

from one city to another in boxes and bales, without their undergoing any cleansing or even airing, after they are taken from the chambers of the dead, which facilitates so much the rapid spread of plague and pestilence from one quarter of the Turkish dominions to the other. The garments of those who are known to have died of the plague, are no more exempt from such sale and transport than the garments of one who may have died of mere old age; and no restrictions whatever exist in any town of Turkey, as to the free ingress and egress of all persons and commodities from one town to another. Such restrictions, of the nature of the quarantine laws of Europe, are held by them as opposed to the principal tenet of their religion, a blind confidence in predestination; and they are almost the only professors of that belief, who conform in practice to the natural dictates of such a creed, by suffering the destined course of events to flow on, without daring to offer their feeble opposition to what they believe Omnipotence itself to have decreed. Hence it is that that dreadful scourge of humanity, the plague, no sooner appears in Constantinople or Cairo, where the matter of infection always exists, being simply checked or rendered dormant by extreme heat at the latter, and extreme cold at the former of these capitals, and is restored to activity and vigour by the temperate seasons in each place, than it spreads itself over every part of the country with which these cities carry on a commerce; and by the wearing apparel of those dying of the disease in the capitals being constantly conveyed into the provinces for sale, thousands fall victims to this malady, whose lives might no doubt be saved under the common precautions which would be taken, if these cities were in the hands of Europeans.

Among other various manufactures to be found in the bazārs of Damascus are very superb caparisons for horses, of which the Turks, and indeed all the Eastern nations, are extremely fond. The best of these are considered to be made in Roomeleea, by which the people here generally understand European Turkey; a number of fine bridles, martingales, and silver and embossed breast-

pieces, come also from Persia. The fire-arms are chiefly of French and German manufacture, but got up in a more highly ornamented style than would be pleasing to European taste, being expressly prepared for this market. Those who are the most choice, however, in the selection of their arms, prefer to have the barrels of their muskets and pistols made of the old wavy iron found in the ancient sword blades of the country, with French or German ornaments, but with English locks. The sabre blades are almost all of the old Persian or Damascus manufacture, the art of making them being no longer known or practised in this city ; so that they continue to enhance in price as they grow older and scarcer, for there is no modern sword that can compare with them in temper and quality. They are mounted in various ways, according to the taste of the wearer, but generally in what is called the Mamlouk style ; and this is done at Damascus in a better manner than even at Cairo, where they pride themselves on their superiority in this kind of workmanship.

The silk seen in the bazārs of Damascus is principally of Chinese and Indian manufacture ; the furs come from Russia, Georgia, Circassia, and Armenia ; the velvet from Italy ; copper from Asia Minor ; lead, tin, and iron from England, through Smyrna ; and various other articles of an inferior kind from Germany and France.

The domestic manufactures of Damascus are very few, and consist chiefly in silk stuffs, plain, coloured, and embroidered with gold : fabrics of plain cotton, and cotton and silk mixed, all for home consumption, and mostly of broad striped or wavy patterns for the caftans of the Turkish dress. They are as well made as they could be of the same materials in any part of Europe, England and France, perhaps, excepted ; and, as far as I could learn, the manufactory was neither slow, intricate, nor expensive. They are worn by persons of the highest rank in the city, while their moderate price and great durability render them also in great request among the middle ranks of society.

Besides the roofed bazārs, in which the articles enumerated

are generally found, there are also open bazārs in which household furniture and wearing apparel, both old and new, are sold by public auction. On each side of these bazārs are always a number of brokers and other purchasers seated on benches that range along the street, who smoke their pipes and take their coffee as if their only object in assembling was ease and pleasure. The auctioneer, who is also the crier, takes the article to be sold, and elevating it in his arms, when portable, walks along the whole of the range, repeating the last offer in a loud voice ; and as he goes only once the length of the bazār with each article, the highest price offered during his walk is the one at which it must be sold. The sale is not so expeditious as by the method pursued in Europe ; but it is more advantageous to the owner of the goods, from the increased probability of obtaining good prices ; and this, indeed, is evinced by the fact that articles are seldom or ever sold for half their market price, as is the case in many of the hurried auctions in England.

Some of the finest buildings in Damascus are the khans or caravanserais, appropriated to the reception of goods brought in caravans from various quarters by wholesale merchants, who supply them to the retail dealers. In the course of our ramble to-day we visited several of these, and were much pleased with them all, but were particularly struck with the beauty of one that was superior to every other. The architecture of this was in the finest style of the Saracen order, and might be considered as a specimen of one of the best works of that age in Damascus. It consisted of a spacious court, the entrance to which, from the street, was by a superb gateway of the pointed arch, vaulted and highly ornamented with sculpture. The court was paved throughout with broad flat stones, smoothly polished and admirably joined together ; and in the centre of this stood a large fountain sending forth cooling and agreeable streams ; the whole being crowned with a cluster of lofty domes. The masonry of this pile was formed of alternate layers of black and white stone, one of the peculiar features of Saracenic and

Turkish taste ; the ornaments were profusely rich ; and the distribution of light through the domes so well managed that no corner throughout the whole of the building appeared obscure. We were so charmed with this fine specimen of the best days of Saracen architecture that we remained in it for a considerable time, and closed there our excursion for the day.

On our return to the convent at sunset, we found the messenger, despatched on the 22d instant, returned from Seyda, with a letter from Lady Hester Stanhope, addressed to me. On the face of the letter despatched by me to Mr. Bankes, relating to my baggage, I had written on the outside requesting that it might be opened at Seyda, in the event of Mr. Bankes having left that place before its arrival, which was accordingly done ; and this letter of Lady Hester Stanhope was in reply to that. The substance of this was to state that my baggage still remained at Seyda, from which there was no safe opportunity of forwarding it immediately, and adding, as a further reason, if that were needed, that it was, in its present state, so badly secured as to endanger the loss of half of it if sent. It was accompanied with a repetition or confirmation of her ladyship's verbal assurance, through Mr. Bankes, founded apparently on his favourable representation of my character, that I should find a welcome reception as her ladyship's guest, in the event of my desiring to avail myself of her hospitality or friendly advice. With that prompt benevolence which has won for her a name that is honoured and revered throughout every part of the country in which she resides, her ladyship adverted to the inconvenience I was likely to suffer from the want of my papers and baggage, and not knowing whether Mr. Bankes would be at Damascus when this reached me, as he had left Seyda with the intention of proceeding in another direction, but had been obliged to change his route, the letter contained a note of credit for a sum sufficient to meet my present wants, addressed with a letter of explanation to Mallim Yuseff, the rich Jew here, informing me at the same time that Mr. Barker would leave Aleppo in May, and offering me

every assistance I could need to facilitate my communications with that gentleman. This act of unasked kindness from a lady of distinction to a perfect stranger, under circumstances of this peculiar nature, and in the heart not only of a foreign, but almost a hostile country, made a deep impression on my mind, and made me rejoice that I could consider such a being my countrywoman.

To-day, however, before going out to see the bazār, I had conversed with Mr. Chaboçeau on the subject of supplying me with money; and assuring him that, though meeting with many interruptions and disasters in my route, I had still with me, among my baggage at Seyda, a letter of credit on Mr. Barker, the British consul at Aleppo, for whatever sum might be necessary to defray the expences of my journey to India, which I expected to arrive from thence, in the course of a few days at furthest: he furnished me with one thousand piastres, or about 40*l.* sterling, for a bill drawn by me on Mr. Barker, which I hoped would be sufficient for the remainder of my journey to Aleppo. This was, therefore, sent off to Mr. Barker with a letter of advice from me, and a copy of the letter of credit, which was deemed all that was necessary; as the original would be better kept to present him when we met. Mr. Bankes had also offered me the use of his credit, if I needed money at Damascus, but I had accepted from him only about a hundred piastres, sufficient to discharge my guide without incurring further expence by delaying him. This was repaid to Mr. Bankes immediately on my thus procuring funds of my own, as I was desirous of not intruding on his resources, being aware that we were each equally liable to suffer the same inconveniencies, from failure of supplies, in a country where no precaution is sufficient to exempt even the richest from sometimes wanting accommodation in this respect.

Mr. Bankes having made up his mind, as to the plan which he had formed, and which, for the reasons before stated, I had encouraged, of his going into the Haurān, we could not hope to proceed from hence to Aleppo in company, as he desired. Added to this,

we learnt that the route from hence to Aleppo direct was far less safe than that by the coast, and was therefore seldom followed but by caravans, which were slow in their progress, and set out only about once a month. My baggage being still at Seyda, where I could join it with less delay than it could be sent to me, was also a consideration, which, added to those already enumerated, induced me to determine on proceeding to that place, and from thence along the coast to Latakeea and Aleppo. These resolutions being mutually debated on and approved, we proposed waiting together on Mällim Yuseff, the Jew, in the morning, for our respective passports, or firmans, and leaving Damascus on the following day, Mr. Bankes for the Haurān, and myself for the Syrian coast.



CHAP. XVII.

VISIT TO THE GOVERNOR OF DAMASCUS.

DAMASCUS, Tuesday, March 27. — The duties of the government being now more pressing than usual, from the powers of the late pasha being exercised by his *kihya bey*, or lieutenant; and more deliberation being used by a *locum tenens* than would be thought necessary in one holding the full powers of a pasha by appointment from the sultan; the chief financier, and secret director of most of the affairs of the pashalic, Mällim Yuseff, was required to attend at the palace from sunrise to sunset. It had been intimated to us, therefore, that if we desired to see him in private at his own residence, our visit must be before the sun was up; we had accordingly arranged for a very early visit, in which Dr. Chaboceau had kindly offered to accompany us, and came

himself, old as he was, to rouse us from our beds even before the day had dawned.

On arriving at the minister's house, which stood in the midst of the quarter exclusively inhabited by the Jews of Damascus, and not far from that of the Christians in which the convent was situated, we were struck with the extreme poverty and meanness of its exterior, although we were aware that this could be only an affectation of humility, to conceal the wealth of the interior, and render it less liable to excite envy in times of tranquillity, so as to escape pillage in times of commotion. We entered the outer enclosure through a small door, which led to a mean and narrow passage, carried along the side of a dead wall, built of earth-dried brick, and without a single aperture to admit either air or light. At the end of this passage was an humble seat, with a dirty carpet and four old cushions that indicated nothing but rags and poverty within. Here we were obliged to wait until the ill-dressed porter, who sat on the seat described, went in and announced our names, condition, and the purport of our visit to the Jew, when a servant of the house was sent out to conduct us to his presence.

Although we had prepared ourselves for the sight of a spacious and commodious house, well furnished with whatever could contribute to the comfort of its inmates, we were greatly surprised at finding not merely this, but a gorgeous display of wealth and luxury, which, concealed as it was from the vulgar gaze by the circumvallation of mud through which we had entered it, seemed to us still too hazardous for any man to possess, even in private, considering that his office, his religion, and the character of the people among whom he lived, all contributed to make him an object of envy and jealousy; while his wealth would be sure to inflame the cupidity of those who might select him as their victim merely to possess it among themselves. At the opening of the inner door leading from the mean passage and waiting-place before spoken of, we found ourselves transported in a moment into a spacious open court, paved with coloured marbles, arranged in various devices of mosaic work,

cooled by refreshing fountains, and shadowed by citron and orange trees, producing altogether a most luxurious, soothing, and pleasurable impression.

We were received with great politeness by the master of the house, and took our seats beside him in a rich divan, formed beneath an arched recess of this splendid court; and presently after our being seated, we were surrounded by a crowd of servants, to the number of twelve or fifteen at least, each preparing and presenting something for our pleasure or accommodation. We were served with long pipes made of the stem of the jasmin steeped in rose water, and mounted with the richest amber, globe nargeels, with gold embossings on their surface, exquisite candies and preserves from silver dishes, and coffee from beautifully coloured china cups with enamelled stands.

After some general conversation, and a few remarks on the subject of our visit, which were lost amidst the admiration that the sight of this magnificent house had inspired, we were conducted over the whole of the building, the master himself preceding us as our guide, and the servants following. We noticed that as they passed through the doors, they touched with apparent reverence, sometimes a piece of wood, and sometimes a hollow case of tin, which were alternately suspended at that postern of the door which received the lock, and not at that which held the hinges; and as the master apologized to us for the unfurnished state of some of the rooms, by saying that they had been stripped of their ornaments during the late passover, and had not been refitted since, it struck me as highly probable that this ceremony of touching the mark suspended at the lintels or posterns of the doors might have some reference to the mark by which the Israelites were to be distinguished from the Egyptians, in the smiting of their first born; particularly as it is said in the record of this event, that this should be observed as an ordinance among the children of Israel and their descendants for ever.* A fear of being thought to exercise an

* See Exodus, xii. 21—28.

intrusive or ill-timed curiosity prevented me from making direct inquiries on this subject, and I hoped also for another opportunity, in which it might be done with less risk of being misconstrued.

After wandering for nearly an hour through a number of spacious and splendid apartments, courts, terraces, and galleries, we descended again to the divan to take coffee and refreshments. In the course of our conversation here, we learnt that this house had been built by the father of our present entertainer; and we were assured that during the latter half of his life, or about twenty-five years, there were employed at least fifty workmen of different descriptions, every day excepting holidays, in its construction and embellishment. Long as this period of time may seem for fifty men to be employed on any one building, we were disposed to think it probable, from the multiplicity of minute ornament displayed in every part of it. The pavements were all of variously coloured marbles, ingeniously and carefully arranged; the surbase-ments of the walls were in mosaic work of the same materials; the friezes, which were from three to six feet in depth, were formed of a series of pointed arch and concave niches, radiated at the top, and gilded, painted, and adorned in such a manner as to appear imposing from a little distance, though not bearing a close examination, being evidently intended for effect from below. The ceilings were as so many broad canopies of gold and brilliant colours, to which were rich additions of sculpture and enamel in fanciful designs. From these hung in many parts the dropping ornament so peculiar to Turkish architecture, which Mr. Banks considered to resemble the stalactites of caverns, and thought they were meant to represent them; an opinion which appeared to me quite as well founded as many others that assign particular objects of nature as the models for architectural ornament, in which they no doubt had their origin. In the walls were deep niches or recesses, the backs of which were inlaid with mosaic work in marble; and in the centre of almost every apartment was a small but beautiful fountain, so constructed as that by varying some of the

works about it, the form of its streams might be varied every day. The whole of this princely mansion was, indeed, as suited to the abode of pleasure as the most luxurious sensualist could desire, and as gorgeous in its decorations as the most ambitious lover of display could wish.

Our necessary passports being promised to us during the day, we took our leave of Mällim Yuseff at an early hour, and having nothing more important to engage our attention till these should be ready, we were led by the venerable companion of our visit, Mons. Chaboceau, to call at some of the dwellings of the principal Christian merchants in Damascus, for the purpose of seeing the style and manner in which their abodes were fitted up. The first on whom we waited was a person who had entertained successively various English travellers, during their stay here, among whom Lady Hester Stanhope and Mr. Bruce were named; but whether he felt hurt at our not having come to his residence instead of putting up at the convent, or from whatever other cause a jealousy might have been excited, we could not imagine; yet, certain it was, that he received us both in the coldest possible manner, and with a sullenness that could have arisen from no other cause than a most unfavourable impression, or some supposed offence, of which, however, we were each equally unconscious. His residence appeared to be extremely beautiful and well furnished: but we saw only the room in which he received us, from his not pressing us, and our not asking, to see any other part of it. Notwithstanding the evident ill-humour of our receiver, he yet condescended, though one of the wealthiest merchants in the place, to fill and light our pipes himself, in conformity with the affected humility of Asiatic manners, and when coffee was prepared, to present it to us with his own hands. Even Mr. Bankes's Albanian servant, who was seated at the foot of the sofa on which we reclined, was equally honoured with the merchant's attentions, while he stood before us to receive the cups after we had emptied them. We thought this a very remarkable trait of manners, as belonging

to what is considered hospitality and humility in the East, where a combination of these qualities seems to be taken for the perfection of good-breeding: though in the present instance it was performed with a mortification that was but slightly concealed.

Mr. Banks had had an opportunity of seeing the palace of Ahmed Bey, to which he had paid a visit alone, without my knowing it until now, when he communicated it to me, in order to say that he thought its interior to be richer and more highly finished than even that of the rich Jew, though the courts he thought were very inferior. He added, that this bey had lately lost a beautiful Georgian wife whom he fondly loved, and soon afterwards a favourite son, who was killed by a fall from the terrace of his dwelling. He was, therefore, now confined to his house and scarcely saw any but his most intimate friends, indulging his sorrows, and rather feeding than endeavouring to overcome his grief; disrobing himself of all ornaments, and wearing also the plainest robes of deep blue, which betokens mourning among the Turks. This amiable trait of domestic affection in a Turkish bey deserves to be recorded, from its being rarely in the power of a faithful narrator to dwell upon the private or the public virtues of this class, though their vices meet him in every direction and at every step.

In all the principal buildings that we had yet seen in Damascus, whether mosques, palaces, or private dwellings, the zigzag or saw-edged intersection of the stones used in the architraves of doorways and other parts of the edifice, formed a very striking and constantly repeated peculiarity of this style of Arabian architecture. The pointed arch niches were sometimes crowned with single, at others with double, and at others again with treble tops, the radiations ascending from a point at the bottom of the arch to the top in some instances, and in other descending from a point at the top of the arch to the bottom. Inlaid work of coloured marble was also seen in various patterns of the Arabesque; and the dropping ornaments thought to represent the stalactites of caverns was also seen in almost every niche.

In the afternoon we went to a very favorite spot of the Damascenes, called, I believe, El Mezey, or more generally known by the name of the place of separation of the waters. It is situated at a short distance to the west of the city, and not far from the suburb of Salheyah. Part of our way to this place lay through a road with tombs on each side of it, which was compared by Mr. Bankes to the entry into Rome by the Appian way, where tombs are similarly placed on each side, at short distances from each other. We found at the spot we had come to visit, many parties of Turks enjoying the delicious freshness of the air in this delightful retreat, and certainly nothing could be more romantically beautiful than the picture which the whole scene presented. The waters of the rivers Fege and Barrady, which join near the source of the former, come here from the north-west united in one stream, when, arriving at this deep bed between two lofty and close-approaching hills, they divide into four separate streams, and diverge off to the eastward and southward, for the supply of the numerous fountains in the city. The natural tendency of men to enhance, by every artificial charm, the value of that which nature has bestowed on the place of their birth or residence, causes the people of Damascus to believe implicitly that this was the place in which stood the garden of Eden, or the Paradise of our first parents; and in conformity with this belief, they consider these four streams to be the four heads into which the river that went out of Eden to water the garden was parted, namely, Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates.*

There is an inextricable confusion in this part of the sacred topography, not to be reconciled by our most learned men; as these rivers, from the description given of the lands through which they flowed, as well as their names, would seem to imply the Niger and the Nile, if Africa be meant by Ethiopia and the land of gold; or the Ganges and the Indus, if Ethiopia meant, as it sometimes did, the country of the Indians, though the geographical knowledge of the Hebrews of that day hardly extended so far; and the two last

* See Genesis, ii. 8—14.

were undoubtedly the Tigris and Euphrates of the present day, all of which rivers, or indeed any four of them, could not have a common origin or source, according to the present conformation of the earth's surface at least, though this description, it must be admitted, applies to antediluvian times. The object of this remark, is, however, merely to show that on a subject so difficult of explanation, the Damascenes may be forgiven for entertaining so harmless a belief, as that their four branches diverging from one stream, are the four heads into which the one river of Eden was said to be parted, in order to water the garden, more particularly as these four streams actually perform that office, and flow over a plain which is not perhaps to be exceeded in beauty by any now on the surface of the globe. As these are the principal waters near Damascus, and are in universal esteem for their sweetness and purity, it is highly probable at least that they are those spoken of by Naaman the Syrian, who when desired by Elisha to go and wash himself seven times in the Jordan, in order to cleanse himself of a leprosy, exclaimed, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters in Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean?"* And indeed so superior are these waters in every estimable quality of that element to the Jordan or any other river of Israel, that the rage in which the Syrian is said to have turned away at the proposition of washing in the latter to purify himself, when he could do this so much more readily and effectually in the former, was natural to one in his situation, and thus easily accounted for.

It is in the neighbourhood of this spot also, that the hill is situated on which Cain is said to have slain his brother Abel, as alluded to by Shakespeare*, and forming a consistent part of the tradition, which considers this to have been the Paradise of our first parents.

* See 2 Kings, v. 8—12.

† See first part of Henry the Sixth, Act i. Scene 3. in a speech of the Duke of Gloster's.

At this place we noticed some artificial grottoes in the cliffs above, one of which had a square entrance hewn out with apparent care, and said to be painted on the inside. It is called Dikān el Sheikh, or the Hermit's shop, from its having niches within it resembling the shelves of a shop in a modern bazār. We did not ascend to examine it closely. On the side of the rock was a long inscription, in old Arabic characters, of the square form, but not Kufic; it was comprised within a square tablet, containing about twelve lines, and not at all mutilated. We had no opportunity of seeing it close enough to be copied, even had we proposed to do so; but Mr. Burckhardt, who remained some time at Damascus, is said to have procured an accurate copy, so as to render this of the less importance.

In so charming a spot, parties of Turks were always sure to be found; and at the present moment we saw many of them, some sleeping on their gay carpets spread out on the turf, others smoking and drinking coffee on the borders of the stream, and others engaged in a game which was carried on by throwing stones from one party to another on opposite cliffs, by certain rules, and others again devoutly engaged in prayer. There were about twenty horses, richly caparisoned, halting on the green bank, waiting for their riders, which gave great life and animation to the picture.

We returned from hence by a new route through the city, and passed a happy evening at the convent, recapitulating and re-enjoying the pleasures of the day.

Damascus, Wednesday, March 20.—The day of our separation again arrived, and we both expressed regret at the circumstances which impelled us to depart in different directions; though, had I been at liberty, I should have liked nothing better than making another visit to the Haurān, and seeing more of it in company with my friend. I did my utmost, however, to furnish Mr. Bankes with the best instructions that I could give him for his excursion there

alone, and supplied him also with such articles of my Bedouin dress and travelling apparatus as he needed, it being necessary to adopt that costume, and worn garments being less likely to excite particular observation than a complete outfit of new. Mr. Banks had a soldier from the troops of Damascus, who was to accompany him in quality of guide as far as the residence of Sheikh Shibley of the eastern Druses, where he would receive guides and protection from that chief. His Albanian interpreter, Mohammed, was also to attend him in the dress of an Arab, making his party three in number. The time fixed for his departure was noon of the present day: all my morning, therefore, was passed entirely in assisting my friend; and when he mounted at the convent door, I certainly felt a sincere regret at parting again so soon from one who possessed and deserved my esteem, more particularly as from the fortunate accident of our unexpected meeting here, I had indulged the hope of our being able to prosecute the remainder of the journey from hence to Aleppo, in company with each other; such a union promising increased protection, increased information, and increased pleasure to each, without in any manner obstructing the views, or impeding the progress of either. *

* Notwithstanding the events which have occurred, and the changes of sentiment which have taken place since the notes of this journey were written, I think it due to the fidelity which I have endeavoured to preserve throughout my narrative, and a just tribute to the superior claims of truth, to retain the exact expression of my original memoranda or diary in the instance just given above, vouching, as I do, for the entire sincerity of the feelings then and there expressed. I ventured to pursue the same line of conduct when speaking of my first interview and subsequent correspondence with Mr. Burckhardt, because it appeared to me that no subsequent change of his opinion or conduct, could justify my speaking of him at any particular period, with any other sentiments than those entertained and recorded by me at that moment. It would have been, at least in my opinion, a falsification of the narrative, to have substituted other opinions for those really entertained, when such opinions had no existence, and nothing had then occurred to occasion them. As my motives in that instance have been grossly misrepresented, I think it prudent to avoid the same imputation here, by explicitly avowing the reasons which induce me to think and act in the same manner on this occasion. Had I then possessed the experience that I now do, of the violence to which political hatred will drive the adversaries of one who values a conscientious discharge of

Being now left alone, I began to prepare for my own departure for the coast. The Bedouin dress in which I had arrived here, and which was as unfit for the city and the villages and towns of the west, as a good citizen's dress would have been for the plains and deserts of the East, were already appropriated to the use of my friend in the way described. The clothes which I now wore had been furnished to me by the kindness of a Christian merchant, as before mentioned; so that it became necessary for me to purchase others for my journey, and restore those I now possessed to their proper owner.

It was on this errand that I set out alone to range the few remaining hours of the afternoon through the bazārs of the city, and effect this task for myself. My purchases were all made at a cheap rate; the whole outfit of a good and respectable suit of Turkish clothes, with two changes of linen, a corresponding set of horse-furniture, carpet, cooking utensils, khordj or saddle-bags, and

his duty to his fellow countrymen and fellow beings before all homage to worldly greatness or deference to arbitrary power, I should then have taken the precaution that I now do, of bidding the reader to be aware that I could speak more evil of the individual I had named, than would be sufficient to counterbalance all the good it had been my pleasure to describe. But I remembered the common propensity of our nature to magnify the vices and diminish the virtues of others; that,

“ The evil that men do lives after them;
 “ The good is oft interred with their bones:”

and that to counteract this disposition was a duty worthy of my regard. I had forgiven all, as I myself humbly hoped for forgiveness; and I was willing that the injuries of those who had striven to cover my name with obloquy, but had not succeeded because they had not truth on their side, should be “ written in water,” and their redeeming qualities “ engraved in monumental brass.” The ill judged zeal of others forced me at length to disclose, what nothing but a defence of my own reputation from unmerited infamy, which neither morality nor honour command us to bear in silence, could ever have wrung from me; and to the disappointed rage and ungovernable rancour of *The Quarterly Reviewers*, may those whose names are stained by such disclosures as I have felt it my duty to make, look for reparation; since their unmanly and dishonourable aspersions of me have alone brought to light, what else would have been still covered with the robe of charity and peace.

other little necessities for the way, amounting to no more than five hundred piastres, or about 20*l.* sterling.

During my ramble I observed a man of large stature, but deformed proportions, walking through the public street without a single article of apparel ; his head had been recently shaved, and he appeared wet all over as if just come out from a fountain or bath : he had a short thick neck, large head and projecting eyes, and his whole appearance was that of an idiot. I expressed my surprise at this, though aware that such scenes are not uncommon in Cairo and the towns of Upper Egypt ; but it was so little a subject of wonder here, that scarcely any person regarded the naked wanderer, except to make way for him, and sometimes to salute him with respect as he passed. Several of the residents of the city afterwards assured me that the same outrages to decency were committed by these privileged saints (for so all idiots are considered) in Syria as in Egypt, and that acts which the most savage nations generally conceal under the garb of night, were performed by these men in the public streets, and in the open day ; while the passers by, instead of expressing their indignation at such a wanton insult to decorum and propriety, frequently offered up their prayers to Heaven for a blessing on the parties submitted to this violation ; and from a superstitious veneration for all idiots, as persons under the peculiar care and guidance of the Divine hand, regarded those who were chosen for their pleasures as pre-eminently favoured by Divine Providence ! Such a horrid and revolting remnant of savage manners, rendered more depraved than they even could have become in a state of nature alone, and reducing mankind to the level of the beasts of the field, painful as it must be to know that it exists and is tolerated in any part of the globe, ought to be recorded as a trait of eastern manners generally (for it extends over the greater part of the African and Asiatic world), and as an illustration of the depth of depravity to which the dignity of man may be reduced, by the influence of despotism and superstition com-

bined. Were men free to express their sentiments through the medium of public assemblies or the press, either on civil or religious topics, such an abomination would not exist in a city like Damascus, not even for a month. But where the tongue and the pen are equally restrained by the strong hand of arbitrary power, all parties sit down inactive and content with things as they are; while, from the mere habit of never venturing to express freely what they think, they gradually learn to lull every faculty with opiates, till at length they cease either to think or to feel at all. In this, as in almost every instance of depraved manners that exists, it may be received as certain, that increased information diffused among all ranks is the only effectual remedy that can be applied; therefore, the enemies to the spread of education among the lower orders are the enemies of improvement or reform; and the enemies of reform are at once the enemies of God and man: since the benevolent purposes of the former, and the virtuous happiness of the latter, can only be promoted and maintained by the progressive advancement of the world in knowledge and in truth.

Among other particulars that I learnt from my enquiries of the dealers in the bazār, I was told the fine cotton-thread, needles, pins, knives, scissors, and fine hardware of every kind of English manufacture, were in constant demand, as well as china and earthenware, whether of English or Indian origin; and that large quantities of cochineal and indigo were consumed in colouring the fabrics of silk and cotton in this city, already described.

I halted at several of the best coffee-houses in my way, to repose, and had an opportunity of seeing a great variety of persons in each. These houses are all large, and conveniently suited to the manners of the people who frequent them. In these there are a great number of attendants, and as the only purpose for which passengers stop at them is to smoke and drink coffee, every visitor who enters is presented with a fresh nargeel, a pipe smoked through water contained in the polished shell of a cocoa-nut, from whence it derives its name, and a cup of coffee, whether he orders it or

not, the price of both seldom exceeding five paras of Turkish money, or about an English penny. Many of these coffee-houses are so spacious as to have benches on each side the street, extending for fifty yards in length, and large rooms of the same dimensions within them, with a large boiler of coffee always on the fire, and men constantly employed in roasting and pounding the berry, so as to have the beverage always fresh; it being found that the only certain mode of retaining the pure flavour of the coffee is to roast, pound, and boil it all in quick succession, the roasted berries soon losing their flavour if laid by for a day, and the pounded coffee becoming insipid, even in a few hours. The Arabs of the desert, who are from necessity economical in their use of this article, follow the same process, even if they require only two cups of the liquid, roasting a handful of berries on an iron plate, pounding them in a pestle and mortar while warm, and the instant the water boils, which it will generally do by the time the other preparations are completed, so that no time is lost, putting the pounded powder into it, and suffering it to boil, stirring it at the same time for about a minute or two, when it is poured out to drink. As this beverage is taken without sugar or milk, the slightest difference in the flavour is perceptible; and long experience having shown this to be the best way of preserving it in perfection, it is perhaps worth mentioning in detail, particularly as the use of this article has become so general even in England. Nargeels for smoking are sometimes carried through the less frequented streets, and places where coffee-houses do not abound, and the bearers of them carrying their tobacco in a leathern bag, with a tin vessel of water, the tobacco being always wetted to cool it before the pipe is filled, and lighted charcoal in an iron pan, prepare it in a few seconds for the momentary use of a passenger, who takes half a dozen whiffs as he walks along, giving a para or a farthing for the pleasure, which their habit of incessant smoking renders a great luxury, after the privation of even half an hour.

In Damascus there are also many houses at which sherbets and other sweet drinks are prepared, cooled with the ice and snow brought down to the city from the summit of Jebel-el-Telj, or the snowy mountain, to the south-west of the town, and on the north of the lake of Tiberias. In these shops are a number of large vessels of brass and other mixed metals, with Arabic inscriptions, and various devices cut on them in high relief, and in a beautiful style of workmanship. These are appropriated to contain the iced drinks in large bodies; and smaller ones of metal also are used to drink out of. Skins of iced water, sweetened and perfumed, are also carried through the streets on men's backs, and served to passengers in the street at a para for each draught, which forms an agreeable and a cheap refreshment, of which all classes but the most needy can partake.

In the course of this afternoon, indeed, I saw more than I could command time to record or describe, particularly as when I returned to the convent late and fatigued, I felt so much indisposed as to be obliged to retire to bed immediately.

Damascus, Thursday, March 29. — I was so ill in the morning as to be unable to rise from my bed, having passed a restless and painful night. Medical assistance being thought necessary, Doctor Chaboçeau was sent for, who attended without delay, and finding me in a high fever ordered immediate recourse to medicine. I was visited during the day by the president of the convent and other kind enquirers, but was no better at night than in the morning.

Friday, March 30. — In addition to the ordinary effects of violent fever, my mouth had become insufferably sore, as if under a strong course of calomel, though none had been administered; and by noon it had grown much worse, covering the roof of the mouth, tongue, gums, and lips, with small and smarting blisters, so that I could scarcely speak, from excessive pain. Bleeding was prescribed, and an Arab barber-surgeon was sent for (these arts being

here still united, as in the early state of civilization in most countries), who performed the operation with great address, taking from me about fourteen ounces of blood, which was thick and almost of an inky colour. Towards night I felt extremely weak, but was much relieved from the violence of all the feverish symptoms, and more cheerful and composed both in mind and body.

Saturday, March 31.— In the morning I felt refreshed, from a good night's rest, and was enabled to leave my bed before noon; my head-ach being now but very slight, I ventured to write for a short time in the course of the day.

Sunday, April 1.— Though still too weak to leave the convent, I attended the service of the church attached to it, which was not far from my room. The church was small, and but meanly furnished, compared with the gorgeous decorations of Catholic places of worship in general. After the mass, a sermon was delivered in the Arabic language by a young Spaniard, whose appearance and complexion indicated an ardent, melancholy, and enthusiastic temperament. The subject of his discourse was the history and purpose of the crucifixion, in treating of which he used an eloquence that was peculiarly impressive. In dilating on the barbarities of those who committed this indignity on the Son of God, he wrought his hearers up to a pitch of the highest indignation; and when the fervour or the frenzy of his audience was at its acmé, he strengthened the effect of his climax by producing suddenly from beneath his robe a large crucifix, which he summoned all to behold, while he pointed to the bleeding wounds still streaming with the warm and crimson blood that Christ had shed for their salvation. Every eye was fixed, every feature was motionless, and every heart seemed dissolving away in tears. As a stroke of impassioned and effective oratory, it was one of the most impressive things that I had ever witnessed, and its reality and close connexion with time and place gave it a force that no words can describe. It reminded

me of the funeral oration of Mark Antony over the bleeding body of the murdered Cæsar ; and the celebrated dagger scene of Burke in the English House of Commons ; but as the subject was loftier, the speaker regarded as clothed with more sacred authority, and the auditors more unanimous in their feelings than could have been the case on either of these two occasions to which it bore a resemblance, the whole scene was more solemn and imposing. The church was at the same time suddenly filled with a corresponding gloom, by the closing up of some of the principal avenues through which it received the sun's rays from above ; and a " dim religious light," which is so favourable to the indulgence of the kind of devotional ardour that it was the object of this combination to produce, reigned over all, and shut out the intrusive brilliance of the " gaudy, blabbing, and remorseful day." This powerful appeal to the passions of love, pity, sorrow, and revenge (for the detestation inculcated toward the murderers of Jesus and the unbelievers who still resisted the Catholic interpretation of his faith, was not in the spirit of him who exclaimed, even on the cross, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,") was one of the most skilful efforts towards the union of fervid eloquence with theatrical effect ; and such as in the early ages no doubt stimulated the enterprise of the crusaders to take vengeance on those infidels who insulted the religion of Christ in the very cradle of its birth, and violated the sanctuaries which they deemed it their highest glory to rescue and defend. It was followed up by fine peals of music from the organ, and the hymns of choristers, who were chiefly children, of both sexes, and who sang in response to each other in the Arabic tongue also, in a manner resembling the songs sung in response by the boatmen on the Nile.

The service being at an end, I had soon an opportunity of discovering that the preacher had a sharp eye, as well as an eloquent tongue ; and that the devotion among the audience was not so universal, as the sobs and tears of many at least that I myself heard and saw had led me to believe. In eastern churches the

women are generally separated from the men, and sit in a gallery enclosed with lattice work, to prevent the attention of the sexes being diverted from religious feelings to less holy passions; and this separation was observed here. It has often been remarked, and is no doubt true, that females are generally more ardent and more superstitious than males; and consequently their sex furnishes more frequent instances of exemplary piety and devotion than are to be found among our own. Notwithstanding this general truth, however, while all those who sat below exposed to public view had behaved during worship with the greatest decorum, a knot of merry and talkative women in the gallery above, whom the lattice work and "dim religious light" had concealed from all observation but that of the lynx-eyed preacher, had excited his extreme displeasure; and before they could disperse, he had quitted the pulpit, and was up among them, reproaching them in terms of unchristian bitterness for their levity and inattention. It was an illustration of the truth too frequently overlooked, that the best safeguard of decorum is publicity, and that nothing will so effectually secure an attention to propriety of action as the conviction that the eyes of the world are fixed on the actor to observe the minutest peculiarities. The decorum of our own public assemblies is chiefly preserved by this feeling; and the better half of the morality of mankind is maintained by no other cause. If any portion of an English congregation were rendered by any means invisible to the rest, their behaviour would be far less scrupulous than at present; and if any portion of mankind at large could effectually screen themselves from the prying eye of the world, and become invulnerable to the power of public opinion on their conduct, such portion could not fail in a short time to become more dissolute and abandoned than others. To increase the means, therefore, of securing such publicity, and to enforce on all classes the necessity of such responsibility, is to promote the cause of virtue by one of the most powerful of all human agents, the desire to live in the esteem of others.

When the president and the friars of the convent met together after service in the small room in which they generally assembled around their chief, their conversation was just as frivolous, and unconnected with the impressions by which they had been endeavouring to make others believe themselves affected during their hours of devotion, as is the conversation of our English clergy and the higher orders among their congregation when they meet to talk of news, fashions, and parties, in the church portico, and while waiting for their carriages indulge in satirical strictures on the dress, equipage, dinners, and even characters of those very persons whom they intend to visit, dine with, and flatter during the week.



CHAP. XVIII.

EXCURSIONS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF DAMASCUS.

MONDAY, April 2.—Although my mules and guide for the journey to Seyda had been engaged for several days, and I was impatient to proceed, I was still unable to do so, being to-day worse than yesterday, probably from my leaving my room too soon. The fever under which I suffered so severely, was considered by Doctor Chaboceau as the effect of my fatigue, and exposure to the sun by day and cold by night, in my late journey; and the black colour of my blood was by him attributed to the wretched food on which I had subsisted for so many days in succession. It is said, also, that the water in the city of Damascus very generally affects the health of strangers who drink freely of it, in an

unmixed state, of which I had done, as water was almost my only beverage. The water of the river Barrady is considered to be unwholesome, and that of the river Feejy pure and excellent. Those who are choice in their drink, send servants, therefore, to fetch water from the last-named stream, at some distance from the town, before it unites with the former; the water that supplies the gardens and most of the houses in town coming from these rivers after they have joined their streams in one. There are, however, several springs in the heart of the city which produce excellent water, but these are only accessible to a few. From one of the principal of these, appropriately called "The Fountain of Health," Dr. Chaboceau was supplied with the only water that he drank, and sent me sufficient for my use; it was very superior to that in common use, and in its pure taste, dark hue, and crystalline transparency, resembled the fine water of Madras.

From some of the best informed residents here, I learnt to-day that Damascus is thought to contain about 100,000 Mohammedan inhabitants, of whom all are native Syrian Arabs, excepting about 10,000 Turks, who are continually replaced by new families and settlers from Constantinople and the towns of Asiatic Turkey. Out of these, about 1,000 are soldiers, horse and foot, but principally the former, and these, with little more than 100 Albanians or Arnoots, form the military force of the city; the remaining 9,000 are persons in the various offices of government, and merchants and traders in the bazars. Besides these, which include the Mohammedan part of the population only, there are considered to be about 15,000 Jews, and 25,000 Christians, of whom there are estimated to be 10,000 of the Roman Catholic faith; 3,000 of the Schismatic Greek communion; and the rest are of the Syrian, Maronite, and Armenian churches. The mosques of the Mohammedans are exceedingly numerous, certainly not less than 100 at least, including large and small; the Jews have six synagogues; the Catholic Christians one convent, with a church included in it; the Greeks one place of worship, larger and richer

than the Catholics; the Armenians a convent and a church; the Syrians and the Maronites one each, the latter the largest of the two.

To all these there can hardly be less than 1,000 persons attached, including the ulema of the Mohammedans, the rabbis of the Jews, and the priests of all the Christian sects: whose sole business is professedly to promote the spread of their several religions; for, with the exception of the Jews, all endeavour, with varied earnestness and varied success, to increase the number of their converts and proselytes. But though these priests are the most useless and unproductive of all the civil classes of society here, (for if they do not promote the increase of virtue and morality, which it is certain they do not, they are even worse than useless, and become a burthen on the people which cannot be too soon shaken off;) they receive probably a larger share of the wealth of the community, as the wages of consecrated idleness, than any similar number of persons in the whole city.

It would be worth the consideration of the people of this and of every other country, to enquire whether it would not be practicable to make every man, who receives a handsome allowance for inculcating the various modes of faith, by an implicit confidence, in which he pretends that his supporters can alone hope for happiness in the world to come, contribute also to fit men for the better performance of their duties to each other in this. If their sabbaths, for instance, were given to expounding the essential tenets and injunctions of their several religions, which in all cases are so few and simple as that "he who runs may read," instead of vexing the hearts and confounding the understandings of men with subtleties that no effort of reason can comprehend or explain, and which it is, therefore, a waste of time to go about to illustrate, they might then have six days of the week to give to the education of youth in matters of positive utility, and leave the miracles and mysteries on which they now delight to found all their claim to reverence, where they ought to remain, in that humility which

a sense of limited or finite capacity would always enjoin when we venture to approach what is confessedly incomprehensible.

If the other classes of society are commanded to use six days of labour, and enjoy the seventh as one of rest, there can be no good reason for the exemption of the priesthood from a rule which they themselves enjoin on others ; still less for reversing it, as they do in this case, by having one day of labour and six of rest. If it be said that the nature of their studies requires all the time they can apply to them, to understand the several systems that they teach, it may be safely answered that such an argument would apply only to the Jewish and Hindoo religions, or similarly constituted ones, in which all devotion consists in a strict observance of an intricate ritual and innumerable ceremonies. It will not apply, however, to the Mohammedan, and indeed the priests of this religion do actually include within their duties, those of lawyers, judges, and instructors of youth : it would apply still less, however, to the Christian faith, which has its foundations so deeply laid in justice and equity, the doctrines of which are so simple, the ceremonies so few, and the precepts so intelligible to every capacity, that a bare repetition of them at fit times and seasons, illustrated by a life of corresponding purity, to give the weight of example to its beautiful injunctions, ought to be, and would be indeed sufficient, were the only object of its ministers to inculcate a firm belief of its truth, and induce men to conform their lives to its doctrines.

Were not an inspired religion made thus plain to the meanest capacity, it would be the height of injustice to punish those who could not comprehend it ; and the idea that the Creator could be the author of subtleties which it required a large portion of the most learned men in all nations to expound to others, who, after all, without the same portion of learning and talent could never comprehend even the explanations offered ; and that a belief in such difficult doctrines should be made the standard of happiness or misery in a future state of existence, is altogether so contrary

to the marks of wisdom and benevolence that every where surround us in his works, as to make every honest mind revolt from the consideration.

The Christian religion being, therefore, the most rational and simple of all the varied faiths that distract mankind, its teachers have less need of employing the greater portion of their time to its study than the teachers of any other system of belief; and as this religion is pre-eminently distinguished above all others by its encouragement to the progressive increase of useful knowledge, it is still more particularly incumbent on its professors to see that the priesthood assist in this, by applying such portion of their time as may not be required for the performance of their religious duties, in superintending the education of youth, for which their superior knowledge and the superior purity of their lives ought more especially to fit them. The whole body of the youth of both sexes, even of the most indigent classes, might be thus well-educated without expense to their parents, and it would be a wise law that should enforce this duty on all fathers, if the means of doing it without cost were open to them, for they would then be without excuse for neglecting it.

The priesthood of every country, whether maintained by the state or by the community, are expressly engaged and paid for the purpose of promoting the true interests of religion; the true interests of religion are best promoted by the increase of morality, and the strengthening the securities of virtue and happiness; the increase of useful knowledge, inculcated both by precept and example, is the only effectual mode of promoting those desirable ends; therefore, the priesthood of every country would be more usefully employed in diffusing instruction through every class of society, than by the most intense study of doctrines that are confessedly beyond their grasp, and can neither be comprehended nor explained, without that light which it has never yet been granted to them to bestow on others.

That popes, cardinals, bishops, and other dignitaries, who obtain thousands and tens of thousands from the public purse, for promoting the growth of true piety by leading idle and useless lives in foreign countries, or corrupt and mischievous ones in opposing every attempt at the spread of knowledge and improvement in their own, should be hostile to such an innovation as this, may be readily believed; but, if the interests of mankind at large are of more importance than the interests of any one particular portion of them, such a use of the priesthood would be generally regarded as most consistent with the dignity of their profession, acceptable to their Creator, and of incalculable benefit to their fellow-creatures.

There are many of the most learned and respectable of the Protestant clergy most usefully employed in the many public and private seminaries of our own country; and what a contrast do they offer to the unprincipled public lives of some, the debauched private lives of others, and the pernicious indolence and apathy of many more, in their own extensive body! Still further, what a contrast do they exhibit to the ambitious, arrogant, and lazy priesthood of the church of Rome, and all the various sects of professing Christians throughout the East! Inasmuch, however, as the small portion of the English clergy so employed are labouring more effectually in their vocation than those who are not, and are therefore more faithful servants of Him whose will they profess to study and obey: so it would be far more to the honour of their whole body, and infinitely more beneficial to the interests of the community, from whom they derive their subsistence, if *all* were so employed, from the highest dignitary of the church to the humblest parish curate.

If the sums now consumed by their body were divided, on some equitable scale of proportion, among the several ranks which it might still be necessary to maintain; and the promotion to such ranks were regulated by the claims of superior length of service, public virtue, distinguished talents, or private worth; such funds

would be fully adequate to maintain the whole church establishment of England in ease and respectability, elevating the most useful of them from the indigence in which many are now compelled to pass their days, and rear even a numerous family ; and yet leave a large surplus to be applied to the maintenance of public schools in every part of Great Britain, for the gratuitous education of all children whose parents had not the means of defraying the expense ; and still leaving a wide field open for the superior education, in more select establishments, or by private tutors, of such children as were destined for the higher walks of life.

To those who were truly and honestly disciples of Christ, and set his life before them as the pattern most worthy of their imitation, no objection could possibly be made to the increased labour, or the seeming humility, of such an occupation, for those who had heretofore wallowed in luxury, and while they helped to drain the wealth, assisted also to rule the councils of the nation. Such was not the pattern set them by their Divine Master, whose whole life was spent in teaching others and in doing good. Nor is it enough that his disciples should merely enjoin from their pulpits the observance of precepts which they exact from others, without making them the guide of their own lives and occupations : as Jesus himself has pronounced, that whosoever shall break the commandments that he is appointed to preach unto men, shall be the least in the kingdom of heaven ; but whosoever shall obey such commandments, and teach them also, shall be great indeed.* Since the servants, therefore, ought not to aspire to be above the master, every member of the Christian church who should object to assist in this great work of the public education of all the youth of the kingdom, and the consequent advancement of the rising generation in virtuous habits as well as principles, might conscientiously be considered as unworthy of his sacred trust, and be removed from that body to give place to some successor who should

* See the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew v.

be better qualified, by Christian piety and humility, to aid in this philanthropic work.

The arguments against the spread of information, and the education of the "lower orders" generally, are founded on such a mixture of blindness and wickedness, that they could never succeed in overturning an institution of this nature, if once commenced. No one would be hardy enough to declare that God created men of different ranks in society, making one a master and the other a slave from its birth; all must admit that such distinctions are purely human, and have arisen from the multiplicity of events that are continually changing the condition of society in almost every quarter of the globe. Sometimes priority of birth, at others greater courage and strength, but more frequently than all, superior virtue and wisdom, have elevated some individuals so far above others among whom they lived, as to give them, by general consent, the character of leaders; and from the earliest stages of civilization up to the advanced state of refinement in which we may be now said to live, in comparison with preceding ages, it is education that is the principal agent in constituting the superiority of one man above another. "The proverbs, adages, and maxims of every age and country, founded on this belief, are too trite and numerous to be adduced, nor need they be referred to except to show the universality of such an impression. If one *man* is better than another because of his superior education, the natural propensities in each being considered the same; then, one *nation* must be also better than another for the same reason: and if the same rule were extended to the world at large, it might be safely asserted, that the nearer a people can approach to the state in which every individual of every nation should be, that is, deeply impressed with moral principles and trained to moral habits, the more widely diffused would be the reign of justice, peace, and happiness throughout the earth, till the supposed "millenium of righteousness" might be almost realized.

That innumerable and perhaps insuperable obstacles exist to oppose a consummation so devoutly to be wished, no man could doubt. But this should quicken our zeal, instead of operating as a reason for despair ; and if every man would put the case to his own bosom, as regarding his immediate offspring, none but the most besotted would deny them the benefit of education if within their reach, from a fear of its pernicious tendency ; the practice of the whole world indeed, wherever education is known, proves that every father would wish his children to be well instructed, from a conviction that such instruction is calculated to make them more useful and honourable members of society.

If it be said that such a general diffusion of information tends to produce too great an equality among mankind, and to make the inferior ranks ambitious, insolent, and disorderly, such a tendency can be disproved by reason, and shown to be the very reverse of truth, by an appeal to the safest of all guides — experience. The untutored or natural disposition of the human heart is admitted to be evil, and one of its most constant propensities is to envy and to covet the superior possessions of others : it is therefore perpetually ambitious of acquiring more than it can command. Another striking feature of the natural state, is abject submission to the strong, and intolerable oppression of the weak : it is therefore insolent. And, lastly, the savage state, from its very precariousness of subsistence, and the constant successions of abundance and want, becomes improvident, sensual, and devoted to the enjoyment of the moment, in utter disregard of the future : it is therefore disorderly. In proportion as men and nations recede from this state of barbarism, they learn to be contented, mild, and prudent ; though unprincipled individuals continually form exceptions to this general rule. It is ignorance, however, which is the great bane of all, and the more effectually this is eradicated, the more orderly all ranks will necessarily become.

In Scotland, where the lower orders are generally instructed, they are more honest, industrious, and orderly than the same class

in any other country, America, perhaps, excepted, where the same cause produces the same effect. In Ireland, where the lower orders are grossly ignorant, there is a constant tendency to crimes and disorders of the most violent nature. In England, the well-educated among the lower orders bear with exemplary patience the constant pressure of an overpowering and disheartening demand on the produce of their labour for the support of extravagance in the state, and yield a ready obedience even to laws and mandates that they pronounce in public and in private to be pernicious and iniquitous; yet, though thus justly dissatisfied, the moderation of their conduct is such as to keep the more turbulent in order by the mere force of good example; while the manly fortitude with which they suffer, the forbearance which keeps them from violent measures, and the patient perseverance with which they try all methods before they resort to violent modes of redress for grievances that almost grind the poor to the dust, presents a triumphant proof of the commanding powers of education over the human mind, which should make every lover of his country rejoice in its superiority to almost all others on this account.

In Turkey, where education is almost unknown, an unpopular sultan is secretly dispatched by the Janissaries; an unpopular vizier is strangled by the bow-string; and an unpopular pasha in the provinces is cut off by poison or the dagger, without even asking him to change his ministers or reform his administration. In this country, too, the lowest individuals in the community may aspire, and often indeed succeed, to the principal posts of honour, when they act the part of the very tyrant they have succeeded in deposing, till their turn comes to give place to another.* The whole history of the country is, indeed, a series of plots, assassin-

* "Despotic princes delight to show their power by raising a man from the lowest ranks of a community to a station which commands the most extensive obedience. A sultan of Constantinople is said to have at once exalted a waterman who rowed him across the Hellespont to the rank of grand vizier." — *Macdiarmid on Subordination*, p. 70. 8vo. 1806.

ations, and disorders of the most turbulent and ungovernable nature; the only law by which they are guided being that of force; and the only mode by which they seek redress being by the exercise of the same agent.

Such are the blessed effects of ignorance in the lower orders! and such the state to which those who oppose education among the poor would reduce all their fellow-creatures below that class to which they happen to belong, for the furtherance of their own selfish and abominable ends!

To return to the subject which gave rise to this digression: I venture to offer it as my opinion, that the thousand priests of all the several religions existing in Damascus, who draw their subsistence from the people, give them nothing of any real value in return, being employed for the greater portion of their time in consulting their own idle gratifications; and in the few hours allotted to the service of the public, substituting incomprehensible mysteries, and unprofitable ceremonies, for simple and useful precepts, and plain illustrations of valuable truths. I consider also, that if these thousand priests were employed in superintending each one school for the education of the rising generation, on the six days of the week, such thousand schools, if only demonstrative knowledge suited to all religions were taught in them, would give the inhabitants of Damascus a vast stride in civilization in the course of one generation only, which would go on with increasing force in every succeeding age. I would further add, that the argument applied to Damascus would apply equally to every other city on the face of the globe; and its force would never be diminished, except a nation could be found that had arrived at the perfection of knowledge in every branch, and where nothing more remained to learn; which, for some centuries at least, if ever, is not likely to be the case.

I am far from supposing that a system of perfect equality ever could exist, or that such a state would be desirable even if it could be attained. Gradations in rank appear to be as indis-

pensable to good government, as division of labour is essential to perfection in the arts of life. But as a very large portion of the misery existing in every country arises from the imperfection of its institutions, and the ignorance which prevails on the subjects of legislation, politics, law, population, and political economy in general ; so the more extensively sound opinions on these subjects could be disseminated through all classes, combined with every other species of useful information, in the physical and natural sciences, and the arts of human industry in every branch, the more difficult it would be for any one to maintain such gross delusions as are now practised by those in power, and the more impossible it would become for bad governors, either through ignorance or fraud, to pursue measures favorable to their own individual interests, but at the same time destructive of the interests and happiness of the community.

The chances of ignorant or bad men rising to the possession of power being thus lessened, the chances of sudden revolutions to displace them would be lessened also. The lower orders, being better informed, would see, as the really well-informed in all countries already perceive, that place and power are far less enviable than they always appear through the magnifying mists of ignorance: they would also see the hopelessness of success without certain combinations, which they would have penetration enough to perceive that they could never command. The objects of ambition, and the motives to its indulgence, would be therefore greatly lessened; and it may be safely asserted, that in all countries, the security of a good government from sudden change by any revolution of the people is great in proportion to the general diffusion of information ; and that where ignorance is most prevalent, there every man's possessions from the throne to the cottage are in the greatest danger of forcible violation and destruction ; because, in truth, in such countries, all men are nearly equal in point of qualifications, and the barber of the vizier is often quite as well fitted to guide the helm of affairs as his master, and the eunuch of

the harem fr quently wields all the energies, or rather all the impotence of the state : so that the lowest individual may aspire to be prime minister, and the highest officer of the realm is not secure of his place for a day.

In the divisions of labour, from the simplest process of agriculture up to the most intricate operation of art, the fitness of the individual for the task assigned him to perform, is the only rule that is or ought to be observed. It would be thought absurd, for instance, to let the ploughman abandon his field and perform the labour of the miller, or for either to quit their several branches and assume the duties of the baker, without being quite as well qualified to do the one as the other : and in the more intricate operations of art, the absurdity would be still more apparent, from the entire incapacity of the workmen in one branch to perform what is required from those in another. In government, whether legislative or executive, confessedly the most important of all the duties that men can undertake, this simple and obvious consideration of fitness is wholly overlooked, and particularly in countries where ignorance is general. In proportion, however, as the happiness or misery of mankind is more dependant on the nature of the institutions under which they live, than on any other single cause : so the science of government must be considered one in which it is, of all others, the most important to secure for its professors the requisite qualifications of wisdom and virtue.

Where universal ignorance exists, this truth is seldom or ever discovered ; and where general ignorance only prevails, the few by whom it may be acknowledged, are unable to overcome the mass of prejudices and passions, which combine to resist its adoption as a rule of choice. If, however, only the majority of a nation were sufficiently well informed to see that such a rule would be the most effectual security for their liberties and enjoyments, it would be first openly and freely proclaimed, and then gradually adhered to in practice ; while in a really well-educated community, where political knowledge should be as generally diffused as arithmetical

knowledge now is, it would be as rare to hear a man dispute this maxim of superior qualifications being the only fit standard by which to regulate appointments to offices of state, as to hear a man deny that twice eight and four times four were the same number, or any other simple proposition in arithmetic.

It has never been asserted, as far as I am aware, that any man can be too good a mathematician, be his condition in life what it may, nor indeed is it thought dangerous for superior information to be made the standard for appointments to professorships in every other science, excepting only that of government. In all other departments of human knowledge, men must acquire by study and application a due stock of information, and exhibit their superiority to others in its practical application, before they can be permitted by the common consent of mankind to take the lead in their particular department, whether it be the higher branches of mental exertion in moral and natural philosophy, or the lowest exhibitions of muscular flexibility and strength, in juggling, rope-dancing, and pugilism; while, in government, the most difficult of all the sciences to know and practise well, men are considered sufficiently qualified by birth or wealth; as if it were considered that nature, and not study, furnished the necessary qualifications to the privileged class; or as if money could purchase wisdom for those to whom nature had denied, or from whom indolence had withheld, it.

The Turks are now in possession of some of the fairest portions of the earth: but by the general prevalence of ignorance, and consequent misgovernment, there is probably no portion of the earth in which the productive powers of nature are turned to so unprofitable an account; none in which the inducements to exertion are less; and none in which life, liberty, and property, are so generally insecure. The cause being known, the remedy is simple; the gradual diffusion of such information, as shall tend to make the people, as well as their rulers, moral, wise, and free: for while the latter are debased and ignorant, the former are sure to be corrupt and oppressive. And if the application of this remedy

would advance the civilisation of Turkey, so it would, in a greater or less degree, improve every country on the globe, unless it could be shown that vice is superior to virtue, and ignorance to wisdom ; or unless it could be proved that some nations should be exempt from its influence, as having already reached perfection.

Damascus, Tuesday, April 3.—Though I had felt much better yesterday, and remained out of bed for the greater part of the day, I found that I had considered myself well too soon, falling to-day into a relapse of fever, which was considered more dangerous than the first attack. I was accordingly obliged to keep my bed, and undergo a strong course of medicine. The weather was extremely severe, with a violent storm from the south-west, accompanied by hail, snow, rain, thunder, and lightning, which made a gloomy day.* My kind physician, Dr. Chaboçcau, as well as the president of the convent, were exceedingly attentive to me, the first paying me three, and the last more than a dozen visits in the course of the day. Both of them were evidently alarmed for my safety, and considered me as likely to be so too ; as they were continually desiring me to compose myself, to have courage, and to hope for the best. Fortunately for my peace of mind, as well as for the tranquillity requisite to the state of my body, such injunctions were unnecessary, as my composure at the prospect of death was only

* * This climate, though generally temperate, and seldom disturbed by violent storms in any season, is nevertheless occasionally visited by them, when they are severe in proportion to their rarity. During the extended empire of the Persians under Darius, Damascus was one of their strong fortified cities towards their western frontier. While Alexander was in Syria, the governor of this place sent him letters, treacherously offering to deliver up the city to him. The messenger was interrupted by Parmenio, who went himself afterwards, with an officer and some soldiers sent to him by Alexander, to the city. In conveying away from thence the wives and children of Darius, with the rich spoils thus treacherously obtained, there was so severe a frost, accompanied with a storm of wind and a heavy fall of snow, that the followers of this train made no scruple of opening the treasures, and clothing themselves in the royal robes of gold which were found there, without any one daring to prevent them.—ROOKE'S *Arrian*, vol. i. b. 3. c. 13. p. 395. 8vo.

occasionally disturbed by an anticipation of the pang that I should feel, if my existence terminated before I could secure the means of leaving some provision for those who would most severely suffer from my loss. In all other respects, such a prospect was wholly devoid of terrors ; although there are few circumstances that could render death more painful, (divested of the hopes or fears of another state of existence, in which the immediate scene or place of expiration could have no influence, since these must depend on the state of the mind and heart at that serious and impressive moment,) than that of its sudden visitation in a strange country, without one beloved object near to receive the last breathings of the departing spirit.

Wednesday, April 4. — I passed a quiet and refreshing night, and was so much better in the morning, as to give cheerful countenances to my attendants, by the visible improvement which they perceived. I was allowed to leave my bed about noon for a little while, and to partake of a very light food called Mash, a kind of gruel made of a dark red seed grown in Egypt, and usually given to sick persons as one of the lightest and simplest kinds of diet.

In the course of the day, the president of the convent had been endeavouring to persuade me that the age of miracles was not past, and that these divine agents of conversion were as necessary to be exhibited to mankind in the present day, as at any former period. In illustration of his position, he brought to me a small modern engraving, representing the present reigning Pope, Pius the Seventh, lifted up from the earth, in divine ecstacy, and there suspended in the air by divine power, while officiating at a high mass in his pontifical robes before the altar on the day of Pentecost, in the year 1811. It is not stated in the inscription at the foot of the engraving, at what particular place this pretended event took place; but Rome is to be inferred, as the Pope seldom, if ever, officiates in his sacred functions, except in that city.

Much as I had seen of religious imposture and religious credulity in Palestine, I had seen nothing so bare-faced and palpable as this. The act of engraving and publishing such a print in Europe at the present day, sufficiently evinces how far priestly impudence will go in attempting to pass off the grossest delusions on mankind, for it is impossible that the originators of such a publication could have been ignorant of the fraud : and the veneration with which it is received and preserved among those for whose edification it is professedly intended, is a strong proof of the credulity of ignorance, and establishes beyond a doubt, (if further proof were required,) that under the sanction of religion, it is as easy to make the larger portion of mankind believe in miracles now, as it ever was in any preceding age of the world; as the modern legends of nearly all the African and Asiatic world, from the straits of Gibraltar to the extreme limits of Chinese Tartary, abundantly testify.

The cause is in all cases the same — a state of general ignorance, and a slavish subjection of the mind to fetters that forbid the exercise of its reasoning and inquisitive faculties. In proportion as men are restrained from the free exercise of their reason, and the free expression of their opinions on any one particular subject, so they are liable to fall into the grossest absurdities by making authority their blind guide : while, in proportion as the laws and institutions of nations admit of that freedom of thought and expression, so will their inhabitants rise above the superstitious prejudices, and gross absurdities, still tenaciously adhered to in less free and less intelligent communities. The greater part of the eastern world is in the former state, and the greater part of the western in the latter ; and so truly does experience confirm the accuracy of theory in this respect, that it may be seen, even among the nations of the western world, that those in which the greatest religious and political freedom exist, as England and America, are proportionately superior in all that can enlighten and elevate mankind, to more enslaved countries, as Greece, Austria, and Italy.

If restrictions on the freedom of thought and expression in matters of science, such as condemned Galileo for the heresy of his astronomical discoveries, had been continued in full force from the earliest ages to the present time, either Newton would never have made his sublime discoveries, or would have pined in a dungeon for promulgating them ; and every other branch of science would have been stationary, or, perhaps, retrograding. They have advanced only because it has been permitted to all men freely to expose their errors, and to use the most unlimited scrutiny in pursuing their researches, and freedom in discussing their most difficult points. Were this rational process also allowed with regard to religion, law, and politics, the world would see more rapid advances towards purity and perfection in each than it has ever yet beheld in the same space of time. Political economy, a science scarcely known a century ago, has, by the mere force of unrestrained investigation, become already so well and so generally understood, in England and America particularly, that no gross delusion in that branch of knowledge could long maintain its ground if submitted to the true test of its merit — free and full discussion.

If religion, law, and politics were exposed to the same fiery ordeal, we should soon see the pure gold of each separated from the dross ; and it would be as difficult to practise delusions in these as in any other science. But while persecution, imprisonment, and death, are the rewards bestowed on those who venture with more zeal than others to scrutinise the dogmas of the one and the maxims of the other, it is not to be wondered at that the progress toward improvement should be so slow ; or that the three great subjects which must have engaged the earliest attention of mankind, and almost the only ones of which we have any very ancient records, should be far less advanced, and less generally understood, than a science which may be said to have been brought into notice but yesterday. If equal freedom of investigation and discussion were admitted in all, we should see them all advance with nearly equal steps, proportioned to their comprehensibility and their relative

importance to the interests and happiness of mankind ; but while profit and honour are the rewards offered to those who unite to maintain existing errors as they are, whether among the Brahmins of India, the legislators of Turkey, or the politicians of Rome ; and degradation, imprisonment, or death, await those who would either gradually deracinate, or lay at once “ the axe to the root of the tree,” which they conceive should be “ hewn down and cast into the fire,” it is in vain to hope for the same ardour in exposing, as will be exerted in defending, corrupt institutions, and the fruit they produce.

This, however, may at least be safely said, that every man who stretches forth his hand to interrupt, by any means, the free investigation of truth, must be hostile to the improvement of mankind, and should be regarded as an enemy of his species ; while, if no honours be reserved for those who exert themselves in that great cause, they should at least be shielded from those barbarous punishments now legally inflicted for daring to speak that truth, which religion, morals, and every dictate of justice and humanity alike command them to proclaim ; the very existence of such punishments, for the exercise of one of the highest virtues of our nature, being a blot and a stain upon the reputation of the nations in which they are sanctioned and inflicted.

Among the communications made to me by visitors during my confinement, I learnt from Mr. Chaboceau the following curious and illustrative fact, regarding the naked saint whom I had seen wandering in the bazār a few days since. Some persons in the confidence of the pasha having spoken to him on the subject of the violations of female chastity and of public decency committed by this venerated vagrant in the most sacred places and in open day, and pointed out the risk of having even his own females or their domestics seized for this man’s pleasures if he should accidentally meet them when under the influence of such a disposition, he was induced to send some of his officers to bring the idiot to the palace ; when, being persuaded, from his behaviour during examin-

ation, that there was as much of depravity as of imbecility in his character, he caused him to be whipped in his presence, and then banished him from the city.

This occurred just before the departure of the annual caravan of pilgrims for Mecca, which sets out from Damascus, as one of the gates to that holy city. The pasha of Damascus, for the time being, is always allowed the honour and the privilege of conducting this caravan in person, and from thence derives the title of Emir-el-Hadj, or the Prince of the Pilgrims; an honour which is seldom declined, for, besides the great reputation for sanctity which the holder of such a title ever after enjoys, he is considered by law as heir to the personal property of all those who die on their way to Mecca, during their residence in that city, or on their return home, a privilege that produces more wealth (from the great number of those who die, and the merchandise and beasts of burden taken with them on this double errand of devotion and gain) than the surplus revenues of his government at home.

As this privilege, however, confers no exemption from the common lot of humanity, the pasha himself fell a victim to the fatigues, bad climate, bad provisions, bad water, and other combined evils that often sweep off the youngest, the richest, and the most healthy in the way. The people of Damascus, on hearing this intelligence, accounted for his death in various modes; though, as unconditional predestinarians, it would seem idle to seek for any causes whatever beyond the limit of his days by superior destiny. Some of the more ignorant and superstitious among the devout dervishes and faqueers of the city contrived, however, to spread a very general impression, that the pasha lost his life as a punishment for having flogged and banished one of their sacred and privileged body, for so they considered the idiot in question; and this impression was so sedulously and so successfully cultivated, that by far the larger majority of the citizens adopted it as a religious truth; and, accordingly, the naked saint was called back to the city, where he was permitted to indulge his depraved propensities

without limit or restriction as to time, place, or condition; violating, it is even said, the sanctity of the Great Mosque, when women passed through it as a thoroughfare, and sometimes even when men were engaged there in prayer!

I cannot imagine a more effectual cure for those who labour under the malady of attachment to things as they are, and regard with jealousy, if not with horror, the very mention of innovations tending to root out all that is ancient and venerable in their customs and institutions, than that of a short residence among a people in which the blessed effects of such a disease (for so it may be truly called) are seen in full and constant operation;—where a reverence for ancient customs permits men to wander naked through the streets, and commit the most revolting acts of violence and indecency; and where a horror of innovation induced the priests and leaders of the army to murder their sovereign (Selim, at Constantinople), because he desired to give strength to his empire by the introduction of European discipline among his forces, and to diffuse information among his people by means of a printing press established in his capital. These are the necessary results of the principle of hostility to improvement among the lower orders, when pushed to its limits; and for evils not much inferior in wickedness and atrocity to these, are the enemies of reform justly responsible, in every country in which they exert their influence to oppose its progress.

In conversation with the friars of the convent, I learnt that they had a small tea tree in their garden, which had once produced excellent tea. proving, that, with proper cultivation, the soil and climate of Damascus were suited to the cultivation of that valuable plant. It had been lately neglected, however, and was now too old to produce leaves fit for use: I was desirous of learning how, by whom, and when it had been first brought here; but no one was able to answer any enquiries on these heads. The tobacco plant is also cultivated in the same garden, and furnishes all the

members of the convent with snuff, which they make for themselves, and consume in abundant quantities.

The oldest friar among them has been in Damascus, and attached to the convent, upwards of twenty-five years. There are only eight in number at present, and these are all Spaniards: the president, a fat, jolly, bon-vivant, being a native of Alicant, and the rest chiefly from other large cities of Spain. All of them study Arabic under teachers of the country, and most of them speak it tolerably, though their pronunciation is defective, from commencing the study late in life, and rarely using it as a language of ordinary conversation. They complain of the frequent and arbitrary exactions of the Turks, and say, that in consequence of this, they have been compelled to draw largely from the convent of Jerusalem, to which they are therefore much in debt. What they cannot otherwise raise for the payment of these exactions they sometimes succeed in borrowing from the most wealthy among their Christian communicants, to whom they pay from 13 to 15 per cent. per annum interest; though they can never raise more on a loan than the amount of houses, church plate, and other property bequeathed or given to the convent will cover as a security; and which are therefore mortgaged, or otherwise placed at the disposal of the lenders, as circumstances may require.

We heard to-day that the soldiers of the city, though few in number, had begun to be troublesome to the government and impertinent to the people, as there was yet no certain information as to the person who would be appointed from Constantinople to succeed to the vacant pashalick; and public affairs were, therefore, in a most unsettled state. It was said that there had already been several instances of their entering the houses of Christians and demanding *aqua vitæ*; that they had also grossly insulted the Christian women whom they met with in their dwellings; and committed many other irregularities. The friars thought of shutting up the convent to secure themselves from such intrusive

visitors ; and, fortunately, every avenue to the establishment is well provided with strong doors, iron bolts, and locks in abundance.

In conversation with some of the resident merchants of the town, I learnt it was a common opinion here, that the Jews possessed the greatest secret influence at Damascus, from their wealth ; that the Christians were the leading movers of the secret springs of government at Aleppo ; and that the Turks enjoyed the fullest authority at Jerusalem, from their having mostly sojourners and foreigners in the city, who submitted more quietly to their despotism, knowing that it would be only for a season.

As a specimen of the tendency to exaggeration, so common to all classes of people in the East, I may mention that several Arab Christians of respectability affirmed to me, as a truth which they themselves believed, that at a village called Sydoniaia, or Sydonÿa, about a short day's journey to the northward of Damascus, there were " thallatha mecah oua sitte oua sitteen Dcere, koolloo " kharaab," or " 366 convents, all ruined and destroyed." The instances are innumerable in which this spirit of exaggeration,—the necessary consequence of general ignorance, — deceives even those who thus unintentionally mislead others. A little reflection would persuade any man, who thought on what he was about to utter, that such a number of convents in one village was highly improbable, and this, repeated or prolonged, would satisfy him that it could not be true ; but, among a people who are as indolent as they are ignorant, and have neither the requisite knowledge to judge of probabilities, nor the requisite regard to truth to exercise any care in ascertaining the accuracy of what they say, more than half of what escapes, without intention to deceive, is positively false, and the slightest motive to misrepresentation is indulged without scruple.

In the course of the day, some medals and coins were brought to me for inspection by a Christian priest, a Syrian Arab by birth, but educated for the priesthood at Rome, where he had acquired a

taste for antiques. Among them were several good silver coins of the Ptolemies, many silver and copper ones of little value, and an English seal with a lion crest cut on cornelian*, which the possessor fondly imagined to be a genuine piece of antiquity! The best of the collection was a gold coin, weighing an ounce and a drachm, the metal of great fineness, and the coin as thick as an English copper penny-piece, of the year 1810. On one side was a fine female head of Arsinoë, with the tiara, and a cloth descending behind, uniting the costume of Greece and Egypt, and therefore highly appropriate to the subject. On the reverse, was a double cornucopia, with ears of wheat rising out of the horns, and clusters of grapes hanging over the sides of them. Around this side of it was the inscription, in fair characters, —

ΑΡΣΙΝΟΗΣ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ

with this device ☿ at the foot, between the points of the horns of plenty. Two hundred piastres, or about 10*l.* sterling, was the price demanded for this, and it would have been well worth that sum to a collector, being in a very high state of preservation, the relief bold, and every line of the impression perfect; the appearance of the coin being more like one fresh from the mint than one of such undoubted antiquity. Having, however, predetermined to resist, as far as possible, every temptation of this or any other nature that might be attended with subsequent inconvenience or regret, I did not yield to the pressing importunities of the cognoscenti, who were astonished at my permitting such an opportunity of an excellent bargain to escape.

At the distance of a day's journey from Damascus, in a north-east direction, is a place called Mullool, inhabited by Syrian Christians, where there are said to be innumerable grottoes of

* The cassidonie, or alabaster, is said to have been found about Thebes in Egypt, and Damascus in Syria. (*Plin. Nat. Hist.* l. 36. c. 8.) This would have been a fine material for statues and engraved stones; but none of these are now known here.

various sizes, hewn out of the rocks, and many of them ornamented.

At Ain-el-Feejy, which is six hours' journey to the north-west of Damascus, are the remains of some ancient buildings, and the commencement of an aqueduct, which is said to leave traces of continued fragments all the way from thence to Palmyra, or Tadmor, in the desert. These communications were made to me by persons professing to be well acquainted with the truth of them ; but such authorities must always be considered as inferior to ocular inspection.

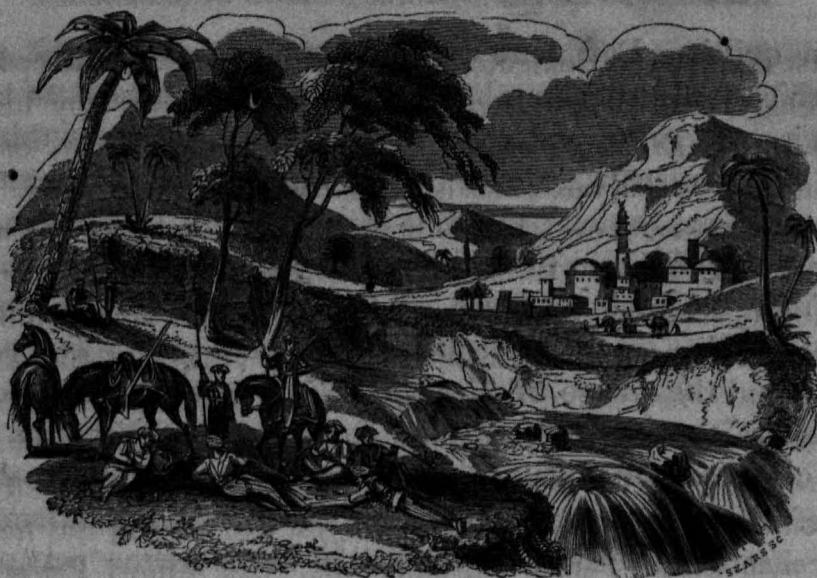
The inhabitants of Damascus, of all ranks and classes, are exceedingly polite in their outward behaviour towards each other ; and where religious distinctions do not interfere, may be said to be civil, and even hospitable, to strangers ; though there is no part of the Turkish dominions, probably, where an European, in the costume of his country, would be more liable to insult and interruption. The language, which is Arabic, with some local peculiarities of expression and pronunciation, abounds with lofty epithets and extravagant metaphor ; and the most hyperbolical compliments are passed between persons even of inferior rank, and on the most ordinary occasions. Whether the habit of hearing it spoken, and endeavouring to acquire its peculiarities, had made these appear less harsh to me than at first, I know not ; but it appeared to me to be much softer and more freed from the deep guttural sounds which characterise this tongue, than the same language spoken after the manner in use at Cairo ; though here the Arabic of Egypt is considered to be much purer than that of Syria. Besides the more intricate differences in idiom and phraseology, the pronunciation of the same word is very different in Damascus and Cairo ; and many of the names of the commonest articles in daily use are totally different, as, for instance, bread, which in Egypt is called *eash*, and in Syria *khobs*, with a hundred equally striking differences that might be collected by one taking the pains to observe and compare them.

In making enquiries, even into the present state of Damascus, a traveller must expect to find great obstacles to the acquisition of accurate information. Under so uncertain and irregular a government there are few records of any description preserved, and such few as may be kept, extend over a brief period only, and even then are not accessible, except to persons in office. A Turk would be unable to comprehend the motive of an enquirer who should desire to see an account of the exports and imports of the city, the amount of the revenue or disbursements of the state, or an estimate of the several classes of the population. He could form no idea of the utility of any branch of statistical information for the purposes of general science; and to talk to him of the value of these facts, as illustrations of political economy, would be to speak of a study quite unknown to him, and one that would no doubt appear more worthless, even if explained to him, than alchymy, astrology, or magic. The only purpose that he would think it probable such enquiries were designed to answer would be that of informing an enemy, whose cupidity might be excited by an acquaintance with the wealth of the country, and his means of invasion regulated by a knowledge of its strength. No registers of births, circumcisions, marriages, or deaths, are kept, and no data can, therefore, be acquired for judging of the state of the population. Every successive governor seems wholly engrossed by the desire of enriching his coffers, and securing a large fortune before he is compelled to give place to another, which he does by temporary expedients, utterly regardless of the future; and this feeling of living for the present only necessarily leads to that of living for self alone, so that the result is a general diffusion of improvidence and selfishness combined, which manifests itself in the conduct of all classes, from the highest to the lowest, produces the most benumbing effect on all the best feelings of the heart, and forms one the greatest obstacles that could be created to social happiness and progressive improvement.

This city of Damascus was built, peopled, and numbered among

the first civilized settlements of the world, soon after the epoch of the deluge, the earliest period of which we possess any history, and at least 3000 years before London existed as a city, or even England was known but as an island inhabited by barbarians. The distance between these cities is now, however, immense ; London being as much above Damascus in whatever can indicate superior knowledge, superior comfort, and all that can endear and embellish life, as Damascus is to the meanest kraal or village of the African Hottentots. Yet the natural situation of the latter has greater advantages than that of the former ; its climate, soil, and water are favourable to the richest productions of the earth ; and even in a commercial point of view, its central situation in the heart of Syria, with India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Arabia, all accessible by land, and the whole range of the Mediterranean open to any of the ports within less than a hundred miles on the coast, would be a source of great wealth to an active and enterprising people. What, then, has been the leading causes of the immense difference between the wealth and intelligence of London and those of Damascus ? is a question that naturally forces itself on an enquiring mind : and the answer necessarily is — “ Education and Freedom,” the two main springs of good government, of which it may be truly said, as Pope has done of self-love and social happiness ;—

Man but for this no knowledge could attain,
And but for that all knowledge would be vain ;
Instruction points the way to true renown,
But Liberty must win and wear the crown.
The untutored savage may be just and brave,
The deeply learn'd, a despot or a slave ;
But Freedom and Instruction, both combined
At once to nerve the heart and raise the mind,
Will teach the Tyrant, trembling on his throne,
This world was made for many, not for one,
And purge the earth, till all be wise and free,
As man still pants, and fondly hopes, to be.



CHAP. XIX.

JOURNEY FROM DAMASCUS, ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS, TO SIDON, ON THE SEA COAST.

THURSDAY, April 6, 1816. — I was still so weak, that it required some exertion for me to leave my bed, and dress. As Dr. Cha-boçeau was of opinion that my getting to the sea air upon the coast would contribute more to my recovery than any thing else, I was determined to lose no time in accomplishing it by easy journies, and accordingly prepared for departure. A mule driver had been engaged at five piastres per day, and a servant to accompany me as far as Seyda, at two piastres per day. The clothes which had been lent me were returned to their owner, and others purchased for the journey, and my horse had been well fed, reposed, and newly caparisoned. I paid to my medical friend, a Spanish doubloon in gold, to the convent ten Spanish dollars, and to the servants five, so that all our arrangements being completed, we mounted about 10 o'clock.

In quitting Damascus we came out westerly by the paved road which leads to Salheyah, and had as much reason as before to admire the gaiety and cheerful appearance of every thing we saw. The gardens were even more beautiful, as the verdure of the ground was fresher; the fruit trees were full in blossom, and every shrub had begun to send forth its young buds of green.

From Salheyah we ascended the hill which presses close on its western edge, by a well-frequented but steep road. The pass of Roboeh and the village of Mezc near it, where the waters of the Barrādy are thought to form the four rivers of Paradise, were below us on our left; while, from the summit of the hill itself, the view of all before us, on turning towards the plain of Damascus, was enchantingly beautiful. We halted in the narrow pass, which appears to have been cut through the rock near an open tomb of some Mohammedan saint on the top, to enjoy the extensive and delightful prospect; and, even after a full hour's stay there, we turned from it with regret.

From hence we went down over the N.W. side of the hill, going on a rugged road of limestone rock; and as a striking contrast to the verdant spring which we had just quitted in the plain below, all the mountains that intercepted the horizon like an amphitheatre, on every side were covered from the summit to the base with snow. It was nearly noon when we reached the small village of Dummar, peopled by Mohammedans, and seated on the N.E. of the Barrādy, at a short distance only from its banks. The view of the valley through which this stream runs from hence, south-easterly to Roboeh, presents a romantic picture, in its high cliffs on either side, and narrow green vale between, filled with verdure, trees, and water.

From Dummar we ascended gradually for nearly three hours in a N.W. direction, passing over a bare tract of land, in which were only a few spots cultivated with corn; and throughout all our way across it, we met not a single passenger. About three o'clock we turned down to the S.W., through a valley of considerable

depth, but narrow. On our right we had lofty and rugged hills of lime rock, and on our left perpendicular cliffs of puddingstone, with many detached masses of the same scattered at their feet. The whole of the space between the enclosing hills, about a mile in breadth, was thickly covered with vines.

At four we reached Beseemia, a small village in a most romantic situation, hemmed in by overhanging cliffs and rugged hills, with grottoes and large masses of severed rock all around; while the stream of the Barrādy, as broad and rapid as the Jordan at its fall, rushes through a thick and winding grove of poplars, watering fields, and meadows, and gardens in its way.

We followed from hence the course of the stream towards its source, going north-westerly for about an hour along its eastern bank, and I do not remember ever to have passed over a more delightful road, or one which presented so continued a series of romantic views as this.

It was about five o'clock when we reached the village of Feejy, so called from the river of that name which rises near it. We were furnished with a beurdee, or a passport, from the governor of Damascus to the sheikh, and hoped to have lodged at his village for the night. He professed his willingness to receive and entertain us, but declared that in all the village sufficient corn for our two animals could not be purchased at any price. We remonstrated and disputed for some time, but in vain, and were at last compelled to push on for another village a short distance off.

The inhabitants of Feejy, to the number perhaps of 500, are all Mohammedan. We found the men well dressed, and apparently much at their ease, and the females, both old and young, were all employed in spinning cotton at a wheel before their doors.

In about five minutes after our quitting the village, and going in a westerly direction, we came to the source of the waters called Ain-el-Feejy, and alighted there for a moment to observe it. The spring appears to issue from beneath an old arch, the roof or

highest part of which is but a few inches clear of the surface of the stream. The quantity discharged from this is considerable, and the water is of the purest transparency notwithstanding its being extremely agitated, as well as of the most excellent taste.

Immediately over the arch from out of which this large body of water springs, are the remains of an ancient building ; and below by the side of the stream, the walls of another very similar one, both thought to have been temples. The lower one is about fifteen paces square within, consisting only of one apartment. It was entered by a gateway extending all the breadth of its front, excepting only the portals, which rise about two-thirds the height of the whole, and there terminate in a cornice exactly like the gates of the Egyptian temples. The stones of the building are very large, and the masonry solid and well executed, though certainly unlike Roman work. The gateway opens toward the south, and immediately opposite to it on entering, or in the centre of the interior face of the northern wall, is an oblong upright niche, as if for the reception of a statue. The spring of an arch is begun from the inner moulding, which runs round the whole of the interior on a level with the top of the portals of the gateway, and three layers of large stones still remain above it ; but it appears from what remains never to have been wholly arched over.

The upper building, which is right above the arch from whence the water issues, is somewhat less than the lower one, being perhaps about twenty feet square, and of one apartment only. Here the portals of the gateway are carried up the whole of the height of the building ; and on each side of the gateway, on the outer front, is a shallow square pilaster without a capital of any kind. It fronts the south, like the lower one, and has a still broader recess in the inner face of its northern wall, over which the rocky cliff above literally hangs. The base of the upper building is just on a level with the top of the lower one, which is distant from it about fifteen paces on the west. Between them both, and in the cliff beside the arch from whence the spring issues,

is a concave recess of excellent masonry, about fifteen feet high, and a proportionate breadth and depth, as if intended for a colossal statue of the river god. The stones are all large and of a coarse yellowish marble, and the workmanship is solid and good throughout; but the style is unlike Roman, and the general appearance very ancient.

The river Barrādy runs close by here to the eastward, between high and rocky hills, the strata of which lie in every direction, from nearly horizontal to quite perpendicular. The waters of the Ain-el-Feejy, which are thought to be of purer quality, rush down here to the southward and join those of the Barrādy at a few paces only from its own source, when they both run together through the romantic bed we had seen at intervals on our way, until they reach the pass at Roboeh, where they divide into what are called the four rivers of Paradise. We had seen nothing of the aqueduct supposed to have conveyed these waters to Palmyra, nor had received any information which might help us to understand whether these were the Abāna and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, which Naaman the Syrian thought better than all the waters of Israel, or not. (2 Kings v. 12.) On leaving Ain-el-Feejy, we followed the northern bank of the Barrādy to the westward, through an agreeable valley, and came in about an hour to Deer-el-Mukarrin, a small Muslim village, where all the people were set in uproar by our demand of corn, of which they possessed none. We continued our way, therefore, on the same course, and in half an hour reached El-Ekfaire-el-Feite, a similar village, and, like all those we had yet passed, on the northern bank of the stream, at a little distance from the water. We alighted here, as it was now past sunset, and though we had still to contend about our corn, we obtained at last shelter and food in a house better built and cleaner than usual, with a chimney in the corner and other conveniences. The females here were all fair, ruddy, and handsome, wearing a white cloth over the head and shoulders, with a black border and tassels hanging from the temples. They were un-

veiled, and wore each an open blue gown, with a scarlet apron descending from the waist to the feet in front, narrow and tightly girt with broad figured tape, looking altogether more interesting than the women of the country generally do.

Friday, April 7, 1816. — I felt almost unable to rise from my carpet, from weakness and fever: 'there was no alternative, however, but to proceed. We therefore took a breakfast of sour milk or lebben, and left El Ekfaire an hour after sunrise. Crossing the Barrādy just below this, we went up the hill to the southward, and came in half an hour to a ruined town called Deer Kanoon, where we observed some small pedestals and variegated marble shafts, large hewn stones, and broken pottery, probably the remains of some Christian settlement and church. From hence we saw to the N.W., about a mile distant, a large village called El Husseneey, on the southern bank of the stream, and standing on the side of a steep rocky mountain. An opening in the hills presented itself to the north of this, through which the Barrādy came, and its source was said to be near a village called Zebedery, three hours north of this.

Our road now became uninteresting in the extreme, constantly ascending over bare limestone mountains in a W.S.W. direction till we came to the snow. The weather was still cold, and the wind high. We then turned down S.W. for near two hours through a broad and irregular valley, in which were the ruins of a town called Demess. This brought us to Wādi Mese noon, a narrow valley between two bare ranges of limestone and puddingstone rock, which we ascended in a westerly direction for about an hour, and then alighted at the spring of Mesenoon, which forms the stream of the valley. It goes only as far as Demess, and then loses itself in the earth. Near this are the remains of a large building, perhaps fifty feet square, with a doorway at the eastern, and the foundations of a wall before the western end. The stones are large and well hewn, but the whole is so destroyed

that nothing but a few feet of the base of the walls remain. There are no fragments by which its order can be determined, nor any sculpture visible; though it might have been, like those at Ain-el-Feejy, a temple to the god of the spring near which it stands. It is about thirty paces east of the spring. We had opened to our view from hence in a S.S.W. direction, distant less than a mile, a high and rugged mountain, now entirely covered with snow, called Jebel Annter. The ruin is called Khan-el-Mesenoon, from its being, perhaps, in the public road; it has no resemblance, however, to such a building.

We quitted this spot about eleven, and ascended in a W.S.W. direction, over deep snow, the hills which pressed on each side of us being sheeted over with unbroken snow, as if it had lain there for ages. In our way we met a small caravan of mules from Seyda, bearing chiefly the baggage of some Muggrebins, who accompanied it on their way to Damascus for the ensuing pilgrimage. Three or four female slaves of a jet black, but pretty features, rode on asses, and each had a large piece of snow in her hand, apparently to eat it, as if a delicacy. The male servants were on foot without shoes, and seemed to suffer dreadfully. We continually ascended for more than three hours, our progress being very slow, from the state of the road, our course from W. to W.S.W., when we gained the summit of the range of mountains we were now crossing, and opened a view of the Jebel-el-Druse to the N.W. of us. This range commences with the Jebel-el-Sheikh to the S.W., and ends in the Jebel Zebedeiny to the N.E., including a distance of from thirty to forty miles. It is called collectively Jebel-el-Wast by the Arabs, and is, apparently, the Anti-Libanus of the ancients. It is of limestone, generally, throughout.

About an hour after our leaving the spring at Mesenoon, we saw a small portion of deep red soil, with some scattered fragments of the black porous stone found in the Haurān and near Tiberias. It was near a pass with cliffs on each side, as if the mountain had been forcibly torn asunder.

From the summit of Jebel-el-Wast we turned down a gentle slope to the S.W., having the high Jebel-el-Sheikh, a pure sheet of white, in sight to the southward. In an hour we reached a circular lake, full of clear unfrozen water, about 150 yards in diameter, and apparently once banked round with masonry. Just above it to the N.W. is a ruined village, said to be very old, and called Keneisy, which name the lake also bears. We halted here to give our animals a moment's repose after their fatiguing passage over the mountain, and took ourselves some hasty refreshment. While here, I was somewhat surprised by the voice of the cuckoo, loud, distinct, and near, at the time that the ground was every where covered with deep snow. The Arabs called it Teer-el-Yaccoub, or the bird of Jacob, from supposing him to utter that name, the Arabic pronunciation of which the sound indeed closely resembles.

We left this spot about three, and descended in nearly a southerly direction over a barren and rocky tract, till we came in about an hour to the foot of the hill, into a plain cultivated with olives, corn, and vines, and called Wādi Ityne. We went through this in a S.W. direction, and came in another hour to the town of Kufr-el-Kook, built on the summit and sides of a round and gentle eminence, and inhabited by about 3000 Druses and Christians, under the government of a chief of the former, called Emir Mansoor. At the entrance of this town is a circular reservoir for water, banked round by a quay of masonry, and descended to by steps; and at the southern end of it, a few feet from the side, is a doric column still erect, with the capital and about a foot of the shaft above water. It seems as if originally placed there for a standard of measure. In the town itself are seen some vestiges of columns; and from the architrave of an ancient doorway, now used as the postern of a court-gate, on the left of the public road, and having sockets for the reception of the pivots of a folding-door, as if of stone, I copied the following:—

ΕΡΟΥC/T
 ΒΕΛΙΑΒΟCCX
 ΧΥΜΟΥΕΥΙΣΑ . . .
 ΜΕΝ . . ΟCΕΠΟΗCΕΝ.

From hence we ascended very gently in the same direction, through fine corn and vine lands, and in half an hour passed on the left, about a mile off, the town of Aihah. It is seated on the side of the mountain, and is perhaps a mile in length from north to south. Nearly in the centre of it rises a tall column apparently fifty feet in height, and of proportionate diameter. It is said to be the only one now left of a large edifice, which from the description given of it, I should conceive to be an ancient temple. * It is said to be of nearly a square form, and built of immense stones, in the jointures of which not a needle could be made to enter; and that within the walls, now much ruined, are a considerable number of fallen columns, in size and design similar to the one now standing. We continued our way, as night was approaching, and at sunset came to the foot of the hill on which the town of Rasheyah is built.

The approach to this place resembles that to the town of Assalt, from the east, as it is seated on the side of a steep round hill, the houses rising in stages one above another, and above the whole is a large castle nearly on the brow of the hill. The town is thought to contain about 800 houses and from 4 to 5,000 inhabitants, one half of whom are Druses and the other half Christians, and the appearance of the numbers in the streets justified such an estimate. We ascended to the very summit, over steep and winding streets, and were lodged in the house of our mule driver, a Christian of the Greek communion, where we were accommodated to the best of their means.

Saturday, April 8, 1816. — As it was a festival of the Greeks, there was no moving to day before the morning service was ended, and weak and ill as I was, no excuse could save me from attending it in person. My servant, who was of the Catholic communion,

professed for the time being that of the Greek, to be on better terms with our guide; while at the same time that he piqued himself on his cunning and success, he sought every opportunity, when he addressed me, to abuse both the faith itself and the votaries of it. In this small place were two Greek churches and one Syrian one, but no mosques, as the Druses perform their service in great secrecy at home. The Greek church we visited was near the centre of the town, tolerably large and well built, and furnished with a number of gaudy pictures and lamps. There were not less, I should conceive, than 500 persons of both sexes attending the service, which was performed as usual with much ceremony, perfumes, and noise: and some parts of it in a way that seemed any thing but solemn and devout. From the fatigue of standing, and the faint heat of the crowd, I was obliged to quit the church in about half an hour, and return to the house. In passing the tower I had an opportunity of perceiving that it was very large, but altogether of Mohammedan structure. It is founded on a rock which has been hewn into wall in several places, and from its elevation completely commands every part of the town. It is the present residence of the Druse governor, Emir Effendi, and his immediate dependants.

The Druses here are said not to fast, though those in the mountains and plains of the Haurān rigidly observe the Ramadān. The women, Christian as well as Druse, all wear the horn upon the forehead. The young females generally put it on at the age of puberty, made of stiff paper or other cheap materials, and on the day of marriage one of silver is usually presented by the husband to the wife. It is a popular belief, among both Mohammedans, Christians, and all the other sects here, that the Druses pay adoration to the emblems of generation, which are enclosed in a small portable sanctuary, like the lingam and yoni of the Hindoos. It has been thought by some that this horn was originally worn in honor of the deity that presides over the secrets of the marriage bed; and as the history and tenets of the Druse religion are altoge-

ther so mysterious and obscure, it is by no means improbable. The shape of this emblem beneath the muslin veil with which it is always covered, might even suggest the origin here popularly ascribed to the usage of wearing it.

The town of Rasheyah, though standing itself on the point of a round hill, is seated at the foot of the great snowy mountain called Jebel-el-Telj and Jebel-el-Sheikh, the highest part of the mountain bearing from S.E. to S.W. and the base not a mile off. This mountain may be said to have its base on a range of high hills, and rising itself to a considerable height above them, its elevation from the sea is perhaps from 12,000 to 15,000 feet; its summit is all the year covered with snow, and at this moment it was sheeted over from top to bottom, the snow extending itself even to the town. Pococke has considered this mountain to be the Hermon most frequently referred to in the Scriptures, as the boundary of the promised land to the northward. His reasons are most satisfactory, and his explanation of the allusion to the dew of Hermon in the Psalms of David ingenious. It is frequently coupled with Lebanon, and spoken of in a way that can scarcely apply to the inferior Hermon near Mount Tabor. Solomon sings to his mistress, "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards." Cant. iv. 8. I could not find the names still remaining, but wolves and other wild beasts are said to exist here, and leopards are reported to be common.

All the women and children that we saw here were pretty, and some even beautiful, their complexions fair, lips red, eyes black and penetrating, and none of their faces disfigured either with stains or uncouth ornaments of any kind.

About nine o'clock we quitted Rasheyah in a thick mist that enveloped all the hill, and went down to the westward into a deep valley called Wādi Ityne. This has for its eastern boundary the range of hills which still run southward, growing lower and

lower, like an extended point, from the great Jebel-el-Sheikh, and all called Jebel-el-Wast as far as Banias. Its western boundary is a range of lower hills called Jebel Arbel, going from about a day's journey south of this to near Bälbeck. The valley between these appears here to be about two miles wide, of unequal level, and well cultivated throughout. To the westward of Jebel Arbel we saw the lofty range of Libanus extending nearly north and south along the coast, and now covered with snow. It is generally called Jebel-el-Druse, from being inhabited chiefly by that people, but its old name of Lebanon is still familiar among the peasants. Between the range of Jebel Arbel on the east, and Jebel-el-Druse on the west, is the valley called the Bukhaah, and thought by Maundrel to be the plain of Aven mentioned with Damascus by the prophet Amos ; c. i. v. 5. It varies in breadth from five to ten miles, growing wider as it goes to the northward, from the angle formed between the direction of the ranges of hills which enclose it ; Libanus following the coast nearly north and south, and Arbel and Anti-Libanus taking a more easterly turn. In length it extends from a day's journey south of this to Bälbeck, till it loses itself in the plain of Homs and Hamah, mentioned also by Amos, c. vi. v. 2., and called Hamath the Great.

In half an hour after leaving Rasheyah, we passed a small village on our right called Akeby, peopled by Druses and Christians in equal numbers ; in another half hour, we passed on the left the village of Beit Caefy ; and in about the same space of time, another on our right called Beit Lyah, all small, and all peopled by Druses and Christians, who appear to live together here in great harmony.

Our course had been nearly S. W., which direction we continued to follow, with some trifling variations, and a little before noon we came to a stream, where we halted for a moment to water our horses. The rain was violent, and sometimes mixed with hail, which fell with great force, as the wind blew a perfect tempest. The stream comes down here from the westward through a narrow pass,

by high steep cliffs; and its spring, which is just above a small village called Kanāby, about an hour distant, on the side of the hill to the west, is called Nubbe Suffa. At the spring itself are said to be columns, and other vestiges, of a large ruined building; — probably a temple to the river god, as that custom seems to have prevailed much in Syria. It was at this stream that we first noticed the black porous stone which is found at the Lake of Tiberias, all through the valley of Jordan, and in the plains of the Haurān. It was here seen only sparingly, scattered among masses of lime-stone rock, and small siliceous stones, but it increased in quantity as we advanced to the southward.

It was about noon when we quitted this stream, and continuing our way in the direction of the valley to the S. W., in less than an hour we came opposite to a large village called Siffeeny, which we passed about two miles on our left. It is seated on a hill, enjoys a fine situation, is apparently well built, and is peopled by Druses and Christians. In half an hour from hence we passed by Eckfaire, a smaller village; and in less than that time, beyond it, were opposite to Mimiss, a much larger one; both about a mile or two on our left, and both peopled by Druses and Christians.

It was, perhaps, an hour from this, when we reached the source of a river called Nahr-el-Hheazbey. It rises in the bottom of the valley, and forms at once a large bason of beautifully clear water. Being confined by a dam or wall, rising in receding stages, like a flight of very steep and narrow steps, it overflows, and falls in a wide sheet over this sloping and unequal surface, so as to form a pretty cascade. At the distance of a few yards only below the source, it has a two arched bridge thrown over it, and is there rapid in its course. The town of Hheazbey, which gives name to this stream, is just above it on a hill to the east. It is of a considerable size, and in it is seen the minaret of a mosque, built by the Mohammedans when there were a portion of Moslems among the population. It is now, however, deserted, as the inhabitants are wholly Druses and Christians.

In half an hour from hence, following nearly the course of the stream, we passed close to a ruined khan, called Khan-el-Hheazbey, at which there is a public bazār, held every Tuesday, and visited by people of the surrounding country, from Damascus to Nazareth.

A few minutes beyond this, or, as my guide measured the distance, in about the time that one might smoke a half-filled pipe of tobacco, we saw on the left a small village, called Abu Kummhe, or the Father of Corn, though not having either the reputation or the appearance of producing more grain than the neighbouring towns. In half an hour from this, while riding on the brow of the western range of hills which hemmed in this valley, we saw, at the foot of the eastern range, the small village of Ferdeese, about three miles distant, seated in the most beautiful hollow that could be seen, and surrounded by waving fields of green, and thickly planted vines and olives. It was somewhat less than an hour from hence, that we saw, on the right of our road, the large village of Kou Kubba, standing high on the brow of the western hills; and just before sun-set we came to a round isolated hill, in form resembling the Mount of Tabor, in the Plain of Esdraelon, but inferior in size to that mountain. It was exceedingly steep, and its sides were covered with Sindian trees, of which we saw none in any other part of the road.

The valley of Wādi Ityne, through which we had come from Rasheyah to this place, has a general direction of N. N. E. and S. S. W., and varies in its breadth from two to three miles. Its level is often interrupted by small hillocks; but it is well cultivated throughout with corn, vines, and olives, and is full of villages peopled wholly by Druses and Christians in nearly equal numbers. The valley ends here by the meeting of the two ranges of hills together.

We ascended on the west side of this round mount, covered with trees, and soon after sun-set reached the town of Hibl, where we halted at the khan appropriated to public use.

As I passed for a Turk from Damascus, a good supper, firewood, and corn for our animals, were all brought at my command, and the most respectful attentions were paid us by the sheikh who furnished all these. I thought it singular that this was the first place at which we had seen coffee since leaving Damascus, an article so universally in use among the Arabs of all classes, that I hardly ever remember to have made two halts in succession without drinking it, or having it prepared and offered to me at least. The night was really dreadful, and our situation being an elevated one, the storms of wind and rain and hail that blew shook the house, and sometimes threatened to unroof it.

Sunday, April 9th, 1816.—The storm still reigned at day-light, and the thermometer in the open air stood at 36°. We were detained for nearly three hours by our guide's attendance on the morning service of the church, and left the town about nine o'clock. In size it is scarcely inferior to Rasheyah, and it is seated, like it, on the summit of a high round hill. From the door of the khan in which we lodged, we saw to the southward the extensive valley of the Jordan, which begins from here under the name of Wādi Sezibān, or Stezibān, and continues all the way to be so called, even to the Dead Sea, though the part south of the Lake of Tiberias is more frequently called El Ghore. We could see from hence, distinctly, the Lake Samochinites, now called Bahr-el-Houly, bearing about S.S.W., and distant, perhaps, 15 miles, seeming but little inferior to the Bahr-el-Tabareehah, Lake of Tiberias, in extent.

We descended from Hibl on the west side of the hill, and entered the Wādi Stezibān. We continued on a southerly course, passing, in about an hour, the village of Gheryeby, and in half an hour more, that of Meary, both on the left of the road. They are small, and peopled only by Christians, the Druses ending at Hibl, or extending no further southward than that town.

We came now into an uninteresting country; the soil was very

scanty, and cultivation scarcely seen. The black porous stone became now the basis of the plain, and lay scattered in detached masses and short ridges on its surface. A few trees, like the English ash, were also seen, but neither vines, olives, nor corn; and the tract seemed to be possessed by Arabs, as we passed several clusters of tents pitched without that regard to order usually seen, and apparently very mean and poor. They were said to belong to the Turcomāns, a race of people who come from the northern parts of Syria, about Aleppo, and elsewhere; who speak Turkish and Arabic equally well, as they live on the frontiers of the two languages; and who come down into the south of Syria to profit by the early spring. They have here a worse character than the true Arab Bedouins, though that may be from their being thought intruders, or strangers, among them.

We descended gradually over this inclined sloping plane, and about noon passed a small village called El Ghadjar, which we left at least a mile on our right. It is seen at a great distance off, from its standing on a rising mound; and from its having, amidst its humble dwellings, a large sheikh's tomb, which is white-washed in the usual way, and makes a conspicuous figure. This village is inhabited solely by a people called Nesseary, whose religion seems very little understood by their neighbours, as they are said, by some, to worship the sun, and by others, to adore the pudenda muliebris. The same stories are related of them as of the Ismaylees, namely, that at their yearly feast they all meet together, persons of both sexes, old and young, and that the room being darkened, promiscuous intercourse takes place, without regard to age or kindred. They have, however, the reputation of being honest and friendly to both Christians and Moslems.

We now crossed the river Hieazbey, which we had kept in sight almost from its source to this place, where it is as broad, as deep, and as rapid as the Jordan near Jericho; and going easterly for about an hour, we came in sight of a large ruined castle on a hill to the eastward of us, called Khallet-el-Banias. We met here a

caravan of at least fifty mules, all laden with myrtle for the supply of families who consume it in strewing with this plant the graves of their deceased friends in the cemeteries of Damascus ; and it was said, that one so charged generally left this neighbourhood for that city every month ; besides which, many others went from different parts of the country in which myrtle grew. The lading of each mule was estimated to be worth fifty piastres, so that those affectionate duties to the dead must be expensive to the poorer classes.

Crossing a small stream which descended from the N. E., called Nahr-el-Banias, and going up over a rising ground in nearly that direction on the eastern side of the stream, we soon came to the entrance of the town itself.

The name of Jebel-el-Wast, which is applied to the Anti-Libanus of the ancients, extends even to the southward of Jebel-el-Sheikh as far as Banias. From thence, southerly, to the eastern shore of the Lake of Tiberias, is an even range of hill, called Jebel-Jowalān, which, with the portion of Jebel-el-Wast from Hibl thus far, forms the eastern boundary of the Wādi Stezibān. The western boundary, which is also a range of hills of no considerable height or marked form, is called Jebel Jowaleen.* The valley itself extends, perhaps, 30 miles, from its commencement at Hibl to its interruption at the north end of the Lake of Tiberias, where the water occupies all the breadth of the plain. To the northward of the Bahr-el-Houly it varies in breadth from five to ten miles, and to the southward of Banias it seems well cultivated throughout.

On entering Banias we saw two grey granite shafts, each in one piece, with several scattered pedestals, and large blocks of stone ; and soon afterwards we passed over a bridge, the lower part of which seemed of Roman work ; but the upper part of the arch and the pavement were modern repairs. A full and rapid stream ran beneath it among tall rushes and other weeds. There were portions of a large building of rustic masonry close by this on the right, most decidedly Roman ; but whether a temple, as has been

conjectured; I should think extremely doubtful. The rustic masonry was chiefly used by them in castles, baths, and works of strength and utility, while their religious buildings were chiefly of smooth work, both within and without; and no columns, altars, or other decisive features, remain among the ruins of this building, to induce a belief of its being a temple, while several portions of aqueducts, strong walls, &c. near, lead rather to a belief of its being some other kind of edifice. Beyond it, to the east, in the modern town, the remains of another rustic building, called El Bourge, were pointed out, but we did not examine this near enough to decide whether it was a temple or not. Sheikh Ibrahim had mentioned to me the existence of two temples at Banias; but whether these were they or not, I could not learn.

We turned aside from the bridge, and went up on the left to see the source of the stream. In our way we passed a perpendicular cliff, where the facing of the rock was very curiously and carefully carved over with diagonal lines, for the length of a hundred, and the depth of about six feet. It was executed with so much regularity and care, and the lines were so deep and well cut, that it was evidently intended as an ornament; but as there was no building near, nor excavation in the cliff itself, we were quite at a loss to conceive its meaning.

Beyond this, to the eastward, we came, in a few minutes, to the source of the stream, which here issues copiously out of the living rock in many places, and, in others, forces its way up through a bed of loose stones, forming altogether an ample basin of beautifully transparent water, and of excellent taste.

Just over the spring, in the northern cliff which overhangs it, is a large cavern in the rock; and high above that, an open building with pillars, and a dome like the sepulchre of some Mohammedan saint. Under this belief, the Moslems forbid Christians to visit it, though these assert it to be the tomb of a Mar Georgis, or St. George, though not the famous one who slew the dragon. We noted, from below, the capital of a Corinthian pillar used on