

On our return we breakfasted at the house of our entertainer ; after which, before we could take leave, it was deemed right that we should pay a visit to the Druse Sheik, Ahmed ibn Harouf. We were politely received there, and, after taking coffee and interchanging a few common place compliments, retired.

We quitted Nedjeraun at ten o'clock in the forenoon, and proceeding over a broken road for an hour to the westward, we came on some old ruins of a town once standing on a rocky eminence, but scarcely any single edifice now remaining perfect. Near to this is a spring and stream of water called Moya Karatta ; and two miles to the south is the large town of Iddoor.

In half an hour after passing the ruins above mentioned, we came to Sahara, a small village, built on a raised mound, but now entirely without inhabitants ; and in an hour from hence we passed the town of Bussr, leaving it at a little distance on our right.

Our course from Nedjeraun thus far had been about west ; and from hence the rugged mass of rock, near which the town of Shuhubah is seated, on the mountains, bore east, apparently distant about thirty miles. The town of Bussr is peopled entirely by Mohammedans, and contains about 100 families. The Druses extend no farther west in the Haurān than Nedjeraun (though there are many farther to the westward, in the mountains of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon) ; and the Christians from thence westerly gradually diminish in numbers. Wherever a settlement contains a few of each of these sects, a balance of interests is preserved, and they live together in tolerable harmony ; at least they do not molest each other : but where Mussulmans principally inhabit, neither Druses nor Christians are borne with as when they live by themselves ; the Druses being the most tolerant, and the Mohammedans the most bigotted of the three. Bussr appears to have extensive ruins, but these are mostly of private dwellings, if we except an old building with two square towers, similar to one at Nedjeraun, which is now used for a mosque ; the towers of this at Bussr have sharply-pointed domes built on them, and being

whitewashed on the outside, so as to be seen from a great distance, resemble the towers usually applied as light-houses, with their lanterns at the summit. S.E. of Bussr, about a mile distant, is the ruined village of Dooery, on an elevated mound, now quite deserted.

From Bussr, our course went W.N.W., and the road improved as we proceeded. From Nedjeraun thus far it had been stony in the extreme, and only partial spots of it were capable of cultivation; but from hence westerly we had before us a wide expanse of light red soil, equal to the plains of Esdraelon, or Zabulon, in Palestine, and like them, now bearing an abundance of thistles, which are now admitted to indicate a fertile soil, though often considered as a symbol and characteristic of sterility. The absence of water began, however, to be visible; as every where the brown soil was parched and cracked, and not an acre of it had yet been ploughed for seed.

On the right of our road, running along east and west to the north of us, we had the southern edge of a rocky district, called Ledjah, which extends all the way from Bussr to Ezra westerly, and spreads itself for many leagues to the northward. All along its southern boundary are seen small towers, and stone walls of enclosures, both now in ruins. This district was once covered with vineyards, and the towers were no doubt used as watch-houses, in the same manner as they were anciently in the vineyards about Jerusalem. It is probable, also, that the stone walls seen on the hills at Salghud, at Gunnawāt, and at Shuhubah, were to mark the precincts of vineyards, in the same manner as seen on this district.

In about two hours from Bussr, going all the way W.N.W. over a clear and rich soil, and gradually descending by a gentle slope towards a lower level, we approached the town of Ezra. This is built on the S.W. projecting tongue of the rocky district of Ledjah; and Nedjeraun is built on a similarly projecting tongue of the same district, at the S.E. angle: there being a slight concave

indentation, like a bay, curving to the northward between them. The road of entrance into Ezra, over this bed, from the eastward, was exactly like the road of outlet from Nedjeraun to the westward; and at each of these, from the sharp and rugged nature of the rocks, we thought it prudent to dismount and lead our horses over it: even this, however, was required to be done with great care, to prevent the horse from falling. It would be difficult to assign any one reason for the choice of such apparently inconvenient positions for these towns, that would not be liable to some objection; but the probability is, that many more considerations than one united to recommend it. The want of wood for building rendered it necessary to use very large stones for some parts of the edifices, such as beams for the roofs and doors; and the convenience of saving the carriage of these heavy masses, by constructing the building as near the quarries as possible, is evident. This was, no doubt, a leading consideration; and security might have been another; as the unobstructed surface of the Plain would afford an easy approach to robbers and marauders, who would have the greatest difficulty, particularly if horsemen, in traversing this rocky bed, over which alone the town can be entered.

We alighted at the house of a Christian in Ezra, near the western edge of the town, and immediately opposite to one of the best preserved buildings, in the original style of the country, that I had yet seen. We were extremely well received, as our host was one of Abu Fārah's relatives: almost all the Christians of the Haurān being from the provinces of Belkah and Adjeloon, from whence they have been driven out, as they say, at different periods, by the southern Arabs, who are constantly plundering those who settle near them. The eastern tribes of Bedouins, though all acknowledge them to be bad enough, are admitted, however, not to be so daring as the Beni Hassan, and the Beni Sakker, near the Dead Sea; besides which, their being here somewhat nearer to the seat of government at Damascus, gives them, in their opinion, greater

whitewashed on the outside, so as to be seen from a great distance, resemble the towers usually applied as light-houses, with their lanterns at the summit. S.E. of Bussr, about a mile distant, is the ruined village of Dooery, on an elevated mound, now quite deserted.

From Bussr, our course went W.N.W., and the road improved as we proceeded. From Nedjeraun thus far it had been stony in the extreme, and only partial spots of it were capable of cultivation; but from hence westerly we had before us a wide expanse of light red soil, equal to the plains of Esdraelon, or Zabulon, in Palestine, and like them, now bearing an abundance of thistles, which are now admitted to indicate a fertile soil, though often considered as a symbol and characteristic of sterility. The absence of water began, however, to be visible; as every where the brown soil was parched and cracked, and not an acre of it had yet been ploughed for seed.

On the right of our road, running along east and west to the north of us, we had the southern edge of a rocky district, called Ledjah, which extends all the way from Bussr to Ezra westerly, and spreads itself for many leagues to the northward. All along its southern boundary are seen small towers, and stone walls of enclosures, both now in ruins. This district was once covered with vineyards, and the towers were no doubt used as watch-houses, in the same manner as they were anciently in the vineyards about Jerusalem. It is probable, also, that the stone walls seen on the hills at Salghud, at Gunnawāt, and at Shuhubah, were to mark the precincts of vineyards, in the same manner as seen on this district.

In about two hours from Bussr, going all the way W.N.W. over a clear and rich soil, and gradually descending by a gentle slope towards a lower level, we approached the town of Ezra. This is built on the S.W. projecting tongue of the rocky district of Ledjah; and Nedjeraun is built on a similarly projecting tongue of the same district, at the S.E. angle: there being a slight concave

indentation, like a bay, curving to the northward between them. The road of entrance into Ezra, over this bed, from the eastward, was exactly like the road of outlet from Nedjeraun to the westward; and at each of these, from the sharp and rugged nature of the rocks, we thought it prudent to dismount and lead our horses over it: even this, however, was required to be done with great care, to prevent the horse from falling. It would be difficult to assign any one reason for the choice of such apparently inconvenient positions for these towns, that would not be liable to some objection; but the probability is, that many more considerations than one united to recommend it. The want of wood for building rendered it necessary to use very large stones for some parts of the edifices, such as beams for the roofs and doors; and the convenience of saving the carriage of these heavy masses, by constructing the building as near the quarries as possible, is evident. This was, no doubt, a leading consideration; and security might have been another; as the unobstructed surface of the Plain would afford an easy approach to robbers and marauders, who would have the greatest difficulty, particularly if horsemen, in traversing this rocky bed, over which alone the town can be entered.

We alighted at the house of a Christian in Ezra, near the western edge of the town, and immediately opposite to one of the best preserved buildings, in the original style of the country, that I had yet seen. We were extremely well received, as our host was one of Abu Fārah's relatives: almost all the Christians of the Haurān being from the provinces of Belkah and Adjeloon, from whence they have been driven out, as they say, at different periods, by the southern Arabs, who are constantly plundering those who settle near them. The eastern tribes of Bedouins, though all acknowledge them to be bad enough, are admitted, however, not to be so daring as the Beni Hassan, and the Beni Sakker, near the Dead Sea; besides which, their being here somewhat nearer to the seat of government at Damascus, gives them, in their opinion, greater

protection than can be enjoyed in more remote parts, where no fear of a superior power exists.

After taking a meal of Dourra bread, and a sweet paste made from grapes in the neighbourhood of Damascus, from which it is brought, as all the vineyards have long since declined here, we went out to see the town.



CHAP. XIV.

STAY AT EZRA, AND JOURNEY FROM THENCE TO DAMASCUS.

IN the examination which I desired to make of the ruins at Ezra, during our short stay there, I was assisted by a person well acquainted with the town, who accompanied me in my ramble, merely to direct me through the streets, and point out such large buildings as the place contained. The first edifice to which I was taken by my guide was what at first seemed to be a very old work, from the style of its architecture, but which proved to be the southern front of a Greek church, now called Mar Elias. The principal face of this building was towards the west; but the place for the altar was no doubt on the east, where the end of the building was of a semi-circular form. The masonry of the southern face had its stones singularly inlaid and locked together, no cement

being used. The interior was divided into a central nave, with two side aisles, separated by arches; and the roof, with its massy beams, were of solid stone; but there were no pillars in any part of it. Over the large door in the southern front, in which were circular and square windows, with stones curiously interlocked with each other, was the following inscription:—

†ΟΙΑΠΟΖΟΡΕΞΙΔΙΒ . . ΜΑΘΗΑΙΟΥΠΡΟΦ
 ΣΠΟΔΗΨΑΜΟΥΕΜΛΟΥΔΙΑΚΕΝΕΤΙΥΙΖ
 ΕΚΙCΑΝΕΠΙΟΥΑΡΟΥΘΕΟΦΣΕΠΙΚΟΠΟΥ
 ΨΕΠΙΓΑΚΟΘCΠΙΟΤΥΟΝΡΟΝΒΥΝΔCΣΜΑΗ

On a low door way to the right of this was a singular mixture of emblems, exhibiting the cross and the vine, as if the worship of Bacchus and Christ had been at one time united, or the latter engrafted on the ruins of the former. The cross appeared in the centre, with vine leaves and clusters of grapes suspended from its arms; and on each side of the circle enclosing the cross, a stem of the vine extended, in a wavy form, with the fruit on it.

On a side door on the left the following appeared on the architrave:—

ΟΛΗΟC + ΗΑΙΑC

One of the inner divisions of this building is now used as the Greek church of Ezra. It has a few paltry pictures, and a rude altar formed of several stones piled together, which stands in the centre of the whole. The other parts of the building have been partitioned off into small dwellings, by heaping up the fallen stones, and forming out of them loose and miserable walls.

From a stone over a square window, exactly in the centre of the eastern or semi-circular end, I copied the following inscription, by climbing on the wall of an arch since built from it across the street, and sitting in a space left vacant by some of the stones having fallen away:—

†ΠΙΣΤΙΔΙΕΔΡΑΜΕΝ+ΘΕΟΔΟΜΟΙΠΡΟΤΕ
 ΕΠΟΥΔΗΚΕΡΤΟΙΓΙΝΕΙΛΑΓΑΘΩΙΝΑΝΑΠΟΔΟΞΚ
 ΠΡΟΦΗΙΟΥΠΑΙΑΕΥΝΑΠΕΛΟΙΔΕΟΥΡΑΝΟΙΓ†

And from a broken block of stone now used in a causeway, on the north side of a street to the north of the church, I copied the following:—

ΑΤΑΗΡΕΗΟΝΙΚΟΝΠ ΑΓΣΟΧΙΑΠΡΑΛΙΓ
 ΔΥΕΝΙΕΥΝΤΕΓΑΡΩΝΘΗΚΩΝΤΟΙΚΚΑΗΑ
 ΔΕΝΑΘΟΥΑΝΙΝΑΓΟΕΤΙΕΟΙΤΗΗCΕΔΗΛΟΙ
 ΡΕΕΝΤΩΥΠΕΡΘΥΡΩΤΗΕΑΝΑΤΦΑΙΑΜΑ
 ΤΨΤΕΡΑΕΘΗΚΜΕΜ ΑΔΙΑΨΕΡΟ
 ΗΡΛΙΑΧΑΝΨΚΑΓΓΙΑΝΟΥΣΕΜΕΡΟ
 ΙΑΙΑΔΟΧΟΙΛΑΥΓΧΕΞΑΝΜΟΓΟΥΨΤ

In the end of the wall, a few paces to the west of this, on the north side of the street, is a large sarcophagus built in with the ordinary masonry. In its cover, which is flat and plain, is a circular hole, about a span in diameter, and above this is an arch cut in the stone, evidently for the purpose of leaving access to this hole, as if it were intended to admit of the dropping alms, or any other thing, into the sarcophagus below. On the side of the sarcophagus is a central ornament, something like a sheaf of wheat, but much injured, and on each side of this is an inscription, as follows:—

ΚΑΚΑΑΥΔΙ
 ΑΝΟCΟΓΕΤ
 ΟΠΟΦΑΝΟΥ
 ΛΕΓΙΡΕΧΛΕΓΙΙΙ

ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕΝ
 ΤΗΚΙCΤΗΑΗΝ
 ΙΔΙΑΙCΑΥΤΟΥ
 ΔΑΠΑΝΑΙC . .

The pannels are raised from the surface of the stone, and the letters are cut deep into the black porous material, with a line drawn between each separate line of the characters.

Close by this sarcophagus is a curious old mosque, with a large open centre and colonnades, or wings of three arcades each, on each side. Some of the arches rest on square pillars of masonry, and others on small circular columns of basalt. One of these pillars is formed wholly of one piece of stone, including pedestal, shaft, and capital; and near it is a curious double column, the pedestals of which are in one piece, the shafts each composed of two pieces, and the two capitals with their plinths all formed out of one block. These pillars are not large, and are only distant from each other, as they stand, about a human span. They are right opposite to the door of entrance into the mosque, and we were assured that it was a general belief among the Mohammedans here, that whoever could pass through these pillars unhurt, was destined for heaven, and whoever could not, might prepare either to reduce his bulk, or expect a worse fate in hell*; the pieces forming the shafts are united by a layer of melted lead used as a cement, and now visible. There are two niches for prayer in the southern wall of this mosque, facing towards the Kaaba at Mecca; one of these might be taken for a Roman arch, as it has the semicircular form, and is built of bricks, of a flat kind and bright red colour, of the description commonly called Roman tiles, and united by a cement of fine lime almost as thick as the bricks themselves; the other is as characteristic of Saracen work and taste, being composed of alternate layers of black and white stone, like the niches in the bath at Bozra, and many other specimens of Saracen work still seen in the great Mohammedan cities of the east.

* This is another instance to add to the several others already enumerated in the "Travels in Palestine," of the prevalence of a notion, probably founded on a literal interpretation of what must have been meant in a figurative sense by Christ, who says, "Straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matt. vii. 14. But the notion is not exclusively Christian: it appears to be common to all religions.

Over the west door of entrance to the south wing of this mosque is a curious block, with a star cut in relief, and several holes made at stated intervals through the stone. Above this is sculptured the Greek cross, and below it is an inscription deeply cut in Arabic. On the outer western front, which is ascended to by a wide flight of four steps, are three square doors, and above and on each side of the central one are three blocks of stone, with pannels raised on them in high relief, and each containing a long Greek inscription, now illegible. These blocks do not appear to me, however, to have been sculptured since they were used in the building, but being found when this mosque was constructed out of the ruins of former edifices, were selected because of their containing such inscriptions, to be placed in their present positions as ornaments, or, possibly, for the purpose of thus recording the fact that Mohammedan places of worship had been raised on the ruins of Christian temples. This, at least, was my impression on the spot, though it might have been a conclusion too hastily drawn.

At the north-west angle of the mosque is a high sloping square tower, near the top of which are seen two Roman arched windows in each face of the building; and below is a bastard Ionic column. I had long entertained a belief, from the various instances in which I had seen the Roman and the Saracen, or the round and the pointed arch united in the same building, that there must have been a period when these distinctive marks of two opposite orders of architecture were confounded together, and often used by the same builder as well as in the same edifice. I was here confirmed in this belief by seeing, in the interior of this tower, the round and the pointed form of arch used in the same arcade, and necessarily contemporary with each other; so that the same may have been the case in the larger edifices, as at the castles before described, where this mixture of styles has been already observed, and accounted for by supposing the one to have been occasioned by

additions and repairs subsequent to the first building of the other : the subject, however, still remains a difficult one, and the solution of that difficulty is not much advanced even by this admission.

Between the tower and the opposite wing, in front of the open part of the mosque, are pure Ionic capitals in good taste, with shafts, pedestals, and blocks of stone, from fifteen to twenty feet long, evidently the remains of some former and more splendid work of Roman times, from the ruins of which the present edifice has been constructed. In the wall of the building, only a few paces west of the tower, are two Arabic inscriptions nearly illegible. Greek inscriptions are seen in the same place, so that the mixture of languages is as complete as the mixture of styles. It was with some difficulty that I made copies of the following.

The first of these is near the two Arabic inscriptions over a door in the wall of the building to the west of the tower :

ΥΠ..... ΑΓΑΘΗΤΥΧΗ
 ΥΤΙΕΡCΥΤΗΡΙΑCΚΑΙΝCΙΚΗCΤΟΥΚΥΡΙΑΥΗΜΩΝΑΥΤΟ.....
 ΑΥΡΗΑΙΟΥΕΞΟΥΗΡΟΥ..... ΕΥCΕΒΟΥCΕΥΤΥΧ.....
 ΩΜΓΑCΖΟΡΑΥΗΝΩΝΕΚΠΙCΕΑΝΤΟΒΑΛΑΝΕΙΟΝΙ.....

The next was over a small doorway, within an open court, on a broken architrave, and at a short distance to the northward of the former :

.... ΗΛΟCΚΙΖΟΒΑΙΔΟΥ.....
 .. ΜΟΥΘΟΥΚΑΙΛΛΟCΕΙΓΟCΚΑ.....
 ΑΙΛCΥΙΟΚ .. ΟCΒΑΡΑΧΟΥΚΑΙΚΟC...
 ΟCΓΔΒΑΡΦΥΚΑΙΙΑΒΝΗΑΟCΑΒΓΑ....
 CΑΝΕΝΤΩΝΙΑΙΩΝ.

The next was on a stone in the north wall of a street, to the north-east of the preceding one, close by the side of a small window. The letters were large, but very lightly traced on the

stone and rudely formed ; they are now indeed scarcely legible without pain :

ΠΑΤΜΚΙΕ
ΧΙΩΡΙΜΦΥ
ΕΤΙΑΦΝΚΙΟ
ΕΛΝΠΑ

To the east of this is a building called the northern church, now in ruins, and no trace of an inscription remaining, as far as I could discover. Over the southern door of this, however, are sculptured ornaments, formed of the vine leaf with clusters of grapes ; with a vase, as if meant to be emblematic of the sacramental wine ; and before the door is a plain sarcophagus of the old Roman kind, and of the usual size.

West of this, and due north of the square tower before described, is a building surmounted with a high dome ; and over the west door of entrance to this building is the following inscription : —

ΕΟΥΤΕΓΟΝΕΝΟΙΚΟCΤΟΓΩΝΔΑΙΜΟΝΩΝΚΑΤΑΩΤΙΟΝ
ΦΩΛΩΤΗΡΠΙΟΝΕΛΑΜΨΕΝΟΠΙΟΥΛΚΟΤΟCΕΚΑΔΥΙΤΕΝ
ΟΠΟΥΘΥΛΙΑΙΕΙΔΩΑΩΝΝΥΝΧΟΡΟΙΑΓΓΕΛΩΝS
ΟΠΟΥΘΕΟΛΙΑΡΨΕΤΟΝVΝΘΟΙΛΕΞΕΥΜΕΝΙΖΕΤΑΙ
ΑΗΝΡΤΙΕΦΙΛΟΧΡΙCΤΟΛΟΠΡΩΤΕΥΩΝΙΩΑΝΝΗCΔΙΟΜΗΔΙΟΜΗΔΕΥΕΥΙΟΕ
ΕΞΙΔΙΩΝΔΩΡΟΝΘΕΩΠΡΟΛΗΝΕΓΚΕΝΔΞΙΟΘΕΑΤΟΝΚΤΙΕΜΑ
ΙΔΡΥCΑCΕΝΤΟΥΤΩΤΟΥΚΑΛΑΙΝΙΚΟΥΑΓΙΟΥΜΑΡΤΥΡΟCΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ
ΤΟΝΙΜΙΟΝΝΙΨΑΝΟΝΤΟΥΦΑΝΕΝΤΟCΑΥΤΩΙΩΑΝΝΗC
ΟΥΚΑΘΥΠΝΟΝΑΛΛΑΦΑΝΕΡΩΕΝΕΤΙΘΕΓΟΥC.

The stone on which this inscription is cut is underneath a round or Roman arch, and on each side of it is the emblem of the cross, with clusters of grapes accompanying it. Beneath this, again, is a small doorway with a pair of small folding-doors of stone, still hanging, their dimensions being about four feet by three each, and eight inches in thickness ; and above it is a small square window, with folding window-shutters of stone in the same style.

Within, the building is seen to be a Christian church, covered by a dome of about sixty feet in height, supported by eight square pillars of good masonry, thus forming a circular arcade. The arches between these square pillars are of the Roman shape, and above each of them, at the foot of the dome, is a semicircular window. At the east end is the usual recess and altar of the Greek church, cut off from the outer space by a screen, with three doors and two small windows, and having another low partition between this and the rotunda, with a rude altar and some broken fragments of marble. The interior was stuccoed, and painted with the emblem of the cross and figures of saints; and though the building is now in a ruined state it is still visited as a place of worship by the Greeks, being dedicated to Mar Georgis, or St. George, the principal saint in their calendar.

There is a paved court in front of this church, and the stone doors which lead to it are still hanging in their original position. The east end of the church is not exactly semicircular, as is usual, but demi-sexagonal, at the place where the altar is fixed.

To the north-east of this large church is a smaller one; it contains, however, nothing remarkable, if we except the faint traces of a Greek inscription which is still to be seen over the western door of entrance, but too much obliterated to be accurately transcribed.

E. S. E. of the domed church, and E. N. E. of the mosque with the square tower, equidistant from each about 300 yards, is the fragment of a building which appears like the semicircular end of a church long since destroyed, as walls and buildings of a subsequent date are now attached to it. On the central or key-stone of the high round arch which separated the altar from the nave, on the under part of the stone, is the following:—

+ΕΠΙΠΟΛΦΟΓΑ
ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥΑΙ
ΑΔΑΕΓΕΝΕΤΟ
ΗΑΗΛΑΥΤΗ.

The characters are of the rudest form, and the most imperfectly traced of any that I had yet seen ; they were probably cut after the arch was constructed, as ceilings are done by a person lying on a stage with his face upward. On coming out of the arch we found this to be at the east end of the building, at the door of which the plain sarcophagus is before described as standing.

In this town of Ezra are to be found the most perfect specimens of ancient houses probably throughout the whole of the Haurān : at least I had not before met with any so good. In the course of my ramble I was taken into one that was unoccupied, though no part of it was destroyed or even materially injured. The front of this exhibited the singular kind of masonry before described as seen in the church of Mar Elias, the stones being interlocked within each other by a kind of dovetailing, and thus very strongly united without cement ; with small windows, both of the square and circular form, in the same range. The central room of this house was large and lofty, and on each side of it was a wing, separated from the central room by open arcades at equal distances from the sides and from each other. The east wing appeared to have been the kitchen, as in it were seen two large fire-places in the stone wall, with hearths, as in the farm-houses in England, and a large earthen vase, half buried in the centre of the floor, and capable of containing at least a hogshead of water ; with small recesses, like cupboards, around the walls. This room was low, being not more than a foot above a tall man's height : but the stone ceiling was as smooth as planks of wood, as well as the ends of the stones on which the massy beams that formed this roof and ceiling rested. In the centre of it was sculptured a wreath, the ends fastened with ribband, and a fanciful design within it, all executed in a style that proved it to be beyond question Roman. In the opposite, or western wing, were other low rooms ; and before the house was a flight of stone steps projecting from the wall, and unsupported, except by the end imbedded in the original masonry leading up to the terrace of the dwelling. In front of the whole

was an open paved court, and beyond this, stables with stalls and troughs, all hewn out of stone, for camels, oxen, mules, &c.

This edifice was exceedingly perfect, and would be an object of great interest to any future enquirer ; but the evening was closing in so fast that we had not time to take a plan or elevation of it, though few buildings would be more worthy of an accurate delineation. I was convinced from this and some other proofs, which I remarked in our hasty ramble, that Mar Elias was itself an ancient building, as I had at first conceived it to be, and that it was at some period subsequent to its first erection that it became a Christian church, and received the Greek inscriptions now seen upon it in different parts. It is worthy of remark, that the stones of all these buildings are originally black, but from long exposure to the atmosphere they decompose at the surface, and this decomposition assumes a yellow colour, giving them an appearance of newness and freshness equal to the sandstone of the Egyptian temples, which, in many places on the banks of the Nile, looks as if it had been taken from the quarry only a few days instead of hundreds of years ago. The most ancient of these buildings assume therefore the freshest appearance : so that the style of the architecture becomes the only safe criterion by which to judge of the age of their first construction. From their extreme durability, being wholly constructed of large masses of stone closely and strongly united, this age may be carried up even to the earliest times of which history makes any mention ; they may be as ancient as the pyramids of Egypt, and are certainly likely to endure as long. The style and character of the buildings in question is low, square, and massive, like that of Egypt. The doors and windows are small, and their frames, though composed of four sides, are often cut out of one stone. The doors themselves, from their great weight and thickness, are in general immovable by one person, though they are often nicely fitted and highly ornamented ; and the roofs or ceilings are formed of beams and planks of stone, laid as closely and as smoothly together as the planked ceiling or

floor of an English house; so that the whole seems fitted to endure for ever. These peculiarities must have belonged to a very early state of society, when this taste for the solid and indestructible in architecture seems to have been so universally prevalent as it was in Babylon, Egypt, Syria, Phœnicia, Greece, and India in the old world, and among the Mexicans and Peruvians in the new; but which necessarily yields to the more useful, convenient, and agreeable accommodations studied in buildings of a later period, among all people at least who can devote so much time, wealth, and labour as these massive houses of stone must have cost, to furnish themselves more pleasurable abodes. They might have been the work of the most ancient inhabitants of these plains; and the Romans who colonised here might have followed the taste of the country, and ornamented some and built others, during the period they occupied the country; but no *later* date than this can be assigned them, as they were most assuredly not constructed by the Greek Christians, nor by the Saracen followers of Mohammed.

At sunset I obtained the following bearings and distances of objects as seen from the terrace of our entertainer's dwelling: —

High peaked hill, called El-Haurān	S. E.	50 miles.
Ragged rock before Shuhubah	E. by S.	40 ditto.
Town of Meleehah, Christian and Mohammedan	S. E. by S. $\frac{1}{2}$ S.	7 ditto.
Theneiby, a Mohammedan town	W. S. W.	3 ditto.
Shukaru, ditto	N. by W.	3 ditto.
Zubbayne, in Ledjah, deserted	N. N. E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E.	6 ditto.
Jeddil, ditto, ditto	N. E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E.	6 ditto.
Harrān, ditto, ditto	E. by N. $\frac{1}{2}$ N.	6 ditto.
Bussr, not in Ledjah, Mohammedan	S. E. by E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E.	8 ditto.
Neamir, ditto, deserted	S. W. by S.	8 ditto.

The bearings of the surrounding country from the same point of view were as follows: — To the north, were the mountains of the Druse, an extension of the eastern chain, and very distant. To the north-east was the flat stony tract of Ledjah. From east to south-east were the eastern mountains bounding the Haurān. To

the south lay the plains of Belkah and a level horizon. To the south-west the high range of the mountains of Adjeloon, visible, but distant. To the west, a level horizon as far as the Jordan, gradually rising in broken hills as it goes to the northward, till it reaches the snowy Jebel-el-Telj, from N. W. by N. to N. by W.

In the stony district of Ledjah, which begins about here, and extends from hence to the northward and eastward, are said to be 366 ruined towns, and a sea (bahr) of inscriptions. These expressions, which are quite suited to the exaggerating taste of an Arab, only mean, however, that there are a great number of each. In the same manner I was assured by one of our party, who had been in Egypt, that in Belled Massr were 366 districts, and in each district 366 peopled towns; to which he added, that having seen Englishmen there he learnt that they had always 366 suits of clothes, or one for every day in the year: an impression, no doubt, occasioned by the frequent changes of garments among the English, a practice almost wholly unknown among the Arabs, who after they put on a new garment rarely leave it off till it is worn out and finally done with. The people of the Haurān, generally, and those residing on its eastern border more particularly, never having seen the sea, are struck with wonder and admiration at descriptions of large ships and the details of a sea life. Even here, however, they are not satisfied with bare facts, however surprising these may be, but constantly endeavour to engraft on these, something of a more exaggerated nature, so powerful is their passion for the marvellous. As an illustration of this, when asked by one of our party what was the greatest number of cannon I had ever seen mounted in one ship, and replying 120, my guide, the Mallim Georgis, insisted that I was far below the mark, declaring most solemnly that he had, with his own eyes, seen 200 pieces of cannon discharged from one side only of Sir Sydney Smith's ship at Acre, and 200 from the other side within the same instant of time! He also asserted that Mohammed Ali, the pasha of Egypt, had lately sent from that country to the Hedjaz, in Arabia, 100 karāt

of soldiers, each karāt being 100,000 ! supporting his assertions with the most solemn declarations of their truth. This feature of exaggeration, an inseparable companion of ignorance, is prevalent among all classes, and can only be cured by increased information diffused among the community generally, to enable them to distinguish truth from falsehood.

During our evening party I was intreated, by several of the individuals composing it, for written charms against poverty, sickness, danger, &c. At first I endeavoured to persuade the applicants that no human being possessed the power to compose such charms, *however impostors might pretend, from interested motives*, to propagate a belief in their efficacy ; and that a very strong proof in support of their being false and delusive was to be gathered from the fact, that the venders of such charms, to save others from misfortune, were not able to protect themselves from the evils inseparable from humanity, but were equally liable, with all other men, to sickness, misfortune, and death. This argument, however, convincing as it would have been to most minds, had no effect whatever on theirs, and I was somewhat surprised to find it combated by an example from sacred history : one of the parties observing that the same objection had been raised, but without foundation, against the divinity of Christ, when those who mocked him exclaimed, “ He saved others : himself he cannot save.” It was in vain to attempt conviction on minds entrenched behind such a position ; and, therefore, to satisfy the increasing importunity of those who now believed, from my very scruples and reluctance, that I really *had* the power, but was indisposed to exercise it for their benefit, I wrote on slips of paper various unmeaning characters, which were taken as favours, and construed into talismans of a general rather than a particular nature, from my declining to assign to them any specific virtue. The occurrence of such a scene as this among the Mohammedans of the Nile, or the barbarians of Nubia, or the savages of Africa, would not have been surprising ; but here, as I had been forced, by what I had seen, to estimate the

state of civilisation among the Arab Christians of these parts, I had not before supposed it to be so low as this incident evidently showed it to be.

After supper we had some sage political speculations among the members of our party, who agreed only in one particular, that whenever the Christian Powers should repossess themselves of the Holy Land, their vengeance on the Mohammedan spoilers of the holy places would be without bounds. It may not be unworthy of remark, that in Ezra all the dwellings of the Christians are marked with the emblem of their faith on the portals of their doors, as if for the guidance of some destroying angel that they expected to pass through their town, and spare those whose dwellings were so distinguished, as among the children of Israel of old.

Tuesday, March 20.—We were detained at Ezra for the purpose of attending the morning service of the Greek church, and returned from thence to breakfast. After this, our future progress to Damascus became a subject of debate; and the oldest of my guides, Abu Fārah, who had already come further from home than he had at first intended, and who began to be alarmed at the difficulty of his returning thence all the way alone, solicited his release, that he might remain at Ezra, till a convenient opportunity should occur for his setting out in company with some one, on his way back to Assalt. The old man's request was so reasonable that it could not justly be refused; and he had already been of so much service to me on the journey, that I only regretted my incapacity to reward him more liberally than my means then admitted. It was stipulated, however, that he should procure a guide to fill his place for the remainder of the way to Damascus, which was readily effected from among those who had formed our party on the preceding evening, and I drew up for Abu Fārah, such a written character as it appeared to me his many excellent qualities as a guide justly merited.

These transactions delayed our departure until noon, when taking leave of Abu Fārah, who left me with tears and benedictions, and the fervently expressed hope that we might one day meet again, and receiving also the good wishes of our entertainers for a safe entry into Damascus, we mounted our horses to depart.

After traversing the rocky bed on which the town of Ezra stands, we went northerly across a fine, fertile, light red soil, having on our left, or to the westward, an extensive plain of the same description, and on our right, or to the east, the western edge of the stony district of Ledjah, extending itself farther to the north-east.

In little more than an hour after quitting Ezra, we passed through the town of Shukharah, which, like the place we had left, is built on a projecting tongue of the stony tract of Ledjah, the patches of soil intervening between these towns being like the curvature of small bays gently indenting a line of rocky coast. I noticed nothing remarkable in this town, except an old square tower in its western quarter, with an open arch of the Roman form in the wall below, and three separate projecting cornices going round the buildings at regular intervals above. The population of this place being entirely Mohammedan, and on bad terms with their Christian neighbours, we did not alight even to take coffee, a great act of self-denial to an Arab, and much regretted by Georgis.

On the bed of rock near this place, our Ezra guide pointed out to us the quarries, from whence the large mill-stones before described are cut, of which we saw several in a progressive state of preparation. The unskilfulness of the Arabs, and their want of proper implements adapted to their labour, with the expence of carriage from the quarry to the place of sale, each stone requiring a single camel, wheel carriages and good roads being entirely unknown, occasion an advance above the prime cost, at which they might be hewn in England, of at least 500 per cent, each pair of stones costing from ten to fifteen and sometimes twenty pounds sterling. This is the only produce that the stony tract of Ledjah now yields, almost all its towns being deserted, except those on

its very edge; but as the ruins scattered over it are very numerous, there must have been a period when some other sources of wealth existed for their maintenance.

Our horses drank from large stone troughs, near a quarry, at the bottom of which excellent fresh water was found, about twenty feet below the surface; and proceeding northerly, we ascended from thence over a very gentle slope for nearly an hour at a walking pace, when the whole of the stony tract of Ledjah became exposed to our view, and presented a most forbidding aspect. From this slight elevation, we went gradually down over a gentle declivity for another hour, until we lost sight both of Ezra and Shukharah, by the intervening hill; and about three o'clock we reached the town of Mahādjee, built like the others through which we had lately passed on a tongue of rock projecting from the main body of it to the northward and eastward.

We had been directed here to the house of one Eesa, or Jesus, —a very common name among the Arabs, whether of the Greek or Catholic faith,—the only Christian residing in the place; and as our guide from Ezra informed us that all the towns between this and Damascus were inhabited by Mohammedans, and that we need not halt at any of them if we slept here, as the journey might be performed in one whole day, we determined on taking up our shelter with him as proposed. Our horses were taken into the courtyard of the house, and unburthened of their saddles, without a single question being asked on either side; and it was not until we had all seated ourselves that our intention to remain here for the night was communicated to the master of the house; so much is it regarded as a matter of course, that those who have a house to shelter themselves in, and food to partake of, should share those comforts with wayfarers, whenever they may halt at their door to partake of them; a state of things that could not exist but in a country where the communication is unfrequent, and where from such infrequency of communication and general insecurity,

there are neither good roads nor houses of entertainment for passengers, the sure indication of civilisation and commerce.

We were kindly received by our Christian host, and a meal of bread and oil, which I had seen so often as to make it become most unwelcome to me, was placed before us, there being neither vegetable nor animal food, neither eggs, butter, milk, or fruits with which to vary it, so that nothing but extreme hunger could support the constant repetition of the same insipid and unsatisfactory food. We ate of it, however, from necessity, as choice was not permitted to the rigid observers of the Greek fast, still continued; and I could not without offence have even asked for any thing forbidden to themselves. When the wayfarers and guests had finished, the remainder of the meal was eaten up by the persons resident in the town, who had already collected to enquire who and what were the strangers on their way to Sham, this being the only name by which Damascus is known here.

The party alluded to consisted of about ten persons, Moslem and Christians, including our host and my guides, and our first conversation turned on some points connected with market prices of different articles, and quotations of purchase and sale, a subject in which most of those present were likely to feel personally interested. The Mallim Georgis, however, had not been long among them, before his peculiar genius gave the conversation quite a different turn; and from speculations on the price of corn and oil, it soon passed to speculations on political and religious subjects, and the awful import of the signs of the times. During the last evening of our stay at Nedjeraun, while a strong north wind blew, and the sky was overcast with clouds, a red light appeared in the west, which was no doubt the reflected light of some large fire that might have taken place in a field or a village near the spot over which it appeared; but this easy and natural solution of the matter was not acceptable to those who love the wonderful, and despise the plainness and simplicity of unexaggerated truth: so that this red light in the west, coupled with the long drought that

had afflicted the Haurān, and the confusion which still reigned in the political affairs of Damascus, was construed into a portentous omen of approaching plague, pestilence, and famine, with battle, murder and sudden death. Like children, who on winter nights gather round a fire and relate stories of ghosts and goblins, till they start at the sound of the wind, and are almost frightened at their own shadow, the party by whom I was now surrounded were so in love with their subject, and the eloquence of Georgis was poured out with such effect, interspersed with passages of scripture and verses of modern seers, that they literally talked themselves into a panic of alarm, and many seemed impressed with a belief that the world was really near its end. On occasions like these I generally remained a patient listener to what was said by others, as I had long since discovered that any attempt to oppose superstition was always regarded as a profession of open infidelity. The intolerance of the human mind is in all countries just in proportion to the ignorance in which it may be enveloped: and on this occasion I saw no hope of benefit by departing from my system, as the evil can only be cured by increasing knowledge.

About sunset, when the conversation began to cease, I took our host, Jesus, on the terrace of his dwelling, and obtained from him the names of such places as were visible from his house-top, took their bearings by compass, and their estimated distances as accurately as I could by the eye, as follows.

Toaf, a few houses on a hill	S. W. $\frac{1}{2}$ S.	3 miles.
Miggadad, a saint's tomb on a hill	W. by S. $\frac{1}{2}$ S.	1 mile.
Kiteiby, deserted	N. W. by W.	5 miles.
Inkhel, a Mohammedan town	N. W. by N.	5 miles.
El Gheneyey, do.	N. by W.	6 miles.
Ghussawa, deserted	N. N. E.	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile.
Tubbiny, Mohammedan	N. by E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E.	2 miles.
Busseer, do. large	N. E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N.	10 miles.
Iddoeer, two towns in one, deserted, in Ledjah,	N. E.	8 miles.
Zebyre, deserted, in Ledjah,	E. by S.	5 miles.

Jeddil, deserted, in Ledjah	S. E. by E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E.	12 miles.
Ghiratata, Do. . . . Do.	S. E. by E.	2 miles.
Lobare, Do. . . . Do.	S. E. $\frac{1}{2}$ S.	3 miles.
Mesetchy, Do. . . . Do.	S. E. $\frac{1}{2}$ S.	4 miles.
Nadjee, Do. . . . Do.	S. S. E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E.	3 miles.
Bussr, with two white towers	S. by E. $\frac{1}{4}$ E.	15 miles.
Square tower and dome of Ezra	S. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.	10 miles.
Shukhara, not visible	S. $\frac{3}{4}$ W.	6 miles.

All the places indicated above, with the exception of the last only, which is hidden by being in the low ground between this town and Ezra, were distinctly seen; and the bearings noted carefully, for the purpose of filling up the blank that now exists in our best maps of this almost untrodden country. Although so many objects were seen, however, in this extensive panorama, the view was, on the whole, tame and uninteresting, from the bareness and flatness of the country over which it is extended.

On enquiring whether there were many ancient inscriptions in the town, I was assured there were several, but no one appeared disposed to take the trouble of pointing them out to me. On the very door, however, of the house in which we had taken shelter, was the fragment of an inscription still remaining, with a Greek cross in the centre of it, and I copied this, chiefly for the purpose of showing, (if, after the many already copied, further proof could be needed,) that even in the smallest and most inconsiderable of the towns in the Haurān, abundant proofs of a former Christian population are to be met with. The fragment alluded to was as follows:—

M . . . IΩVONVΔIIANO . . . AIEY OΛ . . .
 MNITYHCANIOTIOH

 KAIΦIPMINIANOYTE.

The town of Mahadjee resembles those of the Haurān through which we had lately passed, in the general character of its style and mode of construction, but it is smaller than most of the towns to

the southward, and is at least as much in a state of ruin as any of them. In the S.W. quarter of the town is the lower part of a square tower still remaining, the masonry of which is in the oldest style used here, with the stones let into each other, and united without cement. It is now used as a stone-cutter's workshop for the purpose of finishing the circular mill-stones before spoken of as manufactured from the rocky beds of the neighbouring district. There are not more than thirty families residing at this place, and the whole of them are Mohammedans, with the exception of our host, Eesa. The occupation of all is agriculture and the pasturage of cattle. I saw here the mode practised in this country for churning milk into butter: the milk is placed in a goat's skin, which is filled as full as possible and then tied at the mouth, after which it is rolled or shaken on the ground by a woman who sits before it, this operation continuing for several hours on each skin, till the butter is formed from the milk, when the bag or skin is untied, and the two parts separated from each other. The mode is simple enough, it must be admitted, but not so effectual as that pursued in England; and from the bad taste given by the skin, as well as from the butter not being sufficiently washed after the first separation, so as to rid it of all the milky particles that remain, it is often bitter and sour at the same time, and becomes rancid in a very few days after being made. So inveterate, however, are the prejudices of all ignorant people, both abroad and at home, that when I described the method used in England, and pointed out its advantages, they contended that their own was far superior.

In our evening circle round the fire of dried dung, which still continued to be used for want of wood, we had a Moosa or Moses, an Ibrahim or Abraham, a Daood or David, a Suliman or Solomon, an Eesa or Jesus, with several Mohammeds or Mahomets: and, to complete the remarkable association of names, the two women who waited on us were called Miriam, or Mary, and Martha, the well remembered favorites of Christ. * There is no

* St. John, c. xi. v. 1 to 5.

country on earth, perhaps, where the names of distinguished prophets are more frequently given to their respective followers than in this. Among the Mohammedans, the name of Mohammed is more common than any other. Among the Christians, Eesa or Jesus, and Abd-el-Messeeah, or the Slave of the Messiah, are also frequently found: and other sects follow the same example; though, among the many scriptural names used by all the various sects in England, I never remember to have heard of that of Jesus, which is perhaps thought too sacred. In India too, it is a common practice for the respective worshippers of the Indian gods to bear the names of their favourite deities; and even in England, as well as all other parts of the world, the Jews adhere to the names of their principal prophets and leaders, and are proud of being thus distinguished from other sects. Christians however too frequently, and with great inconsistency, call them by their great prophet's name, "Moses," as a term of obloquy and reproach; as if the authenticity of his divine mission and holy inspiration were not as essential a part of the religion of Christianity, as the authenticity of the divine mission of Christ; as if it were possible to cast reflections of ridicule on the name of any one of the prophets whose mission Christ came to confirm, without, at the same time, reflecting on the authority from which all inspiration equally emanated, and by undermining the respect due to the earliest, abate much of that paid to the latest of the messengers of heaven; since no doctrine of Scripture is more clear than this, that each succeeding prophet came to support and confirm the predictions and precepts of his predecessor. There would be no *inconsistency*, indeed, in the Jews reflecting odium on the name of Jesus, since their very existence as Jews is founded on their believing Christ to be an impostor: but there is the greatest possible inconsistency in Christians using the names of the Jewish prophets for the purpose of ridicule, inasmuch as they themselves believe them to be as truly commissioned from heaven as the most devout and orthodox among the Jews can do. If this practice were confined to the lower orders of people, with whom the names of the Father, the

Son, and the Holy Ghost, are treated with much less respect in their ordinary oaths, than that of Beelzebub, the prince of devils, it would not be worth an observation ; since, in the sweeping and indiscriminate habit of swearing, which distinguishes the English from most other nations of the globe, no sacredness of any name or epithet could secure it from profanation. But, as the practice of ridiculing the Jews, by the strange method of associating a feeling of contempt and odium with the names of their most distinguished prophets, prevails in better informed circles, and is to be found in our Plays, Songs, Novels, and other branches of literature, it is, perhaps, worth adverting to. At all events, as one great object to be attained by noting the manners of other nations is to condemn what is faulty, and recommend to the imitation of our countrymen what is praiseworthy, it is not wholly out of place to note, for the purpose of contrasting our absurd practice with the more sensible and tolerant behaviour of men of opposite religions in the East, who, whether Christians or Mohammedans, respect the Jewish names, and honour them by their adoption, as belonging to a religion on which each of their own is built ; and despise the Jews for that only for which they can with any consistency be despised, namely, not for being of the faith of Moses or the seed of Abraham, but, for *not* being also of the number of those who yield equal faith to the missions of Jesus and Mohammed.

To return to the narrative after this digression : I was glad to profit, on this as on all other occasions, by the opportunity which a varied party generally presents for gleaning some useful information out of the vast mass of useless and uninteresting conversation that too frequently prevailed. From one of our party, I learnt that he had been to the eastward of the Haurān, as far as Lezhooof, or Lejhoof, a country of the Wahabees, bordering on the district of Nedjed. He described it as about fifteen days' journey to the eastward of Assalt. The road leading to it was through a country peopled by different tribes of Arabs, who are sometimes at peace but more frequently at war with each other. It was thirty

years since he had made this journey, and the occasion of it was a trading expedition, accompanying a caravan of cheap merchandize for sale into the desert, bringing back principally Arab horses and camels in return. The sect of the Wahabees were but then beginning to spread themselves; and at that time communication was practicable from Belkah all the way to Nedjed, and from thence to Baghdad; but at this moment, when the Wahabees were so powerful, and the whole desert in commotion, he thought such a journey would be imminently dangerous if not quite impracticable, so that I had reason to congratulate myself in not having persevered in my attempt to the eastward from Assalt, from which I might never have returned in safety if I had proceeded much farther. The old man, who informed me of his having made the journey alluded to, about thirty years ago, described the country generally from recollection, as being in many places highly fertile, and containing an abundance of water in small streams, with corn fields and date groves, as in the land of Egypt, which he had also seen. I should consider this picture highly charged: though to be peopled at all it must possess *some* of the means of existence in water and soil: but my companions considered Daood (for that was his name) a man of veracity and good character, and had often heard from him the same account as he had now given me, so that the general features of his description might with some slight allowances be taken to be correct. It would be certainly worthy the attempt of some enterprising traveller to explore that part of Arabia, and fill up the blank which it now presents in our maps.

The adjoining district of Ledjah was familiarly known to all our party, and all confirmed the previous accounts that I had heard of its being full of ruined towns and cities, containing the remains of large edifices and innumerable inscriptions, like those at Bozra, Soeda, and Gunnawât. Missema was the name of a town on the N.E. edge of the district, lying in the road from Damascus to Shukkah, Shuhubah, Hilheet, and Aiât, on the eastern

bills ; and other names were mentioned, which from their number and variety I could not retain with sufficient accuracy to enter among my notes at the time.

Towards the close of the evening, we had another scriptural name added to our party in the person of an old sheikh named Aioobe, or Job, who, hearing of our assembly, came to join it ; and, being a communicative old man, added to the pleasure as well as to the number of our party.

Wednesday, March 21. — We left Mahadjee at day-light, going to the N.N.E., and at sun-rise passed the bed of a stream called Wādi-el-Harrām, which was now dry : and close by it on the right, observed a ruined heap, called Gussawah. In half an hour from hence we passed the small village of Toobbery, leaving it on our right about a quarter of a mile ; and at the same time saw the large town of Ikteeby, about four miles on our left. In half an hour more we came in a line with Gheryeh, a town with two castles, which lay about half a mile on our left ; and at the same time we had on our right the town of Gherbt-el-Wāli, three miles off, and Busseer and El Ghoffy, about one mile distant, all within the stony district of Ledjah ; all large, and all deserted, and without inhabitants.

Half an hour beyond this, we crossed the bed of Wādi Ram-mān, which we found dry, and the channel bending to the northward. Continuing to ride along its bank for half an hour more, we reached the town of Sunnymein. This place contains a bridge of seven arches, a large building with columns, a manufacture of mill-stones from the rocky bed of the neighbourhood, a considerable number of houses, and six towers seen on passing. As we neither alighted nor even halted at the place, but pursued our way without delay, I obtained no further particulars of this town beyond those here noted.

In a quarter of an hour after passing Sunnymein, going now about N.E., we came to Deedy, a small place which we left on our

right; and about a furlong beyond this, we had on our left the town of Ghebt el Ghazāly. There was a paved road here; and an hour beyond this, we had the town of Deer el Bukt one mile on our left, and Mothebein two miles on our right. In an hour from Deer el Bukt we reached what is considered the boundary of the Haurān, and entered on a stony tract of country not unlike that of Ledjah, so often spoken of before. On a hill to the left was a tower, called Kassr-ibn-Gowash, with a tank or reservoir of water near, for the ablutions of pilgrims, and a niche facing the Kāba at Mecca, for prayers; this place lying in the Derb-el-Hadj, or high road of the caravans that take the pilgrims to Arabia. To the south of this station, the inhabitants are called Haurāni; to the west of this, they are called Jeddoori; to the east of this, they are called Druzi, and Lejāhi; and to the north of this, Shāmi, from Sham, the only name by which Damascus is known here. To the east of the reservoir, about 200 yards, is a small town called Garhib, and from thence the district of Ledjah extends itself away to the eastward.

The range of hills near to this is called Sub-et-Pharaoon, but they were no longer of the black porous stone before described, of which we had gradually lost sight as we approached the northern boundary of the Haurān. In an hour after leaving the tower and tank at that boundary, and proceeding in a northerly direction, we passed a place called Shukhub, which lay on a hill to the left, and appeared to be a station enclosed for defence. Near this, we passed through a pretty large party of Bedouin Arabs, which we learnt were the greater portion of a tribe coming from the eastward, and proceeding farther on, to take up an encampment for a season in the western plains.

From hence we proceeded in a N.W. direction for about three hours, over a stony ground with patches of light soil, when we came to a large caravanserai, built of black stone, and called Khan Denoon, near to which on the east was a small village, built of sun-dried bricks formed of a light-coloured earth, and present-

ing a remarkable contrast to each other. In an hour from thence we came to a place called Kissāwee, seated in a valley named Wādi-el-Ajam, and crossed the stream there. The town, though built of sun-dried bricks of a light colour, presented, chiefly from its situation, an interesting appearance, particularly after many of those we had lately seen. We passed over a bridge paved with stone and through a small bazār, both at this place; and after going for another hour up earthy hills, in a N.W. direction, we came suddenly in sight of Damascus, seated on a beautifully wooded and extremely fertile plain, the prospect of which delighted me so much, that I rode for a full hour unconscious of any thing but the beauty of the scene.

On entering Damascus from the S.E. quarter, I was charmed beyond expression with the verdant and delightful appearance of the olive grounds, fruitful gardens, and running streams through which this city is approached. A remarkable peculiarity of the buildings in this quarter is that almost every separate edifice appears to have a high and pointed dome of brick-work, which being of the same light-coloured earth used in the bricks of the buildings, resembles at a distance a number of large straw beehives. We entered the city through the Bab-el-Ullah, or the Gate of God, so called from its leading to Jerusalem and Mecca — both holy cities, and both places of pilgrimage, the last only to the Mohammedans, but the first to all the several classes of Jews, Christians, and Moslems, by each of whom it is held in high estimation, and called by all, El-Khods-el-Shereef, the Holy and the Noble.

We passed up through the city in a N.W. direction, by a street leading from the Bab-el-Ullah, at least a mile in length, and equal in breadth to any of the great thoroughfares in London. To avoid notice, and prevent too narrow a scrutiny into our faces, which the inhabitants of bigotted towns and cities like this are too much disposed to exercise on strangers coming among them, we drew over our faces the keffeah of the Bedouins, after the fashion

used by the Desert Arabs when they advance to the attack in battle to conceal their features, or in cold weather for warmth, or among strangers to whom they do not wish to be known, so that nothing remained visible except the eyes — while we scarcely turned our regards on either side, but contented ourselves with returning the salutations of the faith with which all passengers are greeted on their entry into a town or city, whatever be the object of their journey.

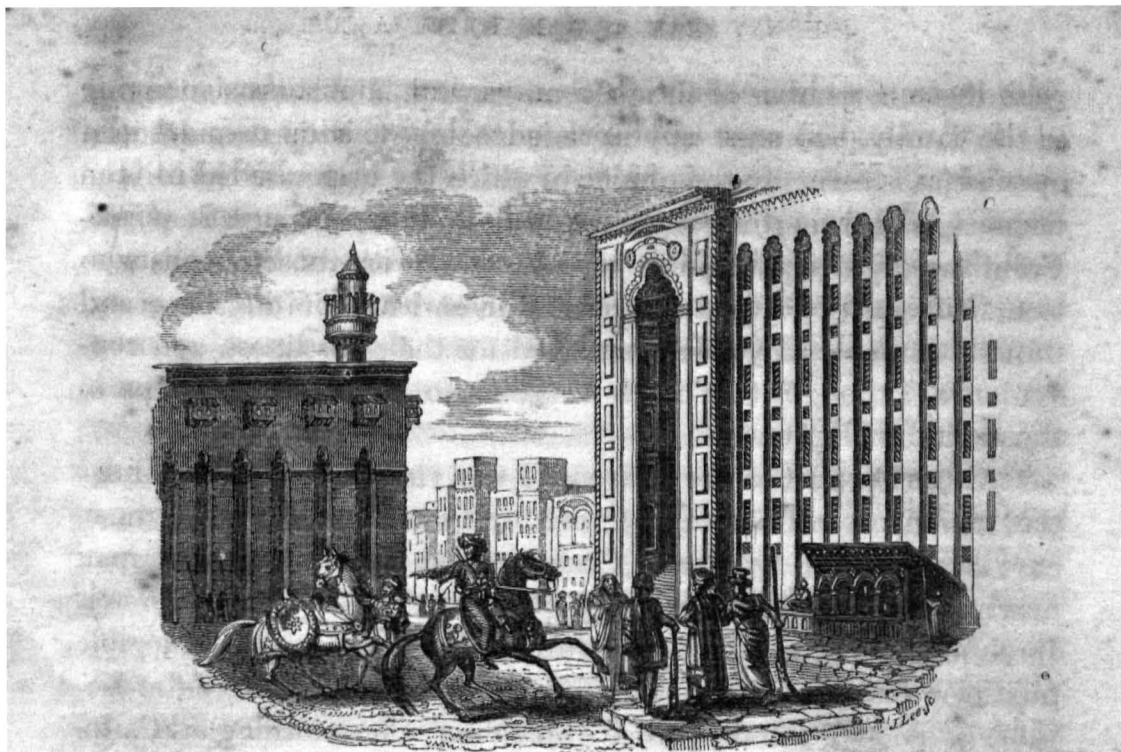
The street through which we passed was paved in the centre, upon a raised level, forming an excellent road for beasts of burden, camels, and horses, and would easily admit the passage of six or eight abreast. Below this raised road, was an unpaved space on each side, and within this again a pavement of smaller stones, nearly as broad as the central raised way, for foot passengers, along the fronts of the dwellings, shops, and other edifices that lined the street. Had the buildings been at all correspondent to the length and breadth of this fine road, the effect of the whole would have been excellent; but these were, in general, poor and mean, and totally destitute of uniformity, whether in size, style, or material. Among the principal edifices I noticed several mosques; some of modern, and others apparently of a pretty old date. The shops were all open, and many manufactories of cotton, silk, stuff, and leather, were carried on at each side of the street in the open air. Notwithstanding my disappointment at the general inferiority of the buildings of this fine street to the expectation I had formed of them, I was nevertheless much pleased at the cleanliness of every thing we saw, and the apparent health and beauty of the people of all classes that we met in our way, as well as the richness and gaiety of apparel, among the young and old, the rich and poor, in proportion to their several ages and ranks; the oldest and the poorest among them, however, being much better dressed than the ordinary class of people in any Arab or Turkish town that I had yet seen. There was a degree of order and tranquillity also visible in every part of the street, even that most thickly crowded with people, which was

pleasing to witness, and gave a very favourable impression as to the sober and orderly habits of the inhabitants.

After more than half an hour's continued ride through this single street, which led us nearly into the centre of the city, we turned off to the westward, and went for upwards of half an hour more through narrow passages and covered bazārs, forming a perfect labyrinth, until we reached the convent of the Catholic Christians, at which we arrived about sun-set. Notwithstanding the poverty of my dress, being still habited as a Bedouin Arab, and though unfurnished with any letter of introduction, from not anticipating the necessity which had forced me into this route, I received a very kind and hospitable reception. The president, a native of Spain, and one of the fattest and in every respect most jolly-looking friars that I had ever seen, had received letters, however, from his brethren at the convents of Jerusalem and Nazareth, in which the names of Mr. Bankes and myself, as English travellers, who had been there, were mentioned with great respect, and in consequence of which it was probable that either of us passing this way would be treated with more than usual attention.

While a supper of fresh fish was preparing, a suit of clean garments was brought to me from one of the Christian merchants residing near the convent, and I enjoyed a pleasure not to be described in throwing off clothes that had never been changed for thirty days, though sleeping almost constantly on the bare ground. Neither was my pleasure less in devouring with a zest almost unknown before, the fresh fish, soft bread, and excellent wine of Lebanon set before me for my evening repast. An excellent apartment was given up to my exclusive use, containing a good bed, a sofa, table, chairs, and drawers, with a dressing-room and closet adjoining, and a window opening into a paved court below, in which was a fine clear fountain and several orange trees, besides a passage leading to an open terrace, whereon I might uninterruptedly enjoy the morning and evening air. I had scarcely ever before enjoyed so sudden and complete a transition from all the

sufferings and privations of a barbarous and almost savage mode of life to the pleasures and abundance of a civilized and social state of existence. I was, indeed, so deeply impressed with the feeling of enjoyment, that it absorbed all other considerations, except the wish that I could surround myself with those friends who were dearest to me in the world, and live with them in peace and retirement at Damascus for ever.



CHAP. XV.

STAY AT DAMASCUS.

DAMASCUS, Thursday, March 22. — At daylight I was accompanied to an excellent bath by one of the servants of the convent, and remained there in the delightful enjoyment which it afforded until nearly noon. This bath is called the Bath of Musk, and belongs to the family of Ahmed Bey, a family that has furnished more Pashas to different provinces of the state than any other throughout all Turkey, whether in Europe or Asia. As that family is now much poorer than formerly, notwithstanding the lucrative employment of so many of its members, while at the same time they endeavour to maintain such a show of grandeur as they think necessary for the maintenance of their dignity, great funds are still required for their disbursements as before, and to

raise these, a number of the palaces, gardens, and baths, belonging to the family, and once appropriated solely to their use, are now opened (as I learnt) to the public, of which the bath alluded to is an instance, and from this source a considerable annual sum is raised. From the great expense and care bestowed on its first construction, it is justly deemed one of the finest baths of the city; and though those of Cairo are renowned for their costliness and convenience, I thought this much superior to any that I had seen in the capital of Egypt.

On my return to the convent, I was visited by several Christian merchants, all Syrians by birth, and mostly natives of Damascus; accompanied by Doctor Chaboceau, an old French gentleman nearly eighty years of age, now quite deaf, with his interpreter, Ibrahim, equally as old and as deaf as his master. The venerable physician had been more than fifty years in the East, or the Levant as it is generally called, including Constantinople, Cairo, Aleppo, and Damascus, yet during all this time he had acquired no one language of the country, speaking only French, and understanding Italian but imperfectly. This indifference, incapacity, or aversion of the French to the acquisition of foreign languages, is every where remarked, and wherever they are placed in foreign countries, they are of all Europeans the slowest in acquiring either the language, the manners, or the habits of feeling prevalent among those by whom they are surrounded, retaining their nationalities, unaltered, after even years of exile and seclusion.

M. Chaboceau's behaviour to me was full of urbanity and kindness, and during this our first interview he entertained me with many anecdotes of the several European travellers who had passed this way during his long residence in Syria, particularly of Mr. Browne, the Darfour discoverer; Pedro Nuñez, or Ali Bey-el-Abassy, the Spaniard who had traversed Barbary; Doctor Seetzen, and Mr. Burckhardt; all of whom he had known personally. He had seen the celebrated Abyssinian Bruce at Cairo, and passed some days with Mr. Volney, at Acre; and, though he

praised the work of the latter on Egypt (as all must be constrained to do who read it), he added, that he had seen but little of Syria for himself, but that all he had written respecting this country was acquired by correspondence, or the visits of persons acquainted with its localities, whom he met with from time to time during his stay at a Maronite convent in Lebanon, where he remained almost all the time that he resided in Syria, and where, indeed, his volume on Syria and Egypt was written.

On enquiring if any news had been received of Mr. Bankes, I learnt that he had been, for the last twenty days, with Lady Hester Stanhope, at the convent of Mar Eleas, near Seyda, the ancient Sidon, and that it was thought he would visit Bälbeck and Palmyra from thence, and take Damascus in his route of return to the sea-coast. The portion of my effects which I had thought it imprudent to take with me in my attempt to force a passage to the eastward from Karak, such as a watch, a sword, the notes of my voyage from Egypt to Syria and journey in Palestine, with my letter of credit on Mr. Barker, and other papers, were left with Mr. Bankes at Nazareth, to be taken by him to Damascus or Aleppo, as circumstances might direct; because, in the event of my being forced back, which had really happened, all those things would still be of use to me. Finding myself thus, in a large city, without money or credit, and therefore fettered in all my movements, for there was no proceeding further in any direction without a supply, I despatched a messenger on foot to Seyda, with a letter to Mr. Bankes, informing him of my being here, and desiring my baggage, papers, and effects, to be sent over to me without delay; directing the letter on the outside to be opened by Lady Hester Stanhope, in the event of Mr. Bankes having left her residence before it reached. The messenger departed soon after noon, under a promise of returning in five days; and the sum stipulated to be paid him for this was twenty piastres, or little more than three Spanish dollars.

My evening was passed in company with the friars of the convent, who had a small room for assembling in at night, in the

same manner as at Jerusalem. The conversation was almost wholly engrossed by a recapitulation of the miseries which they conceived themselves doomed to suffer in this exile from their country and their home; as well as in recounting the various acts of cruelty and ill-treatment to which they were constantly exposed from the brutality and infidelity of the Turks. All these evils, however, were greatly exaggerated, for the purpose, apparently, of impressing me with a belief that their life was one of great suffering and mortification; but in their estimate, as is too often the case with the great mass of mankind, they had entirely overlooked the comforts and even luxuries which they enjoyed, and which rendered their condition superior to that of millions, even among the intelligent, the industrious, and the deserving of their fellow creatures. They had, without rent or taxes, except such as were paid by their flock, a large and commodious house, with excellent apartments, gardens, courts, terraces, and fountains; a heavenly climate, an abundance of the necessaries of life, undisturbed tranquillity, and great respect and veneration from all those with whom they held communion, who were persons of their own faith, and both numerous and respectable. The friars were all Spaniards, and were fully as uninformed on all general subjects as their brethren at Jerusalem. This, indeed, appeared to me the true cause of their unhappiness; for, had they possessed only sufficient knowledge to inspire a taste for acquiring more, it is difficult to imagine a situation in which a man's happiness might be more complete than in an establishment of this description. It is necessary, however, to suppose that his religious duties are performed with the heart as well as the tongue; for if these are regarded as a task, rather than a voluntary offering, their frequent repetition must be irksome in the extreme; and it is not impossible but that this may have its share in the formation of the mass of suffering, by which they delight to picture to others that they are borne down and oppressed. Like the people of Assalt and the Haurān, they dwelt with great delight on the anticipated partition of the Turkish

empire, and thought it a reproach to the princes of Christendom, that the sanctuaries of the Holy Land should remain so long in the hands of these unbelieving monsters.

It was some time after sun-set when strangers were announced at the convent door; and, much to my surprise and satisfaction, it was my former companion, Mr. Bankes, with his servant and Albanian dragoman, a second interpreter for Arabic from Lady Hester Stanhope, a muleteer and four mules, just arrived from her ladyship's residence at Mar Eleas. Our meeting was really a happy one, and we continued up very late, in recounting to each other what had befallen each, since our separation at Nazareth. Not having any means of being informed as to my movements (the communication between the country I had lately traversed and that on the coast being but rarely practicable), and not expecting to find me here, Mr. Bankes had not brought over my effects consigned to his care, but had left them with Lady Hester Stanhope, who had kindly taken charge of them, to be retained or sent forward as circumstances and events might subsequently require. Mr. Bankes's excursions since we separated had been interesting. From Nazareth he went to Nablous; and on his way between these, visited the ruins of Sebasta, which Dr. Clarke had unaccountably overlooked, and taken another place (Sanhoor) for its remains.*

* Mr. Bankes had with him the seventeenth number of the Quarterly Review, which contained a critique on that portion of Dr. Clarke's Travels in the Holy Land. It had, I believe, been sent to him, or was brought by him from Egypt; and I remember our both reading it at Jerusalem, and again at Nazareth. It was from this copy of the Quarterly Review that I gained my knowledge of its criticisms on Dr. Clarke and D'Anville, the inaccuracy of which I had occasion to point out more than once in the course of the Travels in Palestine already published. On the present occasion, however, I remember Mr. Bankes to have been severe in his strictures on what he called the "stupidity" of Dr. Clarke, in supposing the remains of Sebasta to be at Sanhoor (which the Reviewers, with still greater stupidity, call "the town and Norman fortress of Santoni," and "which," they say, "our author, *with great probability*, identifies with the ancient Sebaste"†), while such considerable remains still exist, and where even the ancient name is still retained in the Subusta of the Arabs. Mr. Bankes,

† Quarterly Review, vol. ix. p. 197.

From Sanhoor Mr. Bankes went down to Beisan, on the western bank of the Jordan, and saw there many columns of marble, and the remains of a small and ordinary theatre much ruined. His stay with Lady Hester Stanhope had been agreeable, and he had visited many curious places in the neighbourhood of her residence, under the guidance of her physician, Dr. Meryon. Though we were both extremely fatigued, and needed, as much as we desired, repose, this mutual interest, in which we seemed equally to participate, kept us up until past midnight, and even then we parted reluctantly to rest.

Damascus, Friday, March 23. — We remained within the convent the whole of the day to repose; and it was passed in my reading to Mr. Bankes the rough notes of my journeys since our separation, and in comparing the inscriptions which I had copied in the Haurān with those which had been copied by Mr. Burckhardt, and of which he had given some copies to Mr. Bankes. We found that I possessed several which he did not, and *vice versa*, as well as that in those of which we both had copies there were some that agreed in every letter, and others which differed but slightly in a few characters only.

After reading my notes on the journey I had made through Belkah, Adjeloon, and the Haurān, Mr. Bankes was so much pleased with the account I had there given of the several objects met with in the way, that he formed a resolution to go from hence to Bozrah, and, if possible, to proceed from thence to Assalt and Ammān, and then to return a second time to Jerusalem to pass the holy week. I was pleased at this determination of Mr. Bankes, and

at the same time, concurred with me in the opinion, that nothing could be more preposterous than the idea of Reviewers setting themselves up as judges, to decide, in their closets at home, upon questions of local position, which could only be determined by evidence on the spot; and condemned, most heartily, the arrogance of professed critics in general, and the assumed infallibility of the Quarterly Reviewers in particular. I had no idea then, however, that this same Mr. Bankes would ever join the very persons, and pursue the very practice, which he here so justly condemned.

said all I could to encourage him to its accomplishment, as no good drawings had yet been taken of many interesting monuments there; and no one was more capable of executing them with accuracy, if he would devote the time necessary for such a task, than Mr. Banks would be. Through many parts of the country that he had traversed, he had done nothing more than make a few sketches for drawings, as he had found it impossible to make these and write notes too, without a greater sacrifice of time than he was willing to make in these countries; so that his written materials were very scanty indeed, and he trusted much to his memory to connect together the links which he conceived every sketch of a particular place would form in the chain of his progressive journey. He lamented this, however, as a defect, which it would be very desirable to remove; and, as he professed himself to have no higher object in view than that of laying before the world a good account of the countries east of the Jordan, which up to the present period remained almost a blank, admitting, at the same time, the many obstacles which operated against his collecting accurate information from the natives of the country, from his ignorance of the Arabic language, he made to me the following proposition: — That we should cordially unite our efforts during our respective journeys through the country, to collect as many materials for publication as might be safely practicable, each in his own way; and as he had already read and approved of my notes, he consented to give all his drawings to be united with them, and to add such other illustrations as he might subsequently be able to offer, to render the work more complete. To this I readily assented; and here the first *idea* of publication, as far as I was concerned, certainly originated; for up to this period I had no thought beyond the collection of such remarks as occurred to me in passing through the country, for my own information, and the committing them to paper for preservation, that they might contribute, in an equal degree, to the pleasure of those few who were dear enough to me to make their happiness an object of equal importance with my own.

I had kept very full and copious journals of my voyages and travels for years before this, for no other purpose than that described, so that the long-continued practice had rendered it familiar to me, and made the habit so agreeable, that I should have followed it up with as much zeal for the private ends alluded to, as I could have done in the hope of popular distinction ; my desire to increase the happiness of the individuals on whom my dearest and most frequent thoughts were bent, being a more powerful stimulant than even the applause of the world, without their gratitude being included in it. When the idea of publication, and the putting forth my name to the censure or approbation of professed critics, was thus presented to me for the first time, I shrunk from the notion of it, even while I assented, as if in dread of a power that I naturally magnified, because then entirely unacquainted with its utter inefficiency to inflict permanent pain, unless founded on just views and equitable decisions. With a desire, however, to ensure the greatest possible accuracy and completeness in any work to which I should be a contributor, I suggested the great advantages which it would bring to the work itself, to invite others to co-operate with us also, so that no department of enquiry might be left unexplored ; and that all who possessed any information on the subjects which ought to be noticed in a Book on the countries east of the Jordan, might contribute their share to its completion. The name of Mr. Burckhardt, then in Egypt, and then the joint friend of both, immediately suggested itself as one of the most probable and most efficient aids that could be gained to this undertaking ; and accordingly a letter was addressed to him by Mr. Bankes, making the proposition to him in our joint names. As, however, my desire to be assured of success in this joint labour, and my wish to lessen and divide, as much as possible, the responsibility which would attach to the written materials of the Book, became the stronger the more I considered the subject, I distinctly intimated to Mr. Bankes, that my co-operation in such a joint publication must depend on the assent of Mr. Burckhardt to the scheme. In his

own department, that of the drawings, he was secure enough, as every indulgence would be granted in case of any alleged imperfection in these, whether as to their fidelity, numbers, or excellence of execution, each being complete within itself, and drawings being always acceptable, whether few or many. With regard to the written materials of any publication, however, the same degree of indulgence is rarely if ever exercised; — where there is one critic to analyse a drawing, there are twenty to scrutinize a description in words; and imperfections in narrative, erroneous quotations of authorities, or inconclusive reasonings, are handled with far less mercy than false proportions in perspective, or an undue predominance of light or shade in a picture. It appeared to me, therefore, as in the highest degree essential, to obtain Mr. Burckhardt's assistance in this department, for which we both knew he had abundant materials, and I made it a condition with Mr. Bankes, that the final ratification of this proposed union should depend on the consent of all the parties; or, in other words, that if Mr. Burckhardt, from any cause, declined to enter into the scheme, I could not, alone, pledge myself to carry it through. When I urged to Mr. Bankes the necessary imperfection of my notes, and the time as well as care it would require to put them in a fit state for publication, he assured me that I estimated too highly the importance of perfection in a Book of Travels, and rated at too low a standard the state of my own materials, which he said he had read with considerable pleasure even in their present form, and added that his advice would be to publish them in nearly the same state in which they now stood in my note books.

The writing the letter to Mr. Burckhardt, and these friendly altercations, in which I had reason to be much flattered by the voluntary and unsought testimony paid to the value of what I had hitherto regarded as materials for my family correspondence only, kept us up till long past midnight, though we had been nearly the whole of the day engaged as described. *

* A note on this subject will be found among the papers at the end of this volume.

Damascus, Saturday, March 24.—We were waited on this morning by a soldier of Aleppo, called Abu Adoor, who brought with him a written recommendation from Mr. Rikhter, a Russian traveller, who had recently gone into Nubia, and visited Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, from whence this soldier had accompanied him to Palmyra. As he professed to be perfectly acquainted with all the localities of Damascus and its environs, and offered to attend us in our excursions, we engaged him for this service, and determined to profit by this occasion to see some part of the city at least to-day.

After an early breakfast, we left the convent on foot, and as our faces were not yet known to any of the Moslems of Damascus, we directed our course first to the Great Mosque, where, when we had arrived, we shook off our slippers and walked boldly through. By the aid of our beards, white turbans, and a certain conformity to Turkish or Arabic movements only to be acquired by habit, we passed undiscovered, and without even being regarded, as mere strangers generally are, though known to be of the same faith. This mosque is situated to the north of the Catholic convent, and stands on an elevated position, nearly in the centre of the city. On approaching its entrance we ascended a flight of steps leading up to the door, at the foot of which is a fountain that sends forth a column of clear water to the height of from ten to fifteen feet. The square court in front of this building is magnificent from its extent; and the interior of the mosque itself, from its vast dimensions, produces a most imposing effect. Its form is that of an oblong square, composed of three long aisles running parallel to each other, and divided by rows of fine Corinthian columns. On the outside, it is seen that these three aisles have each a separate pent roof, that the large dome rises from the centre of the central roof, and that at the end of each of these is a mināreh or minaret. The outer court has, on three of its sides, a portico or colonnade of Syrian granite pillars, mostly of a fine grain and reddish colour, but we did not observe the columns of verd-antique which are said to be

in that front of the mosque which faces towards the court, though it was very possible for them to exist, and yet to have escaped our observation as we passed.

It appears from the best authorities that this mosque was a Christian cathedral; and this opinion is supported by the style of the architecture, which is of the Corinthian order throughout every part of the edifice. It is thought by some writers to have been built by the Emperor Heraclius, and dedicated to Zachariah; by others it is considered to have been the work of the bishops of this see, and by them dedicated to St. John of Damascus; while the Turks call it the Mosque of St. John the Baptist, and think it was built by the Khalif Valid, in the 86th year of the Hejira, from some of the Arabic historians mentioning that he embellished it about that period. The mosque, at the time of our passing through it, was full of people, though these were not worshippers, nor was it at either of the usual hours of public prayer.* Some of the parties were assembled to smoke, others to play at chess, and some apparently to drive bargains of trade, but certainly none to pray. It was indeed a living picture of what we might believe the temple at Jerusalem to have been, when those "who sold oxen, and sheep,

* Benjamin of Tudela visited Damascus in the 9th century, and at that time it appears that infidels were strictly prohibited, as now, from entering the mosques. It was, perhaps, from his being unable to enter these buildings and inspect them for himself, that he gives such extravagant accounts of them in his book. The Great Mosque was considered in his day to have been anciently the Royal Palace of Ben Hadad, and its magnificence was highly extolled. Damascus was then called the commencement of the kingdom of Noraldin (probably Noor-ed-deen), King of the Togarmah (the Togarmah of Ezekiel), commonly called Turks. †

† Togarmah traded in horsemen, horses, and mules, with Tyre, on the coast. (Ezekiel, xxvii. 14.) These were no doubt the race at present called Turcomans, who still carry on the same occupation of breeding and selling horses, and hiring themselves out as horsemen, and are scattered over all the country north of Syria, along the fertile plains at the feet of Mount Taurus, ranging to the eastward into the heart of Asia. I have noticed this, because the most learned commentators appear to be at a loss where to fix the country of the Togarmah. Bochart thinks it is Cappadocia; Michaelis, Armenia and Media, where the kings of Persia bred their horses, and where the tribute was paid in them. See Newcombe, who cites the Greek scholiast in Ezekiel, xxxviii. 6. The Chaldee renders it by *Germania*. The objection to Armenia is, that in every other passage this is rendered by Ararat. (2 Kings, xix. 57. — Isaiah, xxxvii. 58. — Jeremiah, li. 27.) — *Vincent*.

and doves, and the changers of money sitting there," were driven out by Jesus with a scourge of cords, and their tables overturned. It was, in short, a place of public resort and thoroughfare, a "house of merchandise," as the temple of the Jews had become in the days of the Messiah.*

On leaving the mosque, we came out into a crowded bazār, which accounted for the building itself being used as a convenient resort for those who wished to converse apart on the subject of business, thus answering the convenient purpose of a promenade and an exchange. In order to show that this may also exist in Christian countries, without implying any extraordinary irreverence to religion, it may be sufficient to advert to the assignations which take place in the Catholic cathedrals of the continent of Europe, and the sauntering gossip of idle visitors to Westminster Abbey, in our own country; to say nothing of the appropriation of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem to worse purposes than either, at the time of its most solemn celebrations, for which we have the most unexceptionable authority.† They all tend to prove, that in every country there is a strange mixture of profit and pleasure with religion, and that edifices set apart for the solemn worship of the Deity, into which no one should enter but with feelings of the purest devotion, are frequently the scenes of indulgence, to some, of the worst passions of human nature — hypocrisy, fraud, and mental and physical prostitution.

Among the minārehs of the city we noticed one of considerable height and grandeur, covered on the outside with a rich green

* Luke, ii. 13—16.

† We went to take our last leave of the Holy Sepulchre, this being the last time that it was to be opened this festival. Upon this finishing day, and the night following, the Turks allow free admittance for all people, without demanding any fee of entrance, as at other times, calling it a day of charity. By this promiscuous licence they let in, not only the poor, but, as I was told, the lewd and vicious also, who come hither to get convenient opportunity for prostitutions, profaning the holy places in such a manner (as it is said) that they were not worse defiled when the heathens here celebrated their Aphrodisia.—*Maundrell's Travels*.

colour, which looked like enamel, or the foil that is sometimes worn on theatrical dresses ; and from its reflecting the rays of the sun, which shone in full blaze upon it at the moment of its attracting our notice, it produced a splendid effect.

We went after this to the mosque of the dervishes, which is at the extremity of the city, and were shown at this place a pleasant garden, in which these religious fanatics dance themselves into a temporary intoxication or madness, for which they select the most holy of the days of the week, Friday. The veneration in which these double impostors are held, who first delude themselves and then their followers, is of itself sufficient to stamp the character of the present race of Mohammedans, if no other proof of their extreme ignorance and barbarism existed. It remains only because of that ignorance being general, and it can only be eradicated by making knowledge take its place : so that those who cry out against the too general diffusion of information among the lower orders of our countrymen at home, and deplore the growing intelligence of the age, may see to what an odious state of debasement and degradation man may descend, when knowledge is withheld from him, and to what a mass of misery and crime their pretended regard for "social order" necessarily tends. The mosque of the dervishes is a large, regular, and handsome edifice. It has two of the loftiest and finest minārehs, or towers, anywhere to be seen in Damascus. Besides the principal dome, which is very large, a line of smaller ones is carried round three sides of the open court in front of the building, after the same manner as those in the great mosque at Mecca, of which it appears to be a close imitation. The domes are all of the low or flattened kind, and, as well as the pointed summits of the minārehs, all covered with lead. The architecture is not Saracen, or Arabic, as seen in the principal mosques of Cairo, but Turkish, as seen in most of the principal buildings at Smyrna and Constantinople. The execution is, however, in a pleasing style and good proportions, and the whole kept in a perfect state of repair. From its agreeable situation, and being sur-

rounded by gardens, trees, and water, it forms one of the most charming spots among the many that Damascus furnishes ; but it was impossible to admire its beauties, and think of the worse than useless, the pernicious, institution to which it was originally applied, without a sigh of regret for the blindness and ignorance which could alone have so perverted the best gifts of bountiful nature. It was some consolation to learn, that now and then a clear head and a benevolent heart sprung up even among the Turks, to do some good amidst the mass of evil which characterises the laws, institutions, and manners of that race. An instance of this, which we now beheld, struck us with more force from its proximity to the seat of folly and superstition just described, for the mosque being shut, we were taken by our attendant to the court adjoining it, where we were shown a large manufactory of silk, carried on within the precincts of the buildings, and constituting, as we were informed, a purely charitable institution, founded by Sultan Sulimān. We could not gather from our guide, who was both uninformed, and backward to communicate freely even the little that he did know, what was the supposed amount of the funds, nor the mode in which they were applied for the relief of charitable objects attached to or dependant on this foundation ; but we learnt this at least, that the productive labour of making silk goods for charitable purposes was carried on during six days of the week with little intermission, and that the seventh only was occupied by the dancing or whirling dervishes for the exhibition of their frenzied freaks of folly. It would be a great relief to suffering humanity, if the same proportion between the useful and the useless occupation of time prevailed over the whole earth ; we might then hope to see a more equal distribution of the bounties of nature, which are more than sufficient for all, and would give every nation abundance, if its population were usefully employed for six days in the week, giving the seventh only to recreation and repose.

Our next excursion, after leaving the mosque of the dervishes, was to a small suburb, named Salheyah, lying at the foot of the

mountains which bound Damascus on the W. and W.N.W. This suburb, or town, is situated at a distance of about two miles from the limits of the city, to which, however, it may be said to be connected by a public road, with a broad paved way in the centre for horses, and a raised causeway on each side for the accommodation of foot passengers. This road leads through one continued succession of gardens on each side, with clean and limpid streams, forming altogether one of the most interesting walks that could be desired. This place becomes one of general resort for pleasure on the last day of every week, when it is crowded with visitors on their way to and from Salheyah, where it is usual for persons of every age and condition to repair in holiday trim whenever their health and circumstances admit.

Numbers of Turkish females, enveloped in white muslin robes, with large head-dresses, covered by the ample folds of their outer garment, sat in parties by the way side, some smoking, others engaged in loud and merry conversation, with satirical remarks on the odd or curious among the passengers who crowded by, and others amusing themselves and their children, who surrounded them in groupes, and evidently enjoyed the scene as heartily as their mothers. Among the women, I noticed only two who wore the upper garment of yellowish white silk with broad red border, so common to the female dress of Nablous, at which place it is manufactured. With these exceptions, the dress here was universally an ample robe of snow-white muslin, with veils of a dark gauze, of striped and flowered patterns, the colours chiefly brown and yellow. Most of the females wore their veils down; some, however, had their faces wholly uncovered, and others partially so: the chief pleasure of all appeared to consist in seeing and being seen. From the prevailing practice, throughout almost every part of Turkey and Arabia, and particularly in large towns, of the respectable females going into public always veiled, and none but women of loose character showing their faces to the world, I had conceived that those who sat unveiled by the way side were of the

latter description * ; but we were informed that such was the severity of the government against this class, that spies and informers were paid by the state for their detection ; and when any were found, they were generally put to death without a hearing or a trial. This last, indeed, is a part of justice almost unknown in Turkey, where accusation is too often considered proof, and men and women are deprived of existence on the slightest pretexts, whenever their death may be desired to gratify the caprice or revenge of some remorseless tyrant. It is impossible to imagine, much less detail, all the horrid evils to which this abominable system, of government by will, exposes mankind ; or sufficiently to express one's astonishment at the ignorance and stupidity of men (for courage is rarely wanting) who patiently submit to any government but that which is established and regulated by fixed and equitable laws. One-tenth part of the exertions made by the people to depose one tyrant and set up another, in times of tumult and commotion, which occur almost every year in some part or other of the Turkish dominions, would accomplish an entire revolution in their favour. Ignorance is the true cause, and its removal the only effectual remedy.

The men of the city were mounted, some on horses richly caparisoned, others on fine mules and asses that trotted with a vigour and activity which these animals never exhibit in the West ; some were sauntering on foot as if to prolong the distance of their way, and others reposing on the banks that skirted the road, either smoking, playing at chess, touching the Arnaout guitar to their songs, or employed in some diversion that proved how generally and effectually all parties had abandoned themselves to the sense of luxury and pleasure, in all the various modes in which they had the means of enjoying it. Nothing was wanting to render this one

* It is worthy of remark, that, in the early ages of the world, honest women exposed themselves openly to the gaze of mankind, and harlots only covered themselves. See Genesis, xxxviii. 15. in the story of Judah and Tamar.

of the happiest scenes that human beings could witness, except the removal of that sense of insecurity which must necessarily be felt by all who live under a confirmed despotism, where no man can be assured that his wife, his children, his possessions, or even his existence, shall be exempt from violation for even an hour beyond the present ; as the rising sun may behold him in full possession of happiness, and the setting sun go down upon his misery, and see him stripped of all that rendered life desirable or worth preserving.

It was about noon when we reached the town of Salheyah, and ascending the hill above it towards a Sheikh's tomb, or some similar monument, called Kubt-el-Nasr, we enjoyed from thence a prospect that was truly enchanting. Having, unfortunately, neglected to take with us either a compass, a pencil, or even paper, no sketch was made of the view, which would have so well rewarded the trouble. The inhabitants of Damascus believe that the Garden of Eden, or the Paradise of our first parents, was in the plain below ; and they still show to strangers, at a place called El-Roobby, four streams, which they consider to be the four rivers described by Moses as issuing from thence. Tradition preserves an anecdote, which is assigned to Mohammed, the Arabian prophet, though probably belonging to some later personage, but sufficiently indicative of the high estimation in which the local beauty of the country around Damascus is held. It is said that the Prophet, arriving at a spot called El-Koddem, about two miles south of the city, was so impressed with the luxuriant and enchanting view before him, that he turned back from entering it, declaring that there was only *one* paradise for man, and leaving the print of his foot on the spot where he resolved to leave this earthly paradise in pursuit of the heavenly one, over which spot a mosque is said to be built to commemorate this event. Others mention a similar sentiment expressed by a certain saint as he caught the first view of Damascus from the summit of this hill on the west, from which the view is more commanding and magnificent. But whether both,

or either of these anecdotes be true or not, their existence, as traditional stories, proves at least how appropriately they are considered by the people of the spot to express the super-eminent beauty of their place of abode ; and in this all strangers who have a relish for the charms of landscape must cordially concur.

From this point of view the city of Damascus appeared to extend its greatest length from north to south, being broader at the northern, and tapering gradually away towards the southern end. Its extreme length appeared to be about three miles, and its extreme breadth about two. It stands on the western edge of a fine plain, and a level site, having a chain of hills pressing close upon it on the north-west, and the plain extending away beyond the range of vision to the east. The buildings of the city being constructed chiefly of stone below and light yellow bricks above, while the principal public edifices are painted in the gayest colours, the aspect of the whole is light and airy in the extreme. The castle, with its outer court and massive walls, and the great mosque already described, both of which are nearly in the centre of the city, look imposing by their magnitude, as seen from hence ; and the light and tapering minarets that rise in every quarter of the town, give a peculiar character of elegance to the whole. The gardens that surround the city on the north ; the fine olive grounds and long avenues of trees to the south ; the numerous villages pressing the skirts of the town on the east, and the great suburb of Salheyah, with the thronged public way that leads to it on the west ; added to the sombre but rich and thickly-planted cypresses, the slender poplars, the corn grounds, and the rivers and streams which so abundantly water the whole, give to this charming spot a character becoming a scene in fairy-land, and render it a fit object for the descriptive powers of an Arabian tale. *

* Pliny says, that the Syrians were excellent gardeners, and took such pains and were so ingenious in the laying out of their grounds, as to give rise to a Greek proverb to that effect.—*Nat. Hist.* b. xx. c. 51.

Not far from the spot at which we halted to enjoy this enchanting view, was an extensive cemetery, at which we noticed the custom so prevalent among eastern nations of visiting the tombs of their deceased friends. These were formed with great care, and finished with extraordinary neatness: and at the foot of each grave, was enclosed a small earthen vessel, in which was planted a sprig of myrtle, regularly watered every day by the mourning friend who visited it. Throughout the whole of this extensive place of burial, we did not observe a single grave to which this token of respect and sorrow was not attached; and, scattered among the tombs in different quarters of the cemetery, we saw from twenty to thirty parties of females, sitting near the honoured remains of some recently lost and deeply regretted relative or friend, and either watering their myrtle plants, or strewing flowers over the green turf that closed upon their heads.* This interesting office of friends or lovers sorrowing for the dead, is consigned entirely to females; as if from a conviction that their hearts are more susceptible of those tender feelings which the duties of such an office necessarily implies, and their breasts fitter abodes for that

* The custom of decorating graves was once universally prevalent in England, as well as among nations of the highest antiquity. There is an admirable paper on this subject, under the head of "Rural Funerals," in the Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, from which the following passage may be here appropriately introduced: — "The natural effect of sorrow over the dead is to refine and elevate the mind; and we have a proof of it in the purity of sentiment and the unaffected elegance of thought which pervaded the whole of these funeral observances. Thus it was an especial precaution, that none but sweet-scented evergreens and flowers should be employed. The intention seems to have been to soften the horrors of the tomb, to beguile the mind from brooding over the disgraces of perishing mortality, and to associate the memory of the deceased with the most delicate and beautiful objects in nature. There is a dismal process going on in the grave, ere dust can return to its kindred dust, which the imagination shrinks from contemplating; and we seek still to think of the form we have loved, with those refined associations which it awakened when blooming before us in youth and beauty. 'Lay her i' the earth,' says Laertes of his virgin sister;

" 'And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring!'"

pure and affectionate sorrow which is indulged for the loss of those who are dear to us, than the sterner bosoms of men. It is a great advance from savage life to know and to acknowledge this; and where such an admission of the superior purity and fidelity of the female heart and character exists, their ultimate advancement to that rank which their sex should hold in social life cannot be altogether hopeless. For this, as for most other blessings, increased knowledge is the most effectual security; when this shall take the place of ignorance, the domestic slavery of women, which now disgraces the East, will disappear as certainly as that abominable slavery of men which for so many years disgraced the name of Christians in the West.

We prolonged our stay at Salheyah, and in its neighbourhood, until near sunset, and in our return home saw near the gate of one of the pasha's palaces a large oriental plane-tree, of at least fifteen feet in diameter, and about one hundred feet in height, with rich and exuberant foliage, forming altogether the noblest object of the vegetable world that I had ever beheld. In our way we halted at a coffee house in the horse-bazār, where we saw some of the most beautiful Arab horses, mares, and colts exhibiting to purchasers, smoked a nargeel, and chatted with some of the Bedouins who had brought them in from the Desert for sale. We reached the convent in time for the evening meal, and sat up late, recapitulating the agreeable objects we had seen, and the pleasing impressions we had mutually experienced during our excursion of the day.



CHAP. XVI.

EXAMINATION OF THE INTERIOR OF DAMASCUS.

DAMASCUS, Sunday, March 25. — Desirous of resuming or continuing the task of visiting the principal parts of the city, and making the best use of my short stay here until I could receive my baggage and papers from Seyda, where they had been left by Mr. Bankes, we quitted the convent, after an early breakfast, and, under the guidance of the person who attended us in our ramble of yesterday, proceeded in search of other objects deemed equally deserving a stranger's attention.

Our first visit was to the office of a celebrated Jew, named Mällim Yusef, the brother of Mällim Haim, the great Jew at Acre; each of these men directing all the financial operations of the re-

spective governments under which they lived.* We found the Jew sitting in a small and mean apartment, in the court of the palace, surrounded by a number of writers, all apparently of his own religion. Mr. Banks had brought letters to him from Lady Hester Stanhope, which procured us a good reception. After a few minutes' conversation, and the serving of coffee, we expressed a wish to be permitted to see the palace of the pasha, the castle, the armoury, and any other public building that might be deemed worthy of a stranger's attention, which, after some hesitation, arising from the peculiar circumstances of the government at the present moment, was at last acceded to.

As no regularly appointed pasha had yet replaced the late governor of Damascus, who had recently died on his route of return from the pilgrimage of Mecca, the administration of affairs was vested in the hands of his *kiyah bey*, or prime minister. A message was therefore sent in to an inner apartment of the palace, stating the nature of our visit, and the request we had preferred; when the bearer of it soon returned, and invited us in the name of his master, to "the presence." We readily followed him, and found the venerable Turk seated in a small but richly furnished apartment, guarded and attended by at least fifty handsome officers, all armed with sabres and dirks, and all superbly dressed. We were desired to seat ourselves on the sofa beside these chiefs, before whom stood in groups an equal number of armed attendants, and were treated with great respect and attention.

* It is worthy of remark, that Damascus was considered by some of the older writers as the original city of the Jews; and, indeed, we have it mentioned as the birth-place of Eliezer, the steward of the household of Abram, before he was promised to be the father of the whole race, and of Israel, whose children they were to be called. The author, who describes it as the original city of the Jews, calls it also "the most noble of the cities of Syria," which it still continues to be. He adds, that the Syrian kings boasted their descent in a right line from Queen Semiramis; and says, that the name of Damascus was given to the city by one of its earliest kings, who was himself so called, and in honour of whom the Syrians afterwards worshipped the sepulchre of his wife Arathes (probably Aradus on the coast), as a temple, and esteemed her a goddess in the height of their most religious devotions.

The rich Jew, Mällim Yusef, who conducted us to the presence of the kihyah bey, seated himself with the greatest possible humility on the floor beneath us, at the feet of his superiors who occupied the sofa, first kneeling, and then sitting back while kneeling, on the heels and soles of his feet, with these and his hands completely covered, in an attitude and with an air of the most abject and unqualified humiliation. Mr. Bankes was dressed as a Turkish effendi, or private and unmilitary person : I still continued to wear the less showy garments of the Christian merchant, with which I had replaced my Bedouin garb. The rich Jew was dressed in the most costly garments, including Cashmere shawls, Russian furs, Indian silks, and English broad-cloth : all, however, being of dark colours, since none but the orthodox Mohammedans are allowed to wear either green, red, yellow, azure, or white, in any of their garments, which are therefore, however costly in material, almost restricted to dark browns, blacks, and blues. Among the party was also a Moslem dervish, with a patchwork and party-coloured bonnet of a sugar loaf shape, and his body scarcely half covered with rags and tattered garments ; his naked limbs obtruding themselves most offensively, and his general appearance being indecent and disgusting. It was impossible not to be struck forcibly with the different modes of reception and treatment adopted towards us, more particularly as contrasted with our real and apparent conditions. The Jew, who was by far the wealthiest and the most powerful of all present, who lived in the most splendid house in Damascus, and fed from his table more than a hundred poor families every day, who literally managed the great machine of government, and had influence enough, both here and at Constantinople, to procure the removal of the present bey from his post if he desired it, was obliged to kneel in the presence of those who could not have carried on the affairs of government without his aid, while the dervish, contemptible alike for his ignorance and arrogant assumption of superiority, was admitted to the seat of honour, and, with ourselves, who were of a faith as far removed

from their own as the Jew's, was served with coffee, sherbet, and perfumes, and treated by the attendants with all the marks of submission and respect.

After a short conversation on general subjects, in which political news and exchange of compliments had the largest share, two cawasses, or soldiers, with silver sticks, were ordered to attend us around the palace, and we accordingly withdrew. On the intelligence of the late pasha's death first reaching Damascus, the treasury, and all the apartments of his residence which were thought to contain any valuable articles, were instantly secured with bolts and bars, and placed under lock and seal, in which state of security they still remained, this being assigned to us as a reason why the apartments best worth seeing were not at present accessible. We were, therefore, shown only a few of the rooms of the palace, and all of these fell far short of our expectations, having nothing of magnificence in their appearance. Many of them, indeed, were so mean as to force comparisons of a ludicrous nature, and present the image of a barber's shop, a tailor's board, &c. This was particularly the case with one small apartment which was said to be a favourite one of the late pasha, in which he generally took his evening coffee, though such a place would be appropriated to no higher use than a scullery in any decent house in England. The choice of such a place was probably, however, not in conformity with the natural taste of this Turkish chief, but from an affectation of simplicity in public, which is by no means uncommon with those who indulge in the greatest luxuries and sensualities in private, and who are withal the most inexorable of tyrants, as evinced, among others, in the character of the late pasha of Acre, surnamed Jezzar, or the butcher, from his bloody cruelty, who nevertheless assumed in public the simplicity of a patriarch or a hermit.

From seeing the lower apartments of the palace, we were taken to a flight of wooden stairs, which we ascended, and came to a long gallery at the top, from which we were shown through

the windows the interior of a fine room, the embellishments of which were really handsome. The marble pavement, the gilded and enamelled friezes, cornices, and ceilings, the pointed arched recesses, the curious and costly mosaic of the inlaid doors, were all extremely beautiful; and this splendour of the pasha's retirement might well compensate for his public appearance of humility. We learnt that this was the principal apartment in which he received and passed his leisure hours with the ladies of his harem; a word which to an English ear conveys an idea of indulgence in voluptuous pleasures, and is calculated to give the most erroneous notions of Turkish life, the harem being no doubt as often the scene of cruel and ferocious violence as of consenting love. We learnt that there were now in the palace a number of the pasha's wives and concubines, under charge of a bearded old man, who was pointed out to us, and not in the keeping of eunuchs, as is almost universally the case. They would remain here, we were told, closely immured and jealously guarded in their confinement, until a person deputed from Constantinople should arrive to take them to the Grand Signor, or Sultan of Stamboul, who has alone the power of adding them to the innumerable victims of his own imperial harem, or disposing of them as may suit his pleasure in marriage to his favourite officers. The reflections suggested by this communication, formed a powerful drawback from the pleasure we derived from the gay and happy scene of yesterday, while it confirmed my impression of the dreadful insecurity of life and liberty under a despotism so unlimited as this.

Our next visit was to the armoury, in the great court before the palace. We saw here thirty brass field-pieces, six-pounders, of Turkish foundry and well mounted, being ranged in front of the armoury, and ready for immediate service. Within these were some few heaps of shot and shells, and a number of large jars filled with tar; several closed palanquins or tachterevans, which are borne between two camels, and used for the conveyance of the pasha's ladies, whenever he may need their attendance in any

journey or excursion, and particularly for the pilgrimage to Mecca. There were also about fifty large and very old blunderbusses, capable of carrying a ball of about a pound weight, and furnished with a swivel just before the match-lock, so as to admit of its being fastened to a saddle and fired from a dromedary's back, or from the ground, as occasion might require. This place might be called the magazine of the Hadj, rather than the general armoury, as all these articles, we were told, were kept exclusively for the pilgrimage to Mecca, and put in requisition on the departure of the annual caravan.

From hence we went to the castle, which is not far distant from the magazine described. It is a large edifice, constructed in nearly the same style as the great castle at Bozrah, and surrounded with a broad and deep ditch of rustic masonry. It appears to be a work of great antiquity, and to have undergone many alterations, additions, and repairs, at different periods. The stones of the oldest parts of this building, near its foundation, are of an extraordinarily large size. The rustic masonry is the only feature of Roman architecture that it possesses, as the arches of the interior are chiefly of the pointed form, like those of Adje-loon and Assalt. These castles, instead of elucidating the history of the pointed arch, and defining the line which separates the eastern from the western style of architecture, or serving to mark the distinction between the Roman, the Saracen, and the Gothic orders of building, offer perpetual contradictions, and make the subject more difficult and obscure. In the same edifice we had seen the round, the flattened, and the pointed arch, rustic masonry on the exterior front, and fine smooth masonry in the interior walls; yet all apparently of the same age, and, in many instances, certainly all coeval with the original construction of the work in which they appeared.

At the castle of Athlete, on the sea-coast of Palestine, Mr. Banks acknowledged to me that he had seen sufficient of these mixed features to create strong doubts in his mind as to the accu-

racy of the system he had hitherto adopted, for his guidance in distinguishing the Roman from the Saracenic works of the country. At Assalt, my own opinions were in the same manner shaken. At Adjeloon, where I saw the fan or shell niche of Roman shape and design united with the pointed arch of the Saracen form, my previous notions were quite unsettled. At Bozrah, the fine Doric theatre and the sharp vaulted passages seen in the same building, gave my opinions on this subject an entirely different turn from that which they had at first taken. And, lastly, this castle of Damascus had again raised fresh doubts as to the accuracy of either of the systems successively adopted. There appeared, at last, to be a choice between two hypotheses only; first, that the pointed arch was as frequently used by the Romans in their buildings in this country, as the semicircular one, and that the castles enumerated were all of Roman origin; or, secondly, that the rounded arch, the rustic masonry, and the shell or fan-topped niche, the most peculiar features of Roman work, were used by the Saracens who succeeded them in their possessions, and that these were all Mohammedan castles, erected after the expulsion of the Romans and Greeks of the Lower Empire from the country. The first of these alternatives seemed to me, however, the most probably accurate of the two; and as the pointed arch is found in some of the oldest of the buildings in the Haurân, constructed wholly of stone, it may have been found existing in these works of the country when the Romans first came into it, and have been subsequently used by them in other and larger works of ornament or defence.

That the early Greeks were unacquainted with the principle of constructing the arch, though they had carried architecture to a higher pitch of excellence than any other nation that preceded them, seems to be generally maintained and admitted. It is also asserted and believed, that neither the Indians nor the Egyptians were acquainted with this refinement in building. In Egypt, however, the monuments of which country are more ancient probably than that of any other on the face of the globe, the *form* of

the Roman arch was well known; and at the remains of Abydos, or El Araba Medfoun, on the western bank of the Nile, are several arched passages cut out in stone, and sculptured with hieroglyphics executed with infinite labour and care. Among the ruins of Thebes, also, on the western side of the Nile, sun-dried brick buildings have been found to contain *constructed* arches, (I think of the pointed form,) the antiquity of which is very uncertain. They may, indeed, be referred to an age coeval with Thebes itself, as well as to any later period; since a pyramid of the same material (sun-dried brick) exists near Dashour and Sakkara*; a boundary wall of the same material near the cataracts of the Nile at Assouam; city walls at Babylon in Mesopotamia, at 'Eliethas in Upper Egypt, and at Tānis in Lower Egypt; besides private dwellings at Abu-ke-sheid in the desert of Suez; at Bubastis in the Sharkieh, and other places decidedly Egyptian, and unquestionably of the earliest ages. The sun-dried brick buildings at Thebes may be as old as any of these, and the arches still remaining in them be therefore of very high antiquity; so also the round

* The buildings of brick were not only as ancient as those of stone, but would seem, from the expressions attributed to an Egyptian king on erecting a pyramid of this material, to have been in higher estimation. The following is the passage of Herodotus in which this may be seen:—

“After Mycerinus, as the priests informed me, Asychis reigned in Egypt; he erected the east entrance to the temple of Vulcan, which is far the greatest and most magnificent. Each of the above-mentioned vestibules, is elegantly adorned with figures well carved and other ornaments of buildings, but this is superior to them all. In this reign, when commerce was checked and injured from the extreme want of money, an ordinance passed, that any one might borrow money, giving the body of his father as a pledge: by this law, the sepulchre of the debtor became in the power of the creditor; for if the debt was not discharged, he could neither be buried with his family, nor in any other vault, nor was he suffered to inter one of his descendants. † This prince, desirous of surpassing all his predecessors, left, as a monument of his fame, a pyramid of brick, with this inscription on a piece of marble: ‘Do not disparage my worth by comparing me to those pyramids composed of stone; I am as much superior to them, as Jove is to the rest of the deities: I am formed of bricks, which were made of mud adhering to poles drawn from the bottom of the lake.’—This was the most memorable of this king’s actions.” — *Euterpe*, cxxxvi.

† The laws of England allow the arrest of a person’s dead body till his debts are paid; this mentioned by Herodotus is the first example perhaps on record of such a custom.

and pointed arches found in the oldest buildings of the Haurān, supporting the roofs of stone, may be of an antiquity long anterior to the first conquests of the Romans in the East. In these buildings are seen arched windows, the arch scooped out of one solid stone, with square, circular, and diagonal apertures cut out of the masses used in the masonry of the front, at the same time that *constructed* arches built of several separate stones are found on the inside of the same edifice. All these are certainly coeval with the stone ceilings and stone doors of the same buildings, and are to be found in the most ancient structures now existing in the Haurān. The arch, whether of the rounded or pointed form, as found existing in these buildings, may, therefore, be carried back to the earliest period at which these fertile plains were first peopled by a race dwelling in houses; and this we know to have been as early as the time of Job, or even before, as, in his day, his sons and daughters feasted luxuriously in *houses*; while the Chaldeans and Sabeans, who, like the present inhabitants of the neighbouring desert, the Bedouin Arabs, fell upon the inhabitants of the plains, and carried off their camels and flocks, smiting those who resisted with the edge of the sword*, probably lived as their successors at this moment do, in *tents*. Wherever, indeed, the cultivators of the soil were fixed, as in these towns of the Haurān, and led a settled life, as distinguished from the wanderers of the desert, their habitations must always have been of stone, from the great abundance of that material, and the total want of wood; and buildings so constructed, of low and massive proportions, with large and solid blocks, united with careful and excellent workmanship, would endure as long as the pyramids of Memphis, or the most ancient structures now existing in any part of the globe.

It is not, however, to be necessarily inferred from this, that the Romans borrowed their form of the arch, or the principle of its

* See the first chapter of the book of Job, which is generally considered to be the most ancient of all the books of Scripture; where many coincidences will strike the reader, between the present state of the Haurān, and the ancient picture of the "Land of Uz."

construction, from the East, since these might both have existed in this quarter at an early period, and yet have been discovered in Italy also at a much later date, without any knowledge of its existence elsewhere : and it will readily be admitted, that while such discoveries as those of the polar attraction, mariner's compass, gunpowder, and the art of printing, were made by the Chinese in the East, and European nations in the West, without interchange or communication between these countries, the more simple discovery of the principle of the arch in building might have been made by two separate nations, and used by each without the one having necessarily borrowed it from the other.

To return from this digression to the description of the castle of Damascus, the mixed architecture of which suggested the observations by which the narrative has been interrupted ; we saw within the gate of entrance some large brass guns dismounted, and on the walls above nearly twenty pieces of different calibre, in a most neglected state ; but we could learn nothing of the ancient *balista*, which has been reported to be here, though we made many enquiries after it. The interior of the castle presented a confused heap, in which were mingled together, strong works of defence, ruined palaces retaining marks of ancient splendour and rich ornaments of the most florid Arabesque, with remains of fountains, aqueducts, and gardens attached ; besides dark passages, gloomy dungeons, secret stairs, and a labyrinth of various objects through which it would be impossible to penetrate without a guide who was intimately acquainted with all the localities of the place.

From the summit of this extensive edifice, we commanded a fine panorama of all the central parts of the city, including the pasha's residence, the principal mosques, and many of the large streets which were laid open to our view. The gardens to the north of the town, and Salheyah to the west, gave an additional charm to the picture, and would alone have rewarded the trouble of our ascent thus far, even had we met with no other objects of interest in our way. On descending to leave the castle, we were

followed by a number of the officers and dependants attached to the fortress, who were all importunate for their expected fees, and though we did not give to any one the full amount of his demand, it required several Spanish dollars to pay them all.

From the castle we went through the city towards its eastern gate, and in our way were shown some of the few remaining portions of the old wall of enclosure, when Damascus was one of the strong walled cities of the patriarchal age. The buildings have so increased, however, since that period, that the number of houses beyond these walls is certainly double the number of those within their precincts. It will be remembered that Damascus is one of the very earliest cities of which the Scriptures make mention, being coeval with Babel, Nineveh, Sodom, Gomorrah, Haran, and Ur of the Chaldees, the first cities that existed after the flood; it is named also as the birth place of Eliezer, the steward of Abram's house, before the covenant, by which God is represented to have given him the whole of this country, from the river of Egypt to the Great River, the river Euphrates.* History makes no mention of any subsequent destruction of this city, as it does of Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, and Sidon, which were denounced by the prophets; so that it is likely to contain some remains of the very highest antiquity, and no where more probably than in these broken portions of its original walls. We were not surprised, therefore, to find these fragments presenting, at the lowest base, a masonry apparently more ancient than either Roman or Saracen. The blocks of stone, of which the foundations were composed, are often of a square form, which is unusual in any but the most ancient structures, and sometimes the height of the blocks exceeds their length, which is still more rarely seen: they are also of a large size, frequently measuring ten feet in length, or breadth, or height, as the greatest dimension may happen to be; they have all a smooth surface, and are closely united without the aid of cement. Above this portion of the most ancient masonry which forms the foundation, and ascends but a

* See Genesis, xv. 18.

little way from the base, is seen a continuation of, or rather an addition to, the old work, by a portion of wall raised upon the original base, and executed in the rustic masonry of Roman times; while this again is repaired and raised upon by patches of Mohammedan masonry, which is easily seen to be of modern date, from the inferiority in the size of the materials, as well as in their strength of union, and neatness of execution, in all of which they are not to be compared to the earlier portions of the structure.

The eastern gateway appeared to be entirely of Roman architecture, having pilasters of the Doric order on each side. Beyond this gate we visited some beautiful gardens, and near them several extensive cemeteries, in which the graves were formed and preserved with a degree of neatness and care, that evinced how universal was the respect and attention shown to these mansions of the dead. Every separate tomb that we remarked, had a sprig of myrtle planted at its foot, where the earthen vase that contained the plant was built in with the enclosure; and this was watered daily by some female relative of the deceased, who visited the grave every day, and of whom there were not less than fifty now scattered singly, and in groups, over different parts of this moving yet agreeable scene.

This formed the last portion of our excursion to-day; and returning through the city by a different route from any we had yet followed, we paid a short visit to Monsieur Chaboçeau, dined together at the convent, and passed a most agreeable evening in recapitulating and comparing the various impressions produced on our minds by the different objects we had seen during the day.

Damascus, Monday, March 26.—We went out this morning to see the bazārs of the city, and were occupied during the whole of the day in traversing them in every direction, occasionally reposing on the bench of some coffee-house, in the streets through which we passed, on our way from one bazār to another.

The narrowest streets of Damascus are wider than the generality of those at Cairo, and will conveniently admit of a laden camel marching in the centre, with room for a foot passenger to move in safety on each side. The greater number of the streets, indeed, would allow two laden camels to pass each other without incommoding those on foot; and many are as wide as the great street by which we first traversed Damascus, on entering it from the southward, as before described.

The bazārs are appropriated each to the sale of its separate class of articles, which is usual, indeed, throughout the Turkish dominions. Those in which the more valuable commodities are vended, are generally roofed in, with apertures left to admit light and air, by which means they are kept warm and dry in winter, and shady and cool in summer, considerations of importance to places so constantly thronged, as are these resorts of purchase and sale. The bazārs appeared to us to be all well furnished with the articles of commerce in general requisition here, and the traders seemed to be more wealthy and respectable than the same class of persons in Egypt.

The shops are seldom opened before ten o'clock in the forenoon, and rarely continue open longer than two o'clock in the afternoon, making their period of business, therefore, only four hours in the day. The persons who attend in them to serve the customers, under the eye of the master, are well dressed, obliging, and polite; and generally succeed, by their complimentary mode of address and agreeable manners, in inducing their visitors to purchase more of them than they at first intended. On the whole, there is perhaps no part of a modern Turkish or Arabian city, where the pictures of the Arabian tales pass so frequently and completely before the view as in a crowded bazār; and to an observant spectator, it is one of the most agreeable and entertaining rambles that he can take.

In Damascus, all kinds of Indian commodities, but particularly spices, cotton manufactures, coarse and fine muslins, chintzes, and

gold stuffs, are in great demand, and considerable quantities of them are sold at high prices. These come from India by the Persian Gulf, Bussorâ, Baghdad, and Aleppo, and are consequently burthened with all the heavy expences of land carriage through such a circuitous route. It is here, among other great cities of the Levant, including Constantinople, Smyrna, and the whole of Asia Minor, that a vast field would be found for the consumption of Indian commodities, if they could be brought to their respective markets at a less cost, and rendered available to all classes, instead of being confined, as they now are by their heavy prices, to the opulent only. It is certain that every article, the produce of China, India, and the Eastern seas, would be supplied at a much easier rate by the way of the Red Sea and Egypt to all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, than by any other route; they could be even brought round the Cape of Good Hope to the coast of Syria, at much less cost than by the tedious carriage of the overland journey, when risk, delay, and other considerations, all acting as so much additional charge, are taken into the estimate. The Red Sea, however, would be more expeditious and less expensive than any other channel; and all that is wanting for this to be chosen, is the assurance of easy transit-duties in Egypt, and certainty of protection. The Pasha of that fertile province, by this simple guarantee, secured on such pledges as should induce a perfect reliance thereon, might do more in ten years to enrich his country, and to make it the resort of merchants from every part of Asia and Africa at least, as well as the eastern parts of Europe, than all the Soudans or Beys that ever reigned on the banks of the Nile have yet been able to effect for that admirably situated and highly interesting region. In the hands of the English, as a connecting link between India and Great Britain, we should soon find Egypt a magazine for all the productions of the East and the West; from which the cheap manufactures of our own country, and the rich natural productions of our Oriental possessions, would be distributed over every part of the globe now subject to Turkish

dominion, and all those that border on its extensive limits ; while a new stimulus would be given to industry throughout these provinces, where many new articles would be produced as commodities of barter and return. Under a despotism so liable to perpetual change as the government of Turkey, in every part of that disjointed empire, such a state of things could never be realised ; though in Egypt, if the reign of Mohammed Ali be continued in the spirit by which that chief professes to be actuated at present, and his independence be established and declared, the progressive introduction of Europeans into his councils may do much towards the accomplishment of so important an object, and Egypt become again as celebrated for its commerce with surrounding countries as it was in the days of its ancient prosperity.

The few manufactures of England that have yet found their way into the bazārs of Damascus, are much sought after, and held in very high esteem, particularly light woollen cloths of gay colours, printed cottons and chintzes, and silk and cotton shawls made in imitation of those of Cashmere. As these are not imported direct from England to Syria, but come through the markets of Malta, Smyrna, the Greek Islands, and Alexandria, at each of which places the prices become enhanced by new charges, they sell here at exorbitantly high rates, and would very handsomely repay the adventurer of a small ship freighted with such a cargo, to be landed at some port on the coast. To these, however, might be added a considerable number of other articles, which, from the cheap rate at which they could be furnished from England, would only need be known, to be in great demand.

The greater supply of wearing apparel for the fashionable persons of both sexes at Damascus, is brought from Constantinople, ready made. These are mostly new, but a large quantity of clothes that have been previously worn, are also brought from the Turkish capital for the bazārs of this city, and distributed indeed over the greater part of the empire. It is this practice of selling the apparel of those who have died of various diseases, and transporting them