

CHAPTER III

1855-1856

The eye sees what it brings with it the power to see.

Without eyesight indeed the task might be hard. The blind or purblind man travels from Dan to Beersheeba and finds it all barren.
—CARLYLE.

PURSUING my solitary way, there seemed at first nothing to distract moodiness, and I rode on, taking stock of the thoughts I had gathered in Syria, of the friends I had made there, and of the work I had done, and this led me into a reverie about my many much-loved friends at home. I was awakened from this at the edge of a precipitous cliff; for I had again come to the ravine which divides the whole tableland of Syria and Moab, making the gulf which reaches from the north to the south, and I had here to descend the western brink.

I had never divined till then one use of a pack animal's tail. The heavily laden mule had to drop its fore-feet over so deep a step that its centre of gravity was in peril; a counterpoise was therefore urgently needed. The muleteer then removed from the load his choice hubble-bubble, and with his disengaged hand took a firm grip of the mule's tail. The animal, appreciating this attention, then felt its way to the very verge of the cliff, while the muleteer sloped back to the most oblique possible line, and the well-trained brute cautiously advanced his hoofs and then slipped both over the edge at the same

moment: he had dropped about a foot. Great skill was needed on the part of the mule and the master to enable the former to turn aside in the direction of the escalier track and leave space for the descent of the hind-legs; all this time the man held on until he was convinced that the animal had recovered his equilibrium without further ballasting.

Notwithstanding all the art used, it seemed a marvel when the leading beast manœuvred successfully to turn himself and advance out of the way of the others; and when these in order all managed to escape overbalancing, and disappearing from further service, we alighted from the risky descent on to a safe slope where we had no longer to watch our footsteps. I looked forward and saw the whole height of Hermon from its base to its snow-mantled apex. At its feet lay the lake of Merom and the Jordan-divided plain, the water everywhere reflecting the varying hues of the mountain from snowy height to verdured base lit by the enriching sun. To the north, raised up above the rounded heights which stood between us and Damascus, was the targe of Anti-Lebanon, amethystine and cerulean. It extended its chord-like musical accompaniment, making itself a background whenever there was an opening in the nearer hills. Turning again towards the east, each moment new perfections revealed themselves. The freshness of the borders of the hidden Jordan and of the meadows about the eastern coasts of the lake were all rendered ethereal by the clear eventide air, and on the incline raised up towards us was a large tract of Indian corn ready for the harvest. I hung behind to revel in the intense delectability of the scene, and when my company of dark mules and men in rich brown costumes with deep crimson tarbooshes passed in procession against the enchanting distance, I longed to have a friend at hand whom I could make a participant in my enjoyment. Seeing Issa, and thinking that he deserved to have his attention awakened to the intoxicating fascinations of the view which he was passing in a

perfectly impassive mood, I beckoned to him. "O Issa," I exclaimed, "men often fail to observe how beautiful God's works are, but I will not let you pass the heavenly vision in front of us without charging you to look upon it! It will not last long, the sun will soon pass away, and perhaps we shall never be here again. Look! does it not seem as though at last all the wondrous powers of creation have met together in this spot of earth, to show at one moment how transcendent is the loveliness of the world? How worthy the view might be of some region of heaven! Think how all the angels may have brought each his most precious contribution in order to make this noble picture! See how the firmament above us is sapphire, and how it melts into topaz and to amber behind the mountain line; and then the mountain itself is clear lapis lazuli, infused by the sun into ruby and fire, except where the milky snow, whiter than any fuller could whiten it, glows in the sun and intensifies every other gem. See how in the plain the water borders appear enamelled with emeralds, how the water is very jasper, and all the preciousness above is dropped molten into it, and the diamond stream of the Jordan carries its burden of colour along. Regard too the glory of these golden fields in front. Turn now and see the Tyrian purple in that broad tiara of Lebanon; and then, in front of all, how rich and grand are the deep colours of the muleteers, and see how much more celestial the hues beyond appear from the harmonious contrast." I dropped my hands in their idolatrous worship, adding, "Bless your stars, O Issa, as I do mine, that you have been permitted thus to see the effulgence of the gods!"

As he turned his eyes from scrutiny of my face he looked almost angry; with his not very long sight, he blinked at the landscape far and near. When he turned to me again it was to say, "Ya, Khowagha, if you went close up to the different things, you would find they were only rock, and dirt, and water, with common maize and trees."

I did not take so long as he had done to realise the

situation, and I said resignedly, "Yes! yes! I am a madman." And he was proud that he had converted me.

He went on, and henceforth I hugged my enjoyment to my own bosom. Every turn in the road was a fresh bar in the melody, and it subsided only when an ashen twilight invaded the scene. Issa's triumph over me had made him markedly reserved and haughty in temper for the remainder of the day. How difficult it is for a trespasser to reingratiate himself with an offended critic! The journey which we had contemplated to Baniyas was too long for our half-day. As we came near the waters of Melhaha, we descried a party of horsemen in the distance coming towards us. We waited therefore before settling ourselves, but all apprehension was at rest when we could make out that they wore European dress. They proved to be two Americans on their way to Jerusalem, and we were both camping at the same spot. Before my tent received its furniture and bedding, I took the precaution to turn over the stones, and discovered eight scorpions, which I had to turn out, with what was unpardonable tyranny, according to the benevolent theory that foreigners should never dispossess natives.

Waking betimes, I heard enough overhead to make me certain that the pond near us must be the resort of wild-fowl, and I sallied forth while it was still dark to secure some for our often monotonous cuisine. It needed but little skill to shoot them as they flew up, but some fell into the water and I had to take trouble to get them. I came back rejoicing in the acquisition, and thinking somewhat that this evidence of practical sense would negative the unfavourable impression I had made upon Issa yesterday. I told him we would take some of the ducks to Mr. Wurtabett, upon whom I had promised to call at Hasbeya. It was easy to see that Issa was not in good humour, but for what reason I thought it needless to inquire. After breakfast I ventured to refer to the subject, but he made it evident that he had more pressing

matters to attend to, and I did not see any special reason for deciding how many birds we wanted, and how many would remain to give away, but when all was packed I asked what he had done with the birds.

"I have thrown them away," he said.

"Why?" I inquired.

"Why?" he returned. "Of what use are they?"

"They are simply of use for eating," was my response.

"We are not heathen; no Christians could eat animals whose blood had not been allowed to pour into the ground, for the blood is the life, and it is forbidden to eat the blood. You should have cut the heads off, and allowed the life to escape."

But, wishing to discover whether in the Oriental mind the phrase "the blood is the life" was an allowance that all animals have souls, I objected, "You are treating a Mosaic ordinance as though Christianity had never been adopted by the outside world. We in England pay no regard whatever to the law you quote."

It was an unfortunate admission. His temper mounted to his face; he could scarcely find words, but at last he spoke like a passionate child. "Then I deny that you *are* Christians, and we Christians repudiate such sectarians."

I pleaded that he must not take me as an authority on the Western creed. I suggested that he should find the birds and bring them with us to the Syrian convert, who was a clergyman of the English Church, and who should decide whether such food was forbidden. Accordingly Issa was prevailed upon, sulkily enough certainly, to recover the birds, and accompany me in a gallop after the mules, which had meanwhile been getting forward on the road to Cæsarea-Philippi.

O knight-errantry, how delightful are thy variations! Our stage that day was a short one, and before mid-day we came to the approaches of the city which has such enchantment of Pagan and Christian history connected with it. First lay in our steps the outside arms of the

Jordan, the deep shores fringed with shrubs and luxuriant plants, so much so that in many parts from a distance there were no other traces of the stream than indicated by this thick border. My horse led the way through this outer belt, and plunged down, standing thrilled throughout his whole frame (as horses will when first in a journey they dash into a bracing stream); settled thus adept, he played with tossing head and curled lip, splashing about the water many times ere he thrust his nose in to drink his fill. With arms free, I gathered a long blossoming bough of oleander and saved some ripe seed for Millais' mother, who had now left Gower Street for a cottage and garden at Kingston. The rivulets were many, and always delightful to ford. Soon we reached an ancient bridge over deeper runnings. The old pavement and parapet still remained, and farther on we came upon links of an aqueduct of sculptured marble. We were entering Cæsarea-Philippi at this point. The sparkling water was flowing through the marble channel, and at every opening welling over and tumbling about among carved ornaments, and varnishing them into exquisite finish and richness that gave such delight as no one could conceive who had not lived for seasons in arid regions. Having chosen a camping-place, I wandered about on foot, the better to trace the nature of the remains. Ascending one hundred paces a steep mound of earth decked with rich growth, my feet came abruptly to a cliff. Looking down there was a wall of perfect architectural work, descending fifty feet into the stream below. Seeing how much lay buried, I thought of the statue of Christ curing the poor woman, which Eusebius said the pagans had erected in this city, and which he declared still stood here in his day, to celebrate the miracle performed in the neighbourhood, as the act of a God come down from heaven; and although there is reason for concluding that whatever the group represented, it was destroyed by Moslems, I thought what a splendid field there was for some one to explore, when the Turk could be made to withhold his dog-in-the-manger hindrance

to intelligent research. It has still to be done, and it is more needful than ever that such remains as may exist here and there should be exhumed and compared, for with many pieces of the puzzle already in hand we are liable to form wrong conclusions as to the whole pattern.

The cave of Pan was a worthy cradle for even a river of such interest as the Jordan, and the old name Panius recommended itself to my ears as that of the city rather than that given by Herod in honour of Augustus Cæsar.

Our peace at Banias was soon disturbed by anxiety about a stranger whom we had taken under our care, a poor boy of about thirteen, whom I had first observed as an addition to our train on leaving Nablous. I agreed to his continuance with us, seeing no reason to distrust his story that he was returning from Jerusalem to his widowed mother at Damascus, from which city he had been tempted to accompany the soldiers by the story that the streets of Jerusalem were paved with gold, and the holy edifices built of priceless jewels. Having found the report a delusion, and having fared very badly, like the prodigal son of old he had determined to return home. On the journey to Nablous his hardships had been so unbearable that the chance of our protection on the road, which Issa, subject to my approval, had promised, had been eagerly accepted.

While Issa and I had been discussing the question of the ducks, we had concluded that the boy had gone on with the muleteers, while they surmised that he was with us, but when all was in order at our encampment at Banias, we learned that he had been last seen by the baggage party loitering as if for our company. Thus he had been missed by both. We sent out scouts for him, and late in the day he was brought in. He had not seen us till we were galloping far out of reach, and then he had lost his way; he climbed up the mountain-side to see the road, and there, hungry and disheartened, he had sat and wept. He came down in so timid a mood that, seeing

our searchers about, he had at first hidden himself, but from his lair had fortunately been able to distinguish the *mukary* and his man, and so he was brought in on the donkey.

During this journey I had as usual relied for protection only upon the gun and revolver I carried myself; to have supplied weapons to any other of the party would have been doubly foolish, as at all times Arab servants handle them so clumsily that no fellow-traveller is safe, and in case of attack the first idea they act upon is for their own safety to deliver up their arms to the enemy. At the slow pace necessary for the protection of the baggage I had found it a relief to get off and walk, and then I wandered about after fowls of the air and any small deer of incautious nature. Seeing the boy footsore, I allowed him to take my place in the empty saddle, but the ignoble creation which bars brotherly love in the East between *franghis* and natives soon provoked exclusiveness, and forced me for the last day or two to leave the boy to walk.

A truly extraordinary contrast it was to see the notion possessed by the modern dwellers in the place and that of their historic predecessors. In the centre of the remains of the palatial city the swamp produced stalwart reeds, and the descendants of the dwellers in marble palaces chose these as posts for their habitations. About fifteen feet from above the surface of the water was constructed a stage secured on four brakes with cane-woven sides to it, and a covering attached likewise above; into this nest the family climbed up the poles. At such an elevation they were saved from the attack of wild beasts or noxious reptiles, the children needed no rocking night or day, for the wind was a constant nurse, and yet the population did not seem numerous, for I saw evidence of only three or four families. These few people are certainly not the only descendants of the once populous place, and the question arises where the children of the ancient dwellers in this city, as also of others once thickly crowded, shall be looked for.

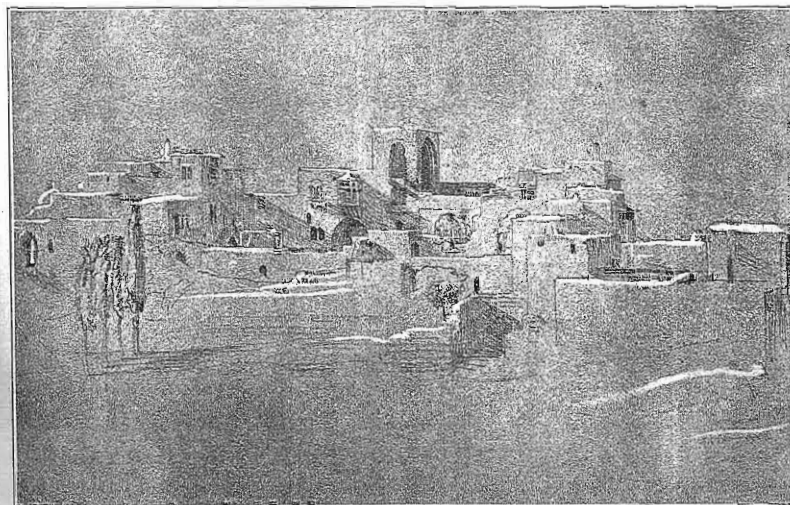
It was now the latter part of November, the days closed early and the nights became chilly. After supper I set myself to scribbling in my tent; on concluding I noticed that the company outside had ceased in their often long-continued chatter and hubble-bubbling; I then, as quietly as possible, disrobed myself, and as usual, in getting under my blankets, I arranged my gun with the stock between my legs, and the barrels under my head on the pillow. When the light was out I was thinking over the marvels of the place, and, with the snoring of the men around their fire, I fancied there was some altogether distinct noise of a shuffling movement. I then raised myself noiselessly to peer between the top of the skirt and the frill of the roof of my tent. Within two feet of me was a great hyena, astride of a slumbering man, with nozzle bent down touching the sleeper's open lips, and at the moment, the beast drew in his breath, eager as a hungry babe and loud as Behemoth; the man only turned. Dashing out of the tent with less stealthiness than impatience I disturbed the foul animal, which trundled along out of the fire-glow, fast as he could move, to where other denizens of the wilds were ramping scared by our fire from nearer approach. The report of my gun changed all into wakefulness for five minutes, for after the echoes came the questionings of birds, beasts, and men. The hyena had escaped, leaving his crimson trail on the ground, and we returned to sleep with renewed confidence against molestation.

The next day we went along by the upper branch of the Jordan to Hasbeya. We had on our left the mount "Al Ferdous"—that is to say, "Paradise"; why so named, could not be guessed, unless it be that it seemed forbidden to the hungry or thirsty sons of Adam, and that in its perfectly barren way it was beautiful, being unjagged in form, and spotless and pure in tint of its virgin rock.

Issa had escaped further argument over the continuity of the Mosaic prohibition respecting the ducks, by losing them from his saddle on our scrambling ride from

Melhaha. It was no trouble to me to be saved further discussion on the matter, as his master, from his connection with the Jewish Mission, would not wish to have raised unpleasant prejudices on the part of the natives against European latitudinarianism in religious principles.

While taking my walks in Hasbeya, I was surprised at finding sculptured relief representing animals (camels and, I think, elephants) above the door of the principal palace



W. H. H.

HASBEYA.

in the great piazza. While I stood speculating as to its origin, the muezzin priest came down from the minaret and joined me. I asked him as to its builders, and to my surprise he said at once that the founders of the Moslem family then living in the palace had erected it, and placed the sculptured decoration there. I objected that in Syria there was no known instance of Moslems representing animals in ornamentation, that it was only in Persia and Morocco that earlier artistic instincts had made Mohammed's caution against the representations of living beings not an

absolute interdiction; but he evidently did not know enough of Mahomedan dogma to understand the point, and I found that he had never suspected there could be any doubt that a building which was the pride of the place, could have been raised by other than people of his own religion. His warmth convinced me that it was not well to push inquiry further. Beyond question the building was of crusading origin.

In the north about Damascus I knew that Moslem intolerance was then even less checked than in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, but I little suspected that I had now entered upon ground where in three years more any who would not abjure Christ would be treated as their predecessors had been in the days of the first Conquest.

On the mountains beyond when encamped on the height at Dahr al Akmar the cold was so wintry that the chance of getting over Lebanon to the cedars seemed precarious. From this point towards the metropolis of the ancient kingdom of Syria our descent was made in the face of a gritty and frozen wind which was very discomfiting. The next stage was a short and descending one into the plain; the ground about was cultivated as gardens, the trees were full and even massive, the water flowed with royal largess over the road, even a landlord ought to have been satisfied with the nature of the plain. As an artist, I was disappointed. No mass of buildings showed above the line of the city wall, and having the designs for Tennyson's poems already in consideration, I had counted upon finding some delightful external views of the city appropriate. I came to the entrance of the "Street called straight," and inside all was rich with unexpected surprises. Economy and further experience in nomadic life were matters of importance, so I had determined to go to the khan, but when I saw the apartments available, I turned to the hotel, which after three weeks of wild tent life was truly luxurious. My bedroom was beautifully embellished with arabesque design; every rafter was artistically decorated

and harmoniously coloured. I loitered some time admiring all, lingered on the roof and in the courtyard, and then I had to get money for Issa and the muleteers.

Soon I came into pleasant contact with the Consul-General—afterwards Sir Henry Wood—who was full of information and anecdote; he was at the time engaged in enrolling recruits for the Bashi-Bazouk service in the Crimea; each man on being passed at Constantinople received a handsome number of English sovereigns, and was then consigned to General Pearson. That all Orientals look alike is only true, as it is with sheep, to the unpractised eye. Mr. Wood was not easily deceived, and had recognised among new recruits, notwithstanding a fuller skin, several whom he had sent on only two months before. On writing to apprise the authorities at Stamboul, it transpired that the Consul's letter first awakened attention to the fact of a desertion which on further examination proved to be quite general. Our interview being ended, Consul Wood went off to measure six hundred mules destined for the Crimea.

I was too much pressed for time to take any but mental impressions of this ancient and most picturesque city: lying away from any line of road frequented by Europeans in that day, it had escaped the rage for improvements and remained richer in orientalisms than any other town I had seen; but I heard that two French silk mills had recently been opened in the neighbourhood, and already, as was seen in the market, the superb traditional patterns, exquisite in design and gorgeously harmonious in colour, were stricken and doomed: for, either from the idea that superiority in mechanics is supposed to be accompanied by greater excellence in taste, or from the greater attractiveness of meretricious design as seen in the barbarous gimcracks of Europe, the new produce was and is preferred to the old. The lowness of my purse would not allow me to make many purchases of rare things, and I did but roam about, indulging my staring propensities for four days, denying myself all time-taxing work.

Of the Moslem boy and his mother we never heard after he left us at the gates to find his home. Years later, I trust he said some words of expostulation to his fellows engaged in the massacre, and that at least he did not forget that he had been helped in the hour of distress by an infidel.

After I had paid my bill, in which attendance was heavily charged for, the landlord's brother and others pestered me so effectively for additional *backshish* that I found when I had left that I had been fleeced even beyond measure. Winding up the western mountains and looking back at the town, I was surprised to find that pictorially the prospect appeared less an earnest of the perfect heaven than the prophet Mohammed had found it. The plain was full of fruitfulness, with signs of having been the home of prosperous and happy men for periods long enough to leave their mark upon it, but being flat, it was as a map looked down upon, and withal scarcely coloured, for it chanced this morning that a thick haze turned all to grey. Proceeding beyond view of this backward region, our road opened towards mountains to right and left, and introduced an undulating landscape richly hued, the sky on which the distant hills were painted lay streaked softly with creamy films; while over this and the azure, floated shallop-shaped clouds as firmly modelled as the violet hills away. Further on we went through fields of rich earth, but herbless and dry. Afar were whirlwinds stirring the still air, and eagles circling about the heights. Gradually we were led into a winding valley thick with trees, whose tremulous leaves the winter's breath had tinted amber pale and deep, and these against the cerulean sky formed a design which for arrangement was reminiscent of Persian decoration. Below were busy brooks winding among groups of grateful bushes. Our steps were then for a time on the banks of a stream which lent its own bed for our feet when from steepness or overgrowth the sides were impracticable. The near and distant landscape were sweetness to my mind. Towards the afternoon we came to rugged passes of rock



W. Holman Hunt, pinx.

Swan Electric Engraving Co. sc.

Amaryllis.

and mountain torrent, grand as ideal gorge in childhood's fancy. One cliff was breast high in its fallen fragments, and the stream beneath tossed about unbridled like a masterful horse ; it had evidently not forgotten a wild leap it had recently made, the place of which we soon reached, where all the tumbling tan-coloured waters fell and swirled, marbled in dancing foam ; it was spanned by a fragile bridge, and going over this narrow road we had to study our steps to avoid the hole where the key-stones had dropped into the watery bed below.

It was a delight as we came to a partial opening in the hills to see more closely the tiara of high cliffs which we had gazed on from the slope of Merom. Here the highest crest of Anti-Lebanon was ranged along a continuing wall, jagged into sharp facets, now looking as though the primeval violence which had riven the eastern mountains from Lebanon had only occurred yesterday. Time's softening hand had no power over it. Under shadow of dark clouds we descended round a mountain to our left into the broad plain of Baalbec.

Ours was the road taken by the fugitive Christians who refused to the Arab conqueror Khalid abu al Walid either apostasy or submission. Abu Obeidah had given them with their young and invalids three days' grace to get out of reach of the malice of Walid, the superseded commander of the Moslem army. When they were reposing on the way to Constantinople and rejoicing in the assurance of safety, Walid, guided by an apostate on a shepherd's path across the mountains, came upon them, and slaughtered all, the betrothed of the apostate refusing his final offer of protection.

At night we camped at Zebedeem, in the front garden of a small stone cottage such as might have been found in Wales or Scotland. I was still unwell, and slept but little in the rainy night, starting often out of bed from fear that we should be too late for an early departure. In the dawn a final fall of rain drenched my tent, and while it was being packed I went inside the cottage,

where I found all the inmates shivering round a hearth fire.

Once started we kept close to a small stream for three hours, and then ascended a slope of Anti-Lebanon. Now, instead of looking up to heights, our prospect was of lower levels shut in by indigo mountains, the upper line jagged against dazzling snow clouds, the bases cut off by rolling plains, as I have seen the foundations of distant cliffs eclipsed from the low deck of a yacht, after a heavy storm.

I could not stop to make more than mental sketches, for the winter was coming apace from the north to take possession of Lebanon, and to bar its road ere I could ascend. With increased means, better health, and corresponding leisure, I promised myself to take advantage of my present investigation by returning to work in this neighbourhood. We passed through Anti-Lebanon, and climbed up over broken rocks to a narrow shelf of road made round the slope of a mountain which stood up on high like a mother above her clinging children, away across the plain stretching out of eye's reach, to left and right the range of Lebanon awaited us. It was the utmost object of my search in this northern Syrian journey. The mountains were said to have the least amount of snow they ever have, for the autumn sun had just done its utmost in distilling the frozen riches into drink for the thirsty plains, and the cold had not yet done more than replace by night the daily waste. The snow could be seen nestling in the hollows around the mountain's neck; while on the heads of the peaks were coronets of immaculate white. The wind blew strongly, telling of the ascending height. I was alone, but with no feeling of desolation, not even when the sun declined in the sky, and the sunset had come. I had, indeed, good cause to be satisfied, for the golden rays lighted up honey-toned Baalbec. There were other Adrianic buildings nigh to the main temple, and cypresses were studded about, making obeisance to Baalbec like loyal servitors to their master;

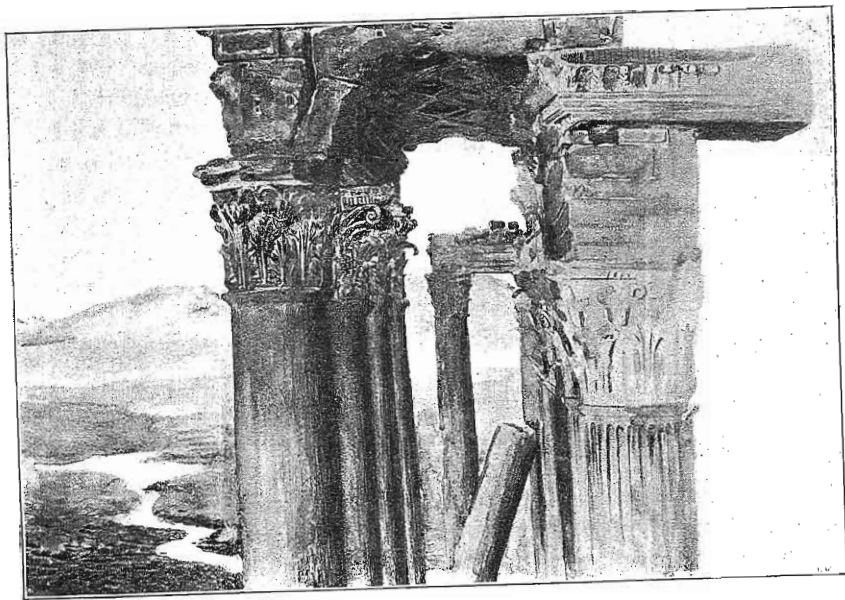
the pure verdure in the plain below received the lengthening shadows of the evening, as the day stretched his long and weary limbs down to sleep through his restful night.

We were greeted by the man at the khan, who undertook to give us a clean and comfortable chamber. Having seen this, and given orders for its preparation, there being still good twilight, I walked through the principal temple. The carving of all the ornament was indeed wonderfully gorgeous and artistic. In Palestine there was no classical pagan work so finished and rich as this. It was full of decorative character not known in Herod's time, indeed where Greek or Roman ornamentation was attempted at any period in Palestine the result is too often undeserving of close attention, defects arising from lack of artistic training in the sculptors. A small temple we had passed on the ridge, "Dahr al Akmar," was a miserable example of such slovenly workmanship. In the temple of Baalbec the god was indeed honoured, but while I looked, the Moslem call to prayer rang out from the village minaret, and proclaimed that the once glorious worship had been overthrown, as had the columns strewing the ground, like the slain warriors of a defeated army.

When I returned to my khan I was visited by a native Christian who brought a handful of curiosities to turn over; one was the man's own double teeth, which he was ready to sell for a consideration.

After my supper, to escape further visitors, I went out and prowled about in the dark; but the ground was treacherous and uneven, and the temple was hidden in the blackness. Staring aside over the chilly plain I peered into the emptiness, my eyes were drawn to right and left from the fancy that cloudy shapes moved about. Gradually the nebulousity was beyond doubt, although it disappeared immediately that it could be quite made out. When the phosphorescence became indistinct it exploded into sparks, and then I recognised that for the first time in my life I was looking upon an *ignis fatuus*. This interested me,

and made me peer the more intently, that I might better scan the waste of darkness. Two globes of fire on my left were singularly steady; I fixed my regard upon them, but ever they glared unchanged, except that they advanced nearer, and proved to be the eyes of an approaching beast. The muzzle of my gun was steadily held towards the animal as I retreated step by step, till

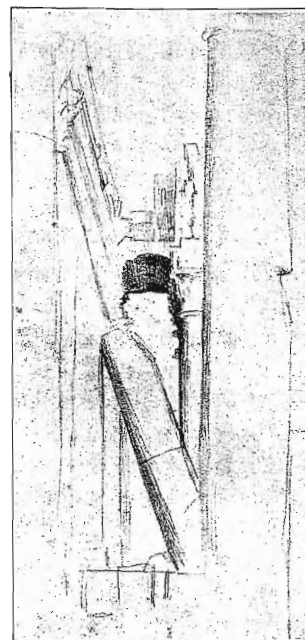


W. H. H.

RUINS OF BAALBEC.

I reached the door of the khan, where I lay down to sleep. The creatures of darkness, however, which come out from nooks and corners of ungarnished chambers allowed me but little rest. My compensation was, that I had the earliest morning for examining the ruins. I was told that Ibrahim Pasha had had the fallen stones built up into a mosque and castle, and the bewilderment caused me by this arrangement was more confusing than the disorder occasioned by successive earthquakes. I

stole time for drawing by sending the muleteer across the plain, with a promise to overtake him by fast riding. As I went on with my work, I heard the village forge beaten, the cocks crow, and the calling of the hours of prayer. About two I concluded that I must depart. In my final visit I observed that the keystone of the



TEMPLE AT BAALBEC.

arch painted by Roberts had dropped lower, and was tremulous in the wind. The fallen stones which formed the ceilings of the side porches had as centres some admirably carved heads of Apollo and Diana, and in one central circle there was a portrait head of Adrian, the donor. The keeper of the khan betrayed some disposition, now that I and Issa were alone, to rely upon our fear to exact extreme *backshish*, but I refused him and

rode away. We had counted too surely upon finding our road over the plain by a mark pointed out on the distant hills, but we lost our way, and had to retrace our steps considerably. The incessant demands for payment from fellahin whom we met, and of whom we asked the way or a drink of water, were vexatious, and we found we had been falsely guided. The horses, by dint of greater repose, and liberal green food, had become quite lively, and were fretful at the loss of their companions of the long journey. After some hours, when I was far ahead of Issa, our mules suddenly came in view, and my steed grew all on fire to join them. I had no objection to the straight line he preferred, until we were stopped at the brink of a stream twenty feet wide. Jerusalem horses are not trained to amphibious habits, so mine stuck at this unfamiliar obstacle; but he did not learn patience enough to go quietly along the banks to a crossing. Cumbered with a large sketch-book on my back, and a gun on my saddle, I was not disposed to humour him, so I turned him to the stream, using my spurs at the moment. We reached the middle of the rather deep and very cold water; there I found my animal had no more mettle left than was sufficient to get him clear of the weeds, and to plod through the mud on the further bank. When we landed, he made the rest of the road to his friends in a very sober mood. The clouds had covered up our beacon on the mountain line and shrouded the summits, which the following day we desired to cross; the sun was hidden, and the wind raked us as with cold fingers. About sunset the veil was lifted off Lebanon, but it had left a mantle of snow on all parts not exposed to the wind. In the west the sun encrimsoned the heavy pall of cloud, and deepened the slopes below into dark indigo, with a crimson lustre like that of the solid lump.

We hurried our unwilling beasts forward, for it was already late when the ascent from the plain was reached; few people were about, but we found Dahr al Akmar

before it was quite dark. It appeared an abandoned labyrinth of cattle yards, and the "clean inn" which had been strongly recommended to us defied our search. No lights were visible anywhere, but when we raised a shout a man appeared out of the ground and said, Yes—he knew the master we inquired for by name; thereupon he became our guide through many turnings between stone walls, and had not the rain been proof that the lane was open above, we might have thought ourselves in the Catacombs. He stopped at the door of a yard. I could look over the walls; the yard had all the litter incidental to the pounds used by draft and other animals. It was difficult to understand where all the "comforts" I had been assured of could be found. No house at all could we discern, but after frequent knocking a man unexpectedly emerged from the distant corner, and came forward, while the voice of another published the fact that the "khowaghat" had arrived. We were evidently expected, the gate was unbolted and we were invited in. I said, "I was told you kept a hotel."

"It is so," he replied, and he beckoned me forward to the other end of the yard where a corner was thatched in a rough way; we alighted and went to the shelter. The low door in the inner house wall was open, and inside glowed a warm fire, lighting up what was evidently a large underground chamber. It thawed my chilled soul to see the flickering flame, and I asked the man whether I could have a similar room for myself alone, and whether my men and animals could also be accommodated indoors.

"Perfectly," he replied, and I went back expressing my content, and bringing my horse into the yard. As I returned to the protecting alcove there was a great stir inside, and I waited near the door for the announcement that all was ready. There could be no complaint of want of life-sounds now, for the noise was that of a market-town; and presently were hustled out of the low door numerous broods of cackling fowls; followed by two lowing oxen, an ass or two, some mules and a horse;

and at the tail of these, rushing like a wether newly belled, came a leader followed by a small flock of sheep.

"Stop," I shouted, "I saw only men and women in the firelight."

"Yes," said the host, "we are all coming out." And behind him, appeared a family of some twelve or more people aged and young, all leaving their glowing hearth. It was needful to assume quite an angry tone to arrest the exodus.

"I will not allow it. Let them go back, and you come and talk to me."

The landlord approached, still pleading for his plan, but I turned towards the sheltering lean-to, where was a truck on wheels, and an old ram mangered by a halter. "Can you put that ram elsewhere and move the cart?" I said, and in spite of remonstrance, I took the vacated nook for my lodging. The tent being suspended on the two outer angles with a lantern hanging on the wall, and Issa's cooking-fire kindled outside, I was perfectly satisfied with the exchange.

To employ the time profitably now, while the dinner was being cooked, was my next object. I was wet through and muddy; and as I had to change my clothes, it seemed desirable to enjoy the abundance of water, which I could not always procure for a good bath. Two large buckets were therefore brought, and soon I was busy, making up for the cold of the water by rubbing and scrubbing and breathing the faster. While thus occupied for a while, in addition to the cheerful sounds of frying and ordinary talking of my company, I heard a boisterous altercation going on between Issa and certain rollicking strange voices. Abating my stampings, and brisk towelling, I called out to Issa to explain the cause of quarrel.

"Why, these people are so unreasonable, ya effendi, hearing that you were having a bath all the men, women, and children came out to look through a hole in the tent. But they can't all see at once, and I want those who were here at the beginning to go away, and make place for

others, but they won't; and those behind are laughing and quarrelling with those in the front, and I threaten that I will turn them all away if they can't agree."

Mauvaise honte, I think, quite spoilt my talents as a performer when I knew that I was acting in public; but, in any case, perhaps the remainder of the entertainment could not have been so diverting as the earlier part of the play. I enjoyed my supper, unconscious if strange eyes criticised my manner of eating; and after an hour or two's reading tucked myself up in my trestle bed, not less confiding in the permanence of comfort in my quarters, because the rain made increasing music in many pools close at hand.

On waking, my first inquiry was whether the storm of the night had, or had not, shut up the road to the cedars. The opinion grew, as daylight came, that it would be found just practicable; and accordingly we hurried our departure, and got well on the road before full daylight came. There was no sun, but every object behind us showed out in the greatest clearness; and with a colour, the fuller and richer, for having no glare to blanch its surface. It is an equivalent for the enchantment of sunlight, one of which we have much in England; but in a climate so perseveringly dazzling as this, the cloud-screened light, when it occurs, is a great delight and refreshment. Anti-Lebanon during the night had passed from summer to winter. Lebanon could only be seen below the clouds, and the muleteer pointed out that the increased snow was decisive against the attempt to ascend, that it was the beginning of the winter snow, which would stop travellers from crossing until May, but I would not heed these croakings. We left all luggage behind in the head muleteer's care, and took with us only enough for a day. We found, throughout the climb, a thick covering of rich earth on the rock which made bad weather a great obstacle to the firm footing of animals; and at first we met many stalwart fair-haired men loading their asses with wood for winter fuel. We had to grip hard to prevent the

saddle from slipping backwards, and as the road grew steeper, showers of rain and sleet warned us to lose no time in our climbing. When we reached the region of snow, the cold was to me only pleasant, but the Arabs covered their eyes and mouths with handkerchiefs and burnooses. When our horses had to rest for fresh breath I noted the plain below, all squared out to the farther slopes like patchwork. About ten o'clock we came to the level of a canopy of cloud resting like a ceiling on the verdure bosoms of the range, and reaching across to the eastern slopes. Higher still in our climb we looked down on the upper surface of this drooping covering, and through several gaps could again be seen with perfect clearness the villages, streams, and temples as separate pictures. Now we got on faster afoot. I dismounted and left my horse to keep the track by himself. About noon we reached the utmost height traversed by the road, and presently came in view of the western landscape; the mountain summits for a few miles fell to a plateau some eight hundred feet below, a mile or two in front of us we saw an opening, forming a gulfy ravine which descended to the Mediterranean plain seven thousand feet below, and the sea beyond with the horizon stretching its straight line across from the arc formed by the mountains to left and right, as the cord extends from point to point of an inverted bow. To the right lay a group of what looked like small mountain firs, these we were assured were the cedars; the snow reached close down to them. I shouted to my men to catch my horse, which had wandered in their direction, but he enjoyed his liberty, and on my taking up the chase, led me many devious tracks ere he was secured. A short ride then brought us under the trees, some twelve of them were indeed mightily trunked and limbed. I had lately read that a French savant had calculated, from examination of a transverse section of one of them, that its age was five thousand years. The rest of the trees are so much smaller in girth,

that according to this calculation, they would be but a century or two old.

We sat down here and ate our luncheon of bread and olives. The majestic beauty of the landscape before us made me regret that I had not brought our animals with us, as we might have gone on the Beyrout coast from the point we had reached. I observed that a small church was in course of building near at hand, and there were signs, in the presence of men, who were collecting broken branches and fallen cones, and in the broken mallets of previous encampments, that a painter might comfortably tent in the place. All the people were Greek Christians, and singularly polite and honest looking. They replied to my questions, that they never broke off any of the living trees, because the cedars were "the Lord's."

The clouds had drooped down ere we arose to return, but no storm broke upon us until we had passed the ridge, and then, as we led our horses with toilsome care down the steep descent, we were assailed by snow and drizzle. When we got into the saddle again there was a three hours' ride to our cheerless shelter, which we regained at dusk.

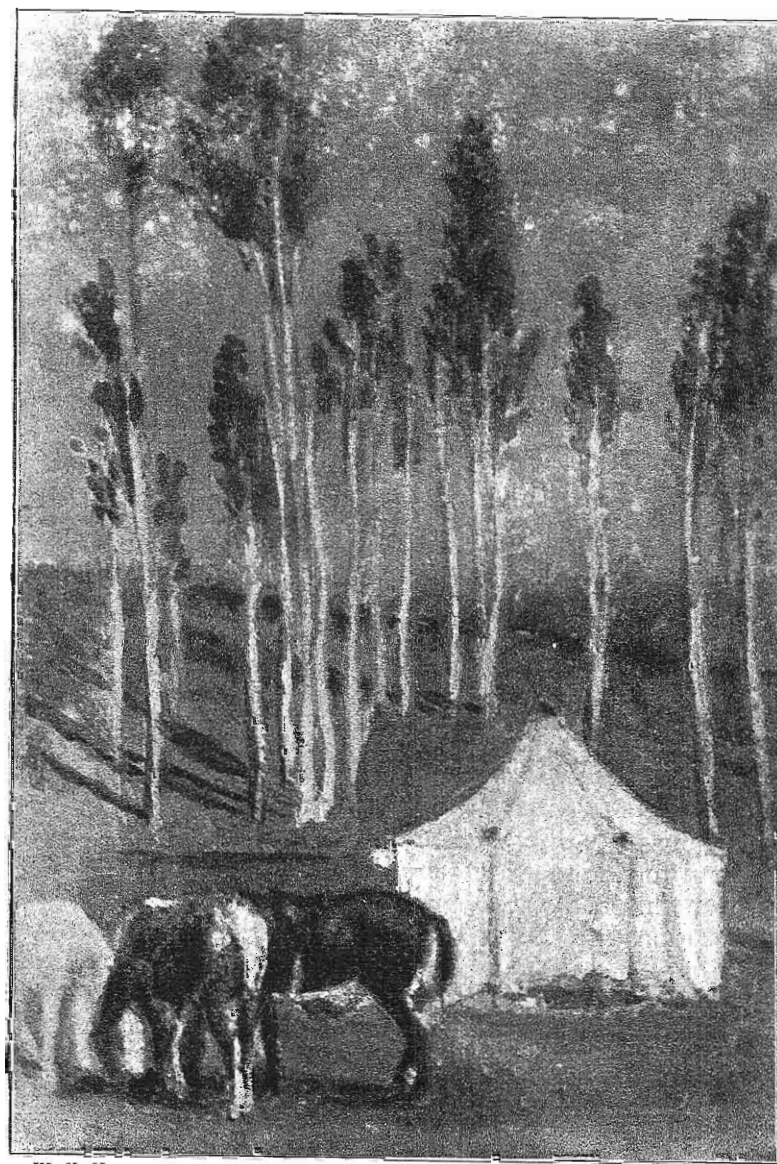
For consolation, I had the satisfaction of having fulfilled a long-cherished desire. I felt it the true education of an artist to see such things, convinced, as I have ever been, that it is too much the tendency to take Nature at second-hand, to look only for that poetry which men have already interpreted to perfection, and to cater alone for that appreciation which can understand only accredited views of beauty. The object of this journey had not been the transferring of any special scene to canvas, but rather to gain a larger idea of the principles of design in creation which should affect all art. I was but pursuing in my chosen region the principles which my fellows and I had agreed upon, and which they were to follow in their own ways at home. After supper I finished the evening with reading some pocket

volumes of cherished authors, whose pages were illumined by a lantern hung up in the corner of my bivouac.

My way northward by land had now ended. I turned to the south. Our road did not always lie at the base of the mountain range, for by striking across the plain, and sometimes passing through chilling meandering waters we often saved a great detour. My climb of yesterday had made my knees feel weak. We were in a well-watered plain and lunched at the side of a brook; in the evening we encamped at Zahle with a running stream at our side. Resting the next day, I took the opportunity to walk about and observe the folk. They all looked well and comely, and some of the girls were beautiful; they were merry, and amused themselves good-naturedly 'at the solitary Englishman walking through their village and making his salutations.

This happy home of peace and innocent mirth was soon after to be the centre of carnage, a place of revelry for incarnate demons!

During all the first half of the century there had been a full recognition of the might of England, and of her ability to punish outrage on Christians in Turkey, which had kept the worst spirits of evil afraid to show their heads. Britain's power had been exhibited so strikingly under the eyes of Egypt and Syria, that in the Arab's proverbial talk they held it to be more than merely of this world. At Aboukir Bay under Nelson, at Alexandria under Sir Ralph Abercrombie, at Acre under Sir Sydney Smith, the Moslems had followed the course of British victories, and they noted the further course of the Napoleonic war with wonder, and epitomised their conclusions by saying that Apolyon (the name they gave Napoleon) had overcome every nation, but England had destroyed him. The traditions of the previous generation had prepared young and old in 1837 to see Ibrahim Pasha defeated at a stroke, and when Sir Robert Napier arrived at Acre, exploded the powder magazine in an hour, and then with his marines drove



W. H. H.

HALT FOR THE NIGHT, ZAHLE.

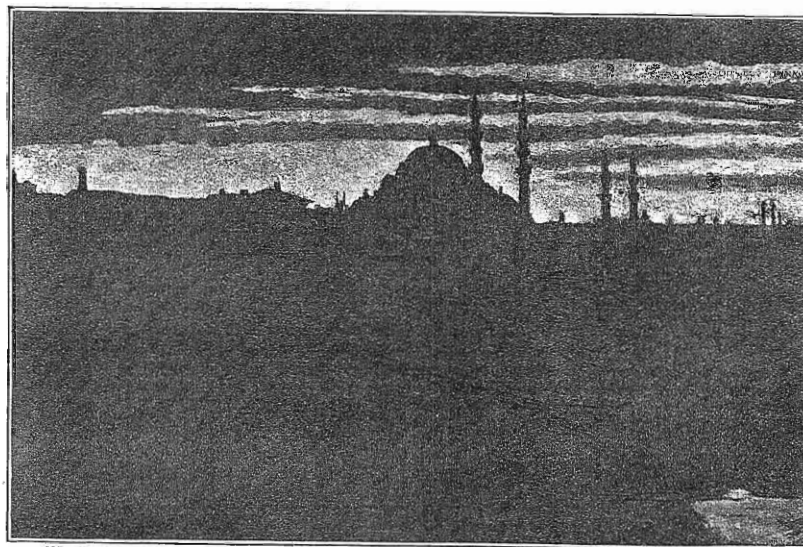
out the Egyptian army, all was looked upon as matter of course. This confirmed the earlier estimate of England's masterfulness, so that when she with her allies took up the cause of Turkey and declared war against Russia in 1854, the expectation of the Mahomedan world was that every defence of our enemy would at once vanish before the army and navy. Now, our long-retarded and still incomplete triumph had marred our prestige, and it was easy to see that we should have to fight for it all again in the East. The French had escaped commissariat disasters in the Crimea, and their regiments had figured in telling manner at the end of the long-continued Inkerman battle, so such respect as was still entertained by the bulk of Mahomedans for Christian forces was transferred to our rivals, whose prowess had not before been so fully recognised by them. The massacre in the Lebanon was the earliest outcome of the diminished fear of Europe in the minds of Druse and Moslem. The Persian War, the Chinese War, and the Indian Mutiny came as the price of our loss of prestige, and when it was seen that the issue proved that the God of battles had not forsaken us, and that we undoubtedly vanquished all our enemies, the rulers of the East felt again that savage instincts could not be indulged without count of a severe reckoning with Christendom.

Going along the road that led to Beyrout, which was to be my place of embarkation for the seat of war, it was natural for me to speculate on the future prospects of our arms; this national question occupied my attention in alternation with the thought of what the members of our fraternity had done and were doing, and how my best friends would care for the small store of work I should be able to show them. My curiosity was the greater, as, having assured them post by post that I was on the point of starting for home, I had received but few letters for the last few months.

While I was still proceeding south, the snowy peak of Hermon ever seemed to accompany me, and for a day it

was my marching companion, but when I reached the road from Damascus I had to leave it behind, and the sea was then my attraction, entertaining my eyes and drawing me on to Beyrout.

Again in mountainous regions we passed companies going to Damascus, and we came upon a small tribe of bedouin pitching their simple tent over the next ridge; farther on we encountered a woman, one of their party,



W. H. H.

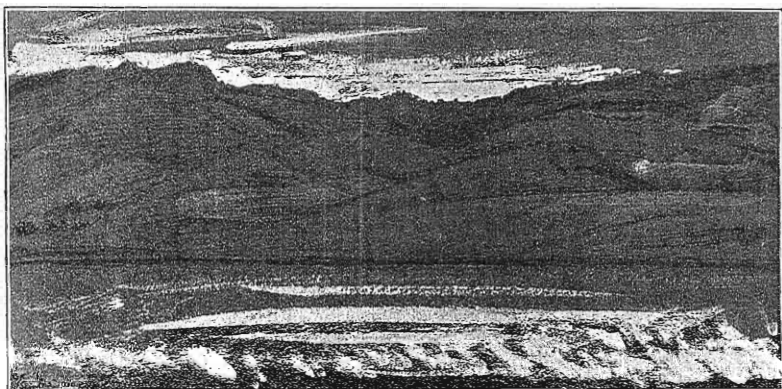
CONSTANTINOPLE.

who was wailing bitterly over her prostrate husband. She turned, begging us to come to her help. I dismounted, and, procuring the brandy flask from Issa, I poured some down the fainting man's throat. When he revived he was suspicious that it was forbidden drink, and pushed it from him, saying it was "fire." Assuring him that it was but medicine, I gave him more, after which he arose and walked to his friends.

When I reached Beyrout I had to settle accounts with honest Issa, the most truthful and trustworthy Arab I had

met. In fulfilment of my promise to Graham, I sent him by Jaffa back to Jerusalem with the tents and animals. Long before I again trod the soil of Palestine the good fellow died.

I took my berth in the Messagerie boat *Le Tancred*, which had come to Beyrout on its way to Constantinople. The vessel was crammed with Mahomedan passengers. Five hundred returned pilgrims from Mecca were enough to cumber the deck, but in addition there were one hundred and five Bashi-Bazouks on their way—not per-

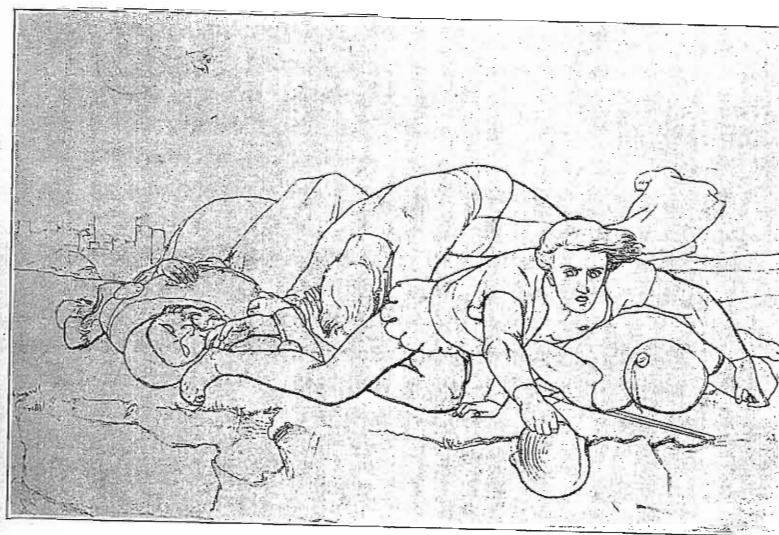


W. H. H.

SMYRNA ROADSTEAD.

haps for the first time—to join General Pearson's contingent, and also about fifteen Syrians going to the Crimea for the land transport service, amongst whom—as his mocking fate would have it—was my unvaliant Oosdoom servant Issa Nicola. Unbidden and unknown to me was another fellow-traveller, the cholera.

Ours was a memorable journey, and its annals are doubtless written in the records of the society to which the vessel belonged. There was much adventure on the yellow-flagged way; the main event can scarcely be classed as belonging to artistic story, so I will not retard the resumption of the Pre-Raphaelite history by



W. H. H.

YOUTHFUL DESIGNS—LEIGH HUNT'S "CAPTAIN SWORD AND CAPTAIN PEN."

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entering here into a sea yarn. Yet to give honour to whom honour is due, I feel bound to declare that had it not been for the sagacious valour of Lieutenant Pigeon of the ship's company, the Bashi-Bazouks in an attempted mutiny would have prevented the good vessel, and every European passenger upon it, from ever arriving in the sweet waters of the Bosphorus. I finally parted with the brave man in Kasatcha. When I arrive in the regions beyond the final harbour of this life's journey, he will not be the last comrade of its voyage that I should care to greet. I made a drawing of him for his good wife in Marseilles. Constantinople delighted my soul by its excessive beauty and picturesqueness. Why, unless staleness be the inducement, the exhibitions should be full of pictures of Venice, already divinely represented by Turner, and why there should never be any illustrations of the Byzantine city, it is difficult to understand.

The spectacle of Christian nations contending in blood together in the Crimea was of humiliating sadness, and filled me with greater desire to develop the war subjects from Leigh Hunt's *Captain Sword and Captain Pen*, which I had designed at nineteen, but, alas! I never gained freedom to put my idea upon canvas.