tents, and who are half cultivators and half Bedouins.

Below this site of Ullān, we passed over a light red soil and a reddish sand stone, with green turf and an abundance of scarlet flowers, similar to those we had seen in such plenty in our way over the plains near Ammān and towards Oom-el-Russās. These I now learnt were called by the Arabs, Berrakoot; they are considered to yield an excellent remedy for asthma and coughs; to effect which the flowers are boiled in a small quantity of water, and the decoction sweetened with sugar, and drank by the patient, to whom it is said to afford speedy and effectual relief.

In half an hour after passing through Ullān, we came to a sister town called Sihhān. This is larger than the former one; and besides being distinguished, like the other, by an abundance of broken pottery scattered around its site, we noticed some grottos in the neighbourhood, with fragments of the rustic masonry of the Romans, and the pedestal of a column, which indicated the former existence of some architectural works of a public nature. This spot is also now used as a place of burial by the tented Arabs of the surrounding country, and on the graves are observed numerous propitiatory offerings and tokens in memory of the tenants of the graves.

Our road still continued in a direction of north-east, and descended to a lower level as we proceeded, when, after a ride of about three-quarters of an hour over a light red soil, we passed suddenly down into a deep valley or glen, between Ullakoom and Sumia, two ruined villages on the hills on each side of us, about a mile apart from each other. From hence the position of Boor-mah was pointed out to me, in a northern direction, on the side of Jebel Adjeloon. I believe this to be a different pronunciation of the same name, which on my former way from Jerusalem to Jerash was called Boorzah, as they were beyond doubt one and the same place.

In an hour and a half from this, still descending, we went down over a steep slope to the passage of the Zerkah. It had been for some time gathering, and now began to rain heavily, with thunder and lightning, so that we had the prospect of a most uncomfortable ride before us; it was now, however, too late to seek shelter or retreat, of which I was rather glad, for had the rain fallen within the first hour of our leaving Assalt, my companions would no doubt have retraced their steps, and I should have been detained another day or two, if not more. The stream of the Zerkah was in this place deep and rapid, and it was not without difficulty that we swam our horses across, although the breadth was inconsiderable. We saw here several encampments of Arabs

in their black hair tents, and noticed some caves and grottos excavated by the earlier inhabitants of these parts in the caves above. On the hill to the east of Zerkah were also pointed out to me more than fifty ruined villages, the names of which were repeated to me, but being unable to write them on the spot they were soon forgotten.

We ascended from hence northerly over steep hills and a clayey soil, in which wild olives and numerous other trees were growing; and in about an hour after passing the Zerkah, we came to a ruined village called Alamoom, about an hour's distance to the east of Boorma or Boorza. The rain here ceased, and after the brilliance and freshness that it had thrown over all the vegetable creation, the view on its clearing up was at once sublime and beautiful. The features of the country were such as I have already described there in my former visit to Jerash; but on this occasion they derived a new charm from the state of the atmosphere, and looked like the most lively part of creation in a new dress.

Directing our course more easterly, we came in half an hour to the ruined town of Hamsa, where we observed many modern graves, and a large building with a pointed arch. We passed on the side of these ruins, without going through them, leaving them a little on the right of our path, and had then on our left the ruined towns of Jejazy on the side of a hill, and Ghiddery above it. Jebel Asswete was pointed out to the eastward, that being the name given to a district like those of Belkah and Adjeloon. In this district of Jebel Asswete were said to be 366 ruined towns and villages, now entirely deserted, and not even occasionally visited by Bedouin Arabs in the course of their wanderings. This form of expression is, I believe, often used merely to signify a great number; but even supposing the towns to have been only as numerous in the district of Asswete as we have evidence of their having been in Belkah and Adjeloon, there is scarcely any portion of the country that could have been more peopled than these three provinces in the time of their greatest prosperity.