

ARTICLE III.

EXCURSION TO THE SUMMIT OF HERMON.

By Rev. J. L. Porter, Missionary at Damascus.

August 30th, 1852. We left Blûdân¹ at 6h. 40m. A. M., descended the hill on the ordinary Damascus road, and crossed the beautiful plain of Zebedâny to the fountain of the Barada. We rode at a fast walk and reached the little lake at 8.30. Having lingered here ten minutes, chasing the numerous wildfowl that were skimming over the surface of the water, we remounted and ascended the rugged and barren slopes to Batrûny, where we arrived at 9.30. From Batrûny we followed the road along the foot of the rocky hill toward the eastern entrance of Wady el-Kûrn; but when, within about one mile of the Wady, we turned to the right, and ascended the mountain by a rugged path. At 10.30 we were on the summit, and had a commanding view of the Alpine scenery around us, with the plains stretching out in the distance. The mountain range, on the top of which we now stood, extends unbroken from Wady el-Kûrn to Wady Yahfûfeh, forming the western boundary of the plains of Zebedâny and Sûrghâya. Its direction is about N. 25 E. Its greatest elevation is nearly 6000 feet above the sea. From Zebedâny to Wady el-Kûrn, the sides are rocky and very rugged, and the top broken and jagged; the northern portion is not so lofty and the sides have a gradual slope to the plains on the east. The elevation decreases gradually toward Wady Yahfûfeh; and at the place where Wady el-Kûrn cuts through, it is also somewhat lower. Southward of the latter Wady the ridge extends, but broken and to some extent irregular, to Râsheiya.

We have seen no map, and we believe none has yet appeared, on which the Antilebanon range has been laid down with any approach to accuracy. Berghaus places the loftiest ridge on the western side of the plain of Zebedâny, and continues it northward in a straight unbroken line. Now the fact is, that about one hour north of Wady Yahfûfeh, there are no mountains whatever

¹ Blûdân is the summer residence of the missionaries at Damascus. It lies on the high ridge east of the plain of Zebedâny.—E. R.

in this line; and, further, the loftiest and principal range of Anti-lebanon is two hours eastward of the above, running immediately on the west side of the village of Dīmās, intersected by the Barada at Sâk, the ancient Abila, and forming the eastern boundary of the plains of Zebedâny and Sūrghâya. Opposite the latter plain, and one hour from the village of Blûdân, is its loftiest summit, which has an elevation of a little over 7000 English feet. From this point its direction is about N. 8 E. with an elevation of about 6000 to 6500 feet.

From the point on which we stood we saw the Druze village of Hilwy, on the mountain top on the other side of Wady el-Kûrn, distant about one hour and twenty minutes S. 63 W. Descending the mountain by a path which runs parallel to the Wady, we reached its western entrance at 11.5. Here commences the oval-shaped plain called Sahil Judeideh, which runs from this point in a direction N. 12 E. about two hours. Its greatest width may be forty-five minutes. It is separated from the plain of Zebedâny by the mountain ridge we had just crossed. On the eastern side of this plain, about the middle, is the village of Ekfair, between which and the plain is a low hill. Crossing the Beirût road where it leaves the Wady and enters the plain, we turned S. W. up a rugged valley whose sides are partially clothed with stunted shrubs and dwarf oak. As we entered it we had on our right, distant eight minutes, but concealed by intervening rocks, the small village Mazria'. Following the valley to its upper end, we emerged at 11.45 on an elevated plateau, wild and rocky in the extreme. On our left ran a range of hills which seemed like some Cyclopean wall rent and shattered to its foundations. Turning a little to the westward they shut in the plateau before us, which is also enclosed on the N. W. by a line of wooded heights. Before us, perched upon the jagged summit of the former range, stood Yüntah. At 12.20 we were beside the village, having passed a small fountain just as we commenced our ascent of the hill on which it stands. From this spot, looking behind us down the valley and across the southern part of Sahil Judeideh, we saw the village of Ekfair, on the mountain side.

It was not without considerable apprehension that we approached Yüntah. Its inhabitants, Druzes, we knew to be covetous and bloodthirsty, and its Sheikhs little better than bandit chiefs. Only two weeks before, six of these Sheikhs went in

the night to Sâk-Wady-Barada, entered a house there, tore an unoffending young man from the arms of his wife, and almost hewed him to pieces in her presence; and then coolly rode off with money and jewels which they took from the room, to the amount of £2000 sterling. Mr. Wood, the British Consul at Damascus, who was on his way to Blûdân, was in an adjoining house when the bloody deed was committed. Hearing the wailing of women he ran out, and found the young man dead, with a fearful gash across his face, which severed his tongue, his head almost separated from his body, and numerous wounds in other places. The murderers afterwards, with true Arab politeness, apologized to the consul for having committed the deed while he was in the village. The government, urged on by Mr. Wood, sent fifty horsemen to apprehend the Sheikhs; but they assembled their retainers, fired upon them, and drove them back. And, as we write these lines, we learn that another detachment sent since on the same errand, has just returned, defeated, to Damascus, with their leader mortally wounded. Yet these men are in the pay of government as the *protectors* of the road between Beirût and Damascus.

Our apprehensions were not lessened by a view of the village itself, and of such of its people as we saw. It is built in a strong position on the summit of a rocky ridge, and might be defended by a few resolute men against a large force. The people are like their country, wild and savage looking. The men we met at the fountain below, were all armed with long guns and large knives. We saw a number, as we approached the village, peering at us from behind precipices, and from the house-tops above. None, however, either spoke to or interfered with us; and so we passed on, well pleased to have escaped both insult and attention from a gang of murderers and rebels.

Descending the hill from Yüntah on the south, we came in fifteen minutes to an elevated and broken plain, having the range on which Yüntah stands on one side and a parallel but higher range on the other. We now travelled in a direction S. 52 W. along this plain. At 12.50 we saw a large village on our right, distant twenty minutes; but our guide did not know its name. It stands on the same ridge as Yüntah, from which it is distant about half an hour. Ten minutes further we reached a large circular pond, partially filled with water, and having on its banks a few stone troughs. Around this the plain is level, and has a

rich soil cultivated with care. Passing this we entered a rocky district, our stony path keeping close along the foot of the hills on our right, and winding among bare white rocks which painfully reflected the sun's rays. But having reached the top of a somewhat steep slope, a scene of beauty and grandeur, for which we were altogether unprepared, opened suddenly to our view. At our feet lay a fine plain some five miles long by three wide. In its centre rose a graceful little hill, its sides clothed with vines, and its top crowned with the village of Kefr Kúk. On its right ran a range of wooded hills rent by numerous valleys; beyond it rose the green slopes on which stand Rásheiya and 'Aiha; while on the left it was shut in by lofty hills, over the summits of which towered the snow-capped Hermon.

We descended and crossed the plain to Kefr Kúk, where we arrived at 2.20. Beside the village is a large walled pond of stagnant water, in which men, boys, donkeys and sheep were wading about in great delight. In the centre of the pond we noticed a fragment of a column, and, in some of the walls near it, a few well hewn stones. From an upright stone, which forms the side of a gateway, we copied an imperfect inscription.

We resumed our journey at 2.40, and rode down the southern slope into a part of the plain lower than that over which we had passed in approaching the village. This plain resembles that of Zebedány in its form and in the richness of its soil. We found, also, by looking at our barometer, that it is exactly of the same elevation, namely, 3500 English feet above the sea. The village of Yúntah we had also seen to be of the same elevation as Blú-dán, that is, 4860 feet. At 3.15 we had 'Aiha on the hillside twenty minutes on our left, and at 3.20 we began to ascend the slopes, the road leading through luxuriant vineyards; and twenty-five minutes after, we reached Rásheiya. We rode through the village and entered a picturesque valley on its east side, in which we pitched our tent beneath a large walnut tree. It was a charming spot, and, as the sun sank behind the castle-crowned heights, we sat on our carpets admiring the grandeur of the scenery, and enjoying the cool evening breeze.

We were visited by two interesting boys, grandsons of the Emir Effendi, a member of the princely house of Shehâb, and now governor of the district of Rásheiya. Having expressed a desire to obtain a good view of the adjoining country, they invited us to the palace, from the roof of which the most extensive pros-

pect could be gained. We gladly accepted their invitation, and at once set out. When we reached the palace, it was thought necessary that we should first pay our respects to the ancient Emtr. We were ushered into an upper room in which we found him seated at an open window which commanded a glorious prospect of the Alpine scenery around. He rose as we entered, and invited us to a seat by his side, and then, after the customary salutations, ordered pipes and coffee. He asked us if we intended to visit Hermon, and, hearing that this was our intention, he told us of ruins on the top, of which we had never before heard. He also assured us, in answer to our questions, that there were many bears on Hermon, and that, at this season, they destroy great quantities of grapes in the vineyards along its base. We inquired about leopards, and he said they were still found, but were not numerous. Taking leave of the old prince, we were accompanied by two of his sons to the summit of an ancient tower connected with the palace, called Burj er-Râsh. From this tower, they said, the village took its name. The whole country was now before us, and as the young Emtrs kindly told us the names of the several villages in sight, we took bearings of them all. Hosts of servants and retainers had assembled in the court-yard ere we descended, to see the strangers; and, as we passed along, many bright eyes were seen peering at us through the *jalousies* of the Harim. As we passed by crowds of armed retainers, and saw the prancing horses gaily caparisoned, held by gaudily dressed grooms, we could not but think that were the costume slightly changed, the palace of Râsheiya would pass for an English baronial hall of five hundred years ago.

August 31st. Some time was required to fasten on our water-jars; pack our stock of provisions, including some baskets of delicious grapes, a *bakhshish* from a friendly *natûr*; and procure a guide to the summit of Hermon. All arrangements being at last completed, we mounted and rode off at 6.25. Continuing some three minutes down the valley in which we had encamped, we then turned to the left with our faces to the mountain-top, now beautifully pencilled on the background of a deep blue sky. The valley we had entered had its terraced sides covered with vines, while a few fig-trees were scattered over the hill-tops above. The valley conducted us into a pleasant little plain, the rich green of whose fruit-trees presented a pleasing contrast to the white cliffs that shut it in. At 7.15 we had reached a large

pond of clear water at the entrance of this plain. It is called Birket el-Yabiseh (the dry pond); but why, we could not determine, seeing our guide assured us that its supply of water was unfailling. We passed the plain in twenty-five minutes, by a path hemmed in by dense foliage, and then reached what may be called the real base of Hermon. We now struck up a ravine directly toward the top; but in some minutes afterward turned to the right by a zigzag path up its almost perpendicular side. The ascent now began in good earnest; but my strong Arab horse bounded onward with almost the lightness of a gazelle; though we had often difficulty in keeping our seat in the saddle. The whole way from this to the summit was difficult and laborious. There is no regular path, but our stalwort guide led the way, now following the track of a winter torrent, now scrambling along a shelving bank, and now zigzagging up the steep slope. The surface of the mountain is covered in every part with loose fragments of white limestone, resembling the sea-beach; but different in this respect, that, instead of being rounded, they are angular, and in many cases sharp as knives. As we advanced, the stones put in motion by the leader of the party, touching others below them, and these again giving of their impetus to others, the ripple would spread as it advanced till the whole hill-side around seemed flowing like a torrent, but with a strange rustling noise, to the depths below. Those in the rear were sometimes even endangered when a larger block became detached. At 9.20 we reached a natural cave, having lost half an hour in waiting for stragglers, and in gazing with admiration on the country far below, as each valley and plain opened up before us. Here turning to the S. W. we skirted the mountain side for twenty minutes, having the summit on our left, and then reached a small fountain.

There being no water higher up, we determined to halt here till evening, and then proceed to the top, and make arrangements for the night. Wishing, however, to see and explore as far as practicable the southern range, I mounted my horse, and taking the guide with me, proceeded around the hill-side. I soon found, that the ravines which furrowed the mountain, could not easily be passed on horseback; so leaving my horse with the guide to await my return, I set out alone. I crossed several deep valleys and intervening ridges, and came at last to a point where I could see, stretching out on the right far below,

Wady et-Teim and Merj 'Ayûn, with their continuation, the Hûleh; and on the left the elevated plains of Jeidûr and Jaulân; while before me, nearly due south, ran a lofty mountain-chain, though much lower than Hermon, toward Baniâs. The whole of this chain, as seen by the eye and closely examined by the telescope, presented the same general aspect as the mountain on which I stood—white and naked rocks, with intervening slopes of loose white stones. The only signs of vegetable life were found in the small plains near the summit; and these consisted of but two varieties; a dark velvet looking moss which, springing from a single slender stalk, rises to the height of about six inches, and spreads over the ground like a circular cushion; the other, that everlasting drab colored prickly shrub one meets with in every part of the Syrian desert, and which seems as sapless as the stones from among which it springs up.

I examined with care the geological features of Mount Hermon. We had been informed before leaving Blâdân, that Lieut. Lynch had passed over granite and other primitive rock, on his journey from Hasbeiya to Damascus. We had not his work at hand to refer to at the time, and consequently took the representation of his statement as accurate. On returning to Damascus, we found that no such statement was made in his book. In fact, he never speaks of granite at all, and accurately describes the mountain as composed of limestone. He does, indeed, say: "As we descended, the limestone rock disappeared, giving place to sandstone and trap; and lower down, *serpentine* occasionally cropped out." He must here refer to the spurs which run out eastward from Hermon, and not to the mountain itself. I have passed round about three-fourths of the base of Hermon, and have marked well the height to which the trap ascends; and this is pretty uniform. I entertain some doubts, however, about the accuracy of the latter part of the passage quoted; though it would be very difficult to disprove, as Lieut. Lynch has not definitely marked the places where he speaks of having seen it.

But to return. Leaving the spot I had now gained on the summit of the southern ridge, I turned my face toward the loftier summit, northward. An hour's smart climbing brought me to a peak, which was separated from a still loftier one to the north, by a valley some 200 feet deep, on the sides of which were deep banks of snow. Between these two peaks we after-

wards pitched our tent, and spent the night. I descended this valley to the place where I had left my horse, and returned to the fountain.

At 4.30 we mounted, and at 5.30 we stood on the loftiest part of Hermon. I shall not soon forget the feelings that filled my breast when I gazed on that magnificent panorama, which was spread out beneath us. I could scarcely realize the thought, that I now stood on that sacred mountain of which inspired penmen had sung in ancient days, and that the land of Israel, God's gift to their fathers, was at my feet. And yet it was so. There was Lebanon and Carmel; and Tabor and Bashan, with the Sea of Galilee between them. And there, too, was Damascus, with the Abana and Pharpar, its renowned rivers, meandering through its delicious plain. A thousand places famed for their power, sacred from their historic associations, and whose names were household words in my boyhood, in a far distant home, lay mapped before me. I stood long in pleasing reverie, looking abroad from that commanding height. The arrival of my companions, and of the baggage and servants, roused me at last.

Having issued our orders for the arrangement of the tent, and other necessary matters, we gave ourselves to a thorough examination of the several summits. These are three. The highest is on the northern side, commanding a view of the whole Būkā'a, with the ranges of Lebanon and Antilebanon on each side. The next is only about two hundred or three hundred yards south of the former, and overlooks the sources of the 'Awaj and the plain of the Haurān. There cannot be more than twenty feet of difference between the elevation of these peaks. The third is about a quarter of a mile west of the latter, and is that which I had before ascended from the south. It is, perhaps, 100 feet lower than the others. With considerable anxiety, I drew out and examined my barometer, thinking that now I would be able to complete, at the highest and most important point, the series of altitudes I had taken in the Antilebanon range. Great, however, was my disappointment, when I found that the index had got so entangled with the thermometer, that it could not retrograde sufficiently to mark the altitude. It stood fixed at a point which indicated an elevation of about 8500 feet. I resolved, however, in the descent to mark the time it should begin to act again, and thus estimate the remainder. In this,

too, I was sadly disappointed; for as I endeavored to make my way, at night, down a cliff, I fell and so damaged the instrument that I could not further rely upon it; and I have since sent it to England to be repaired.

On the second of the summits above referred to, we found some curious ruins. Passing over a rocky projection on our way to it from the first, our guide pointed out the entrance to a large artificial cavern, beside which lay a fragment of a column of limestone, and around it a number of hewn stones. As we ascended the peak, however, we found more extensive and interesting remains. Round a rock which rises to a height of some fifteen feet, are the foundations of a circular wall formed of stones of apparently great antiquity, but carefully hewn. This *ring* is about sixty yards in diameter. In the centre of it, and of the rock, is a rude excavation eight feet deep, open above. Within this enclosure, on the south, and on the very brow of the mountain, are large heaps of hewn stones; some of them beveled like those at the castle of Baniâs, and others with a well-cut moulding running along their edges. Here, also, I could trace the foundations of what appeared to have been a small temple. We saw no columns, and no inscriptions. The former, however, which would naturally have been placed in the portico, may have rolled down the precipice. I thought I could recognize two eras in these ruins. The stones of the temple seemed to be of a later age than those of the ring. But who were the constructors of these buildings, and what was the object for which they were erected? Some light may perhaps be thrown on these questions by a consideration of other circumstances. On three other lofty summits of Antilebanon, I also found ruins of very great antiquity, and each one of these, like that on Hermon, commanding a view of the desert along the eastern horizon. The circular enclosure I have not seen in Syria; but there is one somewhat similar on the top of Mount Greenau, in the north of Ireland, and this place is celebrated in Irish Annals as the great sanctuary for sun-worship. By the ancient inhabitants of Syria, places of worship were erected on the summits of mountains. These the Israelites were commanded to destroy when they gained possession of that land, Deut. 12: 2, 3. And again, when they adopted the worship and the gods of their heathen neighbors, they are said to have built them altars on every high hill, 1 Kings 14: 23. 2 Kings 17: 9, 10. The earliest idolatry was no doubt solar and

planetary; and in after ages the same worship was continued, but under different forms and emblems. A desire to approach nearer to the objects of their adoration, and especially to see and honor the sun on his first appearance along the eastern horizon, would naturally lead them to construct their altars and erect their temples in elevated situations. These facts may explain the singular circumstance of such ruins being found in such a position. I consider all these ruins, situated far above the dwellings and haunts of man, as not only remarkable in themselves, but well worthy of observation as illustrations and proofs of the truth of Bible history.

This, then, we may regard as one of the seats of ancient Syrian worship. The priests and votaries of Baal could here see their god, as his first beams reddened the desert sands; and they could follow him in his unclouded and glorious course till he sank into the still waters of the great sea. As we stood amid those ruins, in the very spot in the centre of that ring where, it may be, the sacred fire burned, and looked over hill and mountain far away along that line of gold, which gleamed and sparkled on the surface of the water, to the bright orb beyond, whose departing splendor illumined sea and sky, we could scarcely wonder that men, unenlightened by inspiration, should adore such an object. The setting and the rising sun, too, presented strange and beautiful phenomena from this point of view. A stratum of purple-colored haze ran round the whole horizon, clearly defined as the circle round a ship in the midst of the ocean. As the sun entered this, his shape was at once converted into a series of rings, arranged in the form of a double cone; then in a little time the upper cone disappeared, and the under one remained like a huge top balanced on the horizon; this afterwards gradually became flatter, and seemed to spread out, until at last it suddenly disappeared. But while we gazed at this picture in the west, that behind us eastward was not less beautiful. The shadow of the mountain fell on the plain away beyond, like a gigantic pyramid. Larger and larger it grew, until its top touched the horizon; and it did not stop here; higher and higher yet it raised its summit, beautifully figured on the sky as it had been on the earth, until, as the sun touched the water, it stood before us, a vast ærial pyramid, with its broad base on the earth and its top in the heavens.

When darkness had set in, we set fire to the dry prickly bushes

scattered over the mountain-top, and in a short time had the whole summit one sheet of fire. This was a signal of our safe arrival to our friends in Bládán. As we left our *Baal-fire* to go to the tent, the moon rose. We were thus permitted to witness another splendid scene, as each hill-top and precipice was tinged with her silver light.

September 1st. The morning's dawn found us shivering on the mountain-top. The thermometer, which had been fifty-two degrees at sunset in the tent, was only forty-one degrees when we got up in the morning; and above, it must have been colder still, as a sharp biting wind was blowing.

My great object now was to examine the form of Antilebanon, which lay mapped before me, and to mark the sources of the 'Awa, on the eastern slope of Hermon. The morning was clear, though white fleecy clouds hung over the plain of Haurán and the lake of Galilee. A sentence in the "Narrative of the United States Expedition," by Lieut. Lynch,¹ had formerly excited in my mind some doubts as to its accuracy, and now I was determined to test it. It is as follows: "From the summit, the country below which had seemed so mountainous to the upward view, appeared an immense rolling plain. Far to the north-west, at the verge of the seeming plain, were the red sands, a dazzling line of gold separating the luxuriant green of the plain from the light azure of the far-stretching sea. Upon that line of sand, like clustering dots upon a chart, were the cities of Tyre, Sidon and Beirút." "Another plain stretched from the opposite side, south to Haurán and to the east, until it was lost in the great desert." Statements like these may be pardoned in that romance of Eastern Travel, "The Crescent and the Cross," where they are also found; but in a professedly scientific work, undertaken for the advancement of knowledge, they are altogether inexcusable. The "seeming plain" is a pure fiction. The ridge of Lebanon north-west, must be at least 6000 feet high. The "red sands, that dazzling line of gold," which separated the luxuriant green of the plain from the light azure of the sea, existed only in the imagination of the writer. The bare white summits of Lebanon completely shut in the view on the north-west; and if Lieut. Lynch saw Beirút, or Sidon, he must have possessed a power of *clairvoyance*, which enabled him to look *through* some twenty miles of mountain. Southward and eastward there is a

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plain, but it is bounded and intersected by several ridges of hills. Nearly due east is seen the blue outline of Jebel 'Aghar. South-east the parallel ranges of Jebel el-Aswad and Jebel Mâni'a run across the plain, separating Haurân from the Ghûtah; while southward the Jebel Haurân shuts in the view.

My object, however, was not to search for those distant places, which could only be seen dimly and indistinctly at the best, but to observe and sketch those nearer and more important, because less known. Seating myself, therefore, on the northern summit with the intelligent guide at my side, my compass on a rock, and telescope in hand, I commenced my observations, and wrote my remarks fully on the spot.

On the north-west the view is shut in by two lofty peaks of Lebanon, which I remember to have passed over two years ago in going from Jezzîn to Jisr Bûrghûz. In a line with these is the southern point of the Bûkâ'a, south of which rise rolling hills. A low ridge here separates the Bûkâ'a from another plain, which may be regarded as a continuation of Wady et-Teim. The ridge is broad till it reaches Jubb Jenîn. Here the western part sinks into the great plain; but its eastern part is connected by a narrow neck with the lofty Tell on which is built Sultân Ya'kûb, and hence it continues in a series of Tells to Mejdél 'Anjar, where it sinks down gradually into the plain near the fountain of 'Anjar, the site of the ancient Chalcis. I could see that from 'Anjar southward this ridge runs in nearly a straight line, and that the valley between it and the main mountain chain is clearly defined along its eastern side; except that, at Sultân Ya'kûb, there is a low ridge or swell running across the valley.

Along the eastern slope of the range alluded to, I saw and took bearings of the following villages, beginning from the south: *Kefr Meshky*, immediately on the north side of which a narrow gorge cuts through the ridge running about east and west. *Kaukaba*, on a partially isolated hill north of the gorge. *Muheidithah*, *er-Rafûl* and *el-Bîreh*, close together and nearly due north; the last is in a line with Râsheiya. *Jubb Jenîn* lies behind the hills nearly over the first of these; and *Kâmid el-Lauz*, also behind the hill, about in a line with the third. *Sultân Ya'kûb*, *Mejdél 'Anjar*. The last is not visible; but from my knowledge of the locality I could accurately determine its position.

On the eastern side of the plain above referred to, as running between this ridge and the main body of Antilebanon, I noticed

the following villages, also beginning from the south. They are almost in a line. *Beit Lekya*; *el-'Akabeh*; *Dahr el-Ahmar*, in a line with *Râsheiya*; *Khîrbet Ruhha*.

Eastward from this plain, or rather valley, begins a very rugged and mountainous district, with Wadys crossing each other in almost every direction. From *Râsheiya*, however, there runs a broken ridge to the western entrance of *Wady el-Kûrn*. This ridge forks near *Yüntah* to the south-west. The western branch is very broad, from one hour to an hour and a half; it is intersected by a *Wady* which runs from a little north of *Yüntah* to *'Aithy* and *Sultân Ya'kûb*. It is intersected again by *Wady Hu-reiry*, which extends from *Sahil Judeideh* to *Mejdel 'Anjar*; and a little north of this, in part, by *Wady 'Anjar*. The other branch, running by *Yüntah* to *Wady el-Kûrn*, was before spoken of. The general features of this ridge are rugged and barren, in parts covered with thin forests of dwarf oak. The rock is limestone, but in one or two places are veins of sandstone.

On the east side of this ridge runs a broken and in some places rocky plain or valley. It can only be called so, however, in contrast with the mountains around. It begins immediately below *'Aihâ*; passes *Kefr Kâk*; then rises somewhat abruptly several hundred feet, and also contracts, and has a gradual slope upwards to the east side of *Yüntah*, where it may be said to terminate; the high mountain chain which bounds the plain of *Zebedâny* on the west, after passing *Wady el-Kûrn*, forks here and shuts it in.

Between this place and the southern part of the plain *es-Sahra*, situated more eastward, there is a confused mass of wild mountains, which form the central and chief chain of *Antilebanon*. In form it is an irregular triangle, with *Jebel esh-Sheikh* for its southern base, and the village of *Dîmâs* the subtending angle. It is united to the former, by the south-western branch of the *Zebedâny* range, which runs from *Wady el-Kûrn*, and joins it an hour and a half west of *Dîmâs*, near the village of *Deir el-'Ash-'air*. A lofty ridge running north-east a few points east from the summit of *Hermon*, bounds this district on the south-east; after running for about two hours north-east, this ridge turns east toward the plain of *Damascus*. The village of *Rûkhleh I* saw at the place where the ridge turns eastward, in a deep and seemingly wild valley, N. 50 E.

I now proceeded to the middle peak, from which alone the south-eastern slopes of the mountain are all visible.

On the southern side of the ridge last mentioned is a deep Wady, with sides in many places precipitous. My guide called it Wady Barbar, but I am doubtful about this name. Toward the lower part of it, where it opens into the plain, I saw the village Kūl'at Jendal, in which, as the name implies, there is an ancient castle, probably, as I have heard from one who lately visited it, of Saracenic origin. From the summit of Hermon there is a path, but steep and difficult, by this village to *Katana*; and this is possibly the road pursued by Lieut. Lynch and his party. South of this village rises a lofty peak, which is the termination of a spur that runs out from the mountain; and south of this again is a valley wider, deeper and longer than the former. It runs up into the very heart of Hermon; and from the spot on which I stood there is an unbroken descent, at an angle of some sixty-five or seventy degrees, to the bottom of it. The depth must be nearly, if not fully, six thousand feet, and yet it would seem as if one could throw a stone into the bosom of the valley below. The head of the valley sweeps round to the south of this summit, and is shut in, at a distance of some two hours, by a high ridge of hills, a spur from the southern chain of *Jebel esh-Sheikh*. In the bosom of the valley, in a direction S. 8 E. are a number of small fountains, whose waters unite beside the village of 'Aurny about half an hour below, and form a considerable stream, which, flowing past *Er-Rimeh*, *el-Khirbeh* and *Bk'a-sem*, enters the plain, and winds across it to *Sa'sa'*; it is the north and principal branch of the river '*Awaj*'. Its general course from 'Aurny to the plain is about due east, and from thence to *Sa'sa'*, S. 20 E. The guide called the river *Nahr 'Aurny*, and the Wady in which it rises, *Wady Bheirān*. This, I suppose, is the tributary to the '*Awaj*', which Mr. Thomson calls the "*Sābirāny*" (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. VI. p. 367). The village *Beit Sābir*, from which he says the name is taken, I did not see, nor did I hear this name applied to the river.

The exact height of *Jebel esh-Sheikh*, so far as I know, has never been ascertained, by barometer or otherwise. *Russeger* estimates it at 9500 feet. I am not aware on what data that estimate was formed, but I think it too low. If the snow upon the summit is to be taken as any guide, I would say that *Jebel Sūnnin* and *Jebel esh-Sheikh* must be nearly of the same height. I have observed them both, day after day, for two summers, in connection also with the peak at the cedars, as all three are

visible from Blúdân, and, judging from the gradual melting of the snow, the last mountain is evidently the loftiest, and Hermon ranks *second*. I know that this mode of calculation is liable to error, from the relative positions in which the mountains are viewed; but I make allowance for this. As seen from Blúdân the snow entirely disappears from Sûnnîn; but from Hermon never. We found snow in deep layers, in the ravines and sheltered places round the summit. The three summits of the mountain I have already referred to. The distance between the north and south extreme summits cannot be much over a quarter of a mile, certainly not more than half a mile; and from these there is a gradual slope on all sides. The ridge which runs south toward Bâniâs must be about, or nearly, 2000 feet lower than any of these peaks; while that which runs to the north-east, is about the same elevation as the other. It will be seen from this that the two peaks put down on the map attached to the "Researches in Palestine," cannot be quite correct. They are there represented as so far apart, that they cannot be those I have mentioned, and there must consequently be a difference in their elevation of almost, if not altogether, 2000 feet. The peaks above mentioned I regard as the true summits of Hermon. The ruin is called Kûl'ât 'Antar.

I have thus described, and I fear *usque ad nauseam*, Hermon and its environs. My apology is, I have felt interested in it. For more than two years I have seen it almost daily. Every feature of it, and of the noble chain that, shooting out from it, shuts in this old city, is familiar to me, as the home of my childhood. It is, moreover, an unknown land, and I wish to send a picture of it to the far west. Without a map, I fear it will be difficult, if not impossible, to follow and comprehend the minute details given. One object I have had in view in making these observations was, to construct a map of Antilebanon, and the country eastward of it to the desert. In this I have to a considerable extent succeeded, and I hope ere long to be able to complete it. As this work is pursued as a recreation, in the midst of many and pressing duties, its progress must be slow and also uncertain.

My companions being ready to mount, when my observations were finished, I rode off with them at 9.45. We descended toward the west, our path being both steep and dangerous. In an hour and a quarter we reached a small fountain on the moun-

tain side, called 'Ain el-Lauz, descending from which, through a wild ravine, we came, in thirty-five minutes more, to the bottom of the Wady which runs along the foot of Jebel esh-Sheikh from Râsheiya. Crossing it, we ascended a range of low, but very picturesque hills, which bound it on the west. Having surmounted this range, we came on the western brow to the brink of a lovely valley, shut in by well-wooded hills, and having the small village of Sha'it in its bosom. As we passed through the gardens below the village, the rich grapes hung in festoons from the branches of the trees that overshadowed our path, while the fences on each side were almost covered with the tempting fruit. We reached the village at 1.10, one hour from the foot of Hermon. In another hour we passed through the village of el-Kufeir; fifty minutes afterwards we reached Mîmis, and in an hour more were beside the palace of the Emîrs in Hasbeiya.

September 2nd. We left Hasbeiya at 8.5, and descended the ravine to the banks of the Hasbâny. Turning to the left, we followed its right bank to Sûk el-Khân, and the bridge below it. Crossing the river, we ascended a low range of hills on the left hand. At 9.20 we had on our left, distant fifteen minutes, Râsheiyet el-Fûkhâr, situated on the side of a well-wooded hill. Further north, and somewhat higher up, we also noticed Kufeir Hamâm and Kufeir Shûbeh. Descending into a picturesque vale, through which passes the track of a winter torrent, its sides fringed with oleander, and overshadowed by the sparse foliage of a grove of ancient olives, we passed on our right, at 10.15, the small village Khûreibeh. Another Wady similar to the preceding, but still more beautiful, ran across our path; and on its northern bank, some twenty minutes from us, on the right, we saw el-Mârieh. Our road now ascended to and traversed a plateau thinly covered with dwarf oak, and having a rich soil and luxuriant vegetation, though now burned up with the summer's sun. The broad plain of the Hûleh now opened up before us, with the lake in the distance, and the heights of Hunin on the west. Hunin itself was visible with its crumbling ramparts; and below it on the north we could distinguish the white threshing floors of Ibel, the Abel Beth Mnachah of Scripture.

We entered the Hûleh at 12.20, and, forty minutes after, were sitting beneath a noble oak, beside the fountains of the ancient Dan, at Tell el-Kâdy. We spent nearly two hours wandering among the rank weeds and luxuriant herbage of this interesting

spot. An Arab encampment was spread around the gushing fountains, while hundreds of sheep, oxen and camels were scattered over the plain. The spot must have been a glorious one, and wonderfully fruitful, when the houses of Laish stood upon and around the Tell, and the whole plain teemed with waving corn.

From Tell el-Kâdy, an hour's ride through a forest of oaks, which covers this part of the plain and of the slopes on the east side, brought us to Baniâs, the Caesarea Philippi of the New Testament. We wandered long among its extensive ruins. The place, unlike most of those in Palestine, is not less remarkable for its classic associations than its natural beauties. There was towering mountain, and wooded hill, and battlemented height, and gushing fountain, and crumbling ruin, and wide-spreading plain, all finely blended in one glorious picture. As I stood and gazed I could not but remember that a greater than classic interest is attached to this spot. Its soil was trodden by the feet of the Son of God; beneath that frowning precipice and beside that clear stream, our Lord and his disciples have no doubt often sat; within those crumbling walls the lips of the Saviour of the world unfolded Gospel truth to men whose dust now mingles with its kindred earth; and perhaps on some one of those mountain-peaks above, Peter and James and John obtained a glimpse of the glory of the upper sanctuary in the Transfiguration.

As we sat in our tent, previous to retiring to rest, an armed retainer of the Sheikh was announced on business. Being introduced, he said the country was in a state of rebellion, the Arabs were near the village, and robbers of all kinds infested the neighborhood; his master, therefore, could not be answerable for the safety of our persons, or our property, unless we would pay a party of men to keep watch during the night. I replied at once that our persons we were prepared and able to protect; and that, as the Sheikh had, according to his own admission, the power to protect our property, I would hold him responsible for anything that might be stolen, but I would pay no man for keeping watch. We got no reply, and we lost nothing.

September 3rd. We were up by daybreak, engaged a guide to Beit Jenn, and started at 5.40. Our first point was the castle; and so leaving our muleteers and servants to follow by the ordinary road, we struck up the hill. In a hour we were within its

walls. Its great strength, vast extent, and beautiful workmanship, far surpassed my expectations. I examined this splendid monument of the pride and power of former days, as well as the ruins around the village below, with considerable care and much interest. I do not feel it necessary, however, to enter here upon any description of either.

Here I was on the borders of a wide district little known, and therefore interesting. It is true, many travellers have traversed this district, and by different routes too; but I have never been able to find any satisfactory information regarding it. Dr. Robinson has summed up in a brief note, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for May 1849, the whole that is before the public upon it. A perusal of that note will show that the country between Bâniâs and Damascus has hitherto escaped the notice of accurate observers almost wholly.

We left the castle at 7.15, and descended to the summit of the ridge, which connects the hill on which the castle is built with the mountains on the east. Here we had on our left a deep valley separating us from the mountain-range on the north; and on our right the hill sloped away gradually for twenty minutes down to the side of a deep ravine. At 8.5 we saw on our right, distant fifteen minutes, the village 'Ain Kûnyeh, built on the northern brow of the ravine; and on our left on the mountain-side opposite, distant about thirty-five minutes, Jûbbâta. From this point our road led up the mountain-side in a direction a few minutes north of east, till we reached a small fountain called 'Ain el-Beidah at 8.30. Here we approached the head of the valley above referred to, as running along the castle hill on the north. Sweeping round it, through groves of oak and other trees, and over beds of mingled basalt and sandstone, we reached the summit fifteen minutes after leaving the fountain, where we had lost five minutes. An extensive and apparently well-cultivated plain was now spread out before us. In its centre rose a low hill, which, being connected by a neck of land with the hills on the west, completely shut out from our view the southern part of it. We could see the wooded heights that bounded it on the east and south. It is called Merj el-Yafûr, and is the joint property of Jûbbâta and Mejdêl. We descended to the plain by an easy path, and followed a road skirting the hills on the north-west, leaving on our right another road which strikes across the plain toward Sahhta. At 9.15 we came to a place where a deep

ravine divides the hills on our left, through which passes a road to Mejdél, distant about twenty minutes, but not visible. From this point we saw towards the south a fountain. It rises at the eastern base of the hill above mentioned as standing in the plain, and over it, distant about thirty-five minutes, a small white Wely was seen, called Neby Yafûr; immediately beyond which commences an oak forest, which extends over the whole hills southward as far as the eye could reach. On the borders of this oak forest, ten minutes beyond the Wely, is situated, as our guide told us, Birket er-Râm, the *Lake Phiala*. We could not see it from any part of our road, and I did not go out of my way to visit it, as I intended a few weeks afterward to travel by the route from Kuneitera to Bâniâs, and hoped then to see it. This position agrees in every respect with that given by Mr. Tipping, in his note to Mr. Smith. *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. I. p. 13. He says: "It is about an hour and a half south of Mejdél." The difference in the estimated distance from Mejdél is easily accounted for by the rates at which different travellers ride. We were well mounted and could have accomplished the distance in a little over an hour, riding at our usual pace. It is south of Mejdél by compass; that is, allowing for the variation, S. 10 E. From this point we also saw the village Sahita on the top of a hill S. 60 E., distant half an hour. The plain is oval-shaped, about an hour in length from north to south, by about half that breadth in the centre.

We now ascended to the high ground on the north of this plain, and at 9.25 reached the top, from whence we saw Mejdél fifteen minutes on our left, and rather behind us, and below it a small fountain. The road travelled by Burckhardt was different from that which we had hitherto followed; Burckhardt's *Travels in Syria*, p. 44 seq. He went from Bâniâs "behind the castle," by which, I suppose, he means on the north of it, to Jâbbâta; and thence he followed the narrow valley, which lies behind the hills that bound Merj el-Yafûr on the north-west, to Mejdél. He could not, therefore, have seen this plain at all, nor the district around Lake Phiala.

We descended into a valley down which flows, in winter, streams from the fountain of Mejdél, and others, and here struck the road travelled by Burckhardt. Crossing this valley, which continues its course toward the south-east, passing on the north side of the hill on which is built Sahita, we went up a branch

valley to a fountain called Ain et-Tin, which we reached at 9.45.

The greater part of the country which we traversed since we left Ain el-Beidah above the castle of Bâniâs, is volcanic. In some places the limestone still appears, and also sandstone strongly impregnated with oxide of iron; but basalt is the prevailing rock. Close on our left rose the lofty sides of the southern ridge of Hermon; one mass of white limestone. The country is wild and desolate, the hills rugged and of barren appearance, though, having a rich soil intervening between the blocks of basalt, they are to a considerable extent capable of cultivation. The whole region from Bâniâs to Beit Jenn was said to be very dangerous, owing to the hostile attitude assumed by the Druzes in opposition to the government. Both at Hasbeiya and Bâniâs attempts had been made to dissuade us from taking this route, and our guide, though well known in the district, seemed much alarmed. All the people we met were armed with long guns and daggers, and some also carried in addition swords and pistols. Their appearance was anything but pleasing; and never in this country, not even in the deserts of Palmyra, when enjoying the comforts of a Bedawy prison, have I seen such wild and fierce looking men. We were, however, a strong party and well armed; and we knew that Arabs would be very chary of attacking Franks under such circumstances. Our numbers and strength were still further augmented by two armed cavaliers, whom we found awaiting our arrival at Ain et-Tin. They had joined our party at Bâniâs, but pursued their journey thus far while we were examining the castle. Not deeming it safe, however, to go further without us, they stopped at the fountain till we came up.

We now ascended the hill on the east of the fountain and traversed an elevated plateau, the highest ground on this road. Descending a little from the plateau, we entered a little plain called Merj el-Hather, and reached a small fountain in it at 10.25, eight minutes after entering it. The water flowing from the fountain formed a pond or little lake, a few minutes on our right, and thence runs E. S. E. through an opening in the low hills, passing on the edge of the plain, and ten minutes from the pond the Druze village el-Hather. The plain is about two miles long by half that breadth. It is encompassed by low hills on all sides except the west, from which rises at once the side of Hermon.

There are extensive oak forests all around, now fast falling beneath the axe of the charcoal manufacturer.

I made particular inquiries about the names given to the great mountain-chain we were passing over; and the result of my inquiries was, that, while each little district is distinguished by a name of its own, taken from some village or fountain in the neighborhood, yet the great chain has two general designations, *Jebel esh-Sheikh* and *Jebel el-Heish*. The former name is given to the great range extending from a line joining *Katana* and *Rásheiya* on the north, to one joining *Bániás* and *Kuncitera* on the south. The continuation of the range south of that line is called by the latter name. I stated above, that from the summit of *Hermon* a lofty range of mountains runs due south, gradually but slowly decreasing in height as it advances. It continues in an unbroken line to *Mejdel*, where it at once sinks down some thousands of feet, as I would think, and then continues the same course along the eastern side of the *Húleh*. About *Hather* a spur strikes out from the main chain, which, after running for some time a few points east of south, turns again and runs nearly parallel to the other, thus enclosing the *Merj el-Yafûr*; south of which the two join, and continue their course in a broad swell.

From the fountain we struck across the plain, leaving the ordinary road on our right. We had just commenced the gentle ascent on the north-east, when a wild-looking Druze, black as *Erebus*, met us, and asked our guide if the muleteers, now some way behind, belonged to us. He answered hesitatingly, and tried to evade the question. I, however, at once stated that they did. He replied, that if they had not been in the employ of Franks, they never would have left the plain alive. I inquired the reason for such treatment of travellers, and especially of poor men. He said that I was at liberty to walk over his fields and pluck his corn, but that if another did it the earth would drink his blood. I replied we were strangers and did not know the road; and, besides, if we had injured anything I would pay for it. He said, "You are an Englishman, and I am your slave. My fields are yours, and you have a right to all." Saying this he passed on seemingly satisfied.

A short time after, we reached a rocky plateau thinly sprinkled with dwarf oak. The guide informed me that this was the worst part of our road; and that travellers were frequently robbed and

stripped by wandering parties of Arabs. On this spot, some two years previous, I believe, a party of English travellers, with a lady in company, were attacked and plundered; and, after the usual Arab custom, stripped of every article of dress; and thus left to pursue their journey to Damascus as they best could. No such romantic adventure awaited us, and we continued our journey in peace.

On this plateau a road branches to the left, leading to 'Aurneh, and Kûl'at 'Antar on the top of Hermon. At 11.30 we reached the brow of a wide and deep valley; and, descending its southern bank, we turned, after reaching the bottom, into a wild ravine, through which runs the track of a winter torrent. Following this twenty minutes in its course nearly due east, we reached a spot at 12 where it passes into another ravine; and here at the point of junction stands Beit Jenn. Wady Beit Jenn is not dry, like that down which we came; a fine stream rushes down it, whose banks are lined with walnut and poplar trees. The fountain, I was told, is at the foot of Hermon, about one hour west a few points north, of the village. I was anxious to take such bearings as would enable me to fix this place; but, from the height of the rocky banks, I could see nothing but the direction of the Wady, which runs S. 75 E. This stream is the second great tributary of the river 'Awaj.

Leaving Beit Jenn at 1.10, we followed the course of the stream, passing in fifteen minutes 'Ain Beit Jenn, which springs up immediately on the right bank of the rivulet, beside a grove of trees. Its waters about equal those which flow down from the village above. We had here on our left the continuation of the lofty spur, which separates Wady Beit Jenn from Wady 'Aurneh. Twenty minutes below the fountain we passed out into the plain. Here are a few miserable huts used only for cattle, and called Mazra'at Beit Jenn. From this place the river runs in a deep channel, and winding, courses across the plain to Sa'sa', where it is joined by Nahr 'Aurneh. From this point I took such bearings as will enable me to fix this branch of the 'Awaj with considerable accuracy on the map. Mr. Thomson, in his journey from Damascus to Bâniâs, passed this spot; but, instead of taking the road by Beit Jenn, he immediately ascended the southern side of the Wady and went over the hills to Hather. Beit Jenn is not "high up," as described by him; it is just thirty-five minutes from the plain, and has an elevation

of only a few feet above it (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. VI p. 369). The plain between this place and Sa'sa' now looked bleak and blasted. Only the narrow bed through which the rivulet ran presented any appearance of verdure. Irby and Mangles, as well as Mr. Thomson, traversed this district early in the year; and, therefore, describe it as well watered, with numerous tributaries falling into the Nahr Beit Jenn. I suspect that if they had returned late in the summer, they would have found water a scarce commodity, and all the

Having lost ten minutes in making observations here, I rode after my companions, across the rolling plain at the foot of the hills, in a direction about north-east. At 2.30 I reached the side of a flat and very fertile piece of land, extending up among the hills on the left in a triangular form, and running down on the right to the banks of Nahr 'Aurneh. At 2.45 we had on our left, distant about half an hour, the village of Hneh, built on the western slope of a small Tell that rises at the head of the piece of land referred to. In ten minutes more, I reached the side of this small plain, and had, rising close on my left, the termination of a low spur from the mountain. Along its side was conducted a stream of water taken from the Nahr 'Aurneh, which was used in watering Hneh and the little plain below it. Following the same course, I reached Kefr Hauwar at 3.25. Here I ascended to the tower, mentioned by Burckhardt, and found that it is nothing but a small modern house. It may, perhaps, once have served as a Druze place of worship. The view from this place is extensive, and I took from it several important bearings. Sa'sa' bore S. 17 E. and Kesweh on the 'Awaj S. 62 E. Toward Haurân the country is one uniform plain, slightly undulating, with isolated conical peaks rising up at intervals. Some of these are crowned with Welys, while others are cup-shaped, evidently the craters of extinct volcanoes.

I had thus ridden from the banks of the Jennâny to Kefr Hauwar in an hour and a half; which will represent a distance of about six Roman miles. Burckhardt gives the distance at three and a half hours; *Travels in Syria*, p. 46. He says, also, that Sa'sa' lay one hour and a half to the right. The bearing of Sa'sa' from the entrance of Wady Beit Jenn is S. 73 E. In placing it on the map by these bearings and one from the summit of Hermon, I found its distance from Kefr Hauwar to be about five and a quarter miles. The Nahr 'Aurneh, the branch of the 'Awaj

referred to formerly, runs in a deep channel twelve minutes to the north-east past Kefr Hauwar; and from this continues its course, winding like a serpent, to Sa'sa', passing only one village on its way. Of this village I did not get the name, though I marked its position. It is strange that Burckhardt does not mention this important river at all, though he passed over it on a bridge between Kefr Hauwar and Beitma. *Ib.* p. 46. About half an hour north-west of Kefr Hauwar this river enters the

From this place I was able to see, at one glance, the whole section of the plain watered by the 'Awaj. I was also able to look down the narrow Wady through which it passes between the low parallel ranges of Jebel el-Aswad and Jebel Mânia', on its way to Lake Hijāneh. From the foot of Jebel esh-Sheikh to Kesweh is about seventeen Roman miles; and the district watered by the 'Awaj is not *on an average* more than an hour in width. From Kesweh to Hijāneh is about fifteen miles; but the river is closely confined between two mountain ranges nearly the whole way. The whole arable ground, therefore, watered by this river, may be estimated at about sixty-five to seventy square miles; and yet Mr. Thomson makes the assertion that it waters *ten times* the arable ground that the Barada does; *Bib. Sacra*, Vol. VI. p. 369. From the fountain to the plain, the Barada is upwards of twenty-two miles long, and the arable land watered by it along its banks, averages at least half a mile in width. From Salahiyeh to the lakes is about twenty miles, and there is an average width of fifteen miles of this watered by the Barada. Thus the arable land watered by this river is about 311 square miles, or nearly five times that watered by the 'Awaj.

I have been more particular in giving these details, because I believe it is the first time the sources of the 'Awaj have been clearly pointed out, or its course described. I had formerly the opinion, that the river was comparatively an insignificant one; and was inclined, therefore, to doubt that it could be referred to by the proud Syrian of old. Now, however, I see that it is unquestionably the *second* river of Damascus. I have visited and examined all the other streams and fountains in this section of the country; and I am now persuaded that if Naaman meant *two rivers*, as is probable, and not *two fountains*, that the Barada and 'Awaj must be these two.

I believe that one or two very small tributaries fall into the

'Awaj from the country south-west of Sa'sa'; but I have not seen them and cannot verify it.

September 4th. We left Kefr Hanwar at 4.30, crossed the bridge over the river twelve minutes after, and rode up the north bank to the half-ruined village of Beitma, which we reached at 4.55. Our road now led over an undulating plain, having the foot of Jebel esh-Sheikh about an hour on our left. At 5.40 we crossed a very small stream running in the hollow of a deep Wady. This stream flows down from Wady Barbar, in which is the village of Kûla't Jendel. At seven o'clock we reached Katana. Westward of this village the plain runs up further into the mountain than toward the south; but is more elevated and undulates more. This western part of the plain comes in between the eastern ridge of Jebel esh-Sheikh and the low hills that bound the Sahra on the south-west. Through it is the road by Bûkheh to Rîsheiya. Katana is a large village with fine gardens and rich fields. It is watered by a stream which springs up a quarter of an hour west of the village. This stream does not flow eastward and cross the Haj road, as represented on Burckhardt's map; but is exhausted in the fields some distance below Katana.

We left Katana at 7.15, and proceeded in a direction more to the east than that we had pursued from Kefr Hauwar. Here is a fine plain which is now a desert, but only requires water to make it a paradise like the gardens of Damascus. At 8.20 we had the village of Judeideh twenty minutes on our right. At 9 we passed the village of Muaddemiyeh, five minutes on our right, and soon after entered among extensive vineyards. Nothing could present a greater contrast than the two parts of the plain at this place, the portion watered and that not watered; the former rich and fertile, covered with luxuriant vines, now bending under the weight of the clustering bunches, and, further on the right, dense groves of olive and mulberry trees, encircling the large village of Daraiya; the latter, close on our left hand, a bare desert, parched and burned up by a scorching sun; while beyond it, white as snow and bare almost as a rock, rose the low range of Kalabât el-Mezzy. Half an hour more and we were within the gardens of Damascus, pursuing our journey amid the most delicious groves; sheltered from the sun's rays by the thick foliage of the fragrant walnut, and having our ears regaled by the murmuring of waters and the voice of birds.

At 10.25 we passed through Kefr Susa, and at 10.45 entered the gates of Damascus.

We rode the whole of this day's journey at a very fast walk, and I should estimate the whole distance passed over in the six hours as twenty-four miles, viz. ten miles from Kefr Hauwar to Katana, and fourteen from thence to Damascus. Burckhardt's estimate of the distance is not at all correct. From Kefr Hauwar to Beitima he makes half an hour, and thence to Katana *four hours*. While from Katana to Kefr Susa he makes only three hours, and thence to Damascus one. *Travels in Syria*, p. 47.

While I pen these lines (October 5th, 1852), the district which I describe is the theatre of war. I had looked forward with pleasure to a proposed journey to the south of Palestine; but I can now scarcely venture beyond the gates of the city. The Sheikhs of Yüntah have seized the passes of Antilebanon; and an army of 14,000 men is employed in endeavoring to subdue the warlike Druzes of Haurân. I see little prospect of a speedy termination of these sad troubles. There is a weak, but tyrannical government; and a restless and discontented, but brave people. And these are elements which do not well agree.

Damascus, October 5th, 1852.