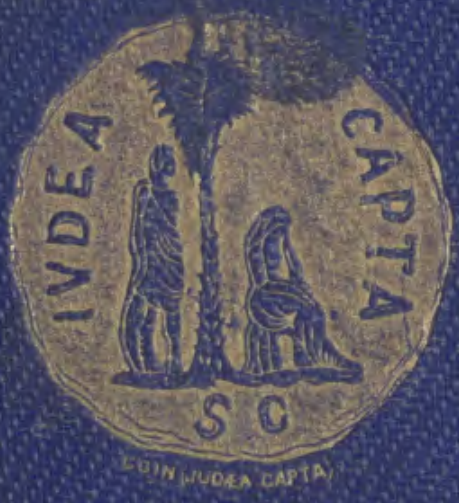

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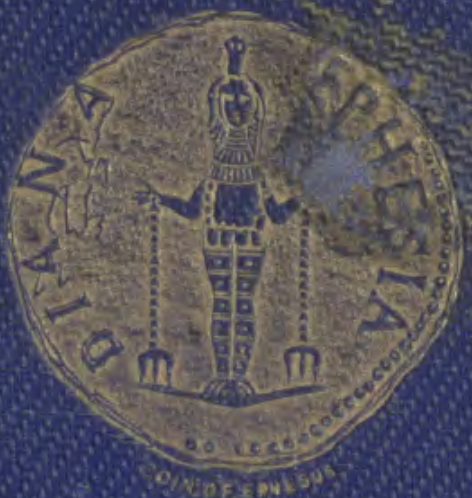


PALMYRA

RUINED

CITIES OF THE EAST.

EPHESUS.	TYRE.	PALMYRA.
SARDIS.	BA'ALBEK.	BABYLON.
PETRA.	MOUNT LEBANON AND ITS RUINS.	NINEVEH.
CÆSAREA.		PERSEPOLIS.

&c. &c. &c.

BY

THE REV. DR. TWEEDIE.

"Behold man proudly view some pompous pile,
Whose high dome swells to emulate the skies,
And smile and say, My name shall live with this
Till time shall be no more; while at his feet,
Yea, at his very feet, the crumbling dust
Of fallen fabrics of the other day
Preaches him solemn lessons."

KIRKE WHITE.

LONDON:
T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

MDCCCLIX.

CONTENTS.

PREFACE.

A THOUSAND scenes in the Holy Land are vocal with lessons of profoundest wisdom, wherever men have ears to hear and a heart to understand. The memories of the past, and the dreary desolations of the present,—upon every mountain, in every valley, and by every stream,—all suggest warning upon warning, or impart joy upon joy. There, if anywhere on earth, man may read that God is true alike to his promises and his threats; and there, if anywhere on earth, we may receive an answer to the question, Who can resist God and prosper?

It is, in truth, with the Holy Land as it was with the religion of the marvellous people who once dwelt there. In that religion God was all in all; and instead of being a faith which is destined to be utterly swept away, the ancient faith of Palestine was rather the envelope of the grand germinating principle of all that is perennial in truth. Not a step was taken there except as God directed. He was that people's King,—the fountain of all law, and at once the beginning and the end of all religion. Not one ceremony, private, social, or public, which the Holy One did not appoint; not one sacrifice which he did not ordain. If prosperity came, it came direct from God; if evil was man's lot, "the Lord did it." The Hebrews had no hopes, no fears, no joys, but such as were somehow connected with the Eternal. It was, in short, the most amazing spectacle ever seen on earth, except the death of the Son of God—to behold a great people living, moving, and having their national being in God; and that was the divine plan regarding the religion of Palestine of old. Like a mighty army

swayed to and fro by one commanding mind, that whole people *should have been* swayed by their God.

And that, we say, was the mould or the matrix of all that is sound or rational and saving in our religion: it begins, continues, and ends in the Eternal One. From this fact, many a spot in Palestine is invested with attractions such as may help us a little on the way to the better country; and the following sections, connected mainly, but not exclusively, with the ruins of Syria, are meant thus to animate, to warn, or encourage. The Eternal threatened: his threats were disregarded; and they were consequently fulfilled. But he has also promised. Is he believed? Then just as these ruins attest his truth in the one case, in the other we may trust for the fulfilment of all his promises; and blessed is the man who is thus "stayed on God." He may weep, as the Jews did at Babylon, over the long desolations of Judah; but there is enough remaining to supplant his tears by "songs in the house of his pilgrimage."

RUINED CITIES OF THE EAST.

I.—THE RUINS OF EPHESUS.

THOUGH the human race undoubtedly sprang from one parent pair, there have been various centres, at different periods of man's history, from which fresh influences or new impulses proceeded, to quicken progress,—to emancipate or to enslave,—to conquer and crush, or to elevate and advance. One of these centres was that section of Europe in which THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA were placed. For centuries a bright light radiated thence into the surrounding regions, and though that light has long been extinguished, the friends of truth still love to linger among the scenes where it shone; to ponder on the moral darkness which now envelops everything there; and to wonder when the fulness of time shall come, when the truth which came from heaven to illumine every land shall shine on those regions again.

Somewhat in that spirit we are now to consider the present condition of two of these ancient centres of light, Ephesus and Sardis. Were we merely to describe the events mentioned in Scripture regarding Ephesus,

"The Light of Asia," as it has been called, the narrative would be long, and would embody some of the profoundest lessons ever taught to man. But we are to consider mainly its ruins. It was the capital of Ionia, and dated from pre-historic times,—the times of fable and of myths. It was situated on the River Cayster, from among whose reeds the swans of old rose clangingly, according to Homer, and not far from the shores of the Ionian Sea. The place was at one period furnished with wharves and docks, which were favourable to the development of its resources; so that it became at length one of the chief Greek cities in Asia Minor. As to a great mart, many of the children of Israel resorted thither, guided by an instinct which ruled them in ancient times as it rules them still; and from among them Paul collected a Christian Church (see Acts xviii. 19, and other places), which exercised considerable influence over the adjacent country. Within that city Paul had again and again to do battle for the truth, and suffer in its cause. Indeed the darkness that comes from hell, and the light which beams from heaven, were there very often in conflict; and Paul tells us (figuratively or literally) that he had to fight with wild beasts at Ephesus while upholding the cause of truth. Those who were mad upon the worship of their great goddess Diana could ill brook the proximity of a purer faith; and hence Paul's life was endangered by her fanatical and infuriated idolaters. Her temple was a wonder of the world, and her worship was dear to many as their own life-blood. The abominations which marked her service harmonized well with the dissolute desires of Orientals; and where voluptu-

ousness of the grossest type reigned, the pure truth of heaven was sure to be opposed. The temple, which it cost the labour of 220 years to complete, stood up in proud defiance against all that was pure and lovely. The pile was 425 feet long, and 220 wide; it was supported by 127 columns, each the gift of a king, and each 60 feet in height. Chersiphron was the architect; Praxiteles chiselled the altar; Scopas, the sculptor, made one of the pillars; and Apelles, a native of the city, contributed a splendid picture of Alexander the Great, who had offered to rebuild the temple when it was burned to the ground by Erostratus, if the Ephesians would allow him to inscribe his name on the façade. Cedar, cypress, Parian marble, and gold were lavished on the structure. The great staircase was formed of the wood of a single Cyprian vine; while the wealth accumulated in the pile from votive offerings was beyond computation. Thus equipped, then, it pressed like a moral millstone on the souls of myriads; it fascinated the sensuous, and when the admiration of art was put for worship, the havoc among the souls of men was such as only eternity can reckon. Diana's gorgeous temple, her silver shrines, her worship altogether, formed, beyond a doubt, one of the heaviest curses that ever smote poor man to the dust of death for ever.

To their other delusions the Ephesians added that of sorcery, and Ephesus possessed a high reputation for magic; insomuch that we learn from Acts xix. 19, that the Ephesians, when the truth got its rightful place in the conscience, burnt books, no doubt on magic, to the value of 50,000 pieces of silver.—It was a signal triumph

of truth over falsehood: it was Satan so far baffled in one of his chosen strongest holds; for the delusion of these arts was at once deep and wide-spread.

It is time, however, to turn to the remains of Ephesus. A two days' journey from Smyrna brings the traveller to the supposed ruins of the place; for so completely has its glory gone that some speak of them as *supposed*. Many of them are placed upon eminences, as in our View, and consist of shattered walls, into which are built pillars, architraves, and fragments of marble. The soil of the neighbourhood appears to be rich, but it is everywhere deserted and solitary, though skirted by mountains which are described as picturesque. The wolf and the jackal now prowl among these remains, and their howling often adds dreariness to a scene otherwise abundantly depressing. Large masses of shapeless ruins and stone walls, interspersed with some corn fields, indicate still further the supposed site of what was once proudly called "The Emporium of the World." But even the sea, it has been remarked, has retired from the scene of desolation, and a pestilential morass, covered with mud and rushes, has succeeded to the waters which brought up ships laden with merchandise from every part of the known world. The body now pines, though the inhabitants are but a handful, where souls were ruined of old.

Along the slopes of the hills Coressus and Mount Prion, and over the plain, there are numerous ruins; but nothing has been discovered to indicate exactly the site of the great temple. Broken pillars and Corinthian capitals of white marble; the ruins of a theatre, with

EPHESUS.

numerous arches,—a wreck of immense grandeur, reputed the largest of any theatre of antiquity, and supposed to be that in which Paul was speaking when the storm broke upon him, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" are all described as forming part of the remains of Ephesus. The ruins of a circus or stadium 687 feet in length, of some palaces or temples, and other buildings, can also be traced; but no inscription has been found, no locality clearly identified: the city has, in truth, long been a quarry of marble; and the ruins of an adjoining town, which was built about four centuries ago, for the most part, out of the exuviæ of Ephesus, add still further to the desolation of the scene. The nearest approach to identification has taken place in regard to some churches, built when Ephesus was so far Christian that the Church met in Council there. Tradition, or Superstition, has also pointed out the tombs of John, of Timothy, of the Virgin Mary, and of the Seven Sleepers, in Ephesus or the vicinity. The prison of St. Paul is also mentioned, and a gate called the Gate of Persecution; but, in truth, all is indiscriminate confusion—the real remains must be sought in far-off mediæval buildings. Columns of green jasper were torn from Diana's Temple to support the dome of St. Sophia at Constantinople, while some of its other decorations may be found in Italian cathedrals. As the result, though the environs of these ruins be at some places beautiful, well wooded, and covered with groves of myrtle, a visit to Ephesus is one of the most depressing that can be made. Goths from beyond the Danube were here, as elsewhere, employed as the avengers; and it has sunk, like countless

other places, under the weight of its own guilt; the rude heel of war, and long years of misrule, have trodden it in the dust.

We have said that scarcely any of the ruins of Ephesus have been distinctly identified. We should notice, however, the opinion of some travellers who have visited the place and have told us that the ruins of the Artemision or Temple of Diana *have* been traced. That stately pile, it is said, was eight times reduced to ruins. Its foundations were at last laid in a swamp, to guard against the effects of earthquakes; and as the the arches of a vast substruction, forming a labyrinth of vaults in which water stagnates, have been traced, some hence conclude that they have discovered the site of one of the seven wonders of the world. The walls are said to be formed of immense blocks of marble, perforated in front so as to admit of fastenings for the plates of brass and silver by which the temple was adorned. Some huge pillars of porphyry are mentioned as having perhaps formed the portico of the temple; but whether these conjectures be correct, or the reverse, the entireness of the ruin is complete. To intensify the impression made by all this we need scarcely add, what some have said, that "the numerous Christian congregation of Ephesus is reduced to two individuals, one a Greek gardener, and the other the keeper of a coffee-house; and these are the representatives of the first great Church of the Apocalypse!" The finger of the Almighty Ruler of heaven and earth has written "Ichabod" here as surely as it wrote His will on the two tables of stone.

The sermons which are in the stones of Ephesus will readily occur to any meditative mind. One who visited the scene about a century ago, in substance thus describes it:* The population of the place now consists of a few Greek peasants, who live in extreme wretchedness and insensibility. They are the sole representatives of an illustrious people, and dwell amid the wreck of former greatness. Some occupy the substructions of once glorious edifices; some live in the vaults of the stadium, once the scene of animated diversions; and some in the very caves which received the ashes of the ancient people. The Emperor Justinian bore away its statues and decorations to Constantinople, and reared the Church of St. Sophia with columns rifled from Ephesus; and now its very streets are effaced and overgrown. A herd of goats was driven in for shelter from the sun at noon; and a noisy flight of crows seemed to insult the silence. We heard the partridge call in the area of the theatre and stadium, where solitude, destruction, and death are paramount. The pomp of its heathen worship is remembered no more, and a truer faith, which was planted by an apostle, barely lingers here in an existence which is hardly visible. And all this, be it remembered, has taken place in a city where the Saviour himself once saw work, and labour, and patience, which he could praise. Along with the praise, however, there was the warning, "Remember whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out

* See Kitto's Encyclopædia, Art. *Ephesus.*

of his place, except thou repent."—It is the mingling of mercy and rebuke, of love and faithfulness; but all was unavailing. The warning was neglected,—there was no repentance, or none that was continuous. The candlestick was therefore removed, and yonder is the debris, the rubbish of Ephesus,—she has become her own grave, because the word of Truth was slighted. First Diana; then for some time, and to some extent, the Redeemer; then the Impostor of Mecca; and now a silence which saddens,—behold the story of Ephesus! "A few more scores of years," one has said at the sight, —"a few more scores of years, and Ephesus has neither temple, cross, crescent nor city, but is a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness." We may pronounce the prediction as already fulfilled.

In our View, the background is filled up by the mountains already named, which terminate the plain in which Ephesus stood. Near to the spectator, on the central eminence, is the castle and town of Aiasaluk; and under that hill are the ruins of a church dedicated to St. John. The remains of an aqueduct built by Herodes Atticus are seen on the right, and in the foreground are some of the massed ruins of Ephesus. The Cayster still oozes through the plain, but it also has partaken of the general desolation of the region.—The origin of the name Aiasaluk, or Asalook, is perhaps worthy of being noticed. The Greeks call John, Ayos Scologos,—a corruption of Agios Theologus, the Holy Divine; and from that corruption arose the modern name of the place.

Such, then, is a glimpse of the ruins of Ephesus,—the home of desolation, inscribed all over with righteous

retributions from on high, retributions which may strike us in a thousand other places, but rarely amid such contrasts or with such emphasis as here—

> "Here, waning grandeur strikes the wanderer's eye;
> There, mouldering towers, like giants, rise in air,—
> Another Babel, mounting to the sky,
> Touched by the hoar of time, mature and fair."

But no power of man can evolve all the lessons which such scenes and sights may teach. Here is the grave of greatness, and here the humiliation of pride. Here are paid the wages of sin, and here desolation swallows up the pomp of the voluptuous, the grossness of the idolater, and even the exquisiteness of art. Here man is seen at once in his power and his puniness. Here abject wretchedness shakes hands with regal pomp across the gulf of many centuries; and here, among the ruins of Ephesus—crumbling, indiscriminate, Babel-like—the world may read its own history, or its own final doom, when He who is holy and true shall arise to judgment, and assert his prerogative as the God of all the ages and all the ends of the earth.

II.—THE RUINS OF SARDIS.

LIKE the solitary pillar of Phocas in the Forum at Rome, the pillars presented in our next view, as exhibiting nearly all that remains of Sardis, furnish another melancholy memorial of the vanity of earthly things.

Sardis was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia. It stood at the base of Mount Tmolus in a plain watered by the river Pactolus, whose waters floated down particles of gold, or whose sands contained no inconsiderable fragments of that precious metal. It was a city of great wealth and corresponding luxury. Possession of Sardis was therefore coveted by many of the royal robbers of antiquity; and many a battle was fought, and many a siege was laid, in order to secure the command of the place. Its last king was Crœsus, whose name is now a synonyme for riches. During his reign it was taken by Cyrus, B.C. 548, and yielded the most opulent prize of all the cities in the East. When the Romans became masters of the place it rapidly fell into decay. An earthquake in the time of Tiberius hastened its downfall, and though that emperor ordered its restoration, yet the voluptuous character of its inhabitants wasted it more completely than earthquakes could—no emperor could restore the ravages wrought by the gross lives of the Sardians, and Sardis sank at last under the weight of its own abominations. It had a name to live—but nothing more; and though "a few" were there who had not defiled their garments

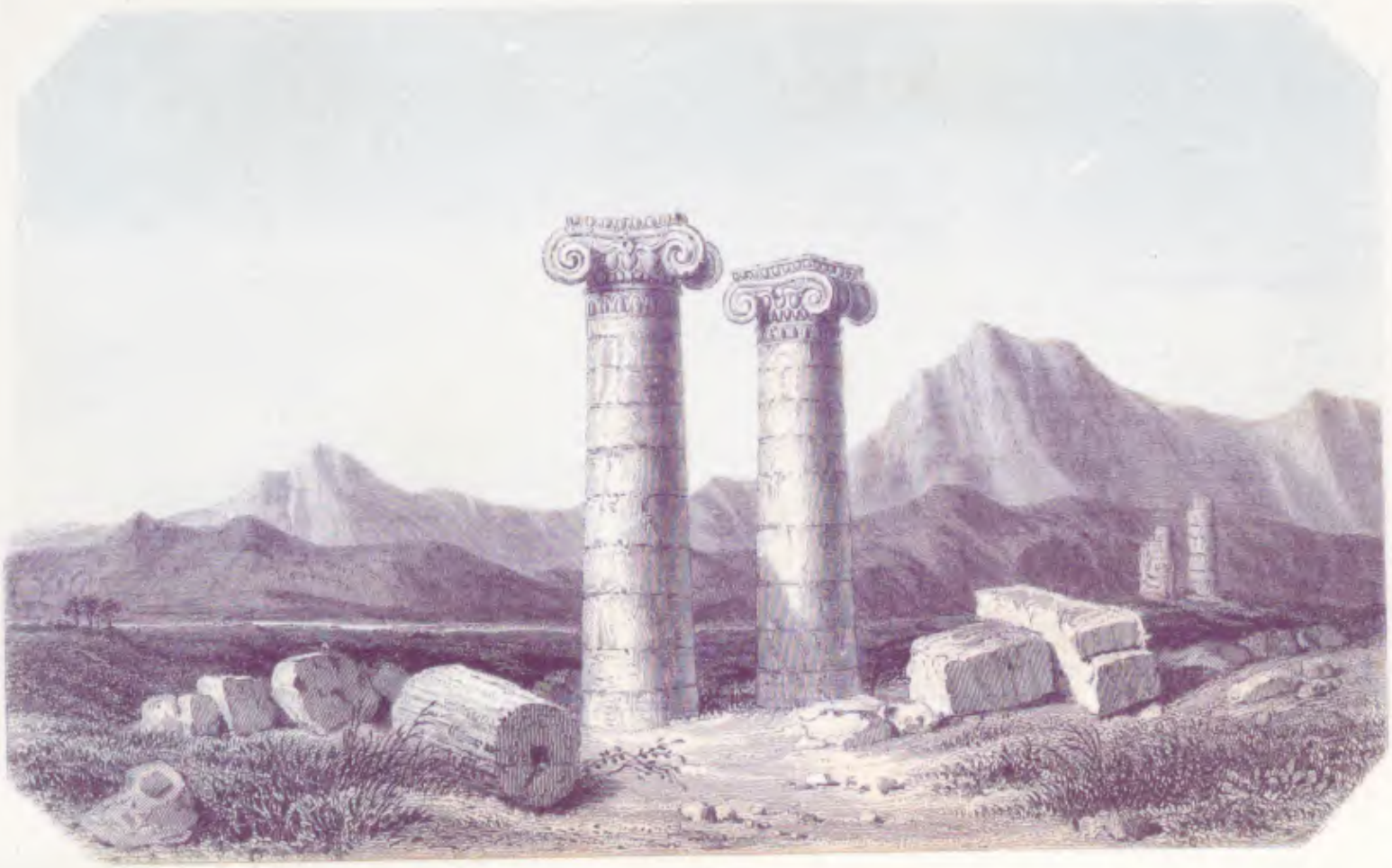
with the world, yet what were these among so many? The particles of preserving salt had no power against the abounding corruption, and Sardis may be said to have entirely ceased to be.

The ravages of war combined with those of earthquakes to speed on this desolation. The Saracens and Turks took revenge upon Sardis for even the shadow of the Christian name which it retained; and its site is now a wide-spread mass of ruins, studded with tokens of its former splendour, but saddening to all who remember the connection between guilt and degradation. The village of Sart, among the ruins, consists of a few miserable cottages, inhabited by Greeks and Turks, contrasting drearily, to the eye of faith, with what the ruins proclaim to have been the ancient splendour of the place. The Acropolis appears distinctly to define the site of the city. It is described as "a tall distorted rock of soft sandstone, rent as if by an earthquake." The ruins of a theatre, of a stadium, and some churches, are found there, and a countless number of sepulchral hillocks in the neighbourhood tell how lowly the once proud and lordly now lie: they show that man and his handiwork are equally transient when the Eternal I AM gives the word.

But perhaps the most remarkable ruins at Sardis are two Ionic pillars of white marble, represented in our View, supposed to have formed part of a temple dedicated to Cybele, the mother of the gods. In the year 1700, six of these marble columns stood erect; but barbarism has destroyed four: they were blasted by gunpowder, and only two now remain to pro-

claim the grandeur that is gone. If that conjecture be correct which assigns these columns to the Temple of Cybele, then these remains rank among the oldest ruins in the world; for that temple is believed to have been built only three hundred years after that of Solomon, or perhaps seven hundred years before the coming of the Saviour.

But temple, theatre, stadium—all that luxury prompted or wealth could supply have passed away. "The Lady of Kingdoms" sits lonely and desolate now; and travellers tell that a feeling of "indescribable solitude," or of "desolate abandonment," takes possession of the mind amid these crumbling vestiges of the past. After visiting the alleged Palace of Crœsus, and other remains, one says,—"I was filled with wonder and awe at beholding the two stupendous columns of the Temple of Cybele which are still remaining: they are silent but impressive witnesses of the power and splendour of antiquity;"—a power and a splendour, we may add, which contrasts very strongly with what is recorded of the modern Sardis: "She affords no permanent habitation to any human being, while her whole Christian population is comprised in two servants of a Mohammedan miller in the vicinity." But still more touching scenes can easily be there reproduced by memory, and another traveller has been at pains to tell us that, as he sat to gaze upon the ruins of Sardis from the banks of the golden-sanded Pactolus, scene after scene once enacted there, rose before his view. Beside him were the cliffs of the Acropolis which the hardy Median scaled when leading on the Persians to conquest. Near that



SARDIS.

traveller were the remains of the Palace of Crœsus, within which were sometimes assembled the wisest of their age, Thales, Cleobulus and Solon. Here Æsop composed the Fables which still delight our youth, and here a wretched father mourned over the corpse of his mangled Atys. In the distance across the Hermus, to which the Pactolus is a tributary, are the grave-mounds of the Lydian monarchs, Candaules, Halyattes, and Gyges; and around them are spread the very plains which the hosts of Xerxes traversed when, rushing in quest of glory, they found only a grave at Marathon. Surely such sights might do more than solemnize,—they might transform. But no. No sight of human littleness,—no bursting of the bubble, fame,—no vanishing away of the glory which is transient and worthless as the foam-bell on the waters, can accomplish that result: God has reserved it in his own hand. His power alone can transform; and we may gaze on all the ruins of Sardis, where more varied and more vivid remembrances (one says, though not correctly) may be awakened than could possibly be attached to any other spot on earth, only to rise from the spectacle and plunge into vanity as before. What can the ruined fanes of a dead religion do to change man's heart? What power have the tombs of forgotten monarchs to lift our thoughts to heaven? Though the palm-tree now waves in the banquet-hall of kings, will that make me set my affections upon things above? Ah, no. Such things may sadden, but they cannot renew; and until the sweet influences of grace be granted to deepen and perpetuate such impressions, they will prove but like the

early dew, the mirage of the desert, or the dreams of our youth. When Solon, to whom Crœsus proudly showed his treasures, warned the monarch not to glory in them, did the warning produce much effect? It did not; and in due time all that wealth became the property of his conqueror, Cyrus. It is ever the same with foolish man; and Omnipotence alone, working with Omniscience, can make him wise.

Were this the place to submit it, the history of Sardis would be found one of the most remarkable upon record. Its founder is not known. As we have seen, it was captured by Cyrus more than five centuries before the Saviour came. It passed into the hands of the Greeks under Alexander the Great. Antiochus, the last king of Syria, besieged and took the city, being guided to an entrance where the walls of the citadel were low, by the flight of vultures, and other birds of prey, as they resorted to the offals thrown from the fortress at that spot. The place was surrendered by Antiochus to the two Scipios more than 150 years before Christ. Julian the Apostate resolutely attempted to restore a waning paganism there, and re-erected all the pagan altars which had been previously cast down. The Saracens succeeded the Romans, and now Desolation has supplanted them all. If Paul planted the Church there, as some suppose, corruption speedily did its work; and neither the presence of bishops nor the holding of Councils could retard the descent of Sardis into the grave which sin digs for nations as well as individuals. But we give one extract more, to exhibit as clearly as we can the lowly condition of

Sardis: "I saw from afar," one says, "the lofty Acropolis, fringed with crumbling ruins; and when I crossed a branch of the golden Pactolus, which once flowed through the Agora, or market-place, and when I stood there at eleven o'clock, the very hour at which, in its ancient days, the place would be crowded, I saw not a soul, nor an object of any sort, to remind me that this solitude had been a vast and splendid city, save here and there a patch of ruin, a dismantled wall, or a heap of brambles and brick-work, mixed with brushwood and creeping weeds. Where palaces and temples, theatres and crowded habitations, had stood, a green and flowery carpet of smooth sward met the eye; and the tall, stately asphodel, or gay lily, gleamed in its beauty, where a marble column had risen in other days."

But the whole story of this city has not yet been told. We have already mentioned the name of Gyges, and it suggests some incidents which were at once flagitious and tragical. Candaules, one of the kings of Sardis, maltreated his queen; and in revenge she encouraged the approaches of Gyges, who slew the king, married the outraged queen, and became king of Sardis himself.

Now about five miles from that capital a large lake called Gygea is found, and on its shores are some of the most memorable of ruins. That lake, which is not far from the river Hermus, is by some deemed artificial in its origin, but the lapse of ages has invested it with the aspects of nature. It teems with fish, flocks of swans stud the waters or gleam in the air, and other attractions add beauty to the scene. On the banks of that lake, the ancient kings of Lydia selected their

place of burial. Their remains are deposited in a vast cemetery, and the crowds of monuments which cluster around them have acquired for the scene the oriental name of "The Place of a Thousand Tombs." They are now large mounds covered with grass; but one is conspicuous above all the rest, which is regarded as the Tomb of Alyattes, the father of Crœsus the Rich.

The mode of its erection lets us see far into the morals of Sardis, and enables us to comprehend why the Saviour said he had a few *even* there who had not defiled their garments. Such was the number and such the wealth of the abandoned females of that capital that they reared this magnificent tomb to their king by their own gifts,—"a monument to their own infamy," it has been said, as well as to their king. Herodotus saw and described it half a millennium before the Christian era, very much as it continues to this day. The base is about three-fourths of a mile in length; the monument itself is a truncated cone now covered with verdure; while from the summit, the lake reposing in its beauty, the crowds of monuments all around, the Hermus, and the whole neighbourhood, impress the visitor once more with the thought of dreary desolation. The traditions regarding these ruins are believed to be thoroughly authentic; and the remains are in themselves so gigantic that "the traveller there sees a monument as vast and ancient as a pyramid of Egypt, but whose history is much more certain and authentic." Around that lake tastes the most diverse might find indulgence. The botanist might luxuriate amid its aquatic verdure. The naturalist might find objects of interest in its

flocks of feathered occupants. The antiquarian might be regaled by ruins which carry us back over two or three thousand years. But above all, the moralist or the man of God might here behold how shameless vice becomes, and how truthful Paul was when he wrote to Rome about ancient paganism, and said that God "gave men up to a reprobate mind," so that they were "filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Rom. i. 29–32.

Without dwelling further on the ruins of Asia Minor, inviting as the subject is, we now cross the "Great Sea," and traverse the desert on the way to the Promised Land. Not far from one of its borders we find the Wady Mousa, or Glen of Moses, and we are alike astonished and delighted by the ruins which there abound. We now refer to Petra.

III.—THE RUINS OF PETRA.

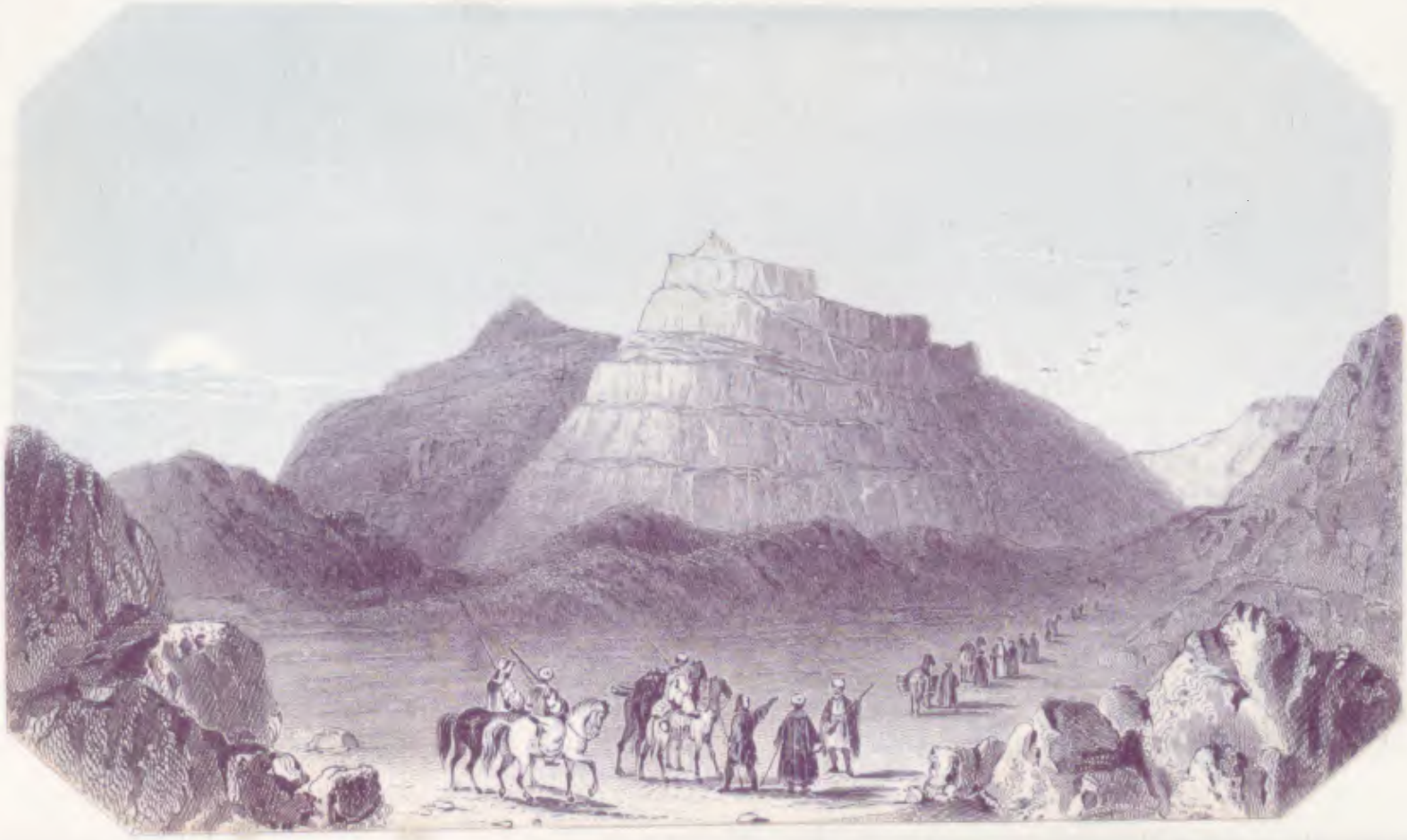
It would be impossible to convey a full account of this marvellous scene unless a volume were devoted to its details. We therefore merely glance at its history, and briefly describe the entrance to the place, with some of its most prominent ruins.

The name Petra, Selah, the Rock, is one of the most descriptive ever applied to any place, as the whole wondrous scene is one mass of living rock. There are houses of rock, and a theatre of rock, and tombs innumerable of rock, and stairs, and excavations, and works without number and without end, all exquisitely chiselled or elaborately dug in the solid rock.—Petra was the ancient capital of Edom, and is utterly unlike any other ruin of which history tells or which modern enterprise has brought to light. The descendants of Esau are reckoned its founders; and as the Edomites are known from Scripture to have been a powerful and a numerous people many centuries before our era, their capital may date far back in the dimness of remote antiquity. In Genesis xxxvi. we have an abstract of its history, or a catalogue of its princes; and we there learn that the place was governed first by dukes and princes, then by many successive kings, and then by dukes again, and all that prior to the foundation of Israel as a kingdom,—"before there reigned any king over Israel." In the time of Saul, Edom was subdued and became tributary to the kingdom of Judah. It

revolted, but was again vanquished in the days of David. When the Romans overran the East, Edom was absorbed; and some of their emperors did much to adorn it. Under Augustus it was a flourishing place, the abode of many Romans. Adrian patronized Petra, and changed its name into Adriane; but soon after his death it ceases to be mentioned in history. Its singular position, "in the clefts of the rock," sequestered it from the eyes of all excepting the wandering Arab; and the unique and magnificent capital became a dwelling only for robbers, for wild beasts and birds, for scorpions and bats. It had once been a centre or a focus of commerce. The roads from the East to the West, and from various other quarters, all converged upon Petra; and the caravans of those remote times occasioned an activity of trade, a bustle among the merchants of all nations there, such as even fancy can scarcely reproduce amid these stupendous ruins, so deserted now that even the foot-fall of the traveller appears to mar the solitude. But as Petra flourished artificially, by the commerce of the nations, it fell in their fall. When Nineveh and Babylon were no more, when Egypt sank low among the nations, and when Palestine was peeled and trodden down, the great market-place of the desert faded with them—its occupation was gone; and we know concerning it now only that prophecy has there been marvellously fulfilled: "O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, and holdest the height of the hill, though thou shouldest make thy nest as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. Also, Edom shall be desolate: every one that goeth by shall be astonished,

and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. . . . . The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high. . . . . I laid the mountains of Esau and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." Never a more explicit prediction,—never a more exact fulfilment. For many centuries the name of Petra was never heard, till the enterprising traveller, Seitzen, brought it once more into notice about the commencement of the present century; and we need scarcely tarry to tell how changed all this was from the time when this capital of the Nabatheans was the focus of all the commodities of the East,—when caravans from the interior of Arabia, from the Persian Gulf, from Yeman, spread their cargoes thence to Damascus, to Jerusalem, to Gaza, to Tyre, and other places. It is unprecedented in all history, that a spot so arid and dreary by nature should have been forced into such prominence, or become such a depôt of all forms of wealth; yet long before Israel was a kingdom, and long after that kingdom had withered away, Petra flourished, as we have seen, while it is now perhaps the most wondrous monument on the globe.

The Wady Mousa, where these remarkable ruins are found, is about two days' journey from the Red Sea; and so vast is the solitude, that we travel for days all round this capital without beholding a trace of man, except it be some horde of Arab robbers prowling for plunder. But it was not always so. Eighteen centuries ago, Edom could furnish a contingent of 30,000 men to help to repel the Romans from Jerusalem; and the ruins



MOUNT HOR

of more than thirty towns can be counted in the territory of Edom within a circuit of a few miles.—It is amid such scenes that the believer can realize most vividly the truth of his religion. He who sees the end from the beginning laid its foundation on the everlasting Rock, and it is waxing stronger and stronger the more the world's history and condition are explored.

Amid scenes so wonderful, it will be difficult to convey a very satisfactory account of the ruins without the help of the pencil or the daguerreotype. The ENTRANCE to Petra is by a narrow gorge, lined by lofty precipices, formed by the channel of a rivulet. This defile is nearly two miles in length. At some places the overhanging rocks approach so near to each other that only two horsemen can proceed abreast. Along this pass, however, merchandise which enriched thousands, and corrupted thousands more, once flowed into the place. The ledge-like path is lined with tombs cut from the live rock, which is at some places not less than from 200 to 300 feet high; and near the city the pathway is absolutely a street formed by tombs. In that neighbourhood stands a magnificent temple, the Khuzné, or Treasury, all cut from the solid rock; and all the details of decoration, though tasteless in themselves, are fresh and sharp, and well defined, except where the hand of violence has damaged them, as if only a few years had passed since they were reared. The sight, it may well be supposed, has roused the genius of poetry. The befitting strain, in such a place, would be a dirge—an anticipation of the

cry, "Woe, woe, woe!" and one has sung, in words applicable to the place,—

> "Across yon cliff a bridge seems hung in air,
> While, mingling life with death, a thousand caves
> Yawn far and near,—the ancient dwellers' graves."

But no poetry can really depict the scene. Under the bridge the pass is only 12 feet wide. "I was perfectly fascinated with this splendid work of ancient art (the Khuzné) in this wild spot," wrote one not apt to speak in raptures; "and the idea of it was uppermost in my mind during the day and all the night. In the morning I returned, and beheld it again with increased admiration. There it stands, as it has stood for ages, in beauty and loveliness: the generations which admired and rejoiced over it of old have passed away; the wild Arab, as he wanders by, regards it with stupid indifference or scorn; and none are left but strangers from far distant lands to do it reverence. Its rich roseate tints, as I bade it farewell, were lighted up and gilded by the mellow beams of the morning sun; and I turned away from it at length with an impression which will be effaced only at death."*

When the visitor to Petra emerges from the ravine, which is the main approach to the place, the city opens before him in all its loveliness. The site forms a natural amphitheatre, about two miles and a half in circumference, while the lofty hills stand sentinels all around. The dwellings, the temples, the tombs,

* Dr. Robinson.

are all fresh and youthful in their aspect; and though pillars have fallen, the friezes are there, for they are parts of the rock. Cornices have given way, yet the entablatures above them remain. Gazed at, in short, with the eye of mere wonder, Petra is a mystery in stone. Judged of by other ruins, it is unique and unmatched. Viewed historically, it is a mighty monument of fallen grandeur: in the light of Scripture it proclaims that God is true, and every man a liar.

> "Pillar and arch, defying Time's rude shock,
> Gleam on each side, upstarting from the rock;"

but the Eternal has done what time has failed to achieve, and the sin of Petra has found it out. It is its own grave, its own monument, and its own epitaph.

In this area one is struck by a strange combination. The rock is honey-combed, Stanley says, with cavities of all shapes and sizes; and through these you advance till the defile once more opens, and you see—strange and unexpected sight, with tombs above, below, and in front—a Greek theatre hewn out of the rock, its tiers of seats literally red and purple alternately,—all in the living rock,—an amazing monument at once of folly and of taste. Its diameter at the base is 120 feet. It has thirty-three rows of seats, rising one above another, in the side of the cliff behind. Above the seats, in the circle of the rock, a row of small chambers is excavated, whose occupants could survey the whole scene below. The theatre is estimated by some to contain about 3000 people, but others deem that number too small. Such a structure or fabric, carved entire, we

repeat, from the living rock, is surely an architectural marvel; but here we have a moral wonder as well. The frivolities of the stage had their zest deepened, and the fetters of the frivolous were pleasantly rivetted, by the magnificence of the adjoining tombs: it was "amusement in a cemetery,—a theatre in the midst of sepulchres." But the surpassing marvels of this city of the dead must be visited by us in person, if we would know all its wonders, or become familiar with all its beauty. Wrapt in the silence which has long enshrouded the place, the remains of a convent, with crosses carved within, and called Ed-Deir, are found among the ruins; but we need not such a memento to tell us of a present God. He is here fulfilling his word. He is here in the glory of his justice; and, we must add, there are few spots on all the earth where there is less to remind us of his mercy.

Before leaving the immediate vicinity of Petra, we may refer to the ruins which crown the summit of Mount Hor, which is well known to terminate the view from one of the principal ruins.

Mount Hor, in Arabia Petræa, is a mass of red sandstone, and forms part of the mountain of Seir, or Edom. Its form is irregularly truncated, and it terminates in three ragged peaks. On its summit Aaron died when he was 123 years of age, transferring his priesthood to Eleazar his son, according to the divine command (Num. xx. 22–29). That son and Aaron's brother, Moses, buried him in a cave of the mountain; and from the fact that the first Hebrew high priest died there the mountain is still known as Jebel Harun,—the Mount of Aaron. Doubts, indeed, are entertained by some

whether the height which is crowned by the edifice now to be named be really the Mount Hor of Scripture; but this at least may be said,—no eminence in the region has an equal claim to be the scene of Aaron's death, and we therefore assume that it was so; nay, that the proof regarding it is as complete as such a case admits of.

For part of the way, the traveller can ascend Mount Hor on horseback; but at a certain point the pathway becomes steep and difficult, insomuch that he who would mount to the summit must at some places clamber upon his hands and knees. The ascent of this portion requires about an hour. At some of the more difficult passes rude stairs are cut in the rock, or steps are roughly laid with stone. The juniper tree, or rather bush, is found in abundance on the mountain, as well as some flowers of great beauty. The ascent is guarded with lynx-eyed care by the Arabs; and Laborde, Robinson, and others, were not permitted to ascend at all.

Having reached the summit, the alleged tomb of Aaron is found to be quite paltry in the exterior, and quite as tawdry within. It is enclosed in a small building, which is supposed to be of modern construction, as it contains some pillars embedded in its walls, while some fragments of granite and slabs of white marble are lying in its neighbourhood. The tomb is composed of fragments of stone and marble, which must once have belonged to some other more sumptuous fabric. It is covered with a pall; and rags and shreds of yarn, ostrich eggs, with glass beads and paras, have been left there,—the miserable votive offerings of a people miserable themselves in all respects.

The pilgrim to the summit of Mount Hor finds his way by some steps to a vault beneath the tomb; but there is nothing venerable there, and it is difficult to decide whether the cave be natural or the work of man's hands. Gazing from the summit, the eye wanders over all the scene of the forty years of Hebrew pilgrimage; and when, on the other hand, the traveller looks from the Deir of Petra towards Mount Hor,—which can be distinctly seen from the elevated part of the ruins,—he has before him associations and sights, mountains and ruins, such as cannot be surpassed in all the world besides. The changes, indeed, which *must* have passed over these scenes since the Hebrew pilgrims in myriads were there, all marshalled and shielded by their God, can scarcely be comprehended by the modern pilgrim to such dreary regions. But the wilderness will yet blossom as the rose; symptoms at least of its budding appear—and "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years."

IV.—THE RUINS OF GAZA, ASKELON, AND ASHDOD.

GAZA.

In entering the territory of the tribe of Judah by Beersheba, and passing along the sea-coast, we reach three ruined cities, ancient strongholds of the Philistines, which it would not be proper to pass without a notice. They are not remarkably signalized by the remains of former elegance, but more than enough still exists to create no little interest, and shed not a little light on the Bible, in the ruins of Gaza, of Askelon, and Ashdod.

Gaza, a city at the distance of about 60 miles from Jerusalem, is mentioned in Scripture as existing in very early times (Gen. x. 19). Thenceforward it holds a conspicuous place in the history of the Hebrew people. Moses refers to it, and Joshua conquered it, but spared the Anakims (Josh. xi. 22), who then occupied the place. In the division of the Promised Land, Gaza fell to the lot of Judah; but its inhabitants were never extirpated, and along with four other Philistine cities it gave a golden emerod from time to time as a trespass-offering to Jehovah (1 Sam. vi. 17). It remained a Philistine city, then, and though taken by the Egyptians, and often otherwise assailed (1 Kings iv. 24; 2 Kings xviii. 8), it never was thoroughly incorporated with the kingdom. The prophets denounced it, and monarchs besieged it, but it was strong enough to perpetuate its own existence against external enemies. It even sustained a siege of five months from Alexander the

Great, who took it at last, however, by storm, slaughtered its defenders, sold their wives and children as slaves, and sought new inhabitants for the city in the adjoining country. But not content with that, Alexander, in imitation of his model, Achilles, dragged the dead body of the general who had defended the city twice around its walls, and so evinced the ferocity of a nature which was inherently mean amid all its boasted greatness. The Maccabees also besieged Gaza, and one of them took it after extraordinary efforts had been made. Other sieges and sackings are recorded, and the place eventually passed under the dominion of Herod, as a gift from Augustus his patron.

But the most noted of all the incidents connected with Gaza relate to Samson, and form part of his history. It was there that he tore away the gates of the city, "bar and all," and bore them on his shoulders to a hill top before Hebron; it was there also that he, as a blinded captive, "did grind in the prison house," being bound with fetters of brass; and it was there that he avenged his own sufferings and the wrongs of his country upon the Philistine lords and people, by tearing down the pillars of the Temple of Dagon. Near Gaza, moreover, in more recent times, Philip the deacon baptized the chamberlain of Queen Candace: so that the place is inwoven at once with Old and New Testament events, and the traveller can scarcely visit the scene without being reminded of some of the most remarkable incidents recorded in the history of man.

But what ruins remain to indicate the former grandeur of the place? The population has been variously

estimated. Some rank it as low as 2,000, while others mention 10,000 or 11,000, and one mounts as high as 16,000. These are the inhabitants of a new town, however, which is considerably more inland than the ancient one; and, like many other places, the latter can be described by two brief lines :—

> "Two or three columns with many a stone,
> Marble and granite with grass overgrown,"

seem all that remain of a city which once required the might of Samson to do it injury, and which for five months withstood the arms even of Alexander the Great.

The modern town, in Arabic called Ghuzzeh, stands on a low round hill of some extent; it is surrounded by suburbs which stretch far to the east and the north; but houses mainly built of unburnt bricks can ill represent Gaza, once renowned as "the strong," the key of Palestine and Syria. A gate is still shown there as that from which Samson carried off the bars; and his tomb, upon the same authority, Moslem tradition, is pointed out in the neighbourhood. But sober inquiry tells us that the vestiges of the ancient walls and strength of Gaza are gone.* Even the traces of its antiquity are rare, "consisting of occasional columns of marble or grey granite scattered in the streets and gardens, or used as thresholds at the gates and doors of houses, or laid upon the front of watering-troughs. One fine Corinthian capital of white marble lies inverted in the

* Robinson's Researches, ii. 38.

middle of a street." Amid all this desolation, however, the soil of the adjoining country is rich and productive. Apricots, mulberries, palm and olives trees, with fruits of every kind, as well as other Eastern productions, are rife in this region. Nor should we fail to notice that though the Christian religion was early planted at Gaza,—for one of its bishops died a martyr in the year 285,—idolatry long kept its hold of the place, and in the fifth century no fewer than eight temples dedicated to he then gods still existed there.

But Gaza "the splendid and delicious" was doomed, like other places, to fall under Mohammedan rule. That took place A.D. 634. In 796 it was laid waste during a civil war. In 1152 the Crusaders erected a fortress there, and intrusted the defence of it to the Knights Templars. In 1170 Saladin sacked the town; and in 1187, after the battle of Hattin, the fortress and the entire place fell, along with other strongholds, into the conqueror's hands. Richard of England for some time held the citadel, but it soon melted from his grasp, like his other conquests in Palestine.

Besides the information already given regarding the utter desolation of ancient Gaza, some Eastern travellers dwell still more earnestly on its dreary dilapidations. "Baldness is come upon Gaza"—"I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof"—"Gaza shall be forsaken"—"The king shall perish from Gaza. . . . . I will cut off the pride of the Philistines"—these are some of the predictions of Jeremiah, of Amos, and Zechariah, regarding this lordly city; and there are some, therefore, who seek

for a more literal fulfilment of the divine denunciations than can be found in a city whose population is variously estimated at from 2,000 to 11,000, or more. We are accordingly told that the plain between Gaza and Ramleh is now deserted and peeled—in prophetic language, the sea-coast has become "dwellings and cottages for shepherds and folds for flocks." Moreover, even Infidelity speaking by Volney, one of its high priests, tells us that the ruins of white marble sometimes found at Gaza prove that it was formerly the abode of luxury and opulence. It has shared in the general destruction, and, notwithstanding its proud title of the Capital of Palestine, it is now no more than a defenceless village. The house of the present Aga, we are informed, is composed of fragments of ancient columns and cornices; and in the court-yard some shafts and capitals of granite columns, fragments of former lordliness, "are bedded in a wall that forms an enclosure for beasts!"

But more precise still. It was predicted, we have seen, that "baldness would come upon Gaza," and it has been doubted whether that could be supposed to have been fulfilled when a town, according to some nearly as populous as Jerusalem, is still found there. But a modern traveller, Dr. Keith, was detained a day in that vicinity, contrary to his purposes and plans, and spent it in traversing the sand-hills, in which manifold though minute remains of the ancient city are still often discovered. He was thence led to the conclusion that ancient Gaza stood among these sand-hills now so bald and bare. Broken pottery, pieces of glass and polished marble, lie thick in every hollow, over a space of several

square miles, while others speak of fragments of antique statues. The places where such remains are found cannot be reckoned under fifty. The ruins, it is supposed, lie buried in the sand; but where Gaza *once* stood, not a fragment of ruin one cubic foot in size, not a shrub, not a blade of grass was seen to interrupt the desolation. Other travellers,* after full inquiry, were satisfied that the bare sand-hills now referred to cover the site of Gaza,—once the abode of luxury and opulence. Its palaces had there found a grave, and those fragments of polished marble were all that remained to tell that Philistine lords ever ruled there,—that Alexander the Great had disgraced himself there,—that the Romans were once masters of Gaza,—that Crusaders had shed blood in torrents there in name of the Prince of Peace; and that from the times of the Crusades the place has been of no note except to pilgrims and their purveyors. At various times and various places over the three miles which intervene between the present town and the sea, hewn stones have been dug up. At one spot ten massy fragments of wall are found embedded in sand. At the distance of about two miles the fragments of another wall exist, and four fountains, belonging, no doubt, to ancient Gaza. About half a mile from the sea three pedestals of beautiful marble have been uncovered. Holes like quarries for stones still indicate the extent of the ruins: in a word, whatever date we may ascribe to the buildings thus partially disinterred, they connect us with some of the most perfect ruins even in Syria,—the

* Nar. of Scot. Dep. p. 136.

melancholy remains of former grandeur, the tokens of a vanished lordly power. And yet of that vicinity we read, "Bare to perfect baldness as ancient Gaza is, the opposite side of the modern town may challenge any land with its rich groves of olives, at least three miles in length. . . . . One of the finest crops of wheat seen in Syria grew under the partial and protecting shade of stately olives in the plains of Gaza." While ruins, endless but thorough, prove what the past has been, the luxuriant vegetation of the region, where there is any moisture at all, forewarns us as to what Gaza and its environs may yet become. Israel is preserved, as if by a perpetual miracle, for some peculiar destiny; and though we are not disposed to dogmatize as to what its future may be, we *should* be taught, by all that we see and learn in such neighbourhoods as that of Gaza, hopefully to leave the future to Him who sees the end from the beginning, and to whom all duration is only one everlasting NOW. The believer sees among these ruins, compared with the prophecies which predict them, new buttresses to his faith; and the infidel must encounter difficulties which it is not easy, on his principles, to solve. He must either deny the records of history, or grant that wondrous transformations have been wrought, as predicted, in wondrous ways, among these bald, bare hills of sand.

ASKELON.

THIS ancient stronghold is situated on the shores of the Mediterranean, about thirty-seven miles W.S.W.

from Jerusalem, and twelve or fifteen miles from Gaza. Its modern name is Askulan, Askalun, or, according to some, Scalona. It belonged of old to the Philistines, and was originally assigned to the tribe of Judah, though never long in the actual possession of the children of Israel. As the birth-place of Herod the Great, Askelon became famed for the decorations which he bestowed on it, in the shape of colonnades, baths, and fountains. As in some degree a frontier town, it was subject to various vicissitudes; and at one time Egypt, at another Syria, reckoned Askelon a part of its territory. During the wars between the Jews and the Romans this city suffered much; for as its people hated the Jews (see 2 Sam. i. 20), and at one time slew 2500 of that nation, who resided within their walls, the spirit of revenge and retaliation was rife. It is, however, in the times of the Crusades that Askelon becomes chiefly important. Under Saladin and Richard it was repeatedly dismantled and rebuilt. In 1099 the Caliph of Egypt was defeated at Askelon by Godfrey of Bouillon. In 1192 a signal victory was gained by Richard I. over Saladin, when 40,000 Saracens and Turks were slain, and the city became the property of Richard. Its fortifications were at length entirely dismantled by the Sultan Bibars, A.D. 1270. The port was at the same time filled up with stones, in order to baffle all future attempts to resuscitate the place. For centuries its desolation has been complete. Though to some extent inhabited, it is another melancholy instance of prostrate magnificence: a blight has descended upon Askelon, and all is dreary desolation.

The ruins, however, which remain, tell of the former strength of the place. The situation of the fortifications was naturally strong. The thick walls were flanked by towers, and built on a ridge of rock which encircles the town and terminates at each end at the sea. The ground in the interior of the city sinks in the manner of an amphitheatre. But strong as nature and art might combine to make it, Askelon could not resist the Almighty fiat: all its glories faded away, and it now remains as only the shadow of a shade. Traveller after traveller describes it as one of the most mournful scenes of utter desolation on which the eye can rest. Yet Canon Stanley ranks it among the cities which are remarkable for the extreme beauty of the gardens which surround them, adorned as they are by the scarlet blossoms of the pomegranates, and the enormous oranges which gild the green foliage of their famous groves. This place was deemed the haunt of the Syrian Venus; and the same traveller tells that the doves consecrated to her still fill with their cooings the luxuriant gardens which grow in the sandy hollow within the ruined walls. These things, with the fact that our Richard held his court in Askelon, while the white-faced hill which forms a conspicuous object in the western part of the plain is the "Blanche Garde" of the crusading chroniclers, and witnessed his chief adventures,* throw additional interest around these hoary ruins. Blackened and rent as they are, they seem to stand as frowning monuments to the vanity of man.

* Stanley, p. 257.

It had been proclaimed of old that Askelon was thus to perish. Though one of the strongest fortresses of Syria, it was written, "How can the sword of the Lord be quiet, seeing that he hath given it a charge against Askelon, and against the sea-shore?" "I will cut off him that holdeth the sceptre from Askelon." "It shall be a desolation." "It shall not be inhabited." By these and similar predictions did Jeremiah and Amos indicate the coming doom of the strong city; and in due time it came. Though it was one of the proudest satrapies of the lords of the Philistines, not an inhabitant is now found in the ancient city. The sea is gradually ebbing away from it. "The lofty towers of Askelon," a traveller exclaims, "lie scattered on the ground, and the ruins within its walls do not shelter one human being." They exhibit, however, a strange medley of pieces of wall, huge building stones, fragments of columns, marble, granite, porphyry, and limestone rubbish in prodigious heaps. The huts of the modern inhabitants contrast strangely with the enormous masses of heavy wall which are still left. These are remains of the Herodian and Crusading ages; but the quadrangular castle, in particular, shows "in its gigantic remains what Askelon must have been, and how dreadful must have been its overthrow."*

Among these ruins, so black and scarred that traveller seems to vie with traveller in describing their gloomy desolation, twenty fountains of excellent water, once buried in ruins, have been recently dug up. Patches of

* Van de Velde, ii. 179.

wheat, barley, olive-trees, almonds, pomegranates, and other productions, betoken the richness of the soil and its capability for future luxuriance. Well might emperors like Saladin, or kings like Richard, contend for such a place; and well might Baldwin II. besiege it, though in vain. Dreary as it now appears, there are unquestionable tokens all around that the place was once goodly and greatly to be desired. Its sanctuaries may be desolate, and the Christian churches once erected there are in ruins like the rest. Its neighbourhood may have been the scene of some of the most terrible slaughters that redden the history of man. The chronicler may be able to record that on one occasion, for twelve miles, there was a continued slaughter of Moslems by the Franks. Or when the King of England led the Crusaders to victory, "a march of 100 miles, from Acre to Askelon, may have been a great and perpetual battle of eleven days." Of all these the ruins before us seem a befitting memorial,—they awe by their mass, they sadden by their gloom and the dreary memories of carnage which they awaken. Yet it will not be always so, and the mind gladly seeks a refuge from the certain woes of the past in the probable brightness of the future.

Such, then, is a glimpse of the ruins of Askelon. Its history from first to last, amid all the vicissitudes of bloodshed, of triumph or disaster, of royal grandeur or down-trodden oppression, forms a signal chapter in the history of man. Yet, even while we gaze upon these ruins, we cannot feel that Askelon has existed in vain. Nay, it wrought out, blindly no doubt, but thoroughly, some of the great purposes of God. These purposes are

never thwarted; they are never turned aside; they are never so much as impeded; and one feels that it is true among the ruins of Askelon, as it is true elsewhere, that in Jehovah's hands all events conspire, none of them conflict—

> "As the Incarnate Mystery's dying cry,
> 'Tis finish'd!' was his triumph over death;
> So oft his cause is crowned with victory
> Though they who love Him buy it with life's breath."

True, a curse was pronounced upon Askelon, and it lies to-day in ruins, a monument of the truth of the Supreme. True also, as Lord Lindsay has recorded, the curse upon Askelon might be exhausted before it became the residence of the Herods or the court of the Crusaders, and there may be some danger in over-pressing the argument from prophecy in connection with such ruins. But that conceded, enough remains to show that Askelon has for ages been a silent yet an eloquent advocate for the truth of God. We cannot wander amid its grim and half Cyclopean masses without feeling that great has been the fall, because great was the guilt, of such a place.

ASHDOD.

ASHDOD, now Esdud, and called Azotus in the Acts of the Apostles, in connection with the history of Philip the deacon, stands near the sea-coast, about 20 miles N.E. from Gaza, and 10 or 12 N.E. from Askelon. Like these two cities, it was a chief place of the Philistines, and famed among idolaters for the worship of Dagon,

"The Fish-god." It was there that the idol fell helpless and demolished before the ark of the Lord, which had been taken from the Hebrews by the Philistines, and there that other woes befell the people in connection with that capture. At the partition of the Holy Land among the twelve tribes, Ashdod fell to the lot of Judah; but that tribe never got permanent possession of the place. On the contrary, it continued a snare to the Jews, and gave occasion to great scandal at some periods of their history (Neh. xiii.). One reason, no doubt, why Ashdod never was subdued was the great strength of the place, and the possession of it was contested by all the conquerors who sought to make Palestine their tributary. Assyria held it for a time, and it is more than note-worthy that this comparatively obscure Philistine town sustained the longest siege that is on record. For nine-and-twenty years did Psammeticus, king of Egypt, beleaguer it. But strong as were its defences, or intrepid its defenders, the prophets of God had predicted the ruin of Ashdod, and it fell. Jeremiah, Amos, Zephaniah, and Zechariah, all spoke of its coming desolation, when "the inhabitant was to be cut off from Ashdod;" and in due time the Maccabees arose to verify the prophecy. It subsequently revived, however; in the days of Herod it was again signalized; and when Christianity had a foothold in Palestine, Ashdod was made the seat of a bishop. But it is now little more than an Arab village, though the site is marked by ruins, by broken arches, by fragments of marble pillars partly buried, by dilapidated capitals, cornices, and other mementoes of a magnificence that has all passed

away. The position is said to be picturesque. Olive gardens and date-palms overtopping the rest of the vegetation, give some appearance of freshness to the place. Two large pools of water near the village lend a further interest, as water ever does in the East. But nothing can redeem the sea-coast of Palestine from its utter desolation till a new rule be inaugurated, and God's mercy be made known, as his judgments have for ages been felt. We cannot look upon the sea-board of Palestine, indeed, as anything but a land asleep, or rather, to carry out the figure, as a land oppressed by a terrible incubus. Be that removed, not by any miraculous interposition, but just by giving free course to the word of God, and the moral desert will speedily blossom, the sandy mounts will grow green, and the rose of Sharon will bloom in its native valley once more.

V.—THE RUINS OF JERUSALEM.

We ought perhaps to search for moral rather than material ruins in "The City of the Great King." It was there that a nation's conscience grew seared, and here that that nation made shipwreck of a faith first announced from heaven, and attested by Almighty Power. It was there that the blood of Christian martyrs, and more, touched the blood of the holy prophets; and there that a people's guilt culminated in the appalling cry, a cry whose echoes are still ringing in woe in the hearts of myriads,—"His blood be on us and on our children!"

Though Jerusalem be now trodden down of the Gentiles, and though its former glory be gone, there are fewer remains of ancient times existing there than in some provincial towns in Palestine. Controversy has thrown doubts and shadows around many a spot, and the student of Jerusalem is sometimes tempted to seek relief from the pain of local disputations in a general scepticism. The very name of the city is an arena. Jebus or Jebusi, Jerusalem or Jerushalaim, Salem or Solyma, Hierosolyma, Jebus-Salem, and still other names, are applied to the capital of the Holy Land,—not to mention Zion, or Ælia Capitolina in ancient times, and El-Khuds, or Beit-el-Makhuddis among Mohammedans. We may safely discard all these, however, and abide by the name by which the place is best known,—a place which has been historical for eight-and-thirty centuries,

and which was at least 1168 years of age when Rome was only a collection of huts.

Though the visible ruins of Jerusalem may not be so numerous as we might at first sight suppose, yet a thousand spots are invested with sacredness to the uttermost. Let us take our stand, in thought, on a summit of Olivet, from 918 to 1310 yards from St. Stephen's Gate, according to the footpath we select for our ascent, and from that gentle elevation we see, on the south, the Mount of Corruption, where Solomon sinned; Beth-haccerem, where the bones of the truculent Herod were buried; and then beyond these, undulation swelling upon undulation, forming the hill country of Judea. On the east one beholds the mountains of Moab and Ammon, with the ruins of Kir-Moab. Pisgah *is* seen, though we cannot absolutely decide which summit in the range forms that Mount. Then nearer at hand is the Dead Sea, with all its dark associations; and the Jordan with more numerous associations still. To the north is Mizpah, Gibeon, the valley of Ajalon, Michmash, Ramah, and Anathoth. But venerable as these names may be, there is something more venerable still at your feet,—it is Jerusalem. There was Golgotha, although it is now unknown; near these walls was Gethsemane; within them were a thousand spots which the Redeemer's presence hallowed: and with such associations pressing on the mind, one cares not, for a while, to think of aught besides. Gethsemane alone, for the time, absorbs all that the heart can feel.

It may tend to show with what pains all that relates to Jerusalem and its various localities has been ex-

plored, if we submit the following measurements. In order to fix the distance travelled by the Great Sufferer, and the places, between the Upper Room and Golgotha, visited by Him just previous to his crucifixion, Dr. Barclay* has said that,—

From Zion, where the Upper Room was, to Gethsemane, was from	850 to 900	yards.
From Gethsemane to the House of Annas,	2300 to 2400	,,
Thence to the High Priest's Palace,	1400 to 2100	,,
Thence to the Council House,	200 to 400	,,
Thence to the Prætorium (in Antonia),	350 to 400	,,
Thence to Herod's Palace,	950 to 1000	,,
Thence back to the Prætorium,	950 to 1000	,,
Thence to Golgotha,	500 to 600	,,
	Or from 7500 to 8800	yards.

But some of the places here referred to are only conjecturally known, and we can only in general terms refer to the antiquities of the place. It is well known, then, that a large portion of modern Jerusalem is built over the ruins or debris of the ancient city. In digging for foundations, or in other excavations, many feet of rubbish, in some cases forty or fifty, have to be cleared ere a firm foundation can be obtained. The Tyropæon has been to a great extent filled up with ruins and the accumulated rubbish of ages, and in some places such accumulations have turned a wady into a plain. But instead of dwelling vaguely upon such topics, we proceed to enumerate some of the more remarkable ruins recorded in history or still known to exist.

* City of the Great King, p. 84.

1. Josephus tells of a Gallery, or Xystus—a covered colonnade, which stood in the Valley of the Tyropæon, at the base of the north-east cliff of Mount Zion, and just below the royal palace. It was built about 175 B.C. The colonnade, it is conjectured, surrounded a quadrangular area in that region of the old city, adorned with fountains and reservoirs. It is believed to have been built as a gymnasium by the infamous high priest, Jason, who purchased the privilege of erecting it at the price of 150 talents. It was long appropriated to athletic exercises, in imitation of the heathen nations, but became at last the great gathering-place,—the Forum of Jerusalem. The people were assembled there when that Herod who was "almost persuaded to be a Christian" addressed them, while his half-sister, the noted Bernice, stood near. Here, also, the Jews were convened when Titus their conqueror harangued them from the cloisters of the Temple. It is conjectured that Peter's congregation on the day of Pentecost also met there. But whatever truth there may be in these conjectures regarding the colonnade, it is an undistinguished ruin now, buried deep under the debris of that city which has seen fire and sword, pillage and bloodshed, again, and again, and again do their work within its walls, till, it is said, on one occasion 600,000 dead were carried out by the gates.

"Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thy cross thou bearest now;
An iron yoke is on thy neck, and blood is on thy brow:
The golden crown, the crown of truth, thou didst reject as dross,
And now thy cross is on thee laid,—*the Crescent is thy Cross!*"

But, 2. One of the most remarkable of all the ruins of

Jerusalem is found in the substructions of what men begin to call the Tyropæon Bridge. The King's Palace stood of old on Mount Zion, which was separated from Moriah, the Temple Mount, by the Tyropæon Valley, and the monarch could not pass from the one to the other except by a circuitous descent and ascent. But to remedy that inconvenience, the founder of Tadmor in the Wilderness, the builder of the Temple, and of other magnificent structures, caused a bridge to be built across the valley, connecting Zion on the west with Moriah on the east. This, it is believed, is one of the wonders which astonished the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings x. 5); but, on the other hand, some dispute the existence of the structure in Solomon's day. Owing to the piles of rubbish long collected at the base of Zion, no remains of the bridge are visible there; but on the eastern side considerable portions exist. The valley is here about 118 yards wide, and that must have been about the length of the structure. Its breadth was 51½ feet, its length at least 350, and the remains enable us to ascertain with perfect accuracy the span of each of the arches, or 41 feet, supposing them to have been equal. Some of the blocks which remain as the spring of a broken arch are 5¾ feet thick, and vary from 21 feet to 25 in length.

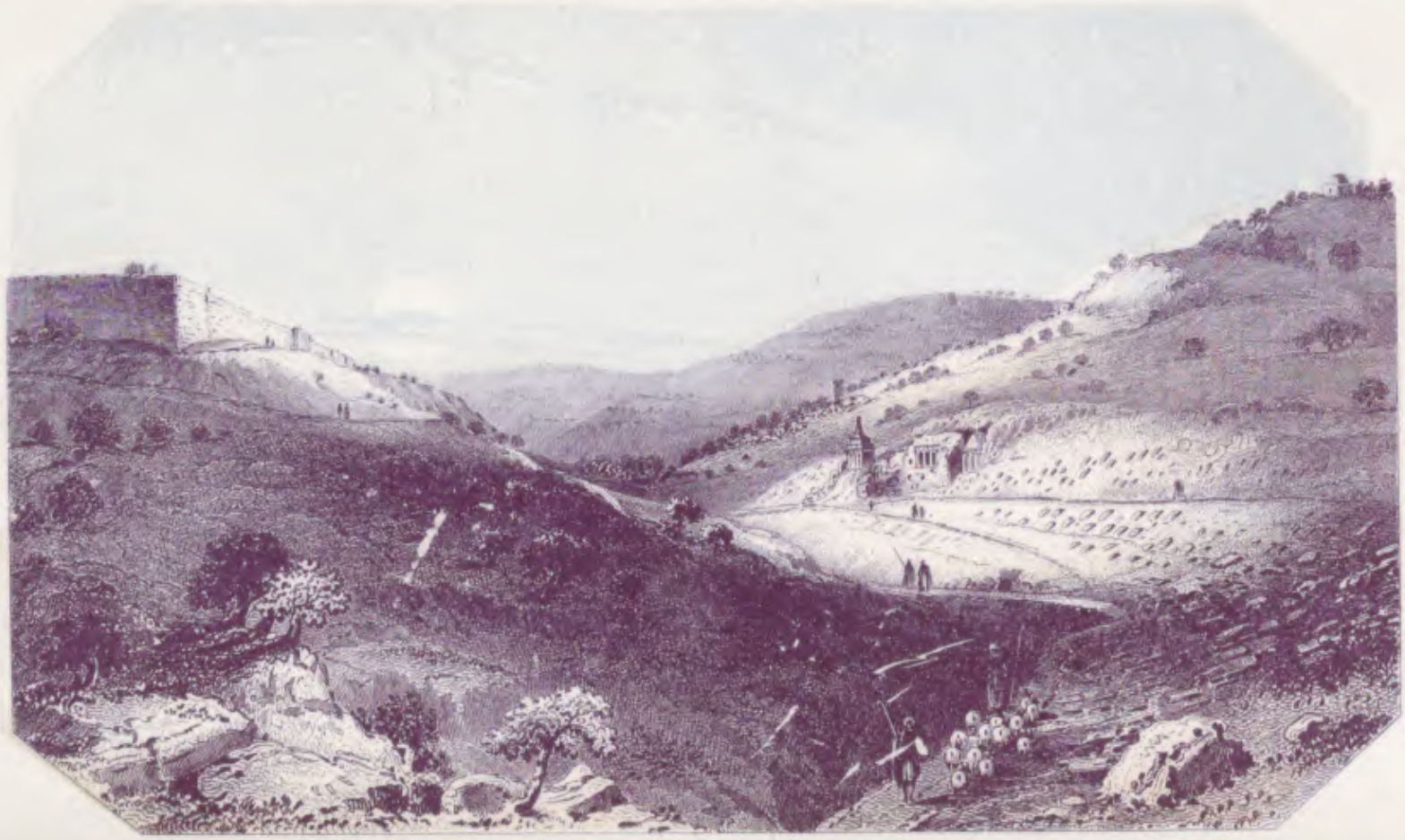
The discovery of these remains, which we owe to Dr. Robinson, has led to much discussion, for some deny that the arch was in use so early as the days of Solomon. But its discovery in Chaldea and Assyria refutes that objection. The arch is found, moreover, under Solomon's Pools, near Jerusalem; so that we can now cherish the hope that in examining these long-concealed

remains upon Mount Moriah we are in contact with a relic of Solomon's time, a portion alike of his Palace and his Temple.

The bridge now mentioned was at the north-west corner of the Temple; but another structure, called the Bridge of the Red Heifer, is believed to have stood on the east side, spanning the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and connecting the Temple Mount with the Mount of Olives. According to the Mishna, says Dr. Barclay, the red heifer was conducted through the eastern gate of the Temple, across the Kedron, to be burned on the Mount of Olives. By the same path, it is said, the scape-goat was led away to the wilderness, and though some allege that a temporary structure was raised every year for these purposes, others explicitly and circumstantially say, "They built at no small cost a foot causeway, upheld with arches, from the Mount of the Temple to the Mount of Olives, upon which they led away the red heifer to be burned. It was double arched, arches upon arches,—one arch upon two arches, so that the foot of one arch stood upon two arches that were there underneath it."

3. We might now advert to some ruins which are found in one of the streets of Jerusalem, supposed to be the remains of "Millo in the city of David." The walls there are six feet thick; arches are also traced, and other tokens of strong underground work, now utterly defaced. Or we might mention the remains discovered at the Damascus Gate, and connected with it, supposed to belong to the times of Solomon, and said to be the best specimens of ancient Jewish mural

Mount Moriah *Garden of Gethsemane* *Tomb of Absolom* *Mount of Olives*



VALLEY OF JEHOSAPHAT.

structures which the battering-ram and the tooth of time have spared. But we pass from these to speak of the Tower of Hippicus,—the best preserved of all the ruins in Jerusalem. It stands near the Jaffa Gate, and is now generally known as the Tower of David. Time, the elements, and man have reduced it to the height of only about 40 feet. It is entirely solid, at least no hollow has been detected in the pile, which has bid defiance alike to the battering-ram, to cannon-balls, to prying curiosity, and the wasting elements, for nineteen centuries. It is 70 feet on one side by 56 on the other; but the stones which compose it are much smaller than those of the Temple wall, and altogether it is obvious that Hippicus is less ancient than many other structures in the city. The Crusaders have added some 15 or 20 feet to the original 40, and Josephus says "that over the solid building .... there was a reservoir 20 cubits deep; over which there was a house of two storeys, whose height was 25 cubits, and turrets all round of three cubits high; so that the entire height was 80 cubits."

4. But few of the remains of ancient Jerusalem can be more interesting than its Tombs, and some of these we now proceed to describe. It is well known that at several places in the environs of the city the rocks are honey-combed with cave-sepulchres. At some other spots, as in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the grave-stones appear to pave the ground. But a Jewish tomb of some mark has been thus described. It is found at El Messahney, and is hewn in the solid rock, the façade being dressed so as to imitate the bevelled stones of the

ancient Temple wall. Though time here has done its work, much of the pile continues fresh and sharp in its decorations, as if it were only a thing of yesterday. Some would carry the date of this tomb back to the time of King Saul, and though it now forms the winter abode of a goat-herd and also the fold of his flock, it bears the marks of having formed the resting-place of some distinguished person. It contains seventeen niches. The style is Roman Doric, and the conjecture which ascribes it to the age of Saul cannot therefore be correct.

The Tombs of the Judges, so called, form another remarkable group of rock-hewn sepulchres. The door-way is surmounted by a sculptured Grecian pediment, and leads into the main room, which contains thirteen recesses. Another door-way conducts from that to a second apartment containing nine repositories. By a stair there is a descent into a lower room which contains ten or twelve receptacles. About sixty niches are found in these catacombs, but tradition, exaggerating as usual, first makes them seventy-two, and then calls the ruin the resting-place of the Sanhedrim.

The Tomb of Helena, queen of Adiabene, who became a convert to Judaism about A.D. 44, has given rise to much antiquarian controversy. Without discussing any questionable points, we refer to that tomb which appears to possess the best claim to the honour of once containing the dust of the queen. There are loose rocks and rubbish on the spot, indicating a structure above ground, as some suppose this monument to have been. In the sepulchre there are three niches much superior to the rest, supposed to have

belonged to the queen and others of equal rank. These, however, and all similar structures, must give place to the Tombs of the Kings, the Kubr-el-Moluk, or Kubr-es-Sultan,—a costly and imposing structure, which has given rise to not a few discussions. These we omit and only describe the remains of the cemetery. It is situated just a mile to the north of the Damascus Gate. On the west side of a low court, about 90 feet square, and more than 20 feet deep, the catacombs are entered through a splendid though dilapidated portico and hall 13½ feet high, and 28½ feet wide. From this apartment a door less than three feet high opens into an anteroom about 19 feet square. Another door leads from that apartment into another chamber which is 13½ feet square, where there are about twelve niches for the dead. In a storey still lower there is a room 10 feet by 12; and several other chambers of a similar construction, all furnished with recesses for entombment, are described as existing in these royal vaults. In one of them sarcophagi have been found, which are now for the most part reduced to fragments. Large pieces of richly panelled stone doors are also found scattered about the rooms. These doors swung on mortise-and-tenon hinges of stone, and the jambs of the interior door-ways have such an inclination that the ponderous doors closed from the force of gravity. The outer door was closed by an unique contrivance, which, however, it is difficult to explain without a drawing. The niches here are about thirty in number.

The portal of this subterranean abode was ornamented by pillars and pilasters. The perpendicular

surface of the rock above the portal was richly adorned with classic mouldings, clusters of grapes and wreaths of flowers; and so difficult is it to assign the style to any recognised standard, that some have invented a name and given it the designation of Romanized Hebro-Grecian. The whole range of these marvellous catacombs, let it be remembered, was chiselled from the solid rock; and with that in view, we may readily concede to such vast excavations the rank of one of the greatest wonders of Jerusalem.

But what were they? Not the tombs of the Kings of Judah; these were on Mount Zion. Not of the Maccabees; they were buried at Modin. Perhaps the tomb of Helena, already mentioned, say some. Perhaps the resting-place of some of Herod's line, say others. But we must wait for further discoveries, should any ever be made, before we can finally decide, and meanwhile we only remark that the decorations of these catacombs are all of a joyous kind. No souvenirs of death are there—but roses and garlands, as if the associations of the dead were rather with festoons and flowers than with the cypress or a skeleton. If they were believers in Him who is the Life, they were right. *Their* "place of peace" should not be transmuted into woe.

The Tombs of the Prophets, called also of the Apostles, form another labyrinth of sepulchres, excavated on the slope of Olivet. They extend about 28 yards from north to south, and 30 or 40 from east to west. About thirty niches are still accessible, but many of the passages are so choked with rubbish that the whole

JEWS' WAILING PLACE.

JEWS' WAILING PLACE.

space cannot be explored. They have been regarded as in some way connected with the idolatrous worship of Baal, while others surmise that they may have belonged to the School of the Prophets.

Besides these, Jehoshaphat has a tomb assigned to him by tradition in the glen of the Kedron. So has *some* Zechariah; so has St. James, and so has the rebel Absalom. Of these, we mention first the alleged Tomb of Zechariah. It is a monolith cut from the rock, from which it is separated on three sides by a passage several yards wide. Its appearance is that of a four-sided pyramid, mounted on a cube about 20 feet high. At least a fourth part of the lower portion is buried in rubbish; but the Ionic capitals which crown the pillars and pilasters give a certain pleasing air to the pile. As no entrance has been detected, this monolith is supposed to be solid; and though the architecture is not imposing, the effect is said to be highly impressive. Strange that the history or special design of such a work should be utterly unknown!

Like the tomb just described, Absalom's Pillar, called also Tantour Pharoun, is monolithic, being cut from the rock which skirts Mount Olivet in the same way as the former monument. About a fourth part of the pile is buried in rubbish, but its height may be about 50 feet, and its breadth 23 or 24. Some of the ornaments are Doric, while the capitals of the pillars are Ionic. The interior appears never to have been finished, and it is well known that neither Christian nor Moslem ever passes this structure without casting a stone to indicate the indignation felt against the rebel son. We

need not reason against the genuineness of this ruin. Nothing but all-devouring tradition could assign such a pile to such an age as that of Absalom; and the different names attached to the cenotaph at different times are sufficient to provoke our suspicions. Hezekiah, Uzziah, Isaiah, Jehoshaphat, Simon the Just, and others, have had their names associated with it.

It were tedious even to catalogue the traditional tombs of this valley; but one remark may illustrate how little faith can be placed in the traditions which assign their modern names. In 2 Chron. xxi. 1, we read "that king Jehoshaphat was buried with his fathers in the city of David;" but a legend, on the other hand, insists we shall believe that he was buried in the valley which bears his name. It even leads us to his very tomb. But that and the titles given to perhaps all the rest of the ruins which line the valley, sober truth compels us to discard.

Among the ruins of Jerusalem we may also place the fountains and reservoirs, though at first sight the collocation may appear incongruous. The fountains under the Temple, the aqueducts, the lower Pool of Gihon—which, when full, presented an area of nearly four acres of water—as well as others, are all associated with remains of ancient architecture which proclaim the elaborate pains with which the city was supplied with water. Here, however, the first place is due to the Pool of Siloam, which, next to Olivet, may be regarded as the most popular and most veritable remnant of former times. It is now known to be not an independent spring, but only the outflow of one further up the val-

ley, called the Virgin's Fount, through a channel cut in the rock under the hill Ophel, and traced by Dr. Robinson with some danger. The present pool and its surrounding ruins, consisting mainly of six pillars of Jerusalem marble, the remains of a basilica over the pool, are no doubt the representatives of the place as it existed in the days of Isaiah, Nehemiah, and the Saviour. There is reason to believe, however, that it is much reduced in size, though still 50 feet long and 14½ feet wide at one end, and 17 at the other. It is a placid sheet of water, fed by some intermittent fountain; and around it many plants, nourished by the water, give verdure and beauty to the spot. Both the past and the present—both Isaiah's allusion to the waters "which go softly," and the Saviour's injunction to the blind man to wash in Siloam and receive his sight, as well as the goodly green which beautifies the spot—combine to render it one of the fairest near Jerusalem.

The Pool of Bethesda, unhappily another scene of controversy, is also another spot which the power of Jesus made illustrious. But where was it? Some describe it as existing near the site where the Castle of Antonia is known to have stood; and there to this day, not far from St. Stephen's Gate, a tank, 360 feet in length, 130 feet wide, and 75 feet deep, is found, with some ruins which *appear* to be the remains of the porches mentioned by John (v. 2). Others, however, utterly discard this idea, and deem that tank or trench a portion of the moat which surrounded the castle. Some, again, regard Siloam as the true Bethesda; while another opinion makes the Fountain of the Virgin, with which

Siloam is connected, the scene of Christ's miracle on the poor paralytic. Others still give the honour to a little tank called Birket-el-Hejjeh, outside the city walls, to the north of St. Stephen's Gate. But the most recent investigations would lead to the conclusion that the remains of Bethesda, as well as the pool itself, are covered over with ruins in a space immediately east from the Temple. We must be content, then, for the present to remain as ignorant of the site of the real Bethesda as we are of the nature of that power which the angel imparted to its waters to render them healing, eighteen centuries ago (John v. 2–9).

It were tedious to plunge into the discussions raised by topographers regarding the walls and gates of Jerusalem. The four modern gates—the Jaffa or Bethlehem on the west, the Damascus on the north, St. Stephen's on the east, and the Zion or David's Gate on the south—are respectable in point of architecture. But the only gate that we need specify is the Golden Gate —the Bab-ed-Dahareyeh of the Arabs, the Porta Aurea of the Crusaders and others. It is a work apparently of Roman times, and stands on the east side of the city, but has been shut up for many generations; and one reason at least is manifest—the Bedawin on that side of the city might be too near or too offensive to admit of a gate 55 feet wide being often opened. The interior recess occasioned by the wall which closes up the gate is used by the Moslem as a place of prayer; and many traditions are connected with the gate. Some say that by it the Saviour rode in triumph into the city; the Emperor Heraclius is reported to have done the same

when he brought back the fabled Holy Cross, which he had recovered from the Persians; and finally, some allege that this gate was shut by Omar himself, and will never be re-opened till the Saviour return. At no great distance, part of an ancient pillar projecting from the wall above the Valley of Jehoshaphat is regarded by Moslems as the seat on which Mohammed is to judge the world.—Some fragments of other gates, and vast stones in various parts of the Temple wall, are mentioned among the ruins of Jerusalem; but on these we need not dwell.

The Wailing Place of the Jews, however, is a portion of the ruins to which the attention of travellers is always turned. It occupies a space of about 40 yards in length. The stones in the wall, like others in the vicinity, are dressed in the form supposed to be peculiar to the buildings of ancient Jerusalem; and there, within the precincts of what was their Temple, the Jews assemble to mourn, and wail, and pray. Though fancy-pictures of the scene be presented by some, it is unquestionably one of the saddest spectacles in this city of sad memories, to behold the children of Abraham thus brought low, the victims of oppression, if we should not rather say of their own unbelief.*

We have already said that the ruins of ancient Jerusalem are for the most part buried under the present city; and of these we can, of course, only get casual

* Dr. Barclay has described some remarkable remains, apparently ancient, at the south-east corner of the Haram, as well as many other portions of the substructions of the Great Mosque. Indeed his subterranean discoveries are in many respects remarkable. Some of them may require confirmation, but even now they are eminently interesting.

glimpses. Yet in some respects the under-ground world of Jerusalem has marvels as well as that portion which sees the sun. Under the hill Bezetha, for example, Dr. Barclay traced a series of chambers, scooped in some degree by nature, but more by art, in the rock. There he found many meandering passages leading to immense halls, as white, he says, as the driven snow, and supported by colossal pillars of irregular shape, sustaining the roofs of the various grottoes. It is a quarry, and the pillars have been left to prevent the sinking of the city. There are marks of the cross there, indicating that the place was known to Christians; but the jackal and other wild animals now reign undisturbed in the cave. Clambering over huge blocks of stone and piles of chippings, indicates too painfully to explorers that they are in a vast quarry; and Dr. Barclay says, "This, without doubt, is the very magazine from which much of the Temple rock was hewn—the pit from which was taken the material for the silent growth of the Temple." He even fears that when the roof gives way, as it is slowly doing, much of the city may be laid in ruins. At the extreme end of the last chamber blocks of stone were found half quarried, and still attached by one side to the rock, where the marks of the tools were as fresh and distinct as if the workmen had but yesterday left the work. The length of these excavations was reckoned rather more than a quarter of a mile, and the greatest breadth less than a furlong. Dr. Robinson is of opinion that this vast cave carries us back to the times of Solomon; so that, bit by bit, the Jerusalem of our day becomes

united to the Jerusalem of two or three thousand years ago; though many years must elapse ere that can be thoroughly accomplished, unless some of the Eastern political complications, more speedily than men suppose, hasten on the grand consummation towards which all things are majestically tending.

—And we thus close our glance at the ruins of Jerusalem. Well may we resort to her own Place of Wailing, and there exclaim—

"Reft of thy sons, amid thy foes forlorn,
Mourn, widowed Queen! forgotten Zion, mourn!
* * * *
No prophet bards thy glittering courts among
Wake the full lyre and swell the tide of song;
But lawless Force and meagre Want are there,
And the quick-darting eye of restless Fear;
While cold Oblivion, 'mid the ruins laid,
Folds his dark wing beneath the ivy shade."

—The ruins of Baalbec are in many respects a mystery; Palmyra, at least in vastness, surpasses even Baalbec; Athens, Poestum, Rome, and other scenes of decay, appeal to our pity and touch our hearts: but for Jerusalem—the city of the Great King, the joy of the whole earth, for many generations the focal point of heavenly light—we can only, like her own captives of old, hang the harp upon the willows and weep. Wherever we turn, the eye seems to rest on desolation. It is a city clothed with a pall; and yet our affections cling to it as to the most sacred spot on earth. It has long been wasted by the self-imprecated curse. When will the blessing come? Will Jerusalem soon, or at all, be made a praise in the whole earth?

VI.—THE RUINS OF CÆSAREA.

THERE were two cities in Palestine which bore this name; the one upon a rocky ledge on the sea-coast between Acre and Jaffa, about 55 miles from Jerusalem; the other at the base of Jebel esh-Sheikh: it is to the former that we now refer. The Engraving will give some idea of the present condition of the place, but it can convey none regarding its former grandeur, its marble columns sunk in hundreds in the sea, and other relics of prostrate greatness. It was the metropolis of the Roman Palestine, and rose to eminence about twenty-two years before the birth of Christ, when Herod the Great, who did so much both to embellish Judea and to oppress its people, founded the city where Strato's Tower had stood before—about 35 miles from Jaffa. Like the harbour of Jaffa and other places along the coast of the Mediterranean, the port of Cæsarea was dangerous, or at some seasons inaccessible. One of Herod's first labours, therefore, was to surround the bay with a mole—which is reckoned one of the most stupendous works of antiquity. The south and west sides of the harbour were thus defended, while the entrance was from the north; and once within the huge breakwater, likened by some to that at Plymouth, ships rode in safety, however the tempest might rage. The foundations were laid twenty fathoms deep in the ocean; the stones, brought from a great distance, were of prodigious size; and everything betokened the vast

conceptions as well as the exhaustless resources of the truculent Herod,—the Henry VIII. of antiquity. The place was named after his patron, Augustus.

But these were not the only decorations of Cæsarea by its royal founder. A temple dedicated to Cæsar, a theatre, an amphitheatre, and numerous statues, were all crowded into the city during the twelve years which were employed in building it. The place was subsequently raised by Vespasian to the rank of a Roman colony, with various immunities; and as the population was partly Jewish and partly Gentile, disputes between them were both rife and bloody. When the Jewish wars with the Romans began, 20,000 Jews, inhabitants of Cæsarea, were slaughtered in that city.

In the New Testament we find many references to this place, some of which are exquisitely touching. There Cornelius was converted, and the gospel thrown open to the Gentiles, (Acts x.) There Herod Agrippa, who was hailed as a god and accepted of the adulation, was smitten for his pride by a mortal disease from a heavenly hand, (Acts xii.) There Philip the evangelist resided, (Acts xxi.) There Paul pled before Felix; there he was detained as a prisoner for about two years; and there also he pled before Festus and King Agrippa, (see Acts xxiii. xxiv. xxv.)

But of all the waste places of Palestine none is more completely desolate now than Cæsarea, the modern Kaiseraeh. Near the end of the mole the remains of an ancient castle are found, which are sometimes compared to those of St. Andrews in Scotland; and miles of ground in the vicinity are covered with ruins, with fragments

of former magnificence and tokens of former grandeur; but the tangled grass, the thistles, the noxious weeds, and heaps of ruins, render it impossible to trace the outline of the city.

> "Weed and wild-flower grown
> Matted and massed together, hillocks heaped
> On what were chambers, arch-crushed columns strewn
> In fragments,"—

all proclaim how complete is the overthrow, how perfect the desolation. Two aqueducts in the neighbourhood still attest how thorough the arrangements of the place and neighbourhood were: but all, all have perished, and the place where 20,000 Jews were butchered, and a mortal hailed as a god, is now occupied only by snakes, scorpions, lizards, wild boars, and jackals. Saracen and Crusader were alternately enriched by its spoils or defended by its strongholds; but the prophet's truth has prevailed against the pride of man, and "the land is desolate from all that are therein, because of the violence of all them that dwelt therein." A recent traveller, while riding along a beaten track among the ruins, saw "a large serpent darting across it, through the rustling plants; and at the sight, his horse started back and literally shuddered under him." Some ruins resembling those of a cathedral rise among the green mounds; but the pride of Roman, of Saracen, of Templar, and of Turk, is all prostrate now. Cæsarea is "desolate without an inhabitant," and all its glory is in the dust: another study for the misanthrope; another proof, if such a proof were wanted, that man's handiworks as well as himself are deeply stamped by

Heaven with vanity and vexation. These scanty remains speak loudly of such scenes as the prophet saw

> "When by the vision led
> His eye surveyed the dark idolatries of alienated Judah."

These fragments of marble and granite columns only help to render the ruin as saddening as they proclaim it to be entire.—Had the truth which Paul preached there been welcomed and retained, what might have been the lot of Cæsarea now?

—There are ruins which awe the traveller by their grandeur, like Baalbec or Palmyra. There are others which depress him by their completeness, like those of Warka or of Sūsa. There are others still which sadden him by their dreary desolation—their nameless, dateless condition, like those remains by which, as we shall see, Mount Lebanon is girdled or studded. But Cæsarea appears to partake of the nature of all these. Its crowds of broken pillars speak of former grandeur; its utter demolition, at many points, speaks to us of the thoroughness of its retribution. The dreariness of its heaps, without a name, proclaims the blight that has passed over the whole; and did we seek a scene to strike a meditative mind dumb at the sight of what God has wrought, we know none, even in Palestine, more fit for that purpose than the prostrate Cæsarea.

VII.—THE RUINS OF TYRE.

THAT was a fearful display of the atrocity of despotic power, when Mohammed Ali, Pasha of Egypt, swept 250,000 men, women, and children, from the Delta, to dig the Mahmoudieh Canal. He allowed them provisions only for a month; their implements of labour were few; yet, under pain of death by starvation, the canal must be dug in that brief period! The men worked with the energy of despair; children bore away the earth in tiny handfuls; nursing mothers laid aside their children and toiled, for had they halted to nourish them the scourge would have mingled their blood with nature's aliment. The work was not finished in the time allotted by the despot; famine soon appeared, and five-and-twenty thousand are said to have found a grave on the banks of that canal which conducts the waters of the Nile to Alexandria.

Five-and-twenty thousand! Yet what is even that holocaust to despotism compared with the myriads immolated in battles and sieges?—We are now to glance at the ruins of a place famous of old for its sieges and its slaughters, in one case amounting to 50,000, either butchered or sold as slaves.

Tyre, now Sur, a Rock, was founded by a colony from Sidon, and is hence called "the daughter of Sidon," though it rose to be itself the planter of colonies like Carthage and Cadiz. Its foundation took place about 240 years before the building of Solomon's Temple. It

is commonly supposed that the original city stood upon the mainland; and it was already a stronghold when Canaan was divided among the tribes, (Josh. xix.) It had become more noted still in the days of David; and when Solomon reigned at Jerusalem the Tyrians inhabited the island,—the rock. In the year 720 B.C. the chief city was on the island, while the portion on the mainland already bore the name of Old Tyre. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, besieged or blockaded the island for five years, but without success. Nebuchadnezzar, the Bonaparte of antiquity, afterwards besieged it for thirteen years; and then came the memorable siege under Alexander the Great, about 322 B.C. He took the island after seven months of labour and struggle, and succeeded only by bringing wood from Lebanon for constructing a mole or causeway from the mainland to the walls of the island city. For that purpose Old Tyre was razed for the sake of its stones. The place was subsequently besieged and taken by Antigonus after a period of fourteen months spent in that undertaking. Eventually Tyre passed into the hands of the Romans. It was under their dominion in the days of the Redeemer's sojourn here, and we know that he and his followers sometimes frequented "the coasts of Tyre." It afterwards became the seat of a Christian bishopric, and in the fourth century it is described as trading "with all the world." But in common with the rest of Phœnicia and the East, it felt the desolating force of the Moslem and Mameluke power, and was ravaged again and again during the wars of the Crusades.

The Crusaders had held Jerusalem for five-and-twenty years ere they could lay siege to Tyre. It was then strongly fortified, at some places with double walls, nay even with treble defences, some of which are said to have been 150 feet high, so important was the occupation of the place. But in June 1125 Tyre was delivered up to the Crusaders, and for more than a century and a half it remained in their possession; strictly guarded for its safety, but energetic as before in its trading. After the battle of Hattin, which laid Palestine at the feet of Saladin, Tyre was besieged by that emperor; but he was forced to raise the siege in 1188. The Sultan Bibars, under various politic pretexts, gradually hemmed in the power of Tyre, and in the year 1291, after the Sultan of Egypt and Damascus had taken Ptolemais, the Frank inhabitants of Tyre embarked on board their ships, and abandoned their stronghold to the Saracens.

Not long subsequent to these events Tyre is described as fortified by quadruple walls, which on the land side were connected with a citadel which had seven towers, and was then deemed impregnable. But it soon became a ruin, and sank deeper and deeper in its desolation. It is described in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as only a heap of rubbish, consisting of broken arches, tottering walls, and fallen towers, with a few miserable inhabitants occupying the vaults among the ruins. Attempts were made to restore it to some of its former importance, but Maundrell saw "not so much as one entire house left," while only a few poor fishermen found a

narbour among its cells. About the year 1740 considerable quantities of grain were exported from Tyre, yet only a handful of inhabitants could be found there. In 1751, Hasselquist described Tyre "as a miserable village having scarcely more than ten inhabitants . . . who lived by fishing." In 1766 a partial revival began. Twenty years thereafter, Volney spoke of Tyre as consisting of wretched huts covering a third part of the peninsula,—that is the rock joined to the mainland by the mole; and its trade has continued in some measure to revive. After all, however, its glory has departed, and even Tyre, with all its wealth, its commerce, and its world-wide influence, is now rather a thing of the past than the present.

The actual Sur is a small sea-port, and those who have seen it say that it hardly deserves the name of city. The houses are, for the most part, mere hovels; the streets are narrow and filthy; the population is computed at 3000 souls; but the presence of palm-trees and other Eastern plants imparts a pleasing aspect to the scene. Yet the effects of earthquakes and that untidiness which is so common in cities of the East, render the place offensive and poor in its appearance. "Here was the little isle, once covered by her palaces," Dr. Robinson says of Tyre, "and surrounded by her fleets, where the builders perfected her beauty in the midst of the seas, where her merchants were princes, and her traffickers the honourable of the earth; but alas! thy riches and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war that were in thee, and

all thy company, where are they? Tyre has indeed become like the top of a rock, a place to spread nets upon. The sole remaining tokens of her more ancient splendour lie strewed beneath the waves in the midst of the sea, and the hovels which now nestle upon a portion of her site present no contradiction of the dread decree, 'Thou shalt be built no more.'"

Meagre as this account may seem, it is nearly all that we can say of Tyre, until we apply to the Scriptures of truth for information. The ruins of the ancient city—that is, Tyre before the Christian era—have now been swept all but utterly away. The modern city is placed upon the eastern part of the island, and a broad strip of land under tillage lies between the houses and the western shore. "That shore is strewed, through all its length, along the edge of the water and in it, with columns of red and grey granite of various sizes,—the only remaining monuments of the splendour of ancient Tyre. At the north-west point, forty or fifty such columns are thrown together in one heap beneath the waves," as if some magnificent fane had once stood there. When we look, then, for the ruins of Tyre, we need for the most part to dive below the waves of the Mediterranean. *That* is the grave of the ancient mistress of the seas,—the prototype of Britain in maritime adventure and power,—must we add, of eventual decline and fall?

Yet Van de Velde has given us some account of remains which he saw, and which should not be passed over. The sea, he states, has swallowed up a large part of the magnificence of Tyre, yet vestiges of its sump-

tuous temples and towers lie buried under ground, especially on the south side of the city. Excavations have there been made, and rich fragments of columns, of statues, and other relics, have been disinterred. They well recall the magnificence of "the crowning city;" for the ground for many feet under the present surface is a complete mass of building stones, pillars, shafts, and marble, porphyry, and granite rubbish. Even fragments of the rare and costly verde antique lie scattered around, and Van de Velde felt assured that enough could be discovered to reward the researches of any who would undertake the task.

Tyre has been compared to Alexandria in ancient times, and to London in our day. For about a thousand years that Rock was so ascendant that no production of the East passed to the West, or of the West to the East, but by means of the merchants of Tyre. Her ships alone crossed the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. Spain, Britain, and even the coasts of Malabar, saw her fleets. The Tyrian bravery was equal to its enterprise, and though now lower than the dust—even sunk in the sea—the daughter of Sidon has so stamped her character on the past, that not even Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander, her conquerors, have left more indelible traces of their power than Tyre has done of hers. The Christian clings, however, to such facts as the Redeemer's visit to the region and the incidents connected therewith, as shedding a halo round the place more sacred and perennial than all that its heaped-up gold could have purchased.

We have heard much of the Tyrian dye or purple,

and the Tyrian traffic, and Ezekiel (chap. xxvii.) may enable us to understand the extent of the latter. First, then, Hermon and Lebanon supplied timber for building, cedar or fir; Bashan furnished oaks; Greece conveyed ivory; Egypt gave fine linen; Peloponnesus furnished blue and purple cloths for awnings; Sidon and Arad contributed mariners; and Tyre itself gave pilots and captains. Persia and Africa sent mercenary troops. Tarshish yielded iron, tin, lead, and silver,—the tin pointing, as some suppose, to Britain. Further, slaves and brass ware came from Greece. Armenia furnished horses, mules, and horsemen. The Gulf of Persia sent ebony, ivory, and rich cloths; while Syria contributed emeralds, coral, agates, and other productions. Judah furnished wheat, honey, oil, and balsam; Damascus sent various manufactures and productions; and the tribe of Dan supplied iron, cassia, cinnamon, and other articles of commerce. Lambs, rams, and goats, came from Arabia Petræa and Hedjaz. Sabea yielded spices, and India furnished gold and precious stones; while Mesopotamia and the adjacent countries brought many exquisite products, such as blue cloth and broidered work, and rich apparel in chests of cedar-wood.—Such is a mere glimpse of the merchandise of Tyre, or "the multitude of wares of her making," as a prophet describes it; but glimpse as it is, we see enough to warrant the words that that city was indeed the mart of the world, as the world was then known.

It is, however, in regard to the fulfilment of prophecy concerning it that Tyre is perhaps most frequently referred to, and we give, in conclusion, a few specimens

of these. Ezekiel, then, recorded a sentence of condemnation against Tyre (xxvi. 13); and before a generation passed away Nebuchadnezzar verified the prediction, by making a fort, and casting up a mount, and lifting up the buckler against the city. Isaiah (xxiii. 15) uttered another prediction against Tyre; and that also was in due time fulfilled, though she had "heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets." Again, Ezekiel (xxvi. 12) had explicitly foretold that men "would lay her stones and her timber and her dust in the midst of the water;" and it was precisely by doing so with the materials of Tyre on the mainland that Alexander constructed the mole which led him to Insular Tyre—a mole which continues to this day. And, to name no more, Ezekiel prophesied further (xxvi. 21), Tyre "shall be no more; though thou be sought for yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God:" and so completely has that been verified, that the site of Tyre on the mainland is still disputed, or unknown, while Tyre on the rock must be sought in a few granite columns scattered on the sea-beach or sunk beneath the waves of the Mediterranean; so mighty is the word of God, so unfailing his truth, and so inevitable the decree which links iniquity with woe, pride with a fall, and the oblivion of our God with the forsaking of our mercies.

Finally: in wandering amid the ruins of these memorable sites, one often longs to know how far the light of heavenly truth has yet penetrated the darkness, and regarding Tyre we can add a single sentence which bids us hope for it and other places. One Christian friend ad-

dressing another, says, "There is an interesting movement at Tyre (1854). Several have declared for the gospel, and are urging us to give them a good schoolmaster who can also instruct adults in the way of truth. I hope we shall be able to do so soon. Sidon was the mother of Tyre, and now the new born Protestants of Sidon are teaching their relatives of Tyre the truth as it is in Jesus."*—He who sometimes of old visited the coasts of Tyre and Sidon will yet see of the travail of His soul in those regions, not in costly cathedrals such as that in which the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa was so pompously interred at Tyre after he was drowned in the distant Cydnus, but in lowly hearts, in renewed souls, —in men who live for heaven. An Infidel has written regarding this region that "a mournful and solitary silence now prevails along the shore which once resounded with the world's debate;"—but that shore will yet resound with far other voices.

It would be pleasant to dwell on the associations linked with Zarephath (now Surafend) and Elijah in this district, or even to refer to the tradition which connects the Saviour's miracle on the daughter of the woman of Canaan with Ras-el-Ain, at no great distance south from Tyre; but we cannot linger longer here, though all around seems consecrated and solemn.

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* See Van de Velde's *Syria*, &c., ii. 494.

TYRE.

VIII.—THE RUINS OF SAMARIA.

THIS place was long the capital of the Ten Tribes, after the disruption of the kingdom in the days of Solomon's successor. Omri king of Israel bought the hill of Samaria, and called the city which he built (B.C. 925) after the name of its original owner, Shemer; and few seats of royalty can surpass it either in venerable associations or in natural beauty. In the green and well-watered valleys, on the slopes of the surrounding hills, and all over the region, the patriarchs once roamed; and perhaps not a spot in Palestine could be named where beauties deemed peculiar to the West appear in finer combination with the exuberance of the East.

But it is with the ruins of Samaria as exhibited in our Engraving that we have mainly at present to do. Among his other gigantic architectural operations, Herod the Great enlarged and adorned Samaria, and, in honour of Augustus, bestowed on it the name of Sebaste; that is, the Venerable, the August. Placed on the slope of a hill, with elevation sufficient to make it imposing and conspicuous, the site would naturally attract such an eye as that of Herod. Encircled with heights, nestling amid much that is green and goodly, famous for having resisted the assaults even of Assyrian kings, and in other respects conspicuous, Samaria invited the taste of that remarkable tyrant, and a city unsurpassed in beauty sprang up at his bidding.

In subsequent times a church dedicated to John the Baptist was built there, when the place became the seat of a bishop; and the tower of that structure, or of one built upon its site, forms a conspicuous object in our View. But the chief attraction of the place is a long avenue of broken pillars, some of them of granite and others of marble, supposed to have formed the main street of Herod's royal city. Here, as in the Hauran, or at Palmyra, Damascus, and in some of the cities of Egypt, vast colonnades lined each side of the street; and running as these pillars do along the topmost terrace of the hill, they tell us how magnificent the fabric must have been, while travellers vie with each other in their descriptions of the imposing scene. In the deep ravine which bounds the city on the north there is another colonnade, completely shut in by hills except to the north-east. The columns there are arranged in a quadrangular, space 196 paces in length by 64 in breadth. The whole number of columns is computed to have been 170, and the place was probably designed by Herod for his public assemblies.

One has told us, for example, that though the hill has been ploughed for centuries, and though the ancient edifices be now demolished, and built into modern houses, yet rows of columns, some erect and many prostrate, remain to attest what Sebustieh—the Arabic form of Sebaste—once was. Even the splendid view from the summit gives place to the admiration called forth by these remains. They are the ruins of temples, of triumphal arches, and a colonnade, running in a straight line for about 1000 feet, and then curving on

account of the nature of the ground; the whole causing us to marvel more and more at the resources, the skill, and the power of those early times. At one place about sixty limestone pillars are still erect, most of them on ground frequently ploughed. Further east some twenty more are standing at irregular distances, and many more than these lie prostrate on the ground. The colonnade was 50 feet wide, the pillars about 16 feet high, and the whole length of the structure, whatever its design, could not be much less than 3000 feet.

But the pride of man must be stained, and the origin of all this magnificence is left to conjecture or to doubt. Writing on the spot, one has said that the purpose of the work and of the edifice it was intended to decorate are alike unknown. These columns now stand solitary and mournful, in the midst of ploughed fields, the mere skeletons of departed glory. One visitor has spoken of no fewer than two hundred columns on the west and the south of the hill: in a word, everything here reminds us of the vanity of the creature, who yet can proudly boast,—

> "Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
> My footstool earth, my canopy the skies!"

But while everything is dark or doubtful regarding these structures, our information concerning Samaria itself is abundantly clear in the Scriptures. For two centuries it was the seat of idolatry, and was, accordingly, often denounced by the prophets. Ahab built a temple to Baal there, and Jehu destroyed it. Elijah and Elisha were prominent actors in Samaria, during

various famines and the deliverances of the place. Herod, after Augustus gave him the city, placed a colony of 6000 persons there; and various Roman emperors, from Nero to Geta, maintained a connection with the proud city. It early became, as we have seen, the seat of a bishopric; but perhaps its ruin began as far back as the fourth century, and though its name occurs in the history of the Crusaders, Samaria sank like a wreck, in spite of its lovely situation, its streams, its gardens, orchards, vineyards, and olive-trees. "I will make Samaria as a heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard. . . . . I will discover the foundations thereof," was the prediction of Micah; and it is fulfilled to the letter. "Judgment-stricken as it is, none can stand on the uncovered foundations of the vanished city, and look from among its solitary columns on the gleanings of its ancient glory all around, without beholding, with the memory's eye, the once glorious beauty of the city and the scene, ere ever the flower that bloomed there in all its gorgeous beauty had faded, or 'the crown of pride' that was seated there had been trampled under foot." "The glory of Ephraim" (of which Samaria was the capital) "*flew away like a bird.*" "As for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water" (Hos. x. 5, 7); and were this the place, it might be shown that prophecy has been fulfilled in that city in a manner which literally transforms prophecy into history. Nor should we fail to notice that the drunkenness of Samaria, as it gave rise to one of the names of the place, is mentioned among the causes of its final overthrow.

SAMARIA

There is one thought which must often occur to the mind of a wanderer among such ruins as those of Samaria: How many thousands must have toiled and died in erecting these piles! Slaves were overtasked and crushed into the dust. To gratify the pride, or to perpetuate the name of some incarnate atrocity like Herod, crowds were doomed to a life-long drudgery, perhaps to early graves. At the thought, it seems a righteous retribution that the memory or the meaning of such structures has utterly passed away. A spunge of extinction has blotted them out; at least all that is known of them is fitly represented by the fragments of cornices and columns, of marble or of granite, which are scattered so copiously over such spots.

Crossing the Jordan from Samaria, and entering what was formerly the Eastern possessions of the Jews, we reach scenes of desolation and piles of ruins still more eloquent, as to man's blended pride and nothingness, than those which have already been explored.

IX.—THE RUINS OF OOM KEIS AND JERASH.

OOM KEIS.

THE region at which we are now to glance is one of the most wonderful in the world.

Early in their history, the Israelites took all the cities of Sihon, king of the Amorites, from Aroer on the Arnon even unto Gilead. At the battle of Edrei the King of Bashan was smitten and his kingdom subdued by the Hebrews. "From the river of Arnon unto Mount Hermon, all the cities of the plain, and all Gilead and Bashan unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Bashan," thus became subject to Israel; and it was in that territory, on the east of the Jordan, that some of their largest cities were formed, insomuch that "three hundred and forty-five ruined or deserted places" have been counted there by a single traveller.

The first place that we notice on the east of the Jordan is Oom Keis, now generally believed to be the Gadara of the New Testament. Leaving the southern extremity of the Lake of Tiberias, and travelling southward on the left bank of the Jordan, the traveller soon arrives at the Yermuck, a swift-flowing stream, as wide as the Jordan, but deeper. Ascending for a few miles to the east, a plateau is reached, and there stand the ruins of Oom Keis. Besides the foundations of a

whole line of houses, there are the remains of two theatres,—one quite destroyed, but the other in tolerable preservation, and handsome. Broken columns and capitals lie around in every direction, as well as sarcophagi to the east of the town, where tombs are found which have greatly surprised a succession of visitors since their first discovery. They are nearly all inhabited now, and Lord Lindsay tells that the massive stone doors which originally closed them still move on their hinges, and open or shut at the option of their present owners. "These doors," he continues, "are usually five or six inches thick. The best specimen I saw was beautifully carved in four deep panels, with a false knocker. A wreath between two roses was sculptured on the lintel, and the sarcophagus still retained its place within. . . . . Over one of the sepulchres I was shown a Greek inscription, claiming it as the tomb of Gaius Annius Gaamph,—a curious mixture of Hebrew and profane names."

Here, then, we are at once introduced to the ruins of the Hauran. At the very threshold we find some rare specimens of ancient art, as well as tokens of the Roman passion for theatrical displays, which were for many ages not known to exist. It is like stumbling upon a new section of the globe; or, at least, it is discovering that whole decades of the history of the world are lost, as well as of the Roman history by Livy. Their events were long a blank, and even now we know little more than the fact that such places *were*. Many things concerning them only furnish an arena for antiquarian disputations.

But among the ruins of the Hauran a prominent place is due to

JERASH.

Its ancient name was Gerasa, and it is certainly the most remarkable of all the ruins east of the Jordan. Its walls are from three to four miles in circuit, and the area enclosed is covered with remains, some of which, by their extent, remind us of the Coliseum at Rome. Two theatres, which rank among the most entire of the ruins, proclaim the former character of the place as one given up to pleasure under Roman rule. Near one of these, where rows of seats 120 paces in circuit can still be counted, the walls of a temple, eight feet thick, are still standing, surrounded by a Corinthian peristyle of many columns, whose lofty shafts now lie in immense heaps around its base. In front of the theatre ran a street lined on both sides with columns, like those at Damascus, Samaria, and elsewhere. That street divided the city into two, and terminated in a semicircular colonnade, opening at once into a theatre and a temple. It was crossed by similar streets, in which some of the columns are still erect; but heaps of rubbish and debris bury much of the former grandeur of the place. Its pavement, rivalling that of modern streets, with the gateways, and other structures of vast dimensions, all tell us what Jerash once was, and contrast sadly and drearily with its present decay,—for it is literally "without an inhabitant." One temple, for example, built on a spacious area, and closely lined by two hundred pil-

lars, now fallen, was adorned in front by columns which are still erect, and which may challenge competition with the ornaments of a modern city.

Gerasa was one of the ten cities which formed the Decapolis; and as this province was a favourite with the Romans, great pains were taken to adorn the place. Along with Bozrah, hereafter to be mentioned, and Petra, already described, it formed a line of fortresses to defend the frontier of the Syrian provinces. But this did not prevent calamity after calamity from assailing it. At one time it was taken by storm for the sake of its treasures. Then the Jews, enraged by the massacre which took place at Cæsarea, were also incensed against it. Under Vespasian it was taken once more, and fire was set to the houses, so that, according to Josephus, "what was remaining was all burnt down." In 1122 a crusading king of Jerusalem, Baldwin II., destroyed the castle; and thus, by various stages, Jerash became another city of desolation,—its beauty was buried in the dust: it ceased to be the abode of man. For centuries it was forgotten and unknown, till discovered by Seetzen, about the beginning of the present century.

But the ruins, which are so extensive as to be reckoned by some superior even to those of Palmyra, may deserve a more exact description. And Buckingham tells that when he approached Jerash from the south, he first saw a triumphal arch of the Corinthian order nearly entire. Within the gateway he found a Naumachia for mock sea-battles; and the channels for filling it with water could still be traced, though corn then grew upon the spot. Passing over heaps of ruins and fragments

of pillars, he came to a second gateway, within which he found a large and beautiful circular colonnade of the Ionic order. He then refers to the streets lined with colonnades, as already mentioned; to a square once lined with an avenue of columns in the same way; to theatres, temples, bridges, aqueducts, and a necropolis, near the northern wall, in which Buckingham found nearly a hundred sculptured sarcophagi, and other proofs that multitudes rested from their labours there. Beheld from the adjoining hills, Jerash appears to be situated in a deep valley, encircled by lofty and verdant mountains, and altogether it is one of the most remarkable scenes which the traveller can visit, or where he can see embodied before his eyes how true it is that the fashion of this world passeth away. All flesh is as grass, but the word of the Lord is perennial, and Jerash is now precisely what the Lord, two thousand years ago, predicted it would become.

Opinions vary much as to the general style and taste of the buildings there. While some applaud the effect, others, for example Lord Lindsay, confess to disappointment at the sight; not because the ruins are insignificant, but because they indicate a declining taste,—in truth, a great decay from the rude severity of the Doric and Ionic, as well as from the elegance of the Corinthian styles. There may be cause for such criticism, but Jerash in such a desert is still a wonder.

We might here refer to other ruins existing in this region besides those at Oom Keis, already mentioned. Traces of colonnaded streets, and other symbols of magnificence, which are conjectured by some to represent

the ancient Gamala, and other places, are mentioned. The ruins of Edrei, in the same region, are two miles and a half in circuit. Salchah contains eight hundred ancient edifices, all tenantless now. Kenath, in ruins, is nearly three miles in circumference, while spacious edifices, lofty towers, and forty columns still erect, proclaim that the place once had decorations though they have now melted away before the displeasure of the Ruler of the nations.

But we need not depict these in detail. The whole of the Hauran may be described, without exaggeration, as a land of ruins: its past glory, and its present decay under Mohammedan rule and Bedawin pillage, are equally signal. Could the religion of the West—that is, of the Bible—be planted there, these sad desolations would cease. Malcolm's wish might be gratified for the union of the West and the East in their symbols—

"In one wreath let the Laurel and Lotus entwine:"

but that would not revive the dead. While Islam remains what it is, an incubus and a curse, even Bashan and Gilead will continue widowed and withered.

But we cannot even yet pass away from these remarkable ruins: they suggest inquiries which bear very directly on the truth or the illustration of Scripture. It has been assumed by many that the piles which abound in the Hauran are chiefly of Roman origin; and no doubt some of the prodigious ruins, like the theatres and temples, are to be ascribed to these Western conquerors. But more recent investigations have made it manifest that not a little of the architecture—all, for

instance, that is domestic—must be traced to much earlier times than those of Greek or Roman art. The opinion has even been hazarded that the houses still standing are the very abodes of the colossal race of which Og, king of Bashan, was the ruler. The Christian structures appear modern in comparison with the other buildings; and so much is that the case, that, founding on the huge masses employed in the ancient fabrics, and other architectural peculiarities, travellers seem to be agreed that these ruins may have been the abodes of the people who dwelt in these regions anterior even to the conquests of Israel. But hear Rev. J. T. Porter, in his work entitled *Five Years in Damascus.*

"We are informed," he says, "by the sacred historian, that in the land of Argob there were threescore great cities with gates and bars. They had apparently been constructed by the Rephaim, the aborigines of the country (Gen. xiv. 5, Deut. iii. 3–14, Josh. xiii. 12, and 1 Kings iv. 13); and the houses of Kureiyeh appear to be just such structures as the race of giants would rear up. The huge doors and gates of stone, some of which are nearly eighteen inches in thickness; and the ponderous bars, the places for which can still be seen, are in every way characteristic of a period when architecture was in its infancy, when manual labour was of little comparative value, and when strength and security were the great requisites. Time produces but little effect upon such buildings as these."

Now, if these views be correct, we are here brought into contact with some of the most ancient structures now existing in the world. We are led back to times

very remotely primitive, and see before us one proof more of the Bible's truth where it speaks of giants, at whose existence Infidelity scoffs. More than three thousand years, Mr. Porter supposes, have passed away since the race who inhabited these abodes vanished from the earth. That the men were Cyclopean we may infer from the Cyclopean nature of their works; and surely we may bestow that name on "doors uniformly of stone, while even the gates of the town are between nine and ten feet high, *and each of a single piece of stone.*" Future explorations may further clear up these views, but meanwhile we have here both a wonder and a proof;—a wonder in the vastness and antiquity of these fabrics; a proof that the mirth of the Infidel is as baseless as it is irreverent.

We are still, however, only on the threshold of these mysterious dilapidations.

X.—AMMON.

This place, as Rabbath-Ammon, possesses a melancholy interest, for it was before it that Uriah was fighting for his king and his country when that king sent the dastardly message which led to the warrior's death. In about an hour after leaving Jerash in a southernly direction, the traveller crosses the modern Zerka, the ancient Jabbok, which flows through a country once well peopled, though now the home only of the roaming Bedawin. Between 30 and 40 miles from Jerash he reaches the valley of Ammon, formed by bare and rocky hills, which are perforated by numerous caves. The city of Ammon stood on both sides of its river, and its remains are such as to draw from some of its visitors the remark, that "the dreariness of its present aspect is quite indescribable: it looks like the abode of death:"* only the croaking of frogs and the screams of wild birds mar the solitude of the place. Tombs, sarcophagi, a mausoleum, an aqueduct, at one place full of human skulls,—these are among the first sights which greet the visitor to Ammon. The chief ruins are grander in design, but much more dilapidated, than those of Jerash. Corinthian pillars, with an elegant cornice lying in pieces on the ground, form the ornament of one structure,—a mausoleum. A lofty portico, following the windings of the river in its form, and ornamented in front with stately Corinthian

* Lord Lindsay.

pillars, of which four much injured and without their capitals are still standing, is another. A well built Christian church with a spire is a third. A temple of florid Corinthian architecture is a fourth. But the noblest ruin of all is a most magnificent theatre, built in the hollow of a hill. A quadrangular Corinthian colonnade extended in front of the pile, and twelve of its pillars were erect when Lord Lindsay visited the place. Eight of them are perfect, entablature and all; and some portions of the theatre are in good preservation. Forty-three tiers of seats, divided by three galleries, were counted, though probably others were buried in the rubbish. Some of the decorations are very chaste; and the effect of the ruins in the foreground, with the crags towering above them, is majestic and imposing. But the bones and skulls of camels were mouldering in the vaulted galleries of the immense structure; and the odour of these animals, dead and decaying, at other places of the valley, made it like a penance to visit the scene. Ruins heaped on ruins, walls to restrain the stream when in flood, a bridge to span it, a channel to carry off the water and prevent inundations, with other works, all evince the pride of Rabbath-Ammon, and tell how its more recent lords, the Romans, dreamt of nothing so unlikely as that the time would ever come when their glory would be laid in the dust.

But it has been so. Men were bent on being exalted. The Most High had decreed that they should be laid low; and the result is according to his word: "Ammon shall be a desolation. Rabbah of the Ammonites . . . . . shall be a desolate heap. I will make Rabbah a stable

for camels, and the Ammonites a couching-place for flocks; and ye shall know that I am the Lord." The noble traveller who quotes these words had occasion again and again to notice the multitude of flocks and herds in that vicinity; but the place where Moloch, the "horrid king," was god, where monster parents were the worshippers, and little children the sacrifice, is now a ruin, and humanity rejoices in that result.

> "Him the Ammonite
> Worshipped in Rabba and her watery plain,
> In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
> Of utmost Arnon."

In this region, however, in the direction of Mount Gilead, there are scenes of even Oriental luxuriance to be witnessed. At some places the valleys are terraced for vineyards. Gardens of figs, olives, and pomegranates of the most refreshing green are there. Its pomegranates, one has magniloquently said, are famed over all the world; so that while the ruins of Jerash, of Ammon, or Bozrah, show us what these regions once were, the rich productions just named appear to foretell what they may yet become, when He who says "I will overturn, overturn, overturn," shall have accomplished all his pleasure.

XI.—THE RUINS OF BOZRAH.

It is well known that the children of Israel had grants of land from the Supreme Proprietor on the east of the Jordan as well as between that river and the Mediterranean. Bashan, Gilead, and other districts, were included in that territory; and we are now glancing at some of the ruins which are there.

Bozrah, Buzrah, or Bostra, the capital of the Hauran, is first mentioned in Genesis in connection with Jobab, its king. It was about four days' journey from Damascus. Isaiah and Jeremiah also refer to it in connection with Edom, and we need scarcely enter here upon the disputed question whether there were two Bozrahs or only one. Whether we ascribe it with some to Edom, or with others to Moab, or give a Bozrah to each, the ruins continue the same, and add another to this land of wonders. Bozrah was once the capital of the Hauran. The Romans reckoned the city as belonging to Arabia Deserta. Its circumference is about three quarters of an hour, or less than three miles; and it was anciently defended by a thick wall, many portions of which still remain. On one side of the place there are copious springs, and on the opposite side there is found a reservoir, 190 feet in length by 153 in breadth, and about 20 in depth. But here, as elsewhere, ruin and dilapidation have laid the pride of man in the dust. Time, Bedawin rapacity, and "the wages of sin," have eaten out the life of the place; and though once famous

for its vines and their produce, not a vestige of these now remains. There is scarcely a tree in the neighbourhood; and the twelve or fifteen families who inhabited Bozrah when Burckhardt visited it, cultivated only wheat, barley, house-beans, and dhourra. The ruins are Greek, Roman, and Saracenic in their style; but their extent, and in some cases their beauty, tend only to deepen the sadness of the scene; in short, Bozrah is now for the most part a heap of ruins: here and there the direction of a street or alley is discernible, but that is all, and the handful of its modern inhabitants are almost lost in the maze of ruins. Olive-trees grew here within a few years,—all extinct now, like its famous vines: and such in the nineteenth century, and under Moslem rule, is the condition of a city which in the seventh century was called "the market-place of Syria, Irak and Hedjaz." "I have sworn by myself, saith the Lord of hosts, that Bozrah shall become a desolation and reproach, a waste and a curse, and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes;"—and that word is true. All this, however, is in strange contrast with Gibbon's information, that in the seventh century Bozrah could send forth 12,000 horse from its gates.

But it may be right to furnish some more specific details concerning this city, which Trajan made the capital of the district, adding his own name to its former title; which Alexander Severus, about a century later, further honoured; which, A.D. 245, gave an emperor to Rome in the person of Philippus, one of its inhabitants —while "good Fortune" was worshipped as the protectress of the place; where, finally, a Christian church was

early planted, and a metropolitan with thirty-nine suffragans presided over the district.

In one street, then, the traveller finds the remains of an ancient temple, where some columns still exist said to be fifty feet high, though indicating a vitiated architectural taste. Opposite to these, however, are some Corinthian pillars of great beauty and in fine preservation; so fair, indeed, are these relics of centuries ago, that the first thought of the traveller in the Hauran, at this sight is, Whence and why such beauty here?

At no great distance is a noble triumphal arch, probably of the times of Philip. Its consists of three gates, and is about 40 feet long, as much in height, and 20 in depth. The castle of Bozrah is another massive structure, with lofty vaulted chambers, long corridors, and a hundred tokens of strength and durability. A theatre, also, appears among these remains, strangely constructed within the castle; and the view from this ruin upon Jebel-esh-Sheik and the intervening territory is described as unrivalled. In that enclosure the inmates of the place at seasons collect all their effects, and defend themselves there from the assaults of the rapacious Bedawin. Further: the western gate of the city, called "The Gate of the Winds," is very perfect, and described as one of peculiar beauty. By that gate a modern traveller has thus mused and moralized: "I looked inward .... and there was not a human being, there was not a living thing,—there was not a sign of life within the range of vision. There was that noble gateway, open and solitary: within it, nought but heaps of rubbish and piles of hewn stones; away in the distance

rose the deserted-looking columns, without an entablature to support or a building to adorn; there too was the triumphal arch, as if erected to commemorate the triumph of Destruction: while *without*, the whole country around was waste, desolate, and forsaken. Never before had I seen a picture of such utter desolation, except when looking down upon Palmyra."

But, as we have seen, the whole region is studded with remains; and wherever the traveller reposes, he may find ruins for a screen. "We halted," says Lord Lindsay, in his Travels here, "under a Doric tomb, ornamented with six semi-columns on each side. On the east of the town are the ruins of a temple surrounded by a peristyle, of which ten columns are still erect. Rows of Roman houses in ruins, Corinthian pilasters, fragments of beautiful frieze, and other remains,—all tell of ancient grandeur and modern decay. They are little thought of, only because of the over-topping wonders of Bozrah."*

Such is a mere glimpse—not even a meagre catalogue, but only a glimpse—of the ruins of Bozrah. It is one of the wonders of antiquity; and when its history is viewed in connection with prophecy, we can scarcely help endorsing the sentiment that the curse of God has fallen on that land for the sins of a rebellious people. Thousands of years ago a prophet said,—and the traveller in the Hauran may see the saying fulfilled at this hour,—"The spoiler shall come upon every city, and

* Of another place Lord Lindsay says: "The Kasr," a little temple, "is the most beautiful little building I saw in the Hauran. The portico is supported by two Corinthian pillars," etc.

no city shall escape. . . . . Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away; for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein." "Howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled, and judgment is come . . . . . upon Kiriathaim, and upon Beth-gamul, and upon Beth-meon, and upon Kerioth, and upon Bozrah." In accomplishment of this, we read that the roofs of the houses have long since fallen in, the walls have crumbled down, and the whole is now like a plain covered with confused heaps of stones, in which the lines of the old streets are seen like furrows.* But the description of Bozrah is, in substance, an account of hundreds of ruins in those long untrodden regions :—

> "There may survive a tinge of glory yet
> O'er all the pastures and the heights of green;
> Which, though the lustre of their day hath set,
> Tell of the joy and splendour that have been;"

but the glory has departed, and Edom and Moab are as desolate and as widowed now as the Palestine which they often tried to enslave. These ruins of empires might confound the sceptic, did he explore them with the Bible for his guide-book.

Yet a sceptic has written regarding Bozrah without being undeceived. Gibbon has described its conquest by the Saracens, and tells that 4000 Moslems presumed to attack the fortress of Bozrah. They were repulsed by the garrison, but saved by one of their leaders with 1500 horse. After a short repose the at-

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* See *Five Years in Damascus* by Rev. J. T. Porter, chap. xii.

tack was renewed, the morning prayer was raiscd, and the proud Moslem rushed against the place. The inhabitants of Bozrah threw open their gates, formed line in the plain, and resolved to die for their religion. But a religion of peace, Gibbon says, could not compete with the onset of fanatics exclaiming, "Fight! Fight! Paradise! Paradise!" and Bozrah fell before them, though the ramparts, he records with a sneer, "were crowded with holy crosses and consecrated banners." The treachery of the governor, who apostatized to Islam, promoted that result, and from that day we may date the ruin of Bozrah.

In speaking of Jerash we have mentioned the theory that many of the Hauran buildings are much more ancient than the times of the Roman conquests; and this theory is believed by some to receive fresh confirmation at Bozrah. Substructions are there pointed out which seem to refer to a remote antiquity; so that discovery after discovery increases our wonder, as we contemplate this land of ruins, once the abode of giants, now depopulated, dreary, and forlorn. Travellers have gone far to identify the spot where the decisive battle was fought between the Israelites and Og king of Bashan. If we would listen to tradition, we might find in those parts the home and domains of Job. But the bloodthirsty and fanatical character of the Moslem inhabitants renders deliberate investigation difficult; yet everything tends to make it plain that further and more accurate inquiry will at once amaze us by its disclosures, and satisfy us by the fresh proof which it brings that the word of God is all that it claims to be.

So remarkable are some of the Hauran ruins, though so long unknown, that we can ascertain the form and proportions of an old Roman's abode more easily there than among the ruins of Rome itself. One ruin, if we may call it so, is described at Nedjraun, which explains at a glance the structure of Roman abodes, though modern buildings have been erected in the spacious court of the place. The mansion obviously belonged to one of the chief men of the city. The court appears to have been nearly square; the entrance is in the centre of the front, but the door is nearly buried in rubbish. There are two windows on each side of it, and beyond these are two other doors, each opening into a moderately sized apartment lighted by windows from without. The entrance hall was 11 paces wide and about 8½ deep, and spanned by a beautiful arch. A communication led from the hall to the left by the chamber on that side; while on the right, a stone staircase led to the upper storey, where the rooms are small, numerous, and still inhabited. The wings are also full of rooms, while the ground floor of the right wing is partly occupied by a beautiful stable, seven paces long and nine paces deep, with mangers of stone; and as the mansion is still entire, owing to its substantial structure of hewn stone, the Arabs of our day stable their horses where the Romans stabled theirs, while they themselves find a home in the identical abodes of some of the world's conquerors.

Here, then, in the remote, inhospitable Hauran, which has now taken the place formerly held by Britain, when it was "cut off from the whole world," we are brought

as nearly as possible into personal contact with the Romans;—and not at Nedjraun merely, but in many other places. In some lists of ruins, the names of 156 cities are mentioned as found in the Hauran and the Ledja; 81 in Bashan; 86 in Ajlun; and 123 in Belka; or 446 in the countries east of the Jordan. It is so surprising, that we mention the fact again and again:—these regions, now given up to dreary solitude, or, what is worse, to Arab robbers, appear, both from ancient testimony and from still existing ruins, to have ranked at one period among the most fertile and thickly peopled countries on the face of the earth; some conjecture that they could scarcely be second even to China itself.

Upon the whole, we may here quote and apply to the Hauran what Lord Lindsay has quoted from Sir Thomas Brown regarding Egypt: "She is now become the land of obliviousness and doateth. Her ancient civility is gone, and her glory hath vanished as a phantasma. Her youthful days are over, and her face hath become wrinkled and tetrick. She poreth not upon the heavens: Astronomy is dead unto her, and Knowledge maketh other cycles. Canopus is afar off; Memnon resoundeth not to the sun; and Nilus heareth strange voices. Her monuments are but hieroglyphically sempiternal. Osiris and Anubis, her averruncous deities, have departed: while Orus yet remains, dimly shadowing the principle of vicissitude and the effluxion of things, but receiveth little oblation."

And yet we should not speak of oblivion in connection with the Hauran,—the ancient Auranitis. It

formed part of the Idumea or Arabia-Provincia of the Romans;—and to that region did Paul the apostle proceed immediately after his conversion From Damascus "he went," he says, "into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus." For three years, it appears (Gal. i. 17, 18), he sojourned in these regions, before going to Jerusalem to enter on his life-and-death work. There he gave himself, we may suppose, to the study of that truth which he was to proclaim to others,—to millions, —to generations; there, no doubt, he grew in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and if we could link his name to any of these ruins,—to Jerash, or Bozrah, or any of the vast remains which stud this land,—interesting as they are, they would become more interesting still. The chance of their having formed the home of the most honoured man that ever lived might well eclipse and overshadow all their other glories.

Before leaving this region, and in order still further to show how crowded and extensive are the ruins, we might dwell on Kennawat, where is the reputed tomb of Job; but we give only one specimen more, in Shoaba, —a place whose very name, we are sure, never was heard by millions of Westerns. The streets of that town, then, are described as handsome, and better paved than any in London. Masses of masonry still stand, which are supposed to have been surmounted by statues or columns. Public buildings line some of the streets. In one stand five Corinthian pillars, the remains of the colonnade of a temple; an extraordinary octagonal building is found at another place; a theatre solidly

built at another : yet while some parts of the city are beautiful, others are so defaced that it is difficult to describe them or fix their character, though there are buildings there as fresh as if they were only fifty years of age.

It is thus that, in wandering from city to city from day to day, ruin after ruin invites our study or augments our wonder. One general description might suffice for all, but their extent, their number, and in many cases their elegance, can be brought out only by repetition. In the inhospitable Hauran men live in Roman houses vacated by Romans sixteen or seventeen centuries ago, yet perfect now as then !

XII.—THE RUINS OF BA'ALBEK.

At the distance of two days' journey from Damascus, more or less according to the route pursued, we find one of the marvels of all time,—the town of Ba'albek, with its stupendous ruins. We submit first a brief history of the place, and then advert to the temples.

Ba'albek and Heliopolis appear to the most exact inquirers to be perfectly identified. Its name, "The City of the Sun," indicates at once who was the chief god there. He was the Jupiter of Syria, or at least of this portion of it; but it is a remarkable fact, that, except what may be collected from collateral references, we have no historical notice of this marvellous place earlier than the fourth century. There can be little doubt that long prior to that period some distinguished buildings stood here: the ancient substructions,—somewhat like the most ancient of the ruins in Jerusalem,—sufficiently attest that fact; but we must be content with inference and conjecture. Whether is Banias or Ba'albek the Baal-gad of Scripture? Or, is Ba'albek rather the Baalath which Solomon built along with Tadmor? Or again, is it the Baal-hamon of Solomon (Cant. viii. 11), where he had his vineyards and retreats? Or, once more, is it "The plain of Aven,"—Bikath-aven, mentioned by Amos (i. 5)? All these have their advocates, and the last seems to be countenanced by the fact that Ba'albek has always been the capital of the magnificent

plain of Cœle-syria, now called Buka'a in Arabic; by Amos, Bikath, in Hebrew; each meaning a plain or level among hills.

But we may hasten away from the regions of conjecture to such certainty as we can obtain. During the second and third centuries our knowledge of Heliopolis is derived from medals, which date from the Emperor Nerva to Gallienus. In the seventh century John Malala wrote that "Ælius Antoninus Pius erected at Heliopolis, in Phœnicia of Lebanon, a great temple to Jupiter,—one of the wonders of the world." Now, if this record may be credited, written so long after the event to which it refers, it is sufficiently definite; and various considerations appear to confirm it. The style of architecture agrees with that of the period of the Antonines; some of the inscriptions found at Ba'albek point in the same direction; and these things, together with later coins, leave little doubt that we know *about* the period when these structures began to be reared. They most probably supplanted former temples. Baal, as the Sun,—or perhaps a whole Pantheon of gods,—was worshipped there; and when we read that Venus was also adored by rites the most disgusting that ever ripened men for woe, we may have no difficulty in explaining the present desolation of the place.

When Constantine assumed the Christian name, the worship of Venus ceased, and a Christian church was founded. But Julian the Apostate restored the old paganism and its abominations for a season; and Heliopolis became prominent in the atrocities of those times. Such was the hatred of its people to the followers of

Christ, that in at least one case they feasted on the liver of one of their victims. But these enormities could not last. Other emperors arose who favoured Christianity; and Christian ministers officiated at Ba'albek till about the year 636, when the place passed into the hands of the victorious Mohammedans. The great temple now became a fortress. It continued an object of strife among rival factions, and was alternately the property of one royal master and then of another. In 1139, 1157, and 1170, it was shaken by earthquakes, while the Crusaders ravaged the adjoining country. In 1400, Ba'albek became the property of Tamerlane; and until about 1550 no further notice of the place is known. The temple was then a fortress, as it had been for centuries; but in the eighteenth century it became famous again. In 1784, Volney gave one of the best accounts of Ba'albek; but prior to his visit, an earthquake, in 1759, had overthrown three out of nine majestic columns remaining till that date. Arabic cupidity and Turkish plunderers have helped further to demolish and deface; but, in spite of all, Ba'albek still continues a wonder. "Diana's marvel" at Ephesus was a mere shrine to this, or like a mere side chapel to some gorgeous fane.

We have been thus particular in outlining the history of Ba'albek because few are at all acquainted with its wonders; and next proceed to as brief an account of these majestic remains.

The walls and towers of ancient Ba'albek are now in ruins, and the modern village is miserable enough: it contains perhaps about 100 families, with 400 or 500 souls. Standing in the region where the Orontes or the

Aasy, the Leontes or the Litani, and the Jordan, take their rise, the native beauty of the place may be assumed. Its height above the sea is 3769 feet; but in a region like that of Syria, under the shelter at once of the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon range, the climate is more than temperate.—Here, however, everything must give place to the Temples, the greater and the less. The former was 1000 feet in length from east to west, and is raised by an artificial platform about 25 feet above the adjacent country. The six remaining columns of the peristyle, which appear in our Engraving, constitute, by universal consent, the crowning glory of the place; what then must the whole have been, when the wondrous fane was entire, gleaming in a Syrian sun, and looking forth upon the Buka'a, Mount Lebanon, and a thousand other glories! The material is everywhere the compact limestone of the country. The portico of the Great Temple was 180 feet long, and about 37 deep. It had twelve columns in front, of which only the pedestals remain. Their diameter was 4 feet 3 inches. There was a pavilion at each end of the portico, and a single stone in one of these measured 24 feet 5 inches long. The pilasters, cornices, and other decorations, are all dwelt on with very special care by every visitor. The first court is a hexagon 200 feet by about 250. The great quadrangle in front of the temple proper is about 440 feet by 370; and the divisions of this vast area, with its decorations of Syenite granite, are all carefully noted. We can only allude to what is said of the pillars, the friezes, the sphinxes, and other decorations.

Fronting this quadrangle was the peristyle, 290 feet long by 160 broad. Nineteen Corinthian columns stood on each side, and at each end ten (counting the corner pillars), making 54 in all. At the base, their diameter was seven feet, and five at the top. The shafts were 62 feet high; the entablature was about 14 more: the whole 76. Each shaft consisted of three stones strongly cramped together with iron; for the sake of which the Arabs have laboriously undermined the pillars. This peristyle, elevated altogether about 50 feet above the surrounding country, though only six of its columns now remain, is one of the architectural wonders of the world. There are some bevelled stones in the substructions which remind us of the architecture of Jerusalem, of perhaps the times of Solomon.

Of these substructions, the western wall is amazing. One stone is 64 feet long, another 63 feet 8 inches, and a third 63 feet. Their height is about 13 feet, their breadth about the same. They are placed about 20 feet above the ground, and there are seven others of like dimensions. The three large stones gave rise to one of the ancient names of this temple,—the Trilithon. We cannot trace the vaults and alleys of the substruction, forming as they do an underground world.

But there is a second temple. Its length is 225 feet, its breadth about 120. It is surrounded by a magnificent peristyle of fifteen columns on each side, and eight at each end. Some of the columns are six feet three inches in diameter at the base, and five feet eight higher up. They are 45 feet high, including the Corinthian capitals. The entablature is seven feet high, and the cornice is

elaborately wrought. But only four of the columns remain in their place on the south side, six on the west, and nine on the north. The rest are scattered in fragments or demolished by Vandal hands.

The portal of this temple is called the gem of the whole; and an artist has said, "This is perhaps the most elaborate work, as well as the most exquisite in its details, of anything of its kind in the world. The pencil can convey but a faint idea of its beauty. One scroll alone of acanthus leaves, with groups of children and panthers intertwined, might form a work of itself." The carved ornaments, the crested eagles, the garlands, and other decorations, all crowd upon us for a notice; but we can only name them, and add that the earthquake of 1759 shivered much of their beauty to pieces. The size of some of the columns may be inferred from the fact that they enclose and conceal a spiral staircase, leading to the top of the fabric.

"What an entrance!" a traveller exclaims on the spot. "Here are accumulated vast heaps of mighty ruins; immense shafts of broken columns; gigantic architraves, cornices, and ceilings, all exquisitely sculptured —all now trodden under foot, and forming perhaps the most imposing and impressive avenue in the world." The symmetry and grace give an airy lightness to the whole, yet the first impression is described as actually overwhelming. These structures, when compared with those of Athens, are said to equal them in lightness, but surpass them in massiveness; with those of Thebes, they are as massive, but far more graceful; and though some might desire a simpler and severer style than that

which reigns at Ba'albek, it is to be confessed that in many respects they are unmatched in the world.

There is a third temple in the vicinity, which is circular, very small, and composite in its character. It is surrounded by eight columns on the outside, and has two tiers of pillars, the lower Ionic, the upper Corinthian, in the interior. But though beautiful exceedingly, everything seems tame or diminutive beside the magnificent peristyle of the Trilithon.

> "Where'er we tread, 'tis haunted, holy ground;
> No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould,
> But one vast realm of wonder spreads around,
> And all the Muse's tale seems truly told."

One object of interest more deserves to be named,—the quarries whence materials for these colossal piles were obtained. They are situated a furlong or two south from the town, and display at a glance the ancient mode of quarrying. The stones were commonly hewn from the face of the rock in an upright position, by cutting away a space of a few inches all round; and many stones still remain in that position, attached to their native rock only at the bottom of the column. One stone remains in those quarries which attracts all eyes by its prodigious and apparently incredible magnitude. Its length is 84 feet 4 inches; its breadth, 17 feet 2 inches; and its height, 14 feet 7 inches. Travellers are at a loss to say for what this mass was designed.

XIII.—MOUNT LEBANON AND ITS RUINS.

I.

To most of the ruins already described some date can be attached. They come within the historic period, and we can generally point to the age at least, though not the year, of their foundation. To nearly all the relics, however, which we are now to describe no date can be assigned. Their origin stretches back into the dim and shadowy past; they stand up like spectres amid the gloom of two or three millenniums, and while they connect us with ages of which we know but little, the information which these fragments bring down is so enigmatical that the mind which longs for certainty is only tantalized by doubt. The specimens of such remains which are here described are made known to us mainly by the Researches of Dr. Robinson. Others have at the most only glanced at them and passed on.

East from Beirût, which stands on the margin of the Mediterranean, where the Lebanon range of mountains approaches nearest to the western sea, there is a Maronite convent on Mount Lebanon, named Deir el-Kulah. The convent is occupied by twenty-five or thirty monks of the Maronite order, who are distinguished by all the superstition which clings to their sect. Soon after crossing the river of Beirût, the ascent of the mountain commences. It is steep, rough, and toilsome, but villages are frequent. The hill sides are terraced

wherever there is earth to encourage that operation. Mulberry and fig trees grow there, as well as the grains of the mountain; while in the gorges below, the remains of an aqueduct are seen, for thrift and industry are virtues which the inhabitants of Lebanon must cultivate, unless they would starve in their mountain homes.

—Arrived at the summit of the ridge, the view upon the Mediterranean, as well as upon the gorges and crags of the mountain, well rewards the toil of the ascent. The convent crowns one of the buttresses of those heights, about five minutes' walk from the ridge. Many villages are in view, and the region is prosperous, owing chiefly to the culture of silk. The remains of the ancient temple, which is supposed to have been of Phœnician origin, and whose abominations might consequently help to fill up the iniquity of the nations of Canaan, till they were swept from the land, front the north-west and look down upon the sea and the plain at the foot of the mountains. They measure 106 feet in length from the south-east to the north-west, and are 54 feet wide. There was a portico 29 feet deep, consisting of two rows of columns, four in each row; and portions of some of these pillars still remain in the spot which they occupied when living worshippers resorted to that temple. The columns measured at their base nearly six feet in diameter, and the height of one of them is still 18¼ feet. Of the body of the temple only the foundations and portions of the lower courses of stones remain; and among these there are some stones 12 feet, or even 14 feet long, by more than five feet broad. Ancient sarcophagi are found in the vicinity; and the convent

church now occupies a portion of the ground formerly covered by this Phœnician temple. Among the ruins, or built into the wall, are stones with Latin and Greek inscriptions, relating, Dr. Robinson believed, to votive offerings made to the god. One of the longest of the Greek inscriptions is on a fragment which now forms part of the hearth of the convent kitchen, and others are scattered over various parts of the modern buildings. In the longest inscription yet deciphered Baal is addressed as "Sovereign Lord of Sports;" and we know that the worship of the ancients was a real revelry; their dances, like those still common in Indian temples, were at once the proofs and the provocatives of crime the most abandoned. From the Old Testament, as Robinson observes, we learn that Baal was worshipped among the Canaanites as Baal-berith—Lord of the Covenant; and as Baal-zebub—Lord of Flies; and here we see that he was worshipped as Lord of Revels,*—at once an illustration and a proof of the accuracy of Scripture.

Here, then, on this majestic ridge, with scenes outspread before us which few lands could match, we find one of the high places of Baal,—one of the scenes of Phœnician idolatry,—one of the strongholds of that debasing worship which helped to fill to the brim the cup of Canaanitish abominations. What though the great and wide sea told of its Creator's glory? Baal and his pollutions had greater charms for men. What though the grandeur of these mountains told of Him whose

* Biblical Researches, iii. 16.

word summoned them all into being? Idolatrous man has no ear to hear what tells of a pure and holy Spirit,—God. Baal is preferred to him,—Baal, whose temples were beauty like this at Deir el-Kulah, but whose worship was mingled obscenity and revels.

On a future occasion, and at no great distance from these ruins, the same indefatigable explorer visited one of the ridges of Lebanon at a place where he counted thirty-five large sarcophagi. The plan of their construction was this: A large rock was selected; the sarcophagus was excavated *in situ;* and then a heavy roof-shaped lid was fitted to it, while the rock outside was left in its natural state. One of the lids measured eight feet long and about three feet broad. Amid these remains of a forgotten past are the foundations of an ancient edifice, 94 feet long by 32 feet wide; but nothing was discovered to fix its date or indicate its purpose. We may conjecture, however, that this was, in some form or other, another centre of evil influence,—perhaps another temple, though all traces at once of its god and of its worshippers have vanished. Those empty but gigantic sarcophagi,—those walls, not crumbling, but crumbled utterly away,—with the place so utterly desolate and lonely,—all seem by their expressive silence to tell us "what is man."

II.

At Kubrikhah, a miserable village not far from the banks of the Litani, or the Leontes, the remains of another temple are found. They consist of two rows of columns, running from east to west, and composed of a

whitish limestone. Dr. Robinson found four of the northern row still standing in their place, and two other pillars were prostrate, with the fragments of two more beside them. On the south side, three are standing and two are fallen. One of the columns which are still erect is of the Ionic order, delicate in some of its tracery, and about twelve feet in height. In the walls of some adjoining hovels many stones of this temple are embedded; but nothing can be discovered to indicate whether it was Phœnician, Greek, or Roman in its origin. History is wholly silent, and even conjecture is difficult in such a case.

III.

At some distance from a place which Robinson identified as Ramah of Asher (Josh. xix. 29), is a lofty hill named Belât, where the remains of another temple are found, though its history and its destination are both wrapt up in the same darkness of oblivion. Ten columns still stand erect on a spot whence the view from Tyre in the north to Akka and Carmel in the south is majestic. The temple stood from north to south-east; and on the south side, four of the columns still bear their architraves, as do those at the north-west corner. They are all of the limestone of the region, and resemble the Doric order. They are about 12 feet high, 5½ in circumference, and stand about 7½ feet apart. The entire length of the building is about 90 feet, and its width is 22. The whole area is now filled with fallen columns, architraves, and similar remains; but no traces of an interior building are found. No sculpture except the pillars, and no inscriptions ap-

pear. A cistern and a single sarcophagus, with some other smaller ruins, complete the amount of these fragments of the past.

And what are they? Who worshipped here? Pagan or Believer? Jew or Christian? The whole is wrapt up in mystery, and we seem left to the general inference that it was one of those high places which of old provoked the most high God. But the very vagueness of conjecture, amid such scenes, appears to invest the past with a dimness or an uncertainty akin to that which belongs to the future. The former occupant of that solitary sarcophagus could once have told a history; but all is now swept away by the tempests of the mountain, like the dust which made him mortal.

IV.

On the road from Banias to Hasbeiya, in the immediate neighbourhood of Mount Hermon, indeed among its offshoots, another group of mysterious ruins is found. They are situated at Kulat Bustra, about 1000 feet above the level of the plain, and on the brow of a precipitous shoulder of the mountain. The summit of that height is crowded with ruins, built of hewn stones, but without architectural ornament; and Dr. Robinson conjectures that it was once the site of several temples. He was able to make out four with certainty, and probably more. They were from 30 to 50 feet in width, and of proportional length; but the materials and the construction were rude. That the place was consecrated to religious worship appears certain; but to the question, what was the god? or who were the

worshippers? not even Echo can reply; and their best explorer confesses that the ruins present a riddle which he was unable to solve. They bear no vestiges of Christianity, and could have been neither churches nor convents. Were they, then, Druze places of worship? Their style does not correspond with that idea. Or did they form one of the high places consecrated by the Syrians to the worship of Baalim,—those places which the word of God so often and so indignantly denounces, thereby proving both how numerous and how polluting they were? That is, in some degree, favoured by the materials which compose the structures; for the stone contains so large an admixture of metal that time produces little impression upon it. Again, however, we must submit to uncertainty, and wonder as we submit, that a place of such exquisite beauty, in regard to position and prospect, should have been polluted by the presence of such idolatries as were most probably practised at Kulat Bustra.

V.

But one of the most perfect specimens of these mountain temples is found near Hibbariyeh, a village which occupies a remarkable position on the slopes and among the wadies of Jebel-esh-Sheik. The remains of this beautiful structure are in a field near the village just named, and the façade is turned towards a mighty gorge, as if to catch the first beams of the morning sun rising over Hermon. Except on the north side, the walls are still standing. The length from east to west is 58 feet, and the breadth 31. The walls are six

feet thick, and 32 feet high; and the portico is 15½ feet deep, and 23 feet wide. The pillars have Ionic capitals; and one of the stones used in the structure measured 15 feet long by about two feet nine inches broad and high. At each end of the fabric is a noble pediment, and various ornaments are described as tasteful and appropriate.

"This is one of the best preserved and most beautiful specimens," writes Dr. Robinson, "of the many ancient temples with which Lebanon, Anti-Lebanon, and the valleys between, are thronged. Their number is not yet known. . . . . They are found in all situations, crowning hills and mountain tops, or secluded in valleys and deep gorges. The founders and worshippers have disappeared for unknown ages. Whether they were Phœnicians or Greco-Syrians, we cannot tell; they have left behind them no trace but these their works, and no record to show how or why these works were erected." Now, where a traveller so scrutinizing and sagacious has failed to find satisfaction or reach results, what can conjecture or speculation achieve? We may say, however, that like the aboriginal substructions in the Hauran, which probably carry us back to the days of Og, king of Bashan, and the early wars of the children of Israel, these ruins, or some of them, connect us directly with the period anterior to the settlement of the Hebrews in Palestine, and the worship of Jehovah there. Strange resuscitation!—thus to find the graceful monuments of a gross idolatry still erect in some of the most commanding spots on the surface of the earth, while of Jehovah's own temple, on his holy hill of Zion, not one stone is now left above another! Hibbariyeh

is 2261 English feet above the level of the sea. Its ruins look down over much of what was promised to Moses; yet perhaps at the very moment when that promise was made, the god worshipped in that tasteful fabric was helping to uphold the idolatry which Moses came to destroy. Does it not cease to be mere wit, and become sober truth to say,

"Since first thy form was in this box extended
We have above ground seen some strange mutations:
The Roman empire has begun and ended,
New worlds have risen, we have lost old nations,
And countless kings have into dust been humbled,
While not a fragment of thy flesh has crumbled?"

VI.

Some of the temples already mentioned are of considerable beauty, but on the road between Hasbeiya, the highest fountain of the Jordan, and Damascus, another structure is found, more elegant and tasteful than any yet described. It stands at the village of Neby Sufa, or Thelthatha, fronting the east, and looking forth upon Jebel-esh-Sheik in all his snowy glories. The general character of the architecture is lighter and more graceful than some of the others. The entablature is not so heavy, and the pediment is more elegant; but only a small part of the temple is entire. What remains, however, with its pilasters, entablature, and pediment, forms a picturesque object at such a place. Towards the east there were columns which, it is supposed, formed a portico, the length of the fabric being 72½ feet, the width 35 feet, the height of the walls 43½ feet, and the diameter of the columns three feet.

On one of the roads leading from this vicinity to Damascus, and near the village of Rukhleh, another temple is found. Sarcophagi by the wayside warn the traveller that he is approaching a sacred place; and he finds it in the bosom of the mountains, fronting again some of the wild recesses of Jebel-esh-Sheik. The temple is larger, more massive, and more simple in its style, than any yet described,—indicating, it is supposed, a greater antiquity. But its walls and columns are utterly prostrate, and huge blocks of stone lie scattered around. The body of the temple is from 82 to 83 feet in length, and in width 57; the whole length of the structure is 102 feet; the shafts of the columns are a little more than 18 feet high, while the height of the capital and the diameter of the columns are each three feet.

In this temple a peculiarity exists, which we describe nearly in the words of Dr. Robinson. On the outside of the southern wall, and just above the ground at the south-east corner, is a large block of stone six feet square, with an ornament like a huge medallion sculptured upon it. There are two circles forming the medallion, an outer and an inner, with borders in high relief; and within the latter is a finely-carved front view of a human countenance in still bolder relief. The length of the face to the top of the hair is three feet four inches; the breadth two feet four. The features, though disfigured, are still distinct and pleasing. At first sight it may be supposed to represent the sun, but Dr. Robinson conjectures that it may have been an image of Baal once worshipped in the temple. Were that conjecture proved to be correct, a key would be found, in some de-

gree, to unlock the mystery which hangs about these nameless, dateless remains. On a knoll to the north-east stood another temple, now utterly demolished; and at several other places in the immediate neighbourhood, as well as at Burkush, some miles from Rukhleh, the debris of other structures are seen. Indeed, the region appears like a forest of temples,—the melancholy memorials of degradation and spiritual death, the prototype of all that is false and impure.

VII.

Dr. Robinson has said that the whole of Mount Hermon was girded with temples; and we cannot proceed many miles, sometimes not many yards, without finding confirmations of the saying. At Deir el-Ashayir, for example, not two hours from Rukhleh, the remains of another large and splendid temple occur. The walls are somewhat entire, and stand upon a platform 126 feet long by 69 in width. The interior of the temple is 88 feet 9 inches, the breadth 35 feet 3 inches; the height of the wall is about 54 feet. The altar-recess is more than 27 feet deep; and one large stone measures 12 feet 5 inches in length, by 4 feet 5 in breadth, and 1½ in thickness. To the south-east of these ruins other extensive remains are found, but so dilapidated that it is difficult to describe them. The stones are large, however, and well cut, and joined without cement; but all is in confusion, so that what was once beauty has now become a chaos. Beside these ruins Dr. Robinson pauses, as if to take breath amid his reasonable wonder, and says, "We had now visited the Panium at Banias; the rude fragments at Kulat Bustra; the stately remains

at Hibbariyeh, Neby Sufa, Aiha, Rukhleh, and Deir-el-Ashayir; and there have likewise been mentioned ruins at Bekka and Burkush. Mr. Thomson had heard of remains at Ain Ata, Ain Hershy, and several other places. These all lie directly upon and around Hermon. The Bukaa and its borders are full of like edifices, to say nothing of the crowning glory of the temples at Ba'albek. Who were the founders of all these costly and magnificent structures?"—But though he could ask the question he could furnish no reply.

On the road from Damascus to Ba'albek other temples are found, as at El-Fijeh, at El-Kefr, where the ruins are Grecian; but we cannot pass over the next that occurs without some account of the pile.

VIII.

The position of the temple at Mejdel, in the Bukaa, is described by Dr. Robinson as very striking. It looks northward along the Bukaa, bounded on the one side by Anti-Lebanon, and on the other by Snowy Lebanon itself. It was about 82 feet long, by 46 wide, and had a pillared portico towards the north. Large Doric capitals are scattered among the prostrate columns, while several of the stones, still *in situ*, measured 21 feet long, and five feet 8 inches in height. Various decorations, niches, and a fluted column of rose-coloured limestone, are enumerated in the description of the ruin. The height of the pile approaches 40 feet; and Dr. Robinson deems this the best preserved fane in or near the Great Valley. "It is simple, massive, and beautiful," he says, "and obviously of an earlier type

than any we had seen, and also than those of Ba'albek; yet not the slightest allusion is found to it in history." Traveller after traveller has passed without noticing or describing it, although the beauty of the ruins, as well as the proximity of another but smaller temple, not more than two or three miles distant, might surely have attracted attention. Near the latter, sarcophagi and large stones from ancient buildings are scattered around. There are also excavated tombs in the side of the hill; and while one is thus reminded, on the right hand and on the left, of the truth,

"Mors etiam saxis nominibusque venit,"

he is prompted more and more to marvel at the silence which enshrouds, or the utter oblivion which has settled upon, these ancient mountain fanes.

IX.

Were it our object to exhaust all the accounts which Dr. Robinson has given of these fabrics, we should refer to another at Masy, in Anti-Lebanon, where the remains measure 78 feet in length and 42 in width, while some of the stones are 10 or 12 feet long, and near which are numerous sepulchres excavated in a hill. But we pass over these to draw attention to the next temple which Dr. Robinson describes, as it may furnish a key to open the mystery of at least some of the rest.

On the route from El-Husn, by the Cedars, to Beirût, the traveller passes the village of Afka; and in its vicinity a temple of great interest is found. There are springs, and streams, and waterfalls, and a lake in the district;

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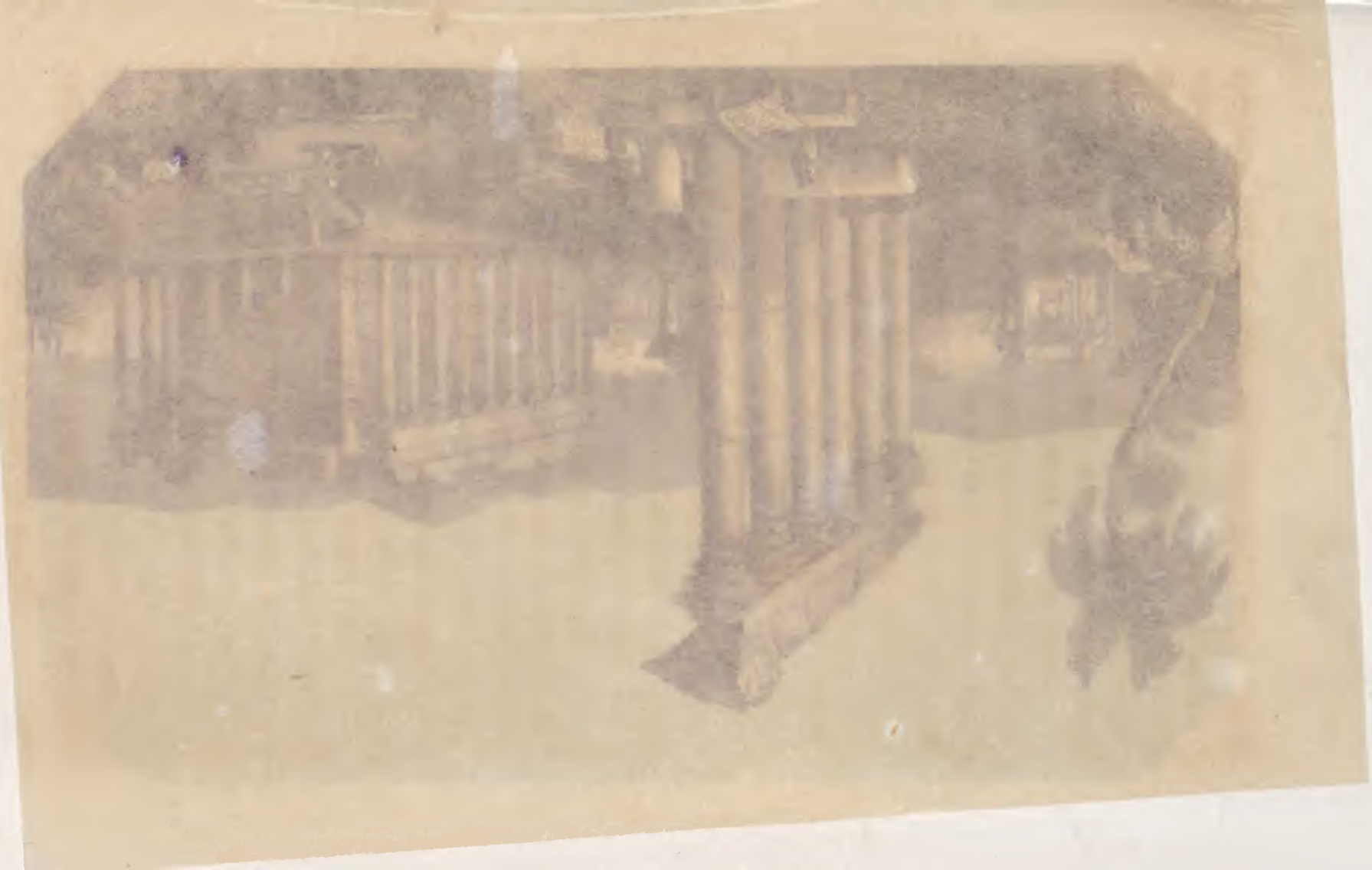
and the ruins stand on a low bluff overhanging one of the streams. From beneath them, at the base of the bluff, a considerable fountain gushes forth. The demolition of the temple is very thorough, but its length is conjectured to have been about 100 feet, and its breadth 50 or more. It was elevated upon a platform, like some others in the region. A column of Syenite granite lies near, and another of the same material (both transported hither no one can tell how) is found in the neighbouring village of Afka. But what sheds some light upon these Lebanon wonders is the fact that the fountain and stream just mentioned form the main source of the river Adonis, which enters the sea near Jebail, the ancient Byblus. The banks of that river formed the scene of the fable of Venus and Adonis, which tells that the latter was torn to pieces by a wild boar, and that his blood, at certain seasons, tinges the waters of the stream. Byblus thus became sacred to Adonis; while on the mountain near Afka, the source of the stream, a temple was built to Venus, at whose ruins we have just glanced. It had become a scene of licentiousness of the grossest kind, insomuch that we disdain even to name the abominations of the place; but when the Emperor Constantine orders were issued to demolish the fabric, where basest passion was the god, and uttermost licentiousness the worshipper.—The neighbourhood presents views of inexpressible grandeur. Rivers, waterfalls, mountains 7000 or 8000 feet high, rugged precipices, the goodly cedars, and other testimonies to the power of the true and living God are teeming here. But what are these to a wor-



and the ruins stand on a low bluff overhanging one of the streams. From beneath them, at the base of the bluff, a considerable fountain gushes forth. The demolition of the temple is very thorough, but its length is conjectured to have been about 100 feet, and its breadth 50 or more. It was elevated upon a platform, like some others in the region. A column of Syenite granite lies near, and another of the same material (both transported hither no one can tell how) is found in the neighbouring village of Afka. But what sheds some light upon these Lebanon wonders is the fact that the fountain and stream just mentioned form the main source of the river Adonis, which enters the sea near Jebeil, the ancient Byblus. The banks of that river formed the scene of the fable of Venus and Adonis, which tells that the latter was torn to pieces by a wild boar, and that his blood, at certain seasons, tinges the waters of the stream. Byblus thus became sacred to Adonis; while on the mountain near Afka, the source of the stream, a temple was built to Venus, at whose ruins we have just glanced. It had become a scene of licentiousness of the grossest kind, insomuch that we dislike even to name the abominations of the place; but under the Emperor Constantine orders were issued to demolish the fabric, where basest passion was the god, and uttermost licentiousness the worshipper.—The neighbourhood presents views of inexpressible grandeur. Rivers, waterfalls, mountains 7000 or 8000 feet high, rugged precipices, the goodly cedars, and other testimonies to the power of the true and living God, are teeming here. But what are these to a wor-

shipper of Venus? What is any proof of Jehovah's presence when passion goads man,—when crime is his amusement or his worship, and evil his good? To render such scenes attractive, legend was added to legend, and the enslavement of the soul was thus perpetuated; yet faith can look on the ruins of the Temple of Venus, crowning this ridge of Lebanon only to pollute it, as a type in their decay of what is yet to be the doom of all that is opposed to the holy and the pure,—utter demolition, because the word of the Eternal has declared it.

X.

At Fukra, on the same route, another ancient temple is found, with a noble portico composed of Corinthian pillars of rose-coloured limestone,—the whole fabric being about 100 feet long by 50 broad. But we pass from these and similar remains to refer, though briefly, to the greatest marvel of all,—namely, ruins resembling some of those which have been described, standing on the very summit of Jebel-esh-Sheik,—that is, Mount Hermon itself. Canon Stanley inclines to the opinion that that summit, and not any of the traditional mounts selected for the convenience of superstition, was the scene of the Transfiguration; and some are disposed to adopt the suggestion,—it is both bold and new. But what we are now to mention is in nothing conjectural, all strange and inexplicable as it may seem.

Mount Hermon is not less than 9000 feet high; some even reckon it 10,000 feet at least. Snow and glaciers never wholly disappear from this Sheik of the mountains, which is indeed the glory of the region over which

it presides. Yet even that lofty point has not escaped from the temple mania of antiquity,—at least in the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges. The summit is divided into three peaks, but so near to each other as to seem only one when seen from below. On one of these three peaks the foundations of a circular wall, 60 feet in diameter, are traced. They are formed of stones carefully hewn, and apparently of great antiquity. They enclose a rock about fifteen feet high; and in that rock is a rude excavation, eight feet deep, and open above. Within the enclosure, and on the very brow of the precipice, are heaps of hewn stones, with the foundations of what appeared to be a little temple. There are no pillars, nor have any inscriptions been found; but this Kulat Antar—for that is its name—was probably, as Dr. Robinson and others conjecture, another seat of the ancient Syro-phœnician worship. The whole region was revered as holy ground by the neighbouring tribes; and, as quoted by the indefatigable American, Jerome says that "a famous temple was said to exist on the summit of Hermon, where the Pagans worshipped."

Such are briefly the facts; but who shall expound the riddle which they embody? Who shall tell us the origin or the authors of the "high places" at which we have been glancing. We now know the dates of the temples at Karnac, Luqsor, and other places in Egypt. Its dynasties and their doings can now be read off nearly as easily as the history of Alexander, or of Cæsar, though not with the same minuteness of detail. But here, among the recesses of Hermon and of Lebanon, is temple after temple, nameless, dateless, utterly un-

known except as piles of ruins, more or less tasteful, but all overthrown. Some key of explanation may yet be found; and the Temple of Venus at Afka supplies more than a hint. But meanwhile sagacity itself is at a loss regarding most of these remains; so that the most patient and successful of all explorers has been compelled to place his finger on his lip and be silent. We wait, then, for some Œdipus to explain the puzzle, and only add, that as the Lebanon range is now as near us, by the highway of the sea, as the Alps were half a century ago, it would more than repay the tourist's trouble to visit and to climb those hallowed heights,—to gaze on their labyrinths of valley,—the majesty of the Mount,—its sea, its rivers, and its forest, the very forest of Lebanon,—on the oriental richness and northern sterility which are united here,—on man's degradation and nature's grandeur,—and, lastly, on the beauty, but also the utter ruin, of the fanes of antiquity so thickly scattered there.—One reads evermore, in such regions and among such ruins, a comment on the text, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn;" and while we see how true He who inspired the saying has been to his threat, we are encouraged to believe that He will be as true to his promise,—that all the ends of the earth shall yet see the salvation of our God. As some of the modern buildings of Lebanon—for example, the convent at Deir el-Kulah—stand on the ruins of former heathen temples, we may cherish the hope that the regions which Paganism and Superstition once profaned and deflowered will, in the fulness of time, become "holiness to the Lord."

XIV.—ANTIOCH.

A MERE enumeration of the historical events connected with Antioch, "The Queen of the East," and once called "God's City," would suffice to show how large a share of influence it exerted upon the men of former times.

That city stood on the banks of the Orontes, between the mountains of Amanus on the north-west and Mount Casius on the south-east; and was about 300 miles north from Jerusalem. It was inland about twenty or thirty miles from the Mediterranean, and along with Seleucia, Apamea, and Laodicea, it formed the Tetrapolis of antiquity; though that name has also been ascribed to the fact that Antioch consisted of four sections, each surrounded by its own wall, and all by a wall in common. It was deemed the third city in importance in the Roman Empire, Rome being the first, and Alexandria the second; and its population may be vaguely estimated by the fact that within 150 years of the date of its foundation, Antioch saw the slaughter of 100,000 of its inhabitants by the Jews in a single day. Early in the Christian era the population was computed at 200,000; of whom about one-half were Christians. The Christian Church there is said to have supported 3000 poor, or even more; so that we may at least conjecture the opulence, the numbers, and the Charities of the Christians at Antioch.

The following incidents may be mentioned among the memorabilia of that city:—

1. It was there that the followers of the Saviour began to be called Christians (Acts xi. 26). His truth was taught there with a remarkable blessing from on high, so that "a great number believed and turned to the Lord;" and Antioch thenceforth became a centre whence the light of truth radiated into the surrounding regions. There Barnabas the eloquent, and Paul the devoted and unwearied, laboured for a whole year continuously, first in founding the Church, and then in building it up. Controversies no doubt arose, and the peace of the infant Church was broken; but for centuries, Antioch continued one of the eyes of the East, at once receiving the light and spreading it to others. The first Christian Council or Assembly was held there. In the third century three others were convened in it; and such historical facts appear to manifest the wisdom of Him who rules over all, in selecting such a city—so central and so influential, in which to plant his truth and secure its dissemination through the lands of the East.

2. Martyr after martyr attested at Antioch the vigour of his faith. Ignatius was the second of its bishops, and suffered martyrdom in the year 107. Babylas, another, died in prison in the reign of Decius; while Lucian, one of its most distinguished presbyters, perished in the fiery times of Diocletian, A.D. 312. There also Chrysostom was born; and there for nearly half a century he held up the torch of truth, that its light might be further and further reflected. No doubt, superstition had begun to do its work in the Church in his day, or from 347 to 407; but his grand Expositions of the word of God kept the light a-flame for a little longer,

till at length barbarism hand in hand with bigotry rushed in to extinguish it and the hopes of mortals together.

3. This city passed through various vicissitudes ere it became a ruin. In the year 260 the King of Persia pillaged it. Earthquake after earthquake has overthrown it. In the years 340, 394, 396, 458, 526, and 528, catastrophes of that kind befell; and in that of 526 it is said 250,000 persons were destroyed, as the earthquake took place at the time of one of the great festivals which superstition has introduced and perpetuated. The emperor of that period, Justinian, gave a sum computed to have amounted to £180,000 to help to rebuild the city; but the Persians came once more, in 540, and gave Antioch to the flames. In the year 658 the Saracens seized upon the place; and that city which had been the capital of the successors of Alexander, the seat of the Roman government in the East, and honoured with the titles, Free, Holy, Inviolate, was degraded by the caliphs to the rank of a provincial town. When the Crusades took place, Antioch, from its position, was coveted by those invaders. About the year 1100, the Duke of Normandy entered it at the head of 300,000 men; and in a battle or siege a century or two thereafter, 17,000 fell, and 100,000 were made captives at ill-fated Antioch. To this day earthquakes continue to desolate the place; and in 1822, 4000 or 5000, out of 20,000, its entire population, perished by one of these disastrous visitations.

But it is with the ruins of Antioch that we are chiefly concerned at present; and these are sufficiently

ample to attest the former importance and magnitude of the place. On the south-west side of the city a precipitous mountain ridge forms a kind of natural wall; but it is rendered yet more strong and commanding by the remains of an ancient Roman wall, which runs along the ridge and descends into the valley. The portion which remains is at some places 30 feet high, at others 50; and the strength of the whole may be inferred from the fact that these masses are about 15 feet in thickness. To complete the means of defence, about four hundred lofty square towers were placed at short distances from each other along the wall, each containing a staircase and two or three apartments. The wall runs in a direct line up the steepest part of the mountain, and the ascending top is formed into stairs, up which the soldiers marched from station to station, or tower to tower, on their way to the citadel, which stood above. The wall ran along two separate hill-tops, in order to environ the city, and crossed a deep ravine, which separated the two, upon a magnificent arch.

The acropolis, we have just seen, stood on the precipitous hill which these ruins now crown or cover; and hence, no doubt, the care with which the place was defended. Altogether, the walls enclose a space which is nearly seven miles in circuit; but much of that is now occupied with mulberry-groves, vineyards, and fruit-gardens. The glory has thus departed; and where the gay and dissolute Lucius Verus, who spent four winters at Antioch, once wasted five-and-thirty thousand pounds on a single supper, ruin piled on ruin is all that now remains—the skeleton or the ghost of former grandeur.

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ANTIOCH.

At the eastern extremity of the western hill the remains of a fortress are found, with turrets, vaults, and a cistern 45 paces in diameter, but nearly filled up with earth; while remains of an aqueduct are seen near the mountains south-south-west from the city. But, in addition to these tokens of ancient strength, antique marble pavements are sometimes laid bare during heavy rains. Gems, carnelians, and rings are frequently found,—all betokening its former proficiency in art. Yet, after all, these ruins are but a poor representative of a city whose people were once counted by hundreds of thousands, and whose position as a stronghold was desired alike by the men who are great in time and the men who are great for eternity.

"Low it lieth, earth to earth,—
All to which our pride gives birth:
Palace, portal, tower, and fane,—
Earth, that never asks in vain,
Hath reclaimed its own again."

The entrance to the present city, when approached from Aleppo, is by an ancient gate, which is named after the Apostle Paul; and the association of his name, or the achievements of his faith in that city, render it famous for all time,—nay, for ever. Paul, several of the Roman Cæsars, fierce Jews, crusading leaders, fiery Saracens, and wind-winged Turks, have all made Antioch the scene of their doings; but which of these was the true hero?—which the real conqueror? With some of them, armies were their weapons and kingdoms their prey; but with Paul armies and kingdoms were like the small dust in the balance: he contended for eternity!—he had in view the crown of glory which fadeth not

away! Which, then, is really the nobler soul? Paul, or the men whose crown, even when they did gain it, faded on their brow? Their influence is in the dust,—his is extending from year to year: and all this supplies another example of the fact that, after all, godliness with persecution and a violent death is a surer way to immortality, than massacring myriads, subduing kingdoms, and founding an empire by the sword. "Alexander founded an empire by force; so did Cæsar, and so did I," said Napoleon Bonaparte on the rock of St. Helena; "and where are our empires now? But Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love; and now, after eighteen hundred years, he has millions that would die in his cause." Such was the testimony of one who had caused the death of 3,000,000 of men to glut his fierce ambition; and amid the ruins of Antioch the words are re-echoed.

We might have spoken of the grove and the temple of Daphne, in the vicinity of Antioch. They formed one of the most exquisite retreats which Paganism ever constructed; but they are an utter ruin now. Their very site is disputed, and nothing remains of either the temples or the gods of the place to tell that they ever had existence. "To live after the manner of Daphne," was once a proverb expressive of all that is debasing; yet the doings which that proverb describes took place amid beauties such as the world has never surpassed. How idle, then, the dream, that mere beauty can tame the heart of man,—can either truly refine or truly elevate the soul! The voice of the past from those desolate scenes exclaims—Omnipotence alone can raise man from the dust.

XV.—THE RUINS OF PALMYRA.

A CITY which owed its origin to Solomon, and waned to its extinction after the reign of the heroic and intrepid Zenobia, deserves and will repay our study. We submit, first, a brief historical account of the place, and then glance at the marvellous ruins which are there.

In 1 Kings ix. 18, and elsewhere in Scripture, we read that Solomon built "Tadmor in the wilderness." The name means Place of Palms. That wise and wide-viewed man saw that the position was favourable as a commercial centre, for at that period the wealth and productions of the East passed through Tadmor or Palmyra, to gratify, enrich, and corrupt the Western nations. Near it there are copious streams—themselves a treasure in the East. The place was about mid-way between the Euphrates and Syria, and the wealth of India and the stores of Mesopotamia hence found an exchange, or an entrepôt at Tadmor. For nearly a thousand years, however, the place is not mentioned in history; and when it became known again, about the commencement of our era, it was a city of importance, of some architectural beauty, and of magnitude enough at least to attract the cupidity of imperial Rome.

About A.D. 130 it submitted to the Emperor Adrian, who made it a Roman colony, and adorned it with some of the stately colonnades which still amaze and awe every visitor, even in their decay. Prior to that time, however, the Palmyrenes themselves had erected some magnificent

structures, as if they would make the grandeur of their city compensate for the sterility of its environment. But from about the time of Adrian, who died A.D. 138, Tadmor rapidly grew in wealth and beauty. It was self-governed, and raised to the rank of a capital; and for nearly a hundred and fifty years its opulence increased, while its pride became proportionally inflated. But this is not the place to detail the ambitious projects, the martial achievements, or the massacres of the Palmyrenes; and we proceed at once to the times of Zenobia—a woman of extraordinary sagacity, virtue, and power. As the widow of Odenathus, the associate of Gallienus in the empire of Rome, she was more than royal; and when her husband was murdered by a nephew, she assumed the title of "Queen of the East." By conquest, she added Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Asia-Minor to her empire; but having incurred the displeasure of Rome, Aurelian marched against Zenobia A.D. 270, defeated her in several battles, laid siege to Palmyra, and took it after a protracted and bloody struggle. The queen was captured on the banks of the Euphrates, and led to grace the emperor's triumph at Rome (A.D. 272), where she appeared bound to his chariot by chains made of her own gold. Her subjects rose and massacred the garrison left in Palmyra by the emperor; but, in revenge, the city was pillaged and in great measure destroyed. The Temple of the Sun was rebuilt, but the place never recovered its former glory, though successive emperors attempted to arrest its decline. Palmyra became the seat of a bishop. The Saracens took early possession of it; a large colony of Jews

made it their home ; but it gradually dwindled down to a village, and in our day a few miserable huts, clinging like parasitic insects to the noble ruins of Palmyra, are all that remain of the city of Solomon and Zenobia, of Adrian, of Aurelian, of Diocletian, and Constantius. Caravans halt there, and the Bedawin prowl around it for plunder ; but Palmyra is a city of the dead rather than of the living,—a grave for ambition,—an antidote, one would think, to pride.

But we are to speak of the ruins themselves, situated in the great desert, about four days' journey east from Damascus. On approaching the place from the west, numbers of tower-like tombs are seen in the valley and along the slopes of the neighbouring hills; but all else fades into insignificance when Tadmor in the desert first flashes on the view. The remains stretch from the base of the adjoining mountains to the Temple of the Sun, all as white as marble, and unshaded by a single tree or twig. The ruin is unutterable,—columns and colonnades, porticoes and temples, mouldering capitals, shivered shafts, triumphal arches, and monuments of the illustrious forgotten,—all, all in architecture that can indicate man's mingled littleness and greatness, there meet the eye of the visitor, while at the same time all is still and lifeless as the limestone of the pillars.

Among the ruins, the Temple of the Sun is generally the first that is visited, as it is the most gigantic ; but we give an account of another portion, which must nearly suffice for the whole. At the north-west angle of the walls of Palmyra stood a peripteral temple. The doorway was surrounded by a broad border of festooning vine

branches and grapes, all exquisitely sculptured in *alto-relievo.* A Corinthian capital, with a monolithic shaft is all that remains of the front row of the portico. But the delicate workmanship and decorations of that capital, the rich scroll-work of the frieze, and the other beauties of these lovely fragments, all proclaim how exquisite the structure in its entireness was. The original plan of the temple was this : It had a portico of four columns in front, with a portico on each side of twenty columns. Near that fabric is a smaller temple, where fragments of fluted columns are still standing; and at a little distance to the south-east, a mausoleum, with a portico still nearly perfect, formed by six columns, all monoliths, and exquisitely proportioned, enhances the beauty of the spot.

But we feel that *words* can give no adequate idea of this scene. It is a chaos of ruins—of rifled sarcophagi, of subterranean tombs, of shattered columns; a blending of modern Vandalism and ancient art,—a forest in stone,—a tomb worthy indeed to contain the dust of an empire rather than to encircle or shade the miserable huts of the modern Palmyrenes. The decorations, criticised in detail, are inferior to those at Ba'albek, and cannot rival those of Athens or Rome ; but viewed in their grandeur and their mass, even the ruthless bands o the Bedawin who demolish columns for the sake of the iron clamps, the waste of centuries, and the devastations of war, have not been able to efface the beauty of this wondrous scene. While we gaze upon such magnificent sights as those of Tadmor, or of Ba'albek, the mind feels over-informed. The blending of beauty and

decay flashes upon us the truth of a hundred texts, and no adequate vent is found for the emotions which arise.

> "O think who once were blooming there,
> The incense-vase with odour flowing,
> The silver lamp its softness throwing
> O'er cheeks as beautiful and bright
> As roses bathed in summer light,"

—all gone!—all a dream!—all a mirage, a mockery of man, if earth were all!

Of the great colonnade of Palmyra we can only say that it consisted of four rows of columns, forming a central and two side avenues, about 4000 feet in length: and who can tell the more than magical effect of one thousand five hundred columns all gleaming in the brilliance of an Eastern sun? Only about a hundred and fifty columns, each 57 feet high, now remain; but even these daguerreotype themselves, by their imposing loveliness, in the minds of all who resort to the scene.

Yet the Temple of the Sun, already mentioned, outrivals even this colonnade. It occupies a square of 740 feet on each side, and the height of the edifice is about 70 feet. A double colonnade lined the interior on three sides, and the shrine, the cell, and other parts of the temple, were all decorated with an art and a beauty such as prompt the thought, How much men have done to honour their false gods, how little to glorify the true! The Ionic and Corinthian decorations which are there,—the pillars and pilasters,—the sculptured eagles, flowers, festoons, and endless ornaments,—all proclaim what Palmyra once was; and though its ruin was no doubt a stage in the world's development, one marvels here at

the sad law to which fallen man is subject—to work out all good by suffering, sorrow, and decays.

Such is a mere glimpse at Tadmor. We have shunned all reference to technical names, and made our narrative popular; and in closing our attempted description we can only say, Go and see. Then only can the past glory and the present magnificent dilapidation of Palmyra be understood.

If it be needful to add other associations to these colossal piles besides their own mass and grandeur, we might find them in the Wady Kebeer, or Great Valley, by which the ruins are approached. It is dreary in itself, but historically it is interesting for ever. There Abraham journeyed on his way from Charran, when going forth at the command of his God, not knowing whither he went; and there Jacob also drove his flocks and herds towards the Promised Land. The vicinity of the springs of Palmyra and other places, it is believed, *must* have been his resting-ground for his live wealth; so that if Solomon founded or greatly increased the splendour of Palmyra, the fathers of his nation were there before him, consecrating these scenes by their presence, and connecting four thousand years ago with the present hour by ties which only truth, the truth of God, can establish. But if Abraham journeyed there "seeking a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," surely we may do the same, in right of these gorgeous ruins,—these piles whose mass, in cases not a few, forms a sepulchre of oblivion for the very name of those who reared them.

XVI.—THE RUINS OF BABYLON.

THE eye can nearly take in at one glance all that now remains of this proud capital,—this boastful Queen of Cities. The accounts which have reached us of its magnificence and its extent, its walls, its riches, and its decorations, appear the creations of Oriental fancy rather than the sober facts of history; and yet these accounts are so circumstantial and so well authenticated, that at least in their great leading features they may be received as true. Its walls are variously estimated at from 300 to 75 feet in height, at different periods; and from 75 to 32 feet broad. The circuit of the city, which was a square, is by some alleged to have been 34 miles, by others about 60. The Temple of Belus, or Baal, was half a mile in circumference, and the eighth of a mile in height. The hanging gardens, constructed by one of the monarchs to gratify a queen whom he had married from a mountain land, rivalled the bulwarks of nature. In tier above tier, resting upon arch above arch, they rose as high as the walls, and bore the floral beauties of many lands. The hundred brazen gates, which defended the city from an attack on the side of the Euphrates which washed it, gave both beauty and strength to the place. An artificial lake in the neighbourhood, 40 miles square, and resembling an inland sea, rendered the proud capital prouder still. Its bridges and its palaces, all enhanced its beauty,—in a word, we are safe in pronouncing the colossal city a marvel. Constantinople, Naples, Venice,

or other sea-side cities of modern times, would have been but a suburb to Babylon.

> "Her daughters had their dowers
> From spoils of nations; and the exhaustless East
> Poured in her lap all gems in sparkling showers.
> In purple was she robed; and of her feasts
> Monarchs partook, and deemed their dignity increas'd."

One main source of all this wealth and grandeur was the Euphrates. Its waters, distributed by art and science,—by canals and hydraulic machines—over the vast plains, occasioned a fertility such as few lands can boast; while its productions—vegetable and live—rendered the territory of Babylon the store-house of the nations. And its power abroad was in proportion to this abundance at home. Again and again did its Nebuchadnezzars and other potentates penetrate to distant lands. More than once they pillaged Jerusalem, and made its people captives; and though that victory proved the ruin of Babylon, when Belshazzar used the sacred vessels of the Temple to pander to his pride or his passion, it *was* a trophy, to have laid a heaven-defended city in the dust. In short, Babylon was the hammer of the whole earth. It demolished cities: it changed dynasties: it made and unmade: it arrogated the prerogatives of a Supreme.

But all this glory was to perish in a night. It did not wane like the moon,—it fell like lightning from heaven; but we need not detail the circumstances. It is well known that Cyrus laid siege to Babylon, and led many confederated chiefs against it; but it long baffled and laughed to scorn the power of all assailants. Secure

behind its impregnable walls, and doubly guarded, it was thought, by the river, the city lived in wantonness though beleaguered by the foe. Revelry and wild luxury reigned. The prodigious granaries, the stores that seemed exhaustless, men's high hopes, and their spirit of jubilant defiance,—all taught Babylon to set its besiegers at nought. But it was the purpose of God that it should fall, and who then shall hold it up? Cyrus turned the Euphrates into other channels above the city; he marched his forces into the heart of it along the bed of the river; his detachments met in the centre; and a large portion of the place was in the hands of the enemy while the last king of Babylon was deep in his carouse, perpetrating sacrilege, and making the God of Israel "serve with his sins."

After the times of Cyrus the place was conquered again and again, by Darius, by Alexander the Great, by Antigonus, by Demetrius, by Antiochus the Great, and by the Parthians. Xerxes, when ingloriously retreating from Greece, rifled Babylon and the Temple of Belus, when the golden statue, forty feet in height, and other treasures, are said to have yielded to him £20,000,000 sterling. Some of her conquerors attempted to restore the proud city: among the rest, Alexander, who would have made it the capital of an universal empire. But, according to prophecy, "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed;" and the building of Seleucia completed the ruin of the place. Her buildings became quarries for other cities, like Ctesiphon, Kufa, Korbellà, Hillah, Baghdad,—themselves nearly all ruins now. Her idols were carried off, and

they are said to have weighed 400,000 pounds in gold. The Forum and fairest parts of the city were fired; the people were deported to Seleucia, at the distance of about forty miles; and the power which had shattered kingdoms, which had beaten down Jerusalem, slain its princes, and both bound and blinded its kings, was itself at last laid in the dust. The slaughter of the rulers of Israel was avenged when Darius impaled 3000 of the nobility of Babylon. "The golden city" thus became a heap; and heaps it still remains.

Our Engraving represents the Birs Nimroud; and that is nearly all that is now found of Babylon the great. A full description of that mound would suffice to show how completely the proud city has been demolished,—how its mighty men "could not find their hands," and how "an end has come upon it;" but a mere enumeration of the phrases employed by the prophets to describe it will show how utter is the ruin,—how thoroughly "the besom of destruction" has done its work. Babylon, then, is fallen. It has become heaps. It is brought down to the grave. Wild beasts of the desert lie there. It is a possession for the bittern, and a dwelling-place for dragons. Pools of water are there. In a word, Babylon at this moment is the reality of which Isaiah 2500 years ago presented the word-picture. The whole face of the country is covered with lines of ruin, with green mounds of rubbish and traces of once extensive buildings. The Temple of Belus and two royal palaces are *supposed* to be known; and one pile covers a space of 700 yards square. But lions, hyenas, jackals, and other noxious animals, now

prowl where the proudest of princes once abode and the loudest of revellers abounded.

But, as we have said, the Birs Nimroud, on the western bank of the Euphrates, represented in our Engraving, is the chief ruin of the scene. It is supposed by some to be the remains of the Temple of Belus or Baal. It is 2082 feet in circuit, and now resembles a hill with a castle on the summit. From top to base, it is a huge and formless mass of ruins; and though originally constructed of seven or eight successive towers, rising from each other to the height of about a furlong, it is now a confused heap of about the third of that height. The bricks of which the pile was constructed are cemented into a conglomerate, which renders the whole well-nigh like stone; and yet the mass is dislocated, chaotic, and utterly ruinous—as perfect a monument of desolation as Sodom and Gomorrah themselves could be after the fire and brimstone fell. The Mujelibé, 140 feet high, and the Kasr, two ruins on the eastern bank, are huge, but they become petty mounds beside the Birs Nimroud; and occupying, as it is supposed by some to do, the site of the Tower of Babel, it tells in many ways of Jehovah's indignation against the pride of man. The Turks digging for hidden treasures, the Arabs for building materials, and the curious for antiquities, have so completely defaced the whole, that confusion now reigns where vice, luxury, and gross ungodliness long held their polluted court and highest carnival.

With all these tokens of decay, these dilapidated trophies of Jehovah's truth and power before them,—with the Birs Nimroud on the western bank, the Mu-

jelibé and the Kasr on the east, in view,—traveller after traveller confesses "the overpowering sensation of reverential awe that possesses the mind when contemplating the extent and the magnitude of these ruins." The grey osiers, still growing on the banks of the river, descendants of those on which the Hebrew captives hung their harps of old, deepen the dreariness of the scene, like flags of distress on a sinking vessel; while the majestic reed-lined stream, wandering solitary amid the maze, seems to murmur something about the time when these mounds were palaces, these lines of rubbish streets, and this dreary solitude the abode of gay and thoughtless and idolatrous crowds.

—But we may pause. Read Isaiah—read Jeremiah—and find there a very hand-book to the ruins of Babylon. There are two modes of learning how complete is its overthrow: first, by visiting the place; secondly, by studying the prophecies which predict its long and utter desolation.

In digging among the debris of Babylon, some inscriptions, in cuneiform characters, have been discovered. In one of the palatial ruins a lion of colossal form and of rude workmanship was found; and cylinders stamped with groups of figures, some of them obviously worshipping, have also been dug up. But these only help to render the traces of ruin more complete; and the meditative mind, amid such mouldered and moulder-ing piles, reads more plainly than ever a sentiment which is true alike of individuals, of cities, and of empires,—"Be sure your sins will find you out."

We have referred to the commonly received opinion regarding the Birs Nimroud; but it were wrong not to

observe that more recent and more accurate investigations have led to other conclusions. In the year 1854, some excavations, conducted under the directions of Sir Henry Rawlinson, have to a considerable extent modified previous opinions. He ascertained, as had been conjectured, that the structure consisted of several different stages, or terraces, and found that there were six. Each terrace was about 20 feet high, and 42 feet narrower than the one immediately below it. They were so constructed as to form together an oblique pyramid; and upon the sixth storey, according to Rawlinson, stands a vitrified mass, which has given rise to much discussion, but which is now supposed to have been the sanctum of a temple. Built into some of the corners were stamped cylinders of Nebuchadnezzar's times, giving to the fabric the name of "The Stages of the Seven Spheres of Borsippa." Each storey was dedicated to a planet, and stained with the colour peculiarly attributed to it by Sabean astronomers, and handed down from the Chaldeans. The lowest tier was black, for Saturn; the second orange, for Jupiter; the third red, for Mars; the fourth yellow, for the Sun; the fifth green, for Venus; the sixth blue, for Mercury; and the temple on the summit is conjectured by some to have been white, for the Moon. This structure, though not the Temple of Belus, if these statements be correct, is understood to have been built upon the same plan as that celebrated erection, insomuch that, "when we look upon the existing edifice, we regard a fac-simile of the one that is now destroyed."*

* Loftus, *Chaldœa and Susiana*, p. 31.

But whether the former or the more recent solution of the questions connected with this pile be preferred, the following translation of the inscribed cylinders of Nebuchadnezzar, which have been discovered there, is full of interest, and proves him to have been as zealous a builder as the Bible describes. The translation says,—

"I am Nabu-kuduri-uzur, king of Babylon, the established governor; he who pays homage to Merodach, adorer of the gods, glorifier of Nabu, the supreme chief; he who cultivates worship in honour of the great gods; the subduer of the disobedient man, repairer of the temples of Bit-Shaggeth and Bit-Tyida, the eldest son of Nabupaluzur, king of Babylon. Behold now, Merodach, my great lord, has established men of strength, and has urged me to repair his buildings. Nabu, the guardian over the heavens and the earth, has committed to my hands the sceptre of royalty; therefore, Bit-Shaggeth, the palace of the heavens and the earth, for Merodach, the supreme chief of the gods, and Bit-Kua, the shrine of his divinity, and adorned with shining gold, I have appointed them. Bit-Tyida, also, I have firmly built with silver and gold, and a facing of stone; with wood of fir, and plane, and pine I have completed it. The building named the Planisphere, which was the wonder of Babylon, I have made and finished; with bricks enriched with lapis lazuli I have exalted its head. Behold now the building named the Stages of the Seven Spheres, which was the wonder of Borsippa, had been built by a former king. He had completed forty-two cubits [of height]; but he did not finish its head. From the lapse of time it had become ruined. They had

not taken care of the exits of the waters, so the rain and wet had penetrated into the brickwork. The casing of burnt brick had bulged out, and the terraces of crude brick lay scattered in heaps. Then Merodach, my great lord, inclined my heart to repair the building. I did not change its site, nor did I destroy its foundation platform; but in a fortunate month, and upon an auspicious day, I undertook the building of the crude brick terraces, and the burnt brick casing of the temple. I strengthened its foundation, and I placed a titular record on the part I had rebuilt. I set my hand to build it up, and to exalt its summit. As it had been in ancient times, so I built up its structure: as it had been in former days, thus I exalted its head. Nabu, the strengthener of his children, he who ministers to the gods, and Merodach, the supporter of sovereignty, may they cause this my work to be established for ever; may it last through the seven ages; and may the stability of my throne, and the antiquity of my empire, secure against strangers, and triumphant over many foes, continue to the end of time. Under the guardianship of the regent, who presides over the spheres of heaven and the earth, may the length of my days pass on in due course. I invoke Merodach, the king of the heavens and the earth, that this my work may be preserved for me, under thy care, in honour and respect. May Nabu-kuduri-uzur, the royal architect, remain under thy protection."—Such a document, transmitted to our day from such a source, is surely a marvel.

While adverting to the ruins in Babylon, or its environs, we should not omit to notice the Tomb of Ezekiel,

so called, which stands due south from Birs Nimroud. A road runs along the raised bank of a marsh in the vicinity of Babylon, and at the distance of about twelve miles stands the little town of Keffil, surrounded by a high wall, and, except at the time of the annual pilgrim festival, a dreary and sad abode. Among the buildings which overtop the city wall, the Tomb of Ezekiel is one. It has the appearance of an elongated cone, tapering to the top by a succession of divisions or steps, cut and embellished in a peculiar manner. Mr. Loftus is rather of opinion that the tradition which assigns that tomb to the Prophet is not unworthy of belief. It is honoured, and has for centuries been so, alike by Moslems and by Jews. Benjamin of Tudela, a Jewish traveller in the twelfth century, tells that it was erected by Jeconiah, king of Judah; and though this information may be deemed apocryphal, this much is certain:—The spot and the scene are lonely and deserted enough to be the last resting-place of a prophet in exile, and such a prophet as Ezekiel. The interior of the pile is tawdry, or worse, but is said to contain an ancient Hebrew copy of the Pentateuch, built into the wall. An ever-burning lamp sheds the dimmest possible light upon the chamber where the tomb of the prophet is shown; but with all this show of honour, it appears as if the place were hastening to decay, and many of the abominations of the East are found in and around the pile.

Nor would it be out of place to refer to the ruins of Kufa, at no great distance, a place signalized at least by Moslem traditions. The city is said to have extended in former times over a space of forty-five miles, although

all that remains is now the fragment of a wall with some mounds, which tell of entombed buildings. There, it is believed, the angel Gabriel once alighted upon earth and prayed; there the waters of the deluge first broke forth from the ground; there Noah embarked in his ark; nay, thither the serpent, after the temptation, was banished! —but, like a thousand other scenes all around, Kufa, once a vast, if not a magnificent place, is now dreary, "without form, and void." There may be scenes in that region, as travellers tell, to which not fewer than 80,000 Moslem pilgrims annually resort; or places of interment consecrated by the blood of the martyred Khalif Ali, to which from 5000 to 8000 corpses are annually conveyed from a distance to be entombed; but all that only makes these dreary scenes more dreary still: they are morally, as well as physically, a waste; and if it be true that the Holy Land, like the book which John beheld in Patmos, is written within and without with the doings of God, not less signal, or not less speaking, are the ruins, the decay, and the desolation of Babylonia.

XVII.—RUINS IN CHALDÆA.

FROM year to year the past is becoming more and more known to us, through the disinterment of ruins, and consequent familiarity with their marvels. The colossal piles of Egypt have given forth their secrets, and the history of that land, so long a perfect labyrinth, is now, on the whole, intelligible and consistent. The ruins of Syria have also been extensively explored, and their secrets made known. Nineveh, and Babylon, the far West of America, and the far East of India, have all been ransacked, and both the public and the private life of the dwellers in these long entombed or long forgotten places are as familiarly known, in our day, as the habits of some of the regions or some of the tribes of the present age. The epoch of the fabulous is thrown much further back than it was in our fathers' times; and just as a walk in Pompeii lets us see far into the life and habits of the Romans, a walk about Babylon, or Nineveh, in Petra, or Jerash, or Yucatan, will impart more knowledge of the past than whole volumes of narrative, or even whole sheets of photography.

But of all the regions of the earth famed for their ruins, if we except the Valley of the Nile, few are more remarkable than the ancient Mesopotamia. It is, for the most part, a dreary level; at least the chief elevations, in some parts, are the mounds which inter long extinct cities, and hide from mortal eye the homes of some who once held the world in awe. Proof is there

heaped upon proof of the dense population which crowded those regions in ancient times. Some lofty mound tells of a fallen capital, or important city. Fragments of pottery, or crumbling walls speak of towns and villages. Now a palace and anon a temple is found, as at Niffar, Bismya, Phara, Hammam, and elsewhere; and as the traveller hastens across the plain, the ruins seem as boundless as the view. Ten have been counted—twenty—fifty from one point. And are these all? Nay, advance a few miles further, and you may count the same number again, till wonder becomes mute; for we are astonished at the thought of what must *once* have been the fertility of these regions, all dreary and desolate as they now appear,—a fertility which only awaits to be re-awakened, when the authority of law shall have superseded that of oppression; when the truth of God shall have supplanted the fables and the fanaticism of man; and when the fierce and prowling Arab, tamed by a heavenly power, shall be found clothed and in his right mind at the feet of a heavenly Saviour.—We are next to glance at some of these Mesopotamian or Chaldæan ruins, selecting chiefly those which refer to places mentioned in Scripture, or in connection with the early history of our race.

I.—MUGEYER.

The great Temple of Mugeyer is situated on the right bank of the Euphrates, at the distance of six miles from the river. The ruins consist of a series of low mounds running from north to south, for rather more than half a mile. Near the north end of these there is a remark-

able building, about 70 feet high, which is the only known specimen of a Babylonian temple in good preservation, not covered with rubbish. It is of brick, and consists of two massive storeys. Its form is a parallelogram, and each storey slopes inward, as if with a view to sustain a heavy pressure at top. The longer side of the figure is 198 feet, and the shorter 133. It is buttressed all round: on the south-west there are nine buttresses, and on the north-west, six. The lower storey is 27 feet high, and there is only one entrance, which is eight feet wide. The upper storey is 14 feet high, its length is 119 feet, and its breadth 75. The fabric appears to stand upon a mound about 20 feet high, though the rubbish and ruins render it difficult to speak distinctly. The entire exterior is faced with red kiln-baked bricks to the extent of ten feet. A difference in the structure of the two storeys is ascribed to the fact that they were built by two different kings.

For some time nothing of much importance was discovered by the excavations carried on in this mass. At length, however, six feet below the surface, a perfect cylinder was found deposited in a niche in the wall. It was inscribed all over with characters which have been deciphered by Sir Henry Rawlinson. And guided by the discovery of this cylinder, shafts were sunk at the corresponding corners of the pile; where other cylinders were found. These records bear the names of a series of kings from Urukh, who lived 2230 years before Christ, to Nabonidus, who lived B.C. 540. One of these kings is Chedorlaomer (Gen. xiv. 1). But the most important identification, according to Mr. Loftus, is, that Mugeyer

(which means "cemented with bitumen") is Ur of the Chaldees; and this identification Sir Henry Rawlinson believes to be complete. At all events, the cylinders disinterred there tend to elucidate and confirm a difficult passage of Scripture. Profane history assigns no place to Belshazzar among the kings of Babylon; but the Scriptures do. How is this to be reconciled? One of the cylinders of Mugeyer, as read by Sir Henry Rawlinson, distinctly bears that Bel-shar-ezer (Belshazzar) was the eldest son of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon according to profane history; and that the son was admitted to share the government with his father. When Cyrus, then, took the father prisoner, the son was king, and in that character Daniel describes him.

An Oratory has also been discovered among these ruins; a cemetery of the primitive ages; and some large blocks of black granite, which are supposed to have belonged to an altar.

Assuming, then, the correctness of the interpretation of these inscriptions, we are here actually guided to Ur of the Chaldees, concerning which we read that "Terah, the father of Abram, took his household, and went forth from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan." This discovery is like placing us in contact with the foundation-stone of some majestic building, or the fountain of some majestic river,—the Nile, the Jordan, or Euphrates. From that centre, light began to radiate 4000 years ago, and it is spreading still. Though Abraham knew not whither he went, his God knew, and led him by an unknown path, —the type or the model of believers in every age.

II.—WARKA.

In Gen. x. 10, Nimrod is said to have founded four cities, "Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar;" and Warka, the next Babylonish ruin we are to glance at, is held to be Erech by some, though others are disposed to regard it as Ur. But whatever ancient place they may represent, these ruins are full of interest, dating, as they do, far back in a period when nearly all except the Bible is fable. They stand on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, and about three miles from the river. At no great distance are other remarkable sites, as Sinkara, Tel Ede, and Hammam. At Warka, the desolation and solitude are even more striking than the dreariness of Babylon itself; but the zealous explorer of the ruins should himself be heard.

"There is no life for miles around," Mr. Loftus says. "No river glides in grandeur at the base of its mounds (as at Babylon): no green date groves flourish near its ruins. The jackal and the hyena appear to shun the dull aspect of its tombs. The king of birds never hovers over the deserted waste. A blade of grass or an insect finds no existence there. The shrivelled lichen alone, clinging to the weathered surface of the broken brick, seems to glory in its universal dominion upon those barren walls. Of all the desolate pictures which I have ever beheld, that of Warka incomparably surpasses all. There are, it is true, lofty and imposing structures towering from the surrounding piles of earth, sand, and broken pottery; but all form or plan is lost in

masses of fallen brickwork and rubbish. These only serve to impress the mind more fully with the complete ruin and desertion which have overtaken the city. Its ancient name even, is lost to the modern tribes, and little is known with certainty of its past history. Nineveh, Babylon, and Susa, have their peculiar traditions; but ancient Warka and its sanctity are forgotten, as though they had possessed no previous existence. . . . ."

The principal edifice at Warka is called the Buwariyya; and from its summit one gazes on a wilderness of mounds and relics of ancient art, nearly six miles in circumference. The earthen rampart which surrounds it is, in some places, 40 feet high. There are buildings of great mass, supposed to be temples, or perhaps royal tombs. Tokens of the devastations of fire are seen. At the extreme north a conical mound appears, the remains of some huge pile; and, as if not content with the space within the walls, ruined buildings, mounds and pottery, stretch fully three miles into the desert. A dome-shaped pile, called Nuffayji, at the distance of two miles from the central edifice, rivals it in height; while mounds and barrows all around form, we may suppose, the tombs alike of the city and the citizens. The barren region surrounding the ruins, devoid as it is at once of water, of vegetation, and of inhabitants, intensifies the melancholy of the forlorn scene; and all this has prevailed for perhaps 2000 years. The walls are now little more than large green mounds, though traces of several turrets are visible at some places along them.

The Buwariyya, already mentioned (meaning Reed-mats), is a tower 200 feet square, supported by but-

tresses; and the monarch whose name has been read on some of the inscriptions,—Urukh, who lived B.C. 2230, —dedicated this pile to the Moon. The total height of the ruin is now about 100 feet. The summit is 68 feet broad from north to south; and some inscriptions point to a Sinshada, who lived about 1500 B.C. In the buttresses, when opened, inscriptions were found in cuneiform characters; and walls of vitrified bricks, bearing the name of Merodach-gina, who lived B.C. 1400, are traceable in different parts.

But the most interesting of the ruins at Warka is that called Wuswas. It stands in an oblong enclosure, of which the north-west side measures 650 feet, and the south-east 500. Gateways, courts, and steps can still be traced. One pile of ruin is 246 feet long, 174 feet wide, and 80 feet high. It stands on a lofty artificial platform 50 feet in height, while the piled-up rubbish and debris all around excite unbounded surprise. A palace has also been discovered there whose façade is 174 feet long; which, according to Mr. Loftus, "furnishes a new page to the annals of architecture,"—and, we may add, a new topic to the moralist. Arches are there; columns are there; indeed the ruin is thorough, and leaves us more and more amazed at the works both of man and of time. Mr. Loftus excavated seven chambers, one of which is 57 feet by 30. Every chamber was filled with rubbish, and it is supposed was lighted from above. This fabric, it is conjectured, was erected seven or eight centuries before Christ.

As we wander from pile to pile among these remains of forgotten times and forgotten men, and study their

decorations, in cones, vases, urns, and similar things, we seem to have reached some other planet than our own. But though that idea were true, the planet would still be the abode of mortals; for we observe next that Chaldæa abounds in sepulchral cities of immense extent; and at Warka the accumulation of human remains at once assures us that it must long have been a sacred place of sepulture,—it is conjectured for about 2500 years. The bones and tombs of the dead crowd nearly every spot; and even the sepulchres of ancient Thebes seem surpassed in number by those of Warka. The funereal remains perhaps penetrate into the earth to the depth of sixty feet; and the coffin, commonly of clay, is thus described: "It contains the bones of a human being, or only a single head, with engraved cylinders and gems, beads and neck ornaments, and rings cut out of marine shells. Sometimes two of these vessels are placed mouth to mouth, and then cemented together. . . . . They contain one or more bodies." In some of them the skeleton is seen trussed like a fowl, and reclining generally on the left side. Sometimes the skull rests on the bones of the left hand; and those of the right are occasionally found in a copper bowl in front, containing cylinders of agate, or meteoric stones, with small personal ornaments. Even the hair and the head-dress have in some cases been found at Warka.

We cannot dwell on the slipper-shaped coffins of this place, nor on the inscriptions and figures which are found on them. Every year hundreds are rifled by the Arabs, for the sake of the gold ornaments which they contain. Armlets, bugles, and toe-rings of silver,

brass, and copper, with gold and silver finger-rings, and gold ear-rings, are found in some of the coffins. Head-dresses are also discovered, as well as drinking vessels and lamps, glass lachrymatories, copper bowls, and other utensils. The top of the coffin is often a receptacle for relics, supposed to be the parting gifts of friends, while copper coins are often found strewed around the coffin. Glazed water-jugs and earthen drinking-cups are placed at the foot of each coffin; and a steel and flint have also been picked up. Terra cotta figures of warriors and women are also found, with some images of Venus, and decorations which we need not describe.

We must, however, name what are called "the bank-notes" of Babylon, or bricks from two to four and a half inches long, and one to three inches broad. Sir Henry Rawlinson believes, from the inscriptions which they bear, that they are certainly official documents issued by the king, attested or endorsed by the principal officers of state, and referring to specific weights of gold or silver. These curious relics relate to a period ranging from 626 to 522 B.C., and are just the circulating medium of Chaldæa. Ornaments in alabaster, in sculptured shells, in carved ivory, and other objects, were found near these bank-notes. In one of the ruins Mr. Loftus discovered a series of tablets, containing some minute but beautiful engravings; and we give the contents of one tablet, as curious illustrations of the progress of art: 1. A roaring lion, moon, and star; 2. A wild ass and crescent; 3. A winged sagittarius and crescent; 4. A winged griffin with a single horn; 5. A bone; 6. A winged griffin and crescent; 7. Nude figure; 8. Goat,

and crescent; 9. Winged bull and crescent; 10. Human-headed bull; 11. Dressed figure; 12. Winged human-headed animal; 13. Lion holding a crescent; 14. Fish god; 15. Human figure; 16. Dog and triangle.

Such, then, is a glance at Warka, perhaps the Erech of Scripture. We need not moralize. These green mounds, and rifled sepulchres, and mouldering, nay, buried palaces, mute as they have been for ages, now speak, trumpet-tongued, concerning man, his greatness and his littleness, his glory and his shame.

III.—SINKARA.

This is another site of ruins about fifteen miles south-east from Warka. The pile is about four miles and a half in circumference. One of the ruins is oval-shaped, and 320 feet long by 220 broad. During the excavations some perfect cylinders were found. Here, also, tombs of great antiquity, and remains bearing the legend of Nebuchadnezzar and other monarchs, were discovered; and a date which extends to 1500 years before Christ, is given. Cemeteries of vast extent are there. Jars and vases of various forms were exhumed, as well as skeletons and their coffins. Funereal ornaments like those at Warka were also dug up. Indeed, the mere catalogue of these old-world discoveries is so full, that as we read we seem to grow familiar with the habits and the thoughts, the life and the death, of the men of 3000 years ago. Their games,—for example, boxing,—their pursuit of the lion, in a rude form, and various other things, are now made known to us by the excava-

tions at Sinkara; but these, as well as some minor ruins at Tel Sifr, (or Copper, from the number of copper articles discovered there,) we need not particularly describe. The latter articles were so rife at one place, that they were supposed to be the stock in trade of a coppersmith: and Mr. Loftus, after Sir Henry Rawlinson, concludes that some of the remains at this place point us back to the date of the Exodus, or more than 3300 years ago. Thus is the gulf of the past bridged over, so that the two extremes of time, as far as time has run its course, are brought together, like a bow whose extremities are made to touch each other. As we thus march over the graves of centuries, and mark how city after city—nay, nation after nation—has been entombed in the past, we are taught to think more than ever of the believer's portion—Him that is unchangeable; and of the believer's home—the city which hath foundations. Strange, and only the Bible can explain it, that men should visit these ruined piles,—nay, actually moralize among them,—and yet cleave to earth as their portion!

XVIII.—SUSA.

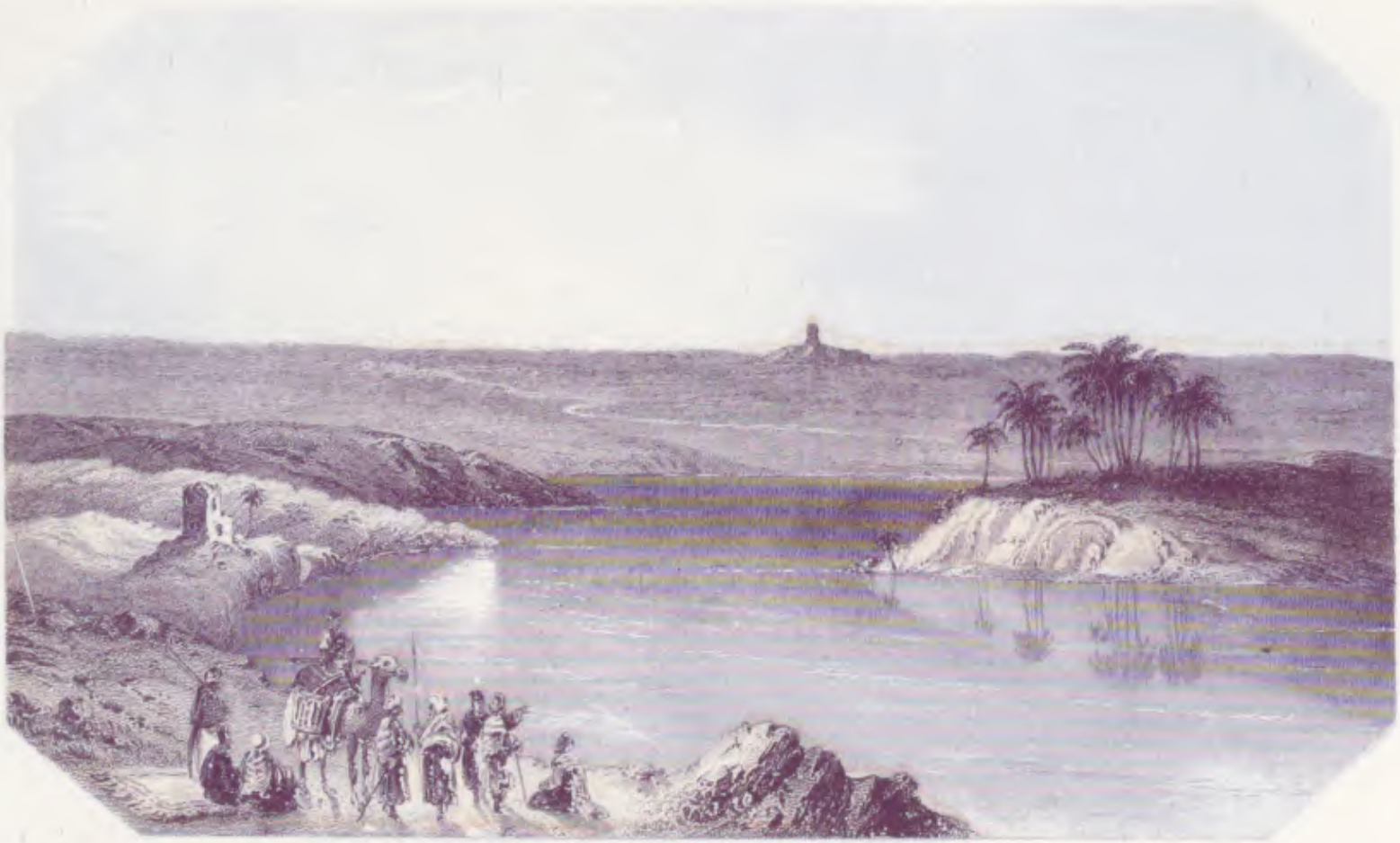
"SHUSHAN the palace," in the city where Esther became a queen, and Haman found a gallows, and Daniel attended to the king's business—what modern ever expected, fifty years ago, to see its halls ransacked, plans of that palace formed, and its curiosities transferred to Britain? Yet all that has been done in our day; and we are now to submit some meagre specimens of the wonders of Sushan, Susa, Sus, or Shush.

The first thing that invites attention here is the reputed tomb of Daniel the prophet,—a place at once of Moslem and of Jewish superstition. Dismissing the Oriental fables which relate to it, and which deserve no regard, we observe that the reputed tomb forms the side of a large court, which must be passed through to reach the sacred pile, shrouded in date-trees, and rising with a conical spire above most of the surrounding objects. Various chambers are traversed before reaching that in which the supposed shrine is found,—that shrine being merely a slab of polished cement. A few miserable lamps, more miserable prayer-mats, and similar things, as filthy as Eastern habits can make them, constitute the entire furniture,—gloomily belying the lightness of the outward aspect. The cone-shaped spire is not wholly inelegant; but whatever degree of credit may be attached to the tradition that Daniel was buried here, (which is undoubtedly ancient,) the tomb is little worthy

of his name. Seven invisible but sleepless lions are believed to guard the structure;—and that may illustrate the moral condition of the region.

The first positive reference to Shushan dates from 650 B.C. About the year 560 B.C. it passed into the possession of Cyrus. It was richly embellished by the succeeding Persian kings, and became the rival of Babylon and Nineveh. Ahasuerus, whom some now identify with Xerxes, reigned here, and in the providence of God was made the deliverer of the Jews from massacre, by capriciously choosing Esther for his queen. He made Shushan a treasure city, and deposited there the wealth which he took from Delphi and Athens. Alexander the Great further enhanced the importance of Shushan, where he found silver to the value of £7,500,000. Indeed, it was so rich that the possession of its wealth, it was said, would make a man a rival to Jupiter himself.

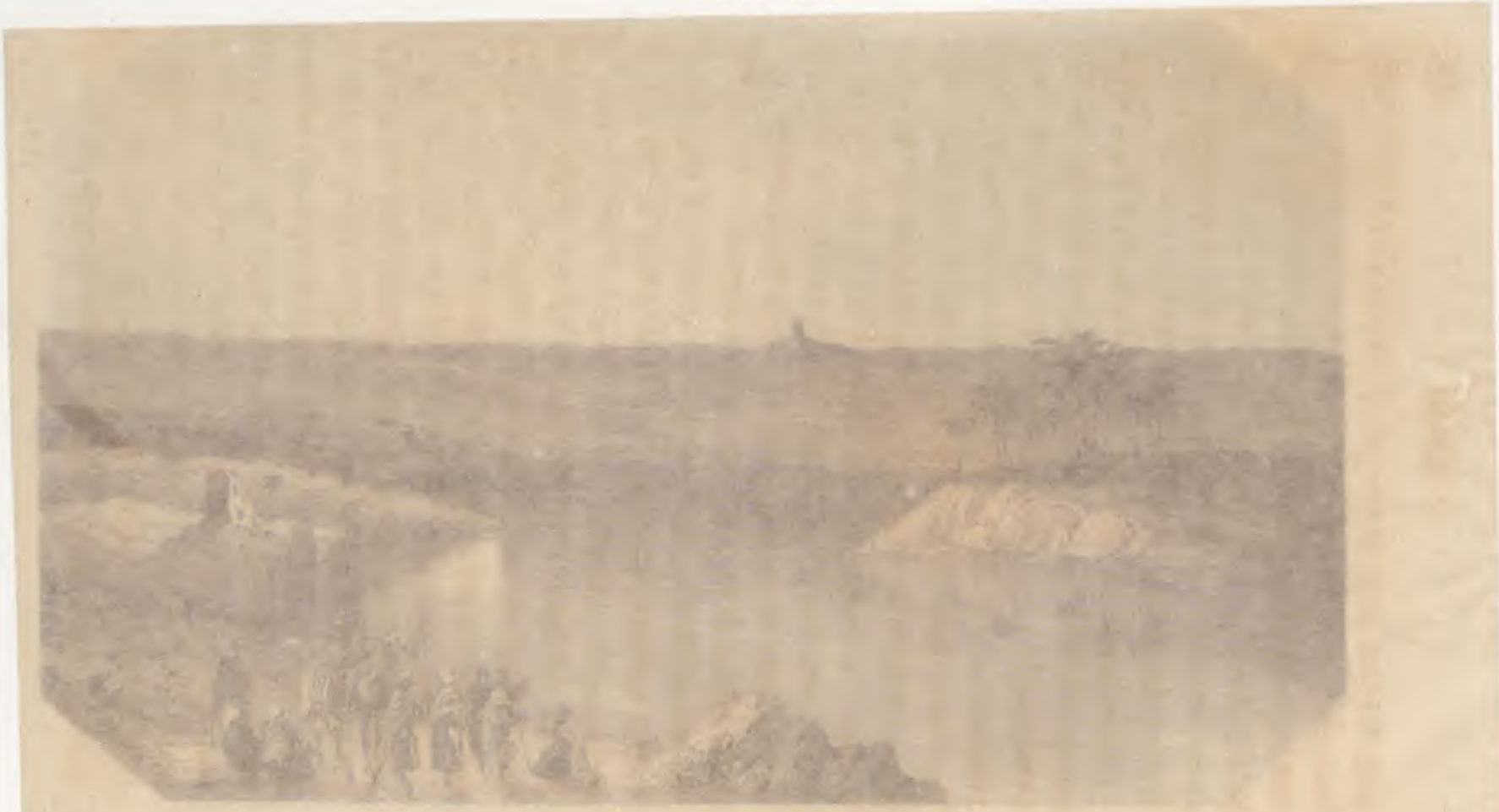
The area of the ruins existing there is about three miles and a half in circumference. The mounds are of vast magnitude, one of them being 2850 feet round the summit. Cuneiform inscriptions, upon fragments of an obelisk and other blocks, are found at a place which is reckoned the citadel. What is called "the great central platform" of the city covers upwards of sixty acres; and the river Shaour, which skirts the ruins, contributed of old to the defence of the place. The list of animals now inhabiting the district is somewhat miscellaneous. Lions, wolves, lynxes, foxes, jackals, bears, porcupines, francolini, and partridges, are named,—a signal contrast to the times when the magnificent city,



PLAINS OF BABYLON.

with its colossal citadel and columnar edifices, rose from the groves of date, lemon-trees, and other Oriental productions, — when little but the sound of the tabret and the viol was heard, and when myriads teemed on in [illegible] amid [illegible] regions, without ever discovering the great end of their being.

When excavations were recently made at Susa, fragments of fluted columns and their bases were discovered at various places, and when these were [illegible] reconstructed from plans, a palace was discovered rivalling the halls of Persepolis in grandeur, and said to be more graceful in design and [illegible]. It [illegible] in detail [illegible] ruins; but they are magnificent [illegible] as they can be reproduced [illegible] decorations as well as that of [illegible] we are willing to believe [illegible] Loftus arrived, namely, [illegible] structure in which [illegible] Esther took place. [illegible] the "pillars of marble" [illegible] still to be traced among [illegible]. The lotus, the palm, and [illegible] among the decorations of [illegible] thing now remains but the [illegible] fancy can't easily [illegible] when Darius and other [illegible] and before it was destroyed [illegible] under the Greeks. [illegible] tion of [illegible] terra cotta figures [illegible] of Venus,



PLAINS OF BABYLON

with its colossal citadel and columnar edifices, rose from the groves of dates, lemon-trees, and other Oriental productions,—when little but the sound of the tabret and the viol was heard, and when myriads passed on to eternity, amid bacchanalian orgies, without ever discovering the great end of their being.

When excavations were recently made at Susa, fragments of fluted columns and their bases were discovered at various places; and when these were traced and a plan reconstructed from them, a palace was discovered rivalling the halls of Persepolis in grandeur, and said to be more graceful in design and ornamentation. It were tedious to detail the discoveries made among these ruins; but they are magnificent in extent, and, in so far as they can be reproduced, they are gorgeous in their decorations as well as rich in inscriptions. Moreover, we are willing to believe the conclusion at which Mr. Loftus arrived, namely, that this palace is the actual structure in which the events recorded in the Book of Esther took place. "The garden of the king's palace," the "pillars of marble," and other things, he thinks are still to be traced among the debris of fallen grandeur. The lotus, the palm, and the bull, are all conspicuous among the decorations of this palace; and though nothing now remains but the bases of its forest of pillars, fancy can easily re-picture the magnificence of the scene when Darius and other monarchs made it their home, and before it was destroyed by fire, perhaps by Alexander the Great. But to show the moral degradation of the occupants of these halls, about 200 terra cotta figures, most of them rude images of Venus,

were found in the ruins which were named the Colonnade.* Though only the ground-plan of these structures can now be traced, and though only a vague conception of their vast magnificence can consequently be formed, yet enough is known to indicate both the grandeur and the taste of the piles themselves, as well as the ambition of their founders. Man's mind was created for the enjoyment of somewhat more than the vast—even the Infinite. It could find repose only in something better than the long-lived—even the Eternal. But, ignorant of the Infinite and the Eternal, man tried to supply his place by such stupendous piles as the palaces of Susa. A pyramid alone could suffice for a grave, or a palace for a home.

In submitting these condensed details, we have, after all, presented only a meagre epitome of the Chaldæen ruins, and especially of those of Susa. Nothing has been said of the Ulai river spoken of by Daniel, nor of various ruins excavated on its banks. More than enough, however, has been noticed to show how stupendous were the conceptions of the monarchs and palace builders of antiquity. Their architecture, tried by modern taste, might be bizarre; their religion might be superstition; their rule oppression; but for grandeur or vastness of conception the moderns must yield the palm to those ancient men: and while we wander amid the wreck and debris of their palaces, their temples, and their tombs, we are again, and again, and yet again,

* At one place about 170 Moslem silver coins were discovered in a small glazed pot; elsewhere alabaster vases were found; elsewhere articles in ivory, iron, copper, and other substances.

reminded of the united puniness and magnificence of man, that singular combination of "deity and dust." Shushan, in particular, furnishes a remarkable instance of disinterment; it seems to render our thoughts of the resurrection in some degree more easy. Here are the foundations of a majestic pile cleared out. Here are some of its pillars recomposed. Here are some of its chambers measured. Here are some of its decorations disinterred, and brought to our distant isle of the sea. By all these things we are so much the more prepared for the future, and the grand disclosure of all, when the earth and the sea shall give up their dead. There is, no doubt, a gloom hanging over the past which no excavation can dispel,—the gloom of moral darkness, the shadow of eternal death, because of the dread abominations of those scenes and cities. But we gladly turn from the gloom of the past to the daylight of the future,—from the contemplation of death to the anticipation of life. He who has prostrated so many palaces in his righteous retributions, will arise in mercy yet. He will make a short work on the earth, and then a long eternity for his redeemed in glory.

But crossing Mesopotamia to the Tigris, its eastern boundary, we find other ruins competing in vastness even with those of Susa.

XIX.—THE RUINS OF NINEVEH.

WHAT Babylon was to the Euphrates, that was Nineveh to the Tigris. Its origin dates from the remotest antiquity; and though antiquarians have argued and speculated deeply on the subject, they have fixed nothing more than was told us thousands of years ago,—namely, that "out of that land" (Shinar, where Babel was built) "went Asshur, and builded Nineveh" (Gen. x. 11). The name means "the town or dwelling of Ninus," Nin-Navah; and the original city stood on the eastern bank of the Tigris, opposite to the present town of Mosul, represented in our Engraving. It is believed by some that what is now called Neby Younas, or the Tomb of Jonah, occupies the site of about the centre of the city. After the first reference to Nineveh, its name does not occur again for many centuries; but in the days of Jeroboam, or 825 years before Christ, it appears again; and Jonah, it is well known, refused for a time to preach repentance to "that great city." So great, indeed, had it become, that in the height of its walls and the extent of its area, it was more than a match for Babylon itself. One ancient author says that Nineveh was 480 stadia in circumference; while its lofty walls, together with the river, rendered the place impregnable. We need not wonder, therefore, though Jonah, as long as he consulted with flesh and blood, shrank from the thought of delivering an unwelcome message to such a place. Its population was such that there were 120,000

children among them; and its inhabitants are consequently reckoned by millions. The mounds and other remains at Nimroud, Konyunjek, Khorsabad, and elsewhere, if they be what some suppose, so many portions of the original city, would indicate a circumference of about sixty miles; so that the prophet's dread had a natural cause. But the habits of the people were more formidable than even the magnitude of the place. Prodigious wealth had led to abounding immorality; luxury and corruption reigned paramount; cruelty of the most atrocious kind characterized its rulers; and the disinterred remains of Nineveh attest all that the Scriptures tell of the fierceness and the crime of that metropolis.

Soon after Jonah, another prophet, Nahum, arose; and he lets us see further and further into the state of Nineveh. Her inhabitants, nay, her very princes, were numerous as the locusts; her wealth was endless ("there is none end of it"); her idolatry made her "vile;" she was by pre-eminence "the bloody city,"—and her sculptures prove the truth of the title. At length, however, the cup of her iniquity was full. The king, Sennacherib, invaded Judea—

> "The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
> And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;"

but soon thereafter "Nineveh was made a desolation, and dry like a wilderness." Jehovah "dug her grave, for she was vile." Ezekiel described its glory, its opulence, and wide commercial influence; but all was godless, and it faded away,—about 625 years before Christ "that great city" became a ruin. There was a fort

there in the time of the Roman conquests in the East; but, till very recent times, huge mounds and dim traditions were all that remained of Nineveh. The town of Mosul, its modern substitute, though on the opposite bank of the Tigris, is a commercial city of some importance as an entrepôt between the East and the West. It is, however, a humble representative of the city of Ninus, of Semiramis, and Sardanapalus.

But in recent times the excavations by Botta and Layard at Nineveh have invested the place with an extraordinary interest. We cannot describe these operations here at length, and give only some hints as to their results. The British Museum and other depositories in England now contain many Ninevite remains and thousands in this land are as familiar with the progress in art, the wars, the customs, and even some of the domestic habits of the ancient city, as with those of Greece or of Rome. The cylinders and inscriptions found in a disinterred palace, and deciphered by Sir Henry Rawlinson with such admirable skill, singularly confirm the Scriptures, and supply some historical blanks heretofore perplexing, silencing the sceptic, and establishing the truth. The deities of Assyria, the architectural decorations, the sphinxes, the winged bulls and lions, and a hundred other things,—all tell that that land and its capital were precisely what the Bible describes. The lists of its kings; its obelisk inscriptions, detailing its divinities and wars; its personal ornaments, in the form of ear-drops, bracelets, and armlets; its crowns, shields, swords, bowls, and caldrons; its ornaments in ivory and mother-of-pearl, beautifully and

elaborately embossed,—all tend at once to excite and to gratify curiosity. The hunting scenes sculptured on the walls, personal encounters with lions, warriors engaged in battle or in assaulting cities, and other views, —all help to carry us back over a mighty gulf of three thousand years, and enable us not merely to study the public and official life of the ancient Assyrians, but in some degree their home habits and their personal deportment.

But we can only glance at these things, and proceed to a brief account of

THE EXCAVATION OF THE GREAT WINGED BULL.

In the course of their labours, Mr. Layard's Arab workmen discovered this colossal figure in one of the trenches during his absence. On hastening to the spot, he beheld a human head of prodigious magnitude and great beauty, sculptured in the alabaster of the country. The body was still buried in the earth, but the part which appeared was in admirable preservation. The expression was calm, yet majestic; and the features displayed such a freedom and knowledge of art as few expected to witness in the production of a period so remote. The Arabs, from their sheik to the humblest labourer, ascribed it to the "infidel giants," to whom they had been taught to ascribe whatever could not otherwise be explained.

After the discovery, the mind of Mr. Layard was naturally turned to the best mode of transporting such a prize to Britain; and after great exertions and many devices, he succeeded in conveying it on board a raft on

the Tigris. To bring the bull down from the spot where it was discovered to the level of the plain below, a trench nearly 200 feet long and 15 wide was cut, and in some places 20 feet deep. About fifty Arabs and Nestorians were employed in the work. Ropes, hawsers, and every available means were employed in lowering the colossus. The steamers on the Euphrates expedition furnished some of their apparatus. The sculptures were wrapped in mats and felt, to preserve them from being chipped. As soon as the operations allowed, rollers were placed under the mass, and by coiling one end of some ropes round some parts of the mound cut for that purpose, and the other end round the bull, and slipping these ropes as the huge bulk slowly descended, it gradually reached the desired level in safety. The sheik was present, attended by a body of horsemen. The different classes of workmen were skilfully distributed, so as to prevent all accidents; and Mr. Layard, on the top of a high bank, directed the whole. During the operation the ropes broke; but by that time the bull was so low that no injury was inflicted; and the whole undertaking, accompanied as it was by the drums and shrill pipes of Kurdish musicians, the war-cry of the Arabs, and their savage aspect, as they toiled nearly naked at their exciting task, was one of a trying, yet, in the end, most triumphant nature. When the discovery was made that the bull was not injured by the fall, the Arabs "darted out of the trenches, and seizing the women who were looking on, formed a large circle, and yelling their war-cry, with redoubled energy commenced a most mad dance.

Mosul Mound of Nimroud Tomb of Jonah

NINEVEH.

The musicians exerted themselves to the utmost, but their music was drowned by the cries of the dancers. Even the sheik shared in the excitement, and throwing his cloak to one of his attendants, insisted upon leading off the debkhé. . . . . Night fell on these operations; and, in retiring to their homes, the Arabs, with the musicians at their head, marched towards the village singing their war songs, and occasionally raising a wild yell, throwing their lances into the air, and flourishing their swords and shields over their heads." The whole operations, by night and day, were accompanied with scenes of true Oriental excitement and rejoicing, sometimes threatening to end in bloodshed; and it is not difficult to sympathize with the enterprising explorer when, after a hundred impediments surmounted, and three hundred men employed to drag the car, the trophy of his indefatigable zeal was fairly embarked on the Tigris (along with the figure of a lion) on its way to Baghdad and Great Britain.

Here again, then, the present and the past are seen to touch in wondrous ways, and on a marvellous arena. The taste of these remains is often exquisite. Progress in art was mature, and men who were paragons of ferocity, or whose pastime was bloodshed, were æsthetically accomplished: they rivalled in some respects the progress of modern times. How great man may become without the knowledge of the true God,—and yet how puny, or how perishing amid it all!

Visiting Persia for a little, we there find other piles which vie with those of the Tigris.

XX.—THE RUINS OF PERSEPOLIS.

We know that Persia at one period exercised a powerful influence on the condition of the Jews. In the times of Ahasuerus and other monarchs, the chosen people were subject to Persian rulers; and Esther was then in providence raised to power, to save her people from extinction. In short, the two nations were at different periods closely linked together,—so closely as almost to entitle Persia to be regarded as one of the Lands of the Bible. (See Acts ii. 9.)

And there are ruins in that land which deserve the study of all who love to shed light upon the present by the events of the past. In travelling, for example, from Shiraz to Ispahan, the ancient Araxes, now Band-emir, is repeatedly crossed; and on the northern bank of that stream stand the famous ruins of Persepolis. That city was founded by Cyrus the Great, or his son Cambyses. It was greatly enlarged and adorned by Darius I. and Xerxes; and occupying as it did a beautiful and healthy valley in Hollow Persis, watered by the Araxes and its tributaries, the Medus and the Cyrus, it became, as might have been predicted, a place of great importance. During the middle ages its title was Istakhar; but in modern times that has given place to Takhti Jemshid, or The Throne of Jemshid; and Chil-Minar, or The Forty Pillars. It was long the capital of Persia, though, as Babylon was taken about the time that Persepolis was raised to that rank, the latter was seldom mentioned as

a royal residence. It was, however, one of the burial-places of the Persian kings, and also their treasure city. Alexander found immense riches there, amounting, it is said, to £27,120,000 sterling, which had been stored up since the time of Cyrus. The place, we have seen, was adorned by Darius I. and Xerxes, and the doings of the latter there are thus mentioned in one of the inscriptions:—"I am the noble Xerxes, a great king, according to the will of Auramazdes: King Darius built this pillared hall, who was my father. Auramazdes! defend me with gods,—both this palace and also the palace of my father King Darius. O Auramazdes! worthy to be propitiated, defend me with gods." Other inscriptions of a similar nature have been deciphered and translated, on some of the portals of the palace. At the instigation of a favourite, and after a debauch, Alexander the Great set fire to these halls with his own hand, about 330 years before the Christian era. Some time after that Persepolis revived, and took its place in history again; but it has long been deserted now, and must be added to the long and melancholy list of prostrate and dilapidated capitals, which tell, with reiterated earnestness, how shadow-like and transient is man.

Had it been our design to furnish in full detail an account of this place and its vicinity, instead of mere glimpses of its faded glories, we must have dwelt on various sculptures found at a short distance, resembling those at Nineveh and elsewhere, and manifestly connecting Persepolis, in some degree, with the proud city of the Tigris. But we must limit our notice chiefly to the remains of the palace on the north bank of the

Araxes, about thirty miles south from Shiraz, certainly one of the most extensive of existing ruins, and "one of the most magnificent structures which art ever reared." Competent judges have said that it may be classed with the buildings at Palmyra, Ba'albek, Jerash, and Ammon; and that the excavations are not inferior to those of Petra, or similar works in India and Egypt. The front of the palace is 600 paces in length, and the wing 390. The architecture, though peculiar in style, is remarkable for correct proportion and beauty of execution. The portals and the capitals are adorned with numerous figures in basso-relievo, and represent combats and processions of various kinds, similar to those at Nimroud and Khorsabad; and though they may not compete with the sculptures of Greece, the ruins of Persepolis deserve the study of all who love to trace the development of the arts.

Near the place, the citadel was built on the summit of a rock levelled for the purpose, and surrounded by triple walls 16, 48, and 60 cubits high. The palace, the royal treasures, and sepulchres were enclosed there; but the ruins of the palace form the chief attraction. Astonishment at the vastness, and admiration of the beauty, seize upon the visitor: one says,—"We yielded at once to emotions the most lively and the most enraptured." One of the most surprising parts of the ruin is a staircase and its surrounding walls. Portals, columns, sphinxes, sculptured bulls of prodigious size, bas-reliefs, polished marbles, pillars erect and prostrate, (sixteen of the former in one place,) aqueducts cut in the solid rock, reservoirs, and other elaborate works,—all proclaim

the magnificence of the original structure. Hall follows hall, and ornament crowds upon ornament, till one is wearied by the variety. Some blocks of marble are 24 feet 6 inches in length, and 5 feet in breadth. So colossal is one of the stairs that each step is 26 feet 6 inches in width: in a word, though time and Vandalism have here as elsewhere done their work, one pauses often to marvel at this mingling of the gigantic and the minute, —these stairs which mounted horsemen can with ease ascend, and yet these exquisite decorations of roses and of beads. The columns were of two orders, distinct in their capitals as well as in their height; and seventy-two have been counted, including those still standing, as mementoes of the past, and those of which only the bases or the sites have been discovered. The highest columns have, strictly, no capital. They are a shaft to the summit, and there a sphinx reposes. Some of the lower columns are fluted, and measure 16 feet 7 inches in circumference. The greater columns are said to be 86 feet high, and the smaller about 60.

But here, as elsewhere, words, or even measurements, fail to give any correct notion of the magnificence of Persepolis. All around, in the plains and on the hills, sculptured figures and remains of buildings,—supposed to have been a temple to Ormazd,—are discovered; remains which carry us back without effort to the Assyrian sculptures with their peculiar decorations. But one such scene deserves a more special notice, namely, the hill of Nakshi Roustan or Rustam. It is a few miles south from Persepolis, and is about 300 yards high. It presents a precipitous face of whitish

marble, covered with sculptured tombs. The four highest are in a superior style of execution, and are now believed to be the last resting-places of the early kings of Persia. The lower tombs are assigned to the Parthian Sassanide dynasties, and the decorations represent their wars with the Romans and the Tartars.

The top of the rock at Nakshi Rustam is levelled into a platform about 20 feet square, and upon it is placed an elevated throne. This may have had some connection with the Magian worship of the sun, or fire, —at least, this seems to be the ascertained use of a similar eminence near Margab, about ninety miles to the north of Persepolis. Juckt-y-Sulieman—such is its name—consists of a large marble structure raised on the face of a hill and forming a platform at top, and is supposed to mark the site of Pasagarda, the city of the Magi, for whose worship the platform is alleged to have been erected. Fire altars and temples have been found in such places. But these, together with the ruins of Persepolis, and all that once constituted the glory of Persia, are now laid in ruins; most of them are level with the dust. Their conception may be colossal, and their execution exquisite; men may be awed, as some confess to be, amid scenes so vast and gigantic; hints may here have been caught for decorations for many minor piles; and, amid such an accumulation of architectural grandeur and beauty, not a few may be bewildered; but a man of God will rather mark the traces of holy power, levelling with the dust what stood in the way of the heavenly purposes. The one God was to be made known; the one Saviour was to be revealed; the

one truth obeyed; and, to open a path for that, Persepolis, and a thousand similar scenes, must vanish away.

It is not a little remarkable that whatever country we visit, this earth is strewed with ruins. Central America contains some marvellous and mysterious piles. The shores of the Pacific are studded with the tombs of cities. The Euphrates and the Tigris,—in Babylon, Nineveh, and Susiana,—see the graves of whole peoples. Here Persepolis stands in the same rank; and the Crimea, we know, is a land of ruins. Greece and Italy are the same. Further, the London of to-day stands over the London of 2000 years ago. Even some provincial towns are founded on the debris of their predecessors as much as the modern Jerusalem, or the huts at Samaria, and a hundred other places, are formed of the remains of former grandeur. Even the apparently inaccessible recesses of Mount Lebanon are full, we have seen, of ruins. The flanks and very summit of Mount Hermon are the same,—everywhere ruins, decay, and death. Now, have not these things tongues, if we had ears to hear? Is it not true that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain? Surely—

> "There is a tongue in every leaf,
> A voice in every rill;
> A voice that speaketh everywhere,
> In flood and fire, through earth and air,
> A tongue that ne'er is still."

Yet while we marvel at these ruins or these works, so stupendous when measured by man's power, what are they when compared with God's? Placed side by side

with his Alps, his Andes, or Himalayas, what are even the palaces of Persepolis, or the piles of Babylon, or the mounds of Warka, or the excavations of Petra? The small dust in the balance!—nameless, puny things! Here, as ever, it is ours to place in the first rank the work of God's hands; and thus it is that we may be helped to glorify him when we understand his ways, or when we cannot scan, to be silent and adore.