

CHAPTER II

1855

Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition.

Falsehood is so vile that if it spoke of God it would take something from the grace of His divinity, while truth is so excellent that when applied to the smallest things it makes them noble.—RICHTER.

RETURNING to my work, the suppression of the interdict of the Rabbis facilitated my appeals to the better class of Jews, and though some of the men whom I now approached were of very humble means, they bore themselves with unaffected dignity. The old fellow with divided beard painted in my picture was one of heaven's own noblemen. He supported himself by the profits of a little chandlery business ; all the day he squatted cross-legged on his board in front of a cupboard with his wares ; spices, coffee, sugar, arranged around him within easy reach, he had numerous customers who purchased small supplies at a time. On the Sabbath I always saw him at the Synagogue, and I learned that he was a rabbi, by his independent industry the better representing the celebrated doctors of Hillel's days. When I applied to him to sit, he explained that, having no relative or friend to carry on the business if he were away the shop would have to be shut up, and that the loss would be continued after he had reopened it, from the habit his customers would contract of dealing elsewhere ; but my terms tempted him. The bargain was that he should have four francs paid to him in the evening of each



W. Holman Paint, 1855.

Juan Electric Engraving Co. & Co.

The Bride of Bethlehem.

day, and that three more should be written up to his account, to be paid when I had completed the work, but this only if he had been punctual. He was always attentive and regular, and never expressed any doubt that I could be trusted for the final conditional sum. Men are slow to believe others to be different to themselves in honesty. I am glad to record this case as one of many I have met with to the credit of the Israelites. To prove the sincerity of some Jewish conversion, and its fitness for such men, a story known to me of actors still living in 1854 is sufficient. In the year 1836 two Jews of unstable character had entered into partnership in a grocery business. They purchased a small stock of coffee and stored it in their dark shop. They indulged in stronger drink than that which their customers brewed, and in their cups they quarrelled. The division of the joint property was a difficulty which no one of their friends could arrange, until they remembered a poor fellow-descendant of Judah who had been converted to Christianity and yet had the esteem of all the Jews. He was the same Calman who kindly assisted me later, and never did I know man who was more thoroughly without guile. He possessed an annuity of £50, and with this he had sought a post on the Mission in Jerusalem for which he refused payment, and was appointed, while still young, keeper of the Hospital where the invalid Jews were nursed. The hostile partners induced him to take charge of the key of their shop until their quarrel should be settled. When he was thus satisfying each that the other was not robbing him, a violent storm occurred; the wranglers knew that the shop roof was defective, and went to Calman, the custodian, to come with them and see that the coffee was not injured.

It proved to have been thoroughly soaked. They both declared themselves to be outraged, and contended that, being the guardian of their property, Calman was responsible, and that he should pay the value to them. After some vain appeals to their reason, and their assumed sense of justice, he paid the demand, principally perhaps

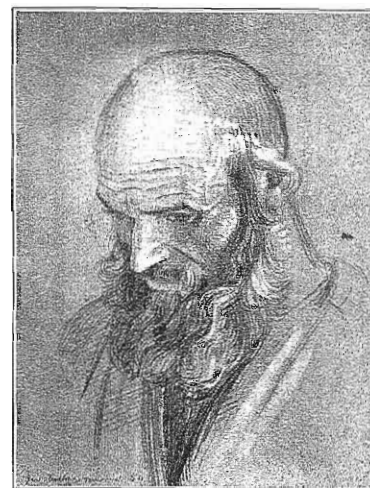
because he knew their poverty, and the coffee was worthless. At this time Ibrahim Pasha was invading the country, and soon he invested Jerusalem. During the siege Calman heard that coffee was well-nigh exhausted in the city, and any variety of it was selling at famine prices. He brought out his bags and spread the contents in the sun, and the coffee proving to be but little hurt by the wetting, he sold it at a high price, which he took no pains to keep secret; indeed, he instanced it as an example of how he had gained by returning good for evil.

At this point, to his astonishment, the two grocers again appeared in mutual accord, stating that they knew that he had made a very great profit on their coffee, which Calman at once admitted. Then said they, "You must pay us the additional money for our coffee, for which you yourself admit you have yet only given us a quarter price." He urged that this demand to him seemed very unjust. "Oh no," they screamed, "you would be robbing us if you did not give us the extra money." "If you declare this seriously and solemnly I will not keep it," he said. "We do; we do!" they shouted, and they went off with their booty, glorying in their superior cunning.

"What a fool that Calman is! and what stupidity his religion is!" said one to the other when on their way to the nearest drinking house. "Yes," said the other, "he is a fool, and it is his religion that makes him so, but what a religion it must be to make a man cast away all selfish interest as he does." Drunkards and schemers though they were by long habit, in embracing Christianity they came under influences which perhaps rendered them more promising men.

There was a good, honest, and intelligent convert heading a band of Baptists who helped me in securing as a sitter a Jew of middle age who kept a mercer's shop. Observing the latter for some time, I discovered that he spoke only Polish, in which I was helpless. My friend thereupon came with me to the shop, which was a comparatively prosperous one, and after getting into general

conversation he adroitly introduced me as the Englishman who was painting a picture of Jewish Rabbis, and who would pay well if he would come and sit to me. The mercer very naturally urged, like the rest, that it would not be to his interest to shut up shop except for large remuneration, but when it was explained that I should want him for seven or eight days, that each evening he should receive four francs, and that three francs additional should be written up to his account towards a sum to be



STUDY OF JEW.

paid at the end if he had always been punctual, he finally promised to come to me the next day.

I waited, at the hour appointed, with all prepared for my new figure, till, patience exhausted, I went straight to the shop, then to the Synagogue. Failing to find the mercer in either place, I enlisted my friend in the search. Most of the day was spent before we found him, and then he urged that although the pay for the time was liberal, it was not enough to cover the loss of custom that would occur afterwards, and I had to agree to add £2

to the final payment if he would make no more delay and come the next morning. To this he agreed, apparently with great contentment.

On the morrow again I waited with palette in hand for an hour or so, but all in vain. This time I determined to have a satisfactory explanation, or to give up the model finally if he failed me further, and I went with my friendly interpreter.

The mercer, on being asked to account for his failure, was somewhat reticent, until we urged him to tell us plainly if he thought it a sin to aid in the making of a picture. Finding him still shy, I pointed out that in the Tabernacle and in the Israelitish camp and in Solomon's Temple also there were animal figures represented as symbols of the various tribes, and I argued further that the Second Commandment did not mean more than that the images should not be made for worship in the first Temple. "Oh yes!" he said in a tone that meant we had been arguing quite needlessly, "I am a rabbi myself, and I have considered the question, and I know it is no sin; but it might be very imprudent, very rash indeed, and I might suffer for that," and, turning with a confiding air, he went into a long explanation with my friend, who carried an amused expression on his face. Now I observed an extra play of suppressed mirth, and this fact, with the understanding of a few words common to all languages, made me anxious to hear the interpretation, which my friend gave with great solemnity. "Well, you know the merchant's name is Daoud Levi. On the Day of Judgment the Archangel Michael will be standing at the gate of heaven, and the names of all faithful children of Abraham will be called out; there will be a great throng, and as each name is uttered the owner of it will press forward, and the Archangel on seeing him will give orders for him to pass, while the name will be checked from the book. When Daoud's name is called, if there were a picture of him, it might be that the likeness would arrive first, and this might be

passed in, and the name on the roll struck off; and when he arrived to demand admittance he might be told that Daoud Levi had already entered in, and that he must be a pretender, and although he might beg and pray and ask for investigation of the truth, it would not be surprising if he were told that he had brought the hardship upon himself, and that on such a busy occasion there was no opportunity to go into disputed questions."



W. H. H.

EXAMPLES OF JEWISH TYPE.

Daoud Levi zealously watched my face to see if the irresistible logic of his argument were duly appreciated. I did my best to betray due concern for the eternal peril he might thoughtlessly have provoked. "Neither of us had thought of that, had we?" I reflected aloud to my friend; "but perhaps the difficulty can be met. Ask whether if we take effectual steps to give the figure in the picture the name of a Christian, the danger will be obviated?" "Yes, if the means were satisfactory," said Daoud. "Would baptizing it do?" I asked. After a little reflection he decided that this would be an effectual means of

separating the picture from himself, so I arranged that after I had made the first few strokes I would sprinkle some water on the likeness, and give it a distinct *franghi* name before his friends as witnesses, and with this understanding the obstacle to his attendance at my studio was removed.

The next morning, with friends, he appeared ready to sit to me, but not without searching glances into the corners of the room, and making many impatient inquiries about the details of my picture. It was a work of perseverance to get him to go far enough away from the canvas to allow me to see him. Faint lines he would not accept as the image, so I had to use charcoal, and when I could point out to him the features of a face, and show him that I was prepared for the ceremony of christening, he went as far away as possible. I then declared the figure's name to be Jack Robinson. Daoud was satisfied, but when the superabundant blackness was dusted away, scepticism on his part returned whether I had not expunged the baptized likeness, and I had to rechristen the painted preparation before a fair start in his posing could be made. It proved that when he was driven to it he could talk Arabic very well, and as I was then practising it grammatically, we got on without difficulty; in fact, he talked more than enough, with an eager and stumbling manner of speech, which was amusing but bewildering to my preoccupied mind. The visits of his friends, who diverted his mercurial mind and body from the pose, made the task no easier, so that at the end of the day I felt as though I had been working for a week, and my walk outside the city at sundown was very welcome.

A few days of this intercourse with the child-like man had impressed me in his favour, so that when he declared himself in great trouble, I invited him to reveal its nature to me. He said that the fast of the Atonement and the feast of the Tabernacle were coming on, and that from having neglected his business he had not been

able to collect outstanding accounts, and that what money he had received from me was not enough for his preparations; he would have therefore to discontinue coming to me some days before the date of the feast, and this would continue so long that there would be at least a fortnight's interval. It would be unjust for him to be kept out of his final payments so long, particularly as he heard I was going away soon and might defraud him altogether; he went on to say that if I would let him have the retained money, with the £2 extra that had been promised on condition of his punctuality, he would have all that he wanted; he would not be obliged to search elsewhere for means for the feast and would come the preceding days. Suspecting my mistrust, he called heaven to witness that he would show his gratitude by coming the first moment after his religious duties released him.

On his repeating this assurance, I told him that I was ready to trust him, and paid into his hands the coveted money. His success was evidently more than he had expected, and he was profuse in his promises to come early in the morning.

He did not appear. I would not at first allow myself to believe that he belonged to the legion of liars and overreachers. There was the possibility that some unavoidable business was detaining him, so I went to his shop. It was shut. I looked for him in other haunts in vain, and at last I went to his house. An old woman held the handle of the door in her hand, saying he was not at home. While she spoke, I heard a screeching laugh, with an inquiry in an unknown female voice whether it was the English fool, and the old woman drew the door back for me to enter. I went in. At the top of a flight of steps I saw a handsome Jewess with her clasped hands rocking herself, in convulsions of laughter, so that her closed palms were alternately between her knees and above her head.

"You are, you are, you are a pretty fool! My husband told me that he should try to cheat you, but

we scarcely thought you would be so taken in. You need not look for him any further, for he'll never come to you any more, now he has the money, never!" My reply was, "I will call again soon." "Do," she said, "I like to laugh at you." I went to the Consulate. The Consul was not in, but his *cancelleria* heard my story and put a *karwas* at my service. Soon I was again knocking at Daoud Levi's house, with my follower left a little way out of sight. The old woman with a merry expression opened the door wide for me to enter the courtyard. "Can I see the master?" I asked, and hurriedly from an upper room out burst the wife, clapping her hands and salaaming, ending with, "Yes, you shall see the master. Come out, O husband!" and on the landing he also appeared with modified bravado, running on into a stammer, and apologising with bad grace, saying that the approaching feast made it impossible for him to come to me, and that the money received was not too much, for he had been for several days to my studio, and that it hindered his business. When I said that he had signed his name on my wall against the account, and also his promise to come again, "Yes," he said, "that was to get the money. You wouldn't have given it without." "That was to get the money," repeated the antic of a woman, and she danced and crowed with an intoxication of triumph. "I have brought a friend who wants particularly to see you, O Daoud," I said. "Ah, it is no use," he urged, but he was cut short by his wife with, "Pray let the visitor favour us; pray come in, O friend," raising her voice each moment to a higher pitch. I turned and made the sign, and down, with stately paces and a silver-knobbed mace, the *karwas* descended the stone stairs into the yard and stood majestic.

Groaning sighs from two apparently Medusa-stricken beings told how such a possibility as the actual consequences of the deceit had never entered into their imaginations. The woman pushed the husband to one of the doors, but I said, "You must not leave us alone, O Daoud. My

friend here particularly wants your company, for he is going to the Pasha's court, and he must have you with him," at which their faces became blank, their eyes started, and the colour fled from their lips. The woman fell on her knees, and the husband appealed to me to believe that he had intended to come, and that they had only declared the contrary in play. "No! No! You lie now as you lied before," said I, unconcerned, and kept this tone until it seemed they had been enough punished for the nonce, then I charged them to listen to me. "If you wish me to save you from prison, you must give me back the two sovereigns and the extra money. You must give this 'friend' of mine two *bishlick*, and you will have to come with me to be painted now, for the whole day, and if you fail any day till the feast comes, you will have no mercy shown you." The money was quickly forthcoming, and the *karwas* went back to the Consulate.

In five minutes more Daoud was in my room. Previously to setting to work I took the opportunity of trying to prove to him the iniquity of his conduct. "Your error is in thinking that because you are a son of Abraham, no truthfulness and no honesty is necessary in your dealings with the rest of the world to secure God's favour; but the whole teaching of the history of your nation proves that you were intended to be better than other people, and that when you disregard this, your sin is greater than that of people to whom the law was not given." To my surprise I was at once challenged on this postulate in the meekest tone. "But it is not wicked to tell lies when it is for an object." "Why," I returned, "is it not written, 'a false weight and a lying tongue are an abomination to the Lord'?" "Yes, but that is when there is no purpose in it. Look," he added eagerly, "all the patriarchs and David told lies at times." I had to say, "Every one knows they did, and it is an example of the candour of the Bible that such blemishes are recorded in the character of men who, in other respects, were

faithful servants of God." But his next rejoinder surprised me. "No, these lies were merits in them, and to prove that falsehoods are not wrong we have the example of God Almighty uttering one when He reported to Abraham Sarah's want of faith in the promise that she should have a son, declaring that 'she laughed,' whereas she is reported only to have 'laughed within herself'; this the Almighty did to make her want of faith appear the more heinous." In vain I strove to convince him that the disputed point in Sarah's course was whether her laughing was a sign of her open incredulity, but his rabbinical sophistry made him strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

It must not be supposed that an artist in honestly using his model does not obey the principles of selection. He has to eschew all marks of degradation or unsuitability in the person before him which would not be consistent with the character that he has in mind, exercising thus the same fastidious choice as in the theme he treats.

Some painters who have since worked in the East on Scriptural subjects do not appear to have considered the gulf between the common men and women to be found in a degraded society and the great leaders of thought, whose lives were passed in an atmosphere of heavenly communion. The fact that Abraham was a nomad, that David was a shepherd, that Jesus was a carpenter, and that His first disciples were fishermen, makes it valuable for artists and authors to examine people following such occupations under the same sun, but seeing that it was not because the founders of the religion of the most advanced races were peasants that we want to know about them, the representation of uninspired peasants of this day will not satisfy a just thinker as the presentment of the leaders of men who are worshipped and loved. To take a homely example from the case of Bunyan; to represent him, it would not be enough, because he was a tinker, to ascertain the exact costume of such a mechanic in the time of Charles II., and to copy a modern tinker in a made-to-pattern dress. If this were done, be it ever so correctly, the

copy could not stand for the inspired dreamer, the patient enemy of worldly compromise, the martyr prisoner, and the steadfast truster in God. When historic painting is inspired by this servile spirit, it would have been better that the artist had used his ingenuity in making boots, coats, or tables.

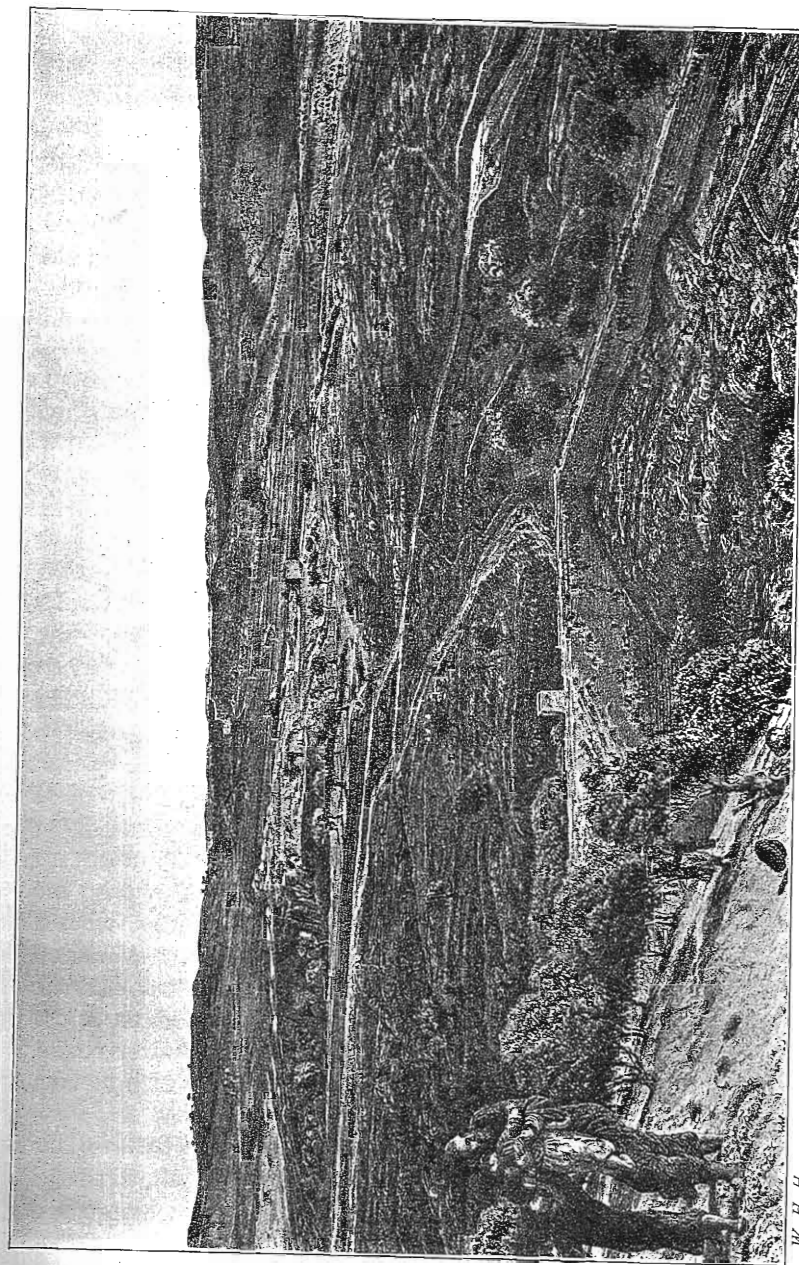
Warder Cressen was a Canadian who had left wife and family at home to come out and preach Christianity to the Jews. Not sufficiently fortified in his original Christian faith to triumph in his task, in a few months he became a proselyte to Judaism, and after invitation to his family to follow his example, renounced them and took a wife of the daughters of Judah. From him I obtained the opportunity of painting from his roof the cypresses in my picture. When I was at his house I found that the husband knew not one word of the language of his wife, and she none of his, so they talked in dumb show; this disability was perhaps a safeguard against contention. He had also been a helper in my dealings with the mercer, through means of his brother-in-law, who was related to this very unpunctual and dishonourable model, and now he served me greatly by obtaining from the master of the Synagogue the loan for a few hours of the silver crown of the law.

The Pasha, who had been courageous enough to allow *franghis* to enter the Mosque As Sakreh, was a Moslem of singularly open mind. He came to Jerusalem not only without a handsome number of wives, but without one. He soon conceived a cordial friendship for Baron Rosen, the Prussian Consul, and visited him as an intimate. The Consul, who was of courteous and gentle manner, appreciated the desire of the Pasha to understand the life of a European household, and welcomed him at all times.

The Pasha became specially interested in the household affairs which, without ceremony, Madame Rosen discharged in his presence. After awhile, in a confidential talk with the Consul, he avowed that the European system

of managing a house was distinctly to be preferred to that of the Oriental, in that dishonesty was completely checked in the servants; this he declared was truly excellent, but still he added, "There is one point I cannot understand; your wife effectually guards you from dishonest servants, but what check have you to prevent her from defrauding you herself?"

I had begun a water-colour drawing of the pool of Gihon, with the plain of Rephaim beyond, from outside the walls. In view of my forthcoming departure I now applied myself diligently to this landscape. I arrived at my place of work an hour or two before sunset; there was no servant at command who would not have been more trouble than help, so I carried my own materials. One day, when the wind was brisk enough to make me almost wish for an attendant who might have been of use to prevent my things from being scattered, the Armenian Patriarch came by on his mule, attended by a single runner. I could only give him a bowing salute. When he had passed, he pulled up, sending his man to ask me to speak with him; as my materials could not be left to the mercy of the winds, I was obliged to excuse myself with the request to be allowed to call at the Patriarchate the next day. Accompanied by a friendly interpreter, we were received in grand state in a large saloon. Relays of sweetmeats, coffee, and long pipes were served, and these ceremonies being over, the Patriarch explained that having heard of me and seen me painting about the city, he had thought that I might execute for his church a fresh picture of Sit Miriam and another of Issa Messiah, and also add to the number and restore some of the existing life-sized pictures of saints decorating the building. This was a tempting offer after my tedious work on a small scale; to have made use of good-looking Armenian models for large work in archaic yet bold spirit, to have painted the Patriarch himself, indeed, with handsome aureole, would have been a refreshing variation, but now long-con-



THE PLAIN OF REPHAIM FROM MOUNT ZION.

W. H. H.

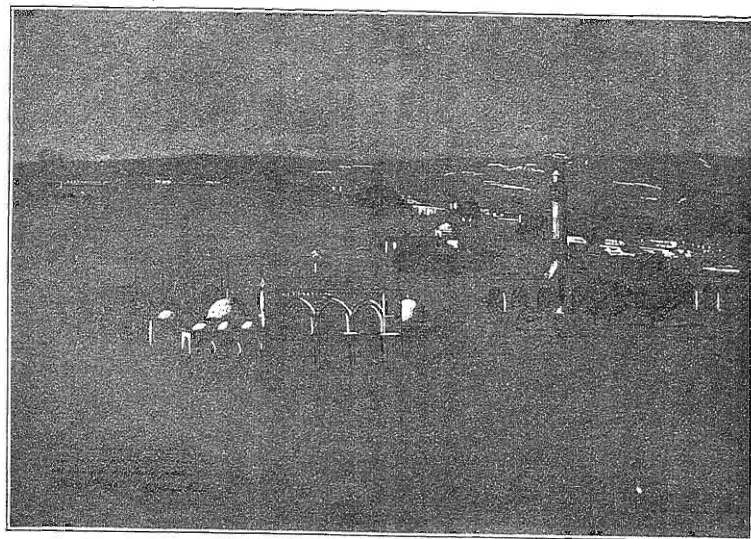
tinued worries were telling on my health, and it was growing late in the autumn for my journey to the Lebanon, so I replied that I had been away from England nearly two years, that my father and mother were counting upon my return, and that his Excellence would see that I could not now commit myself to a fresh task, but that it was my intention to return from England very shortly, and I would then offer myself for his service. The good old nonagenarian was very pressing that I should stay, and even offered to write to my father, but I was obliged to persist in my refusal.

My last work on the Temple picture was from slabs of the local limestone rock representing the pavement of the Court of the Temple polished by constant wear.

For near two years since landing in the East I had escaped fever. I had lived in unhealthy parts of the city, and spared my strength but little. My constitution had resisted all evils, and till the last few weeks acquaintances had wondered at my immunity, but now they assured me that I looked poorly, and it was not easy to affect indifference. Graham often went to Artass on Sunday mornings to perform the service, and one day I agreed to start with him. I rode moodily and slowly in his company, and arrived in such a chilly condition that while the service proceeded I lay outside in the heat of the sun. I could not join the family board when the meal came; tea was all I could put to my lips; as the sun shone on me afterwards, the iciness changed to violent burning, with a still more burdensome oppression in the head. I wondered whether I could sit my horse to return. It had become late, and desperation urged me to mount, then to hurry up the rugged slope, and gallop on all the flatter roads, until I arrived home and thankfully threw myself into bed, trusting I could sleep off my headache.

Next morning I found myself attacked by tertiary fever. On my convalescence the doctor advised that I should go on my journey for the benefit of change and fresh air as soon as possible.

A few days later, Graham, who knew everybody, told me that the Pasha's secretary, hearing of my strong desire to go alone into the Mosque, promised him that if I went that afternoon to his office he would secure me the opportunity. After the formalities of coffee and pipes had been gone through, I was passed on to the custodian of the Mosque, a tall, handsome man of about forty-five years of age. He was the descendant of the



FROM MOSQUE AS SAKREH.

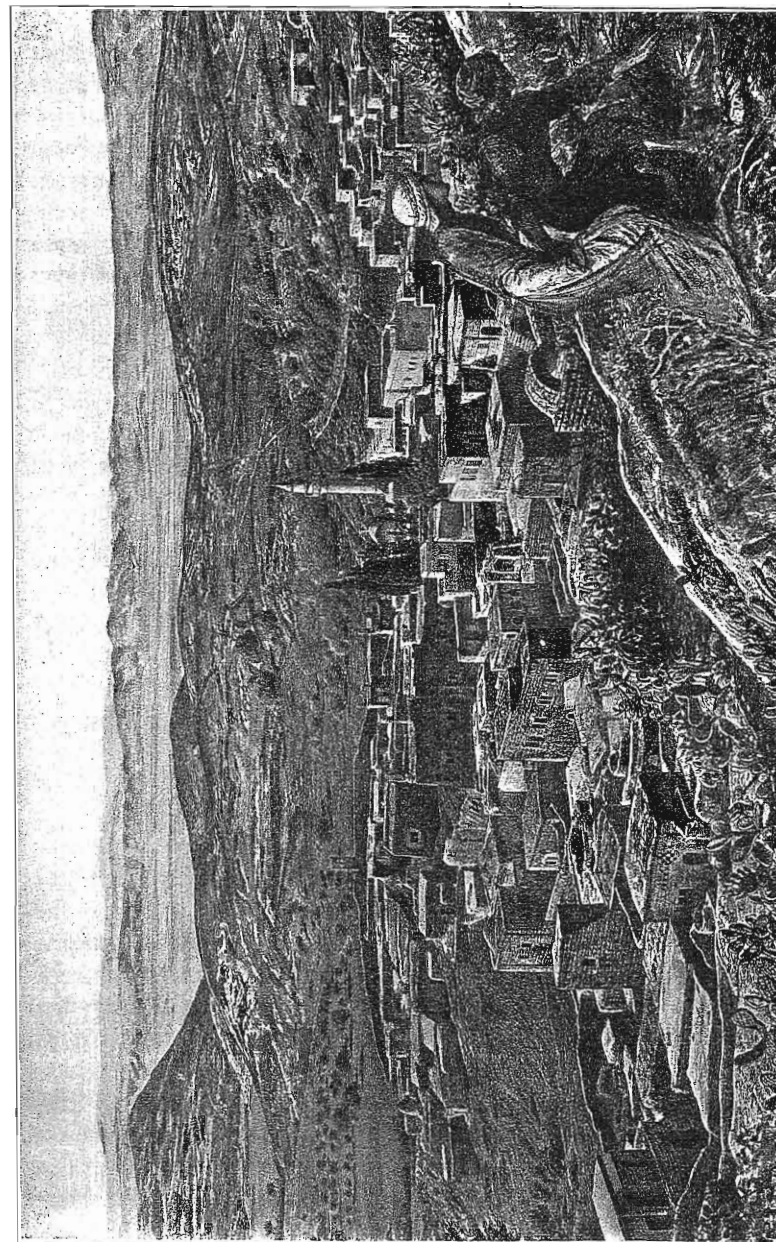
official appointed by the Caliph Omar; lately a placeman from Constantinople had arrived to supplant him, but the man in possession proved that not even the present head of the faithful could ever oust him or his sons, and the usurper went away discomfited.

The official led the way into the sacred enclosure, which looked more beautiful than before. It was a singular example of the Moslem's submissiveness to the inevitable that so few days after the faithful were eager to die to defend the Mosque from intrusion, this later visit

could be made without guards to protect me, although I was habited in English costume. When, however, having made a general round of the building, I revealed that my further wish was to ascend to the roof of As Sakreh and make a drawing, the guide looked uncomfortable, and declared that the key to the stairs was at a distance, and if I were seen alone I should be attacked. However, he gave way, and, shaded from the afternoon sun by the dome, I sat for an hour or so, making my map-like sketch of the walls and Scopas, and thus a victory over what had seemed an insuperable obstacle was achieved.

I had deferred a visit of thanks to the secretary, but the next day, when in the midst of the confusion of packing, an urgent message was brought by the Pasha's *karwas* that I should attend the Deewan at once. I took my sketch-book, and was received by the Pasha's factotum, who declared that he had expected me to give him a drawing of the Mosque, and now requested it. I explained that it was then impossible for me to do one, as I was on the point of departure from the city, whereupon he added that he had supposed I would make him a present of his own portrait. He was a funny little short-necked Assyrian in bastard Frank costume; at once I undertook a drawing of him. As I progressed, the mute servants about vainly endeavoured to hide their curiosity. In an hour the portrait was done, and he turned it about to see its resemblance and show some subtle beauties in it, only regretting that he could not be done a second time without his tarboosh.

It was on the 17th of October that I sent away my boxes to Oxford, with pictures and materials. In the afternoon I mounted my horse and left Jerusalem. Graham, who had suddenly resolved to accompany me as far as Nazareth, was the cause of a late start, but I was compensated by his company. Mr. Poole, a geologist visiting the country for the Sultan's informa-



NAZARETH.

W. H. H.

tion as to mining possibilities, also rode with us; his prime desire was to meet the Consul, who was somewhere away in the north.

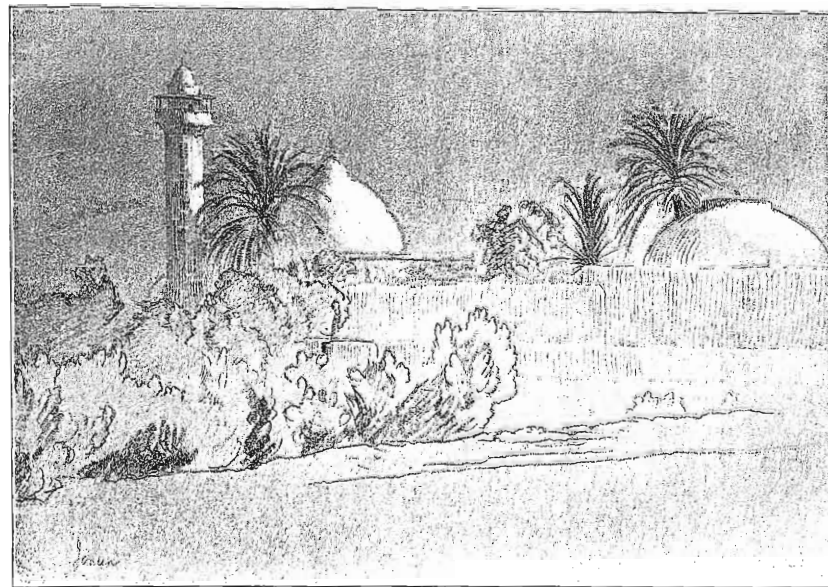
We passed through to Beera to pitch our tent, and thence we went on to Nablous and Nazareth, by way of Samaria and Jenin. On the stage from Jenin we were threatened by bedouin, who, however, wheeled off when we drew up with the sign of "ready." At the Galilean village, which is one of the few spots in Palestine to which English travellers accord the merit of beauty, which in my eyes in one way or the other every part of the country possesses, I was delayed long enough to undertake a large coloured drawing.

Mr. Poole had left us already, but Graham had fallen ill, and had wisely accepted the hospitality of a missionary and his wife, who were nursing him. For some days he grew worse, and I became anxious; in the meantime tidings arrived that Tiberias, which was to be my next station, was so scourged by cholera that all its inhabitants had left it. I told my friend that the news settled with me in the negative the question of his coming, but he threw off his malady, and against my urgent remonstrance persisted in accompanying me.

On the 26th we struck the tent early, but did not start till past three. We sent on the muleteer with the baggage direct, with orders to set the tent ready for our arrival. We could see him in the descending plain as we went up the ridge to Tabor; rich vegetation, rare on the tops of hills, here surged up around old walls and towers, and between gaps were distances of beauty, more intense for being so foregrounded. So evident is it that the whole summit had been occupied by a city at the time of the Saviour, that the legend connecting the Transfiguration with this mount only increases the number of doubtful sites in which authority, unsupported by internal evidence, claims faith.

When off my horse, and yet leading him in practicable places, I strove to get an outlook to the east. Clamber-

ing among rich tree growths, I reached a height where the old wall joined a fortification still undemolished enough to form, with the trunks and branches of trees, a frame to the eastern distance. Below the furthest horizon, amid amethystine variation of gradating tints like those of a prism spectrum, lay a mirror, oval and unbroken in border, which reflected the turquoise sky so perfectly that it looked



W. H. H.

JENIN.

like a portion of the heavens seen through the earth. It was the Sea of Galilee, the next haven of which I was in search.

I have read many books that speak of Palestine as in itself devoid of attraction, without beauty, and wearisome in its sterility. Several writers are undoubtedly moved by the desire to demonstrate the entire fulfilment of the curse with which it was threatened. As far as I could see, the actual curse dates only from the time that the

Turks entered into possession. From the landlord's point of view undoubtedly there is now much to deplore, for miles of the mountain tablelands are unproductive; but this is owing to the destruction of the cisterns, aqueducts, and the terraces on the slopes that kept up the soil. The trees are also rooted up and become fewer each year, owing to the imposition of a tax upon every one that grows, even before the three years needful to bring it to fruitfulness have expired, so that any unforeseen drain on the farmer's purse at once condemns the trees to be cut down and taken to the nearest market for firewood. But there is a beauty independent of fruitfulness, which perhaps it is too much to expect all to see, just as it is unreasonable to require the ordinary observer to appreciate the beauty of the proportions and lines of a human skeleton; and yet if the latter were placed in juxtaposition with the complete bones of an ourang-outang its grace could scarcely fail to be convincing. It is in this sense, with a hundredfold less strain upon natural prejudice, that Syria is intrinsically beautiful. The formation of the country, the spread of the plains, the rise of the hills, the lute-like lines of the mounts, all are exquisite; and with these fundamental merits there is often enough of vegetation to add the charm of life to the whole. It may be that pictures of Oriental landscape do not always satisfy high expectations of beauty; certainly faithful transcripts of landscape passages are often disappointing. This is accounted for by the fact that in a country of great range there is a variety and equipoise as the charmed spectator turns to left or right which does not exist in the limited picture.

I could have stood long looking at the scene which had burst upon me in such unexpected beauty, but the soldier reminded me of the length of the journey we had to make. Graham, with a photographer's keenness, was making independent research. I now asked the guide if it would be possible to get water to drink, and he took me to the spot where prepara-

tions were being made for the foundations of the three churches which were to be built, one to Moses, one to Elias, and one to Christ. We found Greek monks and a humble priest in charge, and after a little delay were supplied with a draught of clear water, whereupon I returned to my friend and forthwith descended into the eastern plain.

The country between Tabor and Tiberias is full of enthralling associations. The loss of the sun was never more regretted than when it sank behind me, the darkness grew, there was no moon, our way was rugged with rocks; our horses groped down and up deep wadies. The earth was so dim, and the sky was of such deep hue, that only the stars showed the whereabouts of the horizon. I was riding in advance when we came to an extended flat, and I was admiring Cassiopeia and the Great Bear, when my attention was caught by an animated talk going on between the guard and my friend's excellent servant, Issa Nicola. The guide was a soldier whom the *Metsellim* of Nazareth had urged us to take, and he was of course a Moslem.

"I did not know the *franghis* were Mahomedans," said the guide.

"Neither are they," said Issa.

"But your masters are," the soldier argued.

"What are you talking about?" shouted Issa, all of his feeling of possessorship in us being outraged.

"Well," added the other, "I don't know for certain about the elder one, but that the younger is a Moslem I am sure."

"He's no such thing," said Issa; "he has lived in Jerusalem for a year and a half, and he is a Christian, I tell you."

But the guide was not to be silenced thus. "He's not a Christian, that's very clear, and I'll tell you why I know. On the top of Tabor, when we were going about, he became thirsty and asked me if I could find some water. I took him to where the builders are; a priest

received us, and while waiting he produced a small crucifix carved out of the stone found there. The Khowagha took it, turned it over, peering at it closely all round, and then handed it back, thanking the priest. The latter urged him to keep it; but the Englishman firmly refused, saying he did not want it. Now had he been a Christian you know very well that he would have kissed it first, and then muttered some prayers and put it in his bosom."

"You are quite mistaken," said Issa. "He is a Protestant; Protestants don't have idols or crosses in their churches, and do not carry crucifixes on their breasts. Their churches are empty of images, and they kneel only towards the east, and in their houses they pray only to the unseen God."

"Well, that's just what I say," summed up the soldier; "he is a Moslem. 'Protestant' is, I see, another name for the same religion."

The discussion did not end at this point, but it went off into tiresome details which I ceased to follow. The act from which the trooper had drawn conclusions as to my creed had been performed from dread of overloading myself with trifles.

The only variation in the scene before us was in the gradual uprising of the stars, except when the level plain had some break in it, which our horses could understand better than ourselves, and then we left them more than ever to their own guidance. It had taken so much longer than I had calculated to reach the last descent, that I was feeling weary at the monotony of the journey, until gradually it was possible to distinguish changes of form in the objects in the near foreground. A few hundred more paces we were on the brink of a deep precipice; and there below the horizon in the gloom floated what might have been taken for a cloud, but that a solitary fire far away on the mountain land beyond and a nearer flame were reflected deep into its surface. This was again the Sea of Galilee.

We dismounted and trod down the steep and rugged road, holding the bridles so that the horses should have an easy and deliberate choice of foothold. The descent was exceedingly irksome, the more so as I had scarcely slept the night before; but my fear was that my companion would be overtaxed in the incessant manœuvring to wind down the headlong path in such manner that the beast should not fall over upon him.

It must have been more than the depth of Shakespeare's Cliff ere we found a midway tableland fit for our horses. When we had remounted and advanced a few yards, we felt ourselves suddenly confronted and surrounded. To our challenge, a speaker in disarming voice told us that Tiberias was so afflicted with cholera that it was deserted. Most of the residents had gone to Safid; but the very poor came up and slept around the well each night. They added that our muleteers had passed soon after sunset, and had gone forward to prepare our tents for us. We gave them a few coins in return for water, and went on wishing more than ceremonious peace to them.

A further descent brought us to the slope on which Antipas built his imperial city. When within sight of the towers we called out for our muleteer, and found that he had chosen to pitch the tents in the burial-ground close to the walls of the pestilence-stricken city. We made him move them to a place above the town, where we settled for the night, and took our meal of eggs, bread, and tea. My friend was unusually docile, and retired to bed early. I stayed and watched the slowly increasing glow above the mountain horizon and the brightening waters below. Suddenly a spot of flame-like brightness arose beyond the far mountain line, steadily growing into the burnished circle of the moon. As it ascended, a path was spread across the lake below, and what had been ere-while blank and dead became a pulsating and breathing world.

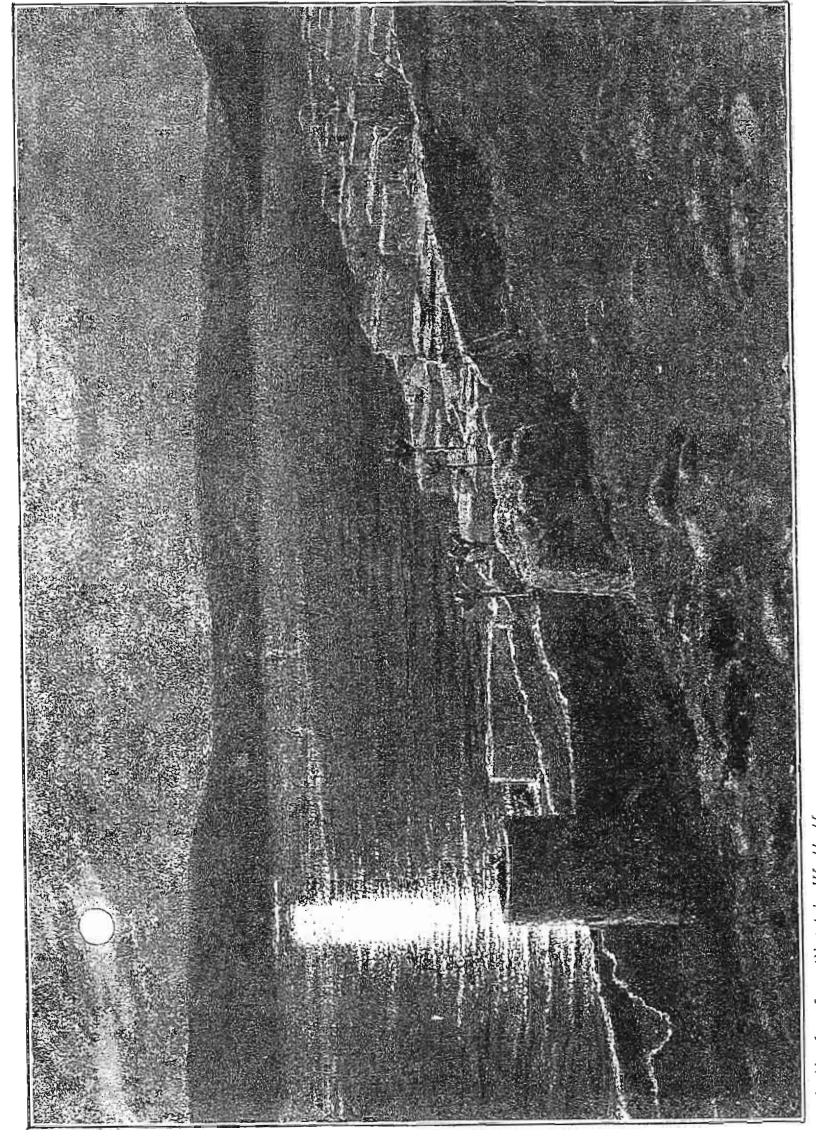
I bless my soul now that I beheld that lovely scene. I shut my eyelids, and can see the creeping waters with the

ladder of molten fire. I can count again its miles by the mark of currents and wisps of wind that fretted its surface. The waters labour, they travail, from the gloom they crawl and creep into the ray of glory, and then pass again into obscure repose.

I went out to see the lake from other points. The town sloped down steeply into the waves. Even by the moon's light the walls and towers could be seen to have great fissures in them, caused, as I learnt, by the earthquake of 1837, and no light of any kind was seen within the city. It might indeed have been regarded as belonging to a people who, like to those of Nineveh, left the world centuries ago.

Returning and seeing how important it was not to disturb my worn-out comrade, I decided against the attempt then to represent that moon enthroned among the stars and all they shone upon, but quietly lay down on my trestle-bed, having so arranged the tent door that I could see the lake. As I looked the sweet composure of rocked babyhood came back to me, and so I fell asleep.

The sun was nearly on the horizon before we were willing to stir, and then special considerations induced us to give up the swim in the lake which we had promised ourselves. The conditions of our situation were favourable in that there was a complete absence of bedouin. They had all fled, and we were free to go anywhere. In my saunter before breakfast I climbed up the broken masonry of a tower to overlook the city. All was stillness till, turning my gaze around to the burial field, I observed two men rise up from a finished task and make for a southern gate. They were traceable through the rectangular streets till they entered the door of a house. After a short while they reappeared in some way encumbered with a burden. They had converted a bed into a bier, and this they carried back to the graveyard, two others the while crossing them on a similar errand. As I stood a man came close to me, and I asked how many people remained in the town.



A. Hughes, from Sketch by W. H. H.

LAKE OF TIBERIAS.

"None alive," he replied; "the yellow wind has eaten them all," and there was the look on him of helpless submission which Defoe describes so well.

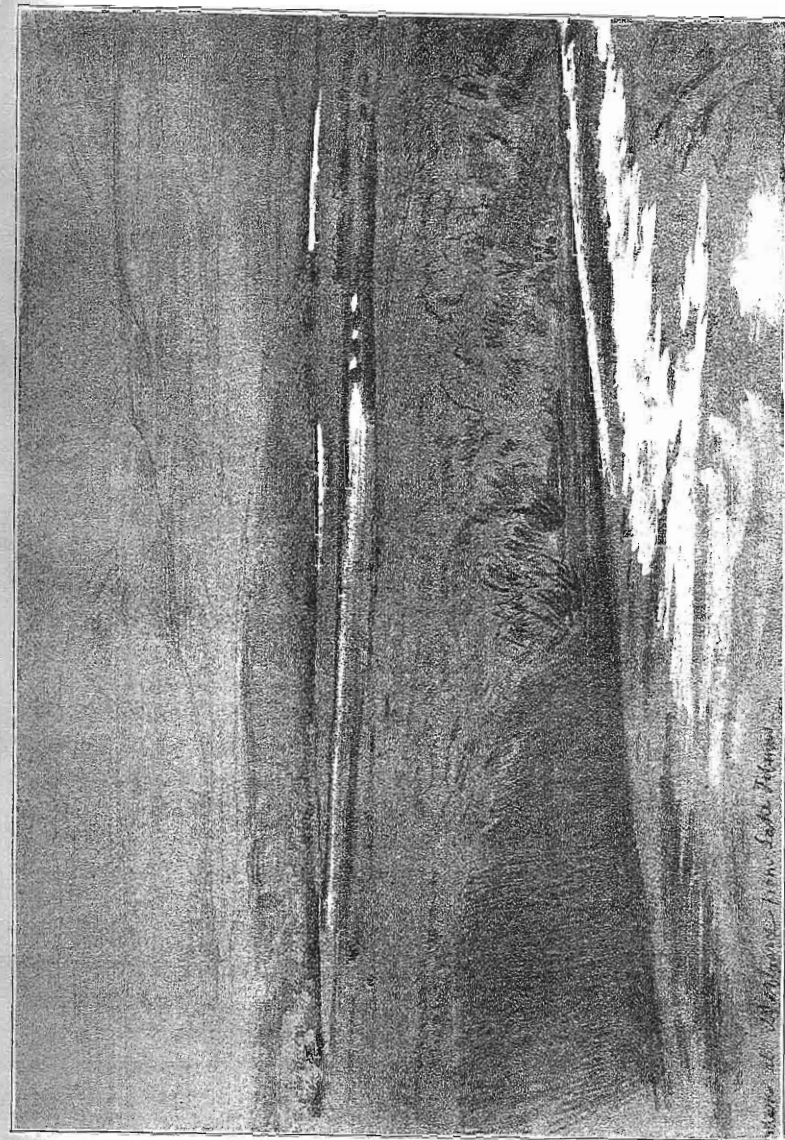
"The yellow wind?" I repeated. "Can you smell it?"

"Can you not?" he inquired, and I could realise that since the sun had risen there had been a peculiar musty scent.

From where I stood the whole of the shores of the lake could be traced. I wished to see the country of the Gadarenes, but I could not make out any violently steep place. On the right there were the heights of Migdol; turning north, I saw the entrance of the Jordan, with all the spread of the land to west and east, where the sacred Life was spent and the patient training of the disciples conducted. Miracles could only have convincing value to onlookers, but the words of love and peace uttered by the great Alleviator of sorrows still perform miracles before our eyes, slowly though this be.

I descended from my post of reflection to find that breakfast was scanty, for no eggs could be bought, and the prospects for dinner were very bad. We wanted to make the most of the day, and told Issa that we should be satisfied with whatever he could get; and then abandoning for the nonce an outline drawing which I had begun, we rode to the south, past the burial-ground and the thermal baths of Herod, and gained the very outlet of the Jordan, where we prowled about, my friend photographing while I sketched. As I was sketching, we discovered that we had attracted the attention of Arabs on the eastern side, and that a party was moving down towards us. We had no motive for prolonging our stay, so we remounted and rode back to camp.

Here we were received with more apologies than food for dinner, and with flat rebellion from the muleteers. The *mukary* said if we liked to be eaten up by the yellow wind we could, but that for his part he must and would leave the place that night. We pointed out that a true



JORDAN FROM LAKE TIBERIAS.

W. H. H.

Mahomedan ought to be more resigned, but the utmost we could get from him was the concession of an hour for eating and consultation. Graham again was compelled to prolong his journey, for not an animal of any kind could be got to carry back his camera, and so we were unexpectedly travelling together for a further stage.

When remounted I never felt less disposed to be lively. We had still an hour's sunshine and the whole scene was one of sweet repose. I tried to divert thought from the chilly quiver that shook my frame. "Let us have a good scamper," I said to my friend.

"Agreed," he replied merrily. Every one who had seen him on horseback knew what to ride like a centaur must be, and he had a good white steed. Away my horse went too; never did I less enjoy a ride when starting—it was difficult to avoid toppling over—but as action warmed my blood the evil vein lessened, and we reined in at the distance of two miles with all my chilliness gone.

A novel scene made me slacken pace. Between us and the lake was a large field of ripe corn, and at intervals of about two hundred yards stages were erected. On each platform was a man nearly or entirely nude, standing on the alert with a sling, and with this he aimed at all birds which attempted to alight within reach. I reserved it as a subject for a statue in the future, but ere I could get the opportunity, Leighton had seen the same incident in Nubia, and made it the theme of one of his admirable pictures. I have failed to discover any reference to this custom in the Bible.

Happily it was still quite light when we reached the spring of Capernaum. There was no room for disappointment in looking into its bubbling waters, which were clear as crystal, engemming the pebbles which flickered below, and harbouring shoals of sheeny fish, while around grew beautiful flowers and luscious fruit. It was a worthy emblem of the spiritual spring of life, which had its source in this region. Generations had been refreshed by it as

they rested in going on their journey; the fountain, in truth, was indeed a paragon of purity. Josephus in his legend of its underground communication with Egypt, and of Egypt's fish swimming in its waters, testifies to the marvellous feeling which it inspires.

Capernaum was nigh this spot, and the ground was covered with high growths, but we had no time to search for ruins; turning our faces from the plain, we were soon overtaken by sundown and gloom, not, however, before we had seen some remarkable caves with Gothic-like openings in the chasm below. I had only temporarily got over my pain, and could not, during the long dark climb up to Safid, forget my discomfort, nor the conviction that had I stayed another hour at Tiberias I should have been plague-stricken. I did not recover altogether for six weeks, not indeed till I had landed at Marseilles.

On going forth from the tent the next morning, I was surprised to see how the altitude of the level we had reached dominated all the land we had passed through. It was indeed the "city built on a hill." Tabor was far beneath the horizon, all was below us as it might have been from a balloon, and nearly every tract seemed as sterile as the face of the moon. To the north the view was less open.

Here Graham and I had our last breakfast together; he was to go across to Khaifa to catch the steamer, while I was to take on his servant Issa with me to the Lebanon, and to send him back from Beyrout. Before we ate our breakfast the tent was struck that we might have a long day for our journey; but my friend went away to get money changed, not returning till about two o'clock with ardent apologies. We exchanged parting words, while a crowd stood by watching us with great interest. We had travelled much together in the last year and a half, and as I shook hands with James Graham, I felt more than I was able to speak.