

CHAPTER XVIII

1854

How fleet the glances of the mind !
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift winged arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land
In a moment I seem to be there ;
But, alas ! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

COWPER.

Soon now the mountains, the sea, and the middle distance on my canvas were completed, and I was beginning to feel the more indifferent to the grumblings of the men. I was gradually working down to the salt foreground, and one afternoon when Soleiman was away I was pondering on the present state of desolation of "the way of the sea," when my "brother" appeared, looking more impressive than usual. He crouched down beside me, put his hand out to the cliffs towards Masada, and uttered the portentous words, "There are robbers ; they are coming this way—one, two, three, on horseback, and two—wait, three—yes, four on foot. They have not yet seen us, and soon they will be behind Oosdoom, and we shall be able safely to move. You must put down your umbrella, shut up your picture, cover it with stones. They will not be here for an hour. We will go up in the mountain ; they will keep along the road at the foot ; we will come back to the

picture when they have gone by." I could see the party very far away, and asked, "How do you know they are robbers?" "They are always robbers when the others are feeble; it would be useless for us to resist. Quick," he said. "Perhaps they belong to a friendly tribe," I argued. "They do not," he said. "Come." "No," I said, "I shall stay." He implored me to listen, and finally stamped, saying, "Your blood be on your own head; as for me I shall go to the mountain and hide myself." As he went away he turned two or three times, and again appealed to me like a man at his wits' end. "Why stay? What do you trust in?" I replied mine was a good work, that Allah would help me, and that I was content to accept whatever might be the issue, and I saw him run to the break in the mountain near, and, with the ass climb up its roughness and disappear.

I worked on steadily, but had to turn my head occasionally to watch the progress of the *deeshman*. Before they were cut off from observation by the intervening Oosdoom I recognised that Soleiman's estimate of their number was correct. There was a long hiatus, while my "brother" made no sign, and there was nothing to do but to progress with my work as effectively as possible. As time wore away I grew anxious for the climax, and it was a relief to me to be able at last to hear the approaching Arabs talking, and their horses' hoofs among the shingle. I suspended my painting and looked from beneath my umbrella, until suddenly the *deeshman* emerged from behind the mountain within half a furlong of me where they all halted. The horsemen had their faces covered with black *kufeyiahs*, and carried long spears, while the footmen carried guns, swords, and clubs. They stood stock-still some minutes, pointing at my umbrella, and then turned out of the beaten way direct to me,¹ clattering at a measured pace among the large and

¹ Sir Gray Hill, writing from Jerusalem in 1902, states that the water of the Dead Sea has now risen several feet, and that the way by the sea on the eastern side of Oosdoom where I painted, and upon which these Arabs were

loose stones. I continued placidly conveying my paint from palette to canvas, steadying my touch by resting the hand on my double-barrelled gun. I knew that my whole chance depended upon the exhibition of utter unconcern, and I continued as steadily as if in my studio at home.

Eventually the whole party drew up in a half-circle. The leader thundered out, "Give me some water." I turned and looked at him from his head to his horse's feet, and then very deliberately at the others, and resumed my task without saying a word. He stormed again, "Do you hear? Give us some water." After turning to him once more with a little pause, extending my right hand on my breast, I said, "I am an Englishman; you are an Arab. Englishmen are not the servants of Arabs; I am employing Arabs for servants. You are thirsty—it is hot—the water is there—I will out of kindness let you have some, but you must help one another; I have something else to do," and I turned again quietly to work.

They chattered a little in a low but excited tone. Presently the leader again spoke, "Are you here alone?" "No," I said, "I have Arabs of the tribe of Abou Daouk waiting upon me." "Where are they?" "Well, some are with my tent and animals in the Wady Zuara, but one comes with me to stay all day." They looked about while they handed the bottle from one to another and drank. And then again the speaker said, "We should see him were he here." "But," I said, "he saw you coming when you were at a distance, and, being afraid, he went to the mountains to hide himself." At which my questioner said, "Call him." I looked at him very gravely, and said in a convincing tone, "But I don't want him." The reply was, "We want him." "Well," I added, "then *you* call him; his name is Soleiman." After a little discussion the

travelling, is now entirely overflowed, so that the present road southward lies on the western side of Oosdoom. Either the plain has sunk or the sea has risen. The exploration map registers the state of the narrow southern extension of the lake as a marsh: this, again, can no longer be.

strangers seemed to see reason in the argument ; and the plain echoed with the name, familiar to Arabs as that of the imperial wizard over nature, but no response came. "There," they said, "there is no one, or he would answer."

My explanation was that I had said he was afraid, that they best knew what, under the circumstances, it was needful to do ; accordingly "Soleiman" was again shouted with solemn pledges of amity. Presently a voice was heard demanding further assurances of safety, then my "brother" stood up from behind a rock, and slowly he came down, bringing the donkey with him. He advanced with salutations direct to the men. First, he kissed the leader, and then addressed himself to the others, who returned his salutation and began to talk, both stating their tribe. When this ceremony was over the horsemen dismounted, formed a circle, lit pipes, and sat down to talk.

To their first question I heard Soleiman reply that the tent was guarded by one hundred of his tribe, some of whom were always coming down to us, that I had bargained with the sheik to stay a month or two, that I had been on the spot twelve days, and recounted what I had done on arriving there. "What does he come here for?" was asked. "He comes," said Soleiman, "each day from the tent at sunrise, and stays till sunset writing on that paper with his coloured inks taken out of those bottles." "Ah!" was muttered, "why doesn't he stay in England and leave our country to us?" "Who can say," returned my "brother," "why *frangis* do what they do." "True," said the speaker. "What arms has he?" "That which he holds in his hand," said my guard, "is a gun with two souls, and I have seen him shoot large and small lead with it. But under his coat he has a pistol which will shoot not twice only, but as many times as he likes without reloading, for when I have asked whether it would fire again he has gone on to five, and then put it away, and I knew it would still shoot." "But why did he stay here when you went?" "He said that he trusted in Allah." (Then came the muttering of some of the sacred attributes.) "Does he

ever talk?" "While he writes he will not talk, but when coming here, while eating, and going home his words are many." "What does he say?" "Many things, he told me why this sea is called Bahr Lut." "Tell us," they clamoured ; and Soleiman commenced giving my history of the wickedness of the people of the four cities of the plain, of God's wrath, of the visit of the angels to the patriarch Ibrahim at Mamre, of his pleadings, of the angels leaving Hebron, of the arrival of two at Sodom, of Lot's reception of them, of the flight, the death of the wife, and of the overthrow by fire of the four cities, "so that no men could now trace where they had been." The history was much embellished by the rich Arabic of the narrator. After a pause he went on to say that I talked to him about Mahomet, and was myself a dervish, and he described my dancing. These mysterious particulars so dear to Arabs gave them many weighty problems to revolve.

For a time there was no sound but that of smoking. Silence was broken by a new speaker, who said, in a smothered voice, "I want to talk," and his fellows invited him to do so. His address was thus : "The *khowagha* is a magician, he has books in his own country like other Franks, which tell him all things, he has learnt about the four cities ; they were of course magnificent towns full of silver and gold and riches of all sorts. He came before with his two friends to look ; they could not find the places of the cities ; they knew that we Arabs would not let them search and dig, and so he returns once more with that large paper and on it he writes as Soleiman says, the sky, the mountains, the plain, the sea and even the salt. He had the white goat led over the ground to charm it, when done he will take the paper to England. And with a sponge he will wipe out the coloured inks and at the bottom he will find the four cities wherever they were, and he will become possessed of all treasures." The suspended breathing was resumed with a groan. "It must be so," all said. Then they questioned how

many days I should remain. I had not yet said a word to Soleiman that I thought of leaving before the stipulated term, and what he said to the Arabs was calculated to make them think that I should stay at least another week. Very low conference ensued until at last they resolved to leave me. I gathered they were making calculations, but I went on with my work as though I gave no heed to them.

Soleiman uttered an impressive *Allamdiilah* when the *deeshman* had gone far along the plain. He told me they belonged to a place and tribe two days away in the Arabah. As I went home that night I danced more from prudential motives than from lightness of heart. Soleiman detected strange voices mixed with those of our party when we approached our encampment, but he soon recognised them as those of friends, who going by, had determined to make our resting-place theirs also, and we became a merry company although without wine or even much food.

The demands for interviews with me at night on my return from work were frequent, both from bedouin and muleteers; their object always was to shorten our stay. Our food supply could not be replenished, for no one would go back to the Jehalin encampment to buy provisions. I pointed out they ought to have provided food not only for a fortnight but for two months, and it was their lack of prudence only that was to blame. Still, that the animals had insufficient food was not triumphantly parried by the fact that I also participated in the famine, my *mukary* now persisted that he would take all his troop back in a few days without me, if I would not come. My counter proposal was that he should go the next day with the luggage, the canteen included, and even my riding horse and Nicola's, that we should have only one mule to carry the picture and a few blankets and cooking things, and that Nicola and I should walk the whole way to Jerusalem, but the fellow would not even consent to this.

Under the most favourable circumstances Nature

exhibits her jealousy in frustrating all attempts of the artist to represent her, but in Syria it seemed that she obtained allies of such strength to fight her battles that it needed superhuman patience to continue the struggle against her; I held in reserve the fact that I had nearly finished my background except such parts as clouds and other details sketched, which could be as well completed in Jerusalem. One evening while I was at dinner after a stormy altercation, we were alarmed by the appearance of a strange party descending the hill who did not return the salutation of our men. Saleh rushed into my tent for his gun, and I had to sally forth with mine, but the strangers then declaring themselves proved again to be no enemies. I regard one who has not sojourned in a tent as not having thoroughly lived; for without such experience how can a man feel what is his own relation to silent Nature, and to his disorderly fellows. When slumber came I was no longer an outcast; the distance between London and the remote wilderness of Judea was annulled. Sleep vanquished distance and time. I was at home with my dear and true friends, the comrades of my highest ambition, we were talking warmly and listening charmedly to ideas and plans beloved of both. I was with the real working Brotherhood, and as I asked for unseen ones they appeared. I had much to tell and not less to hear; many there were whom I took by the hand and grasped familiarly by the shoulder. It was satisfaction almost to pain. While still eager in debate a force of separation came between us, I held out my arms as it seemed, but I was torn backwards across the round dark sea and over the wind-swept hills, and waking, I found myself again in the lonely tent pitched in the desolate valley,

Near that bituminous lake where Sodom flamed,

with the creatures of the wilderness screaming and howling from above and below, aggrieved that our fires barred the

way between them and the salt or water, which it was their wont to visit by night.

When Soleiman continued to refer to the danger of the *deeshman* returning with an increased force, I rejoiced the more at the progress of my last labours, still it was clear that the white space on my "paper" where the goat had to be painted, represented to all the Arabs, including Soleiman, an amount of work which would consume much time. The *deeshman* would be advised that if the whole paper were not covered, the *writing* would be of no use either to me or to them, and that they must not therefore return prematurely. My "brother" however was ever increasingly anxious for our departure.

In shifting the picture in and out of the case, it was strange in this wild place to read on the back the name of the colourman with the address, 51 Long Acre; now there was nothing essential for me to paint but the driftwood and adjacent salt, and this I brought happily to an end. After sunset I announced to Soleiman that I had finished. Collecting salt and one or two other relics for use in Jerusalem, we returned to the tent prepared to start on the morrow, but I cautioned secrecy towards strangers should any come.

When Soleiman understood all he repeated his wish that I should stay and become one of his tribe, but I pointed out that I must go to Jerusalem to turn into gold the paper money which I had paid them; this was the best of arguments, and he pleaded that I must return to the camp afterwards. His fellows however soon aroused another spirit in him, for when they understood we were so soon to be on the move, each came to represent that the particular part he had taken in the service would entitle him to larger *backshish* than the rest, and then my "brother" gave up his unselfish position and competed with them in cupidity.

Soon after sunrise my own preparations were complete. Sad at leaving the place I consoled myself with the promise that I would soon return from England and

paint the castle and some other wonderful scenes about the wady. I had much to direct, and could not neglect the business of the start. Notwithstanding the erewhile haste of the *mukary*, he was slow in getting away; yet the sun was not far above the horizon before I led my horse up the difficult slope, full of thanksgiving at having so far been able to achieve my object in the expedition. It was a blessing to get on the broad upland again, release from prison, and the sweet breezes welcomed me from the tropical-heated plain.

There soon proved to be no dearth of fresh cares; the mule with my principal luggage fell at the brink of the ascent. Anxiety was next claimed for the poor goat, who was suffering and too weak to walk, I had him lifted on to the picture case and carried, the sun there soon distressed him, we took him down but it was useless; the ominous vultures appeared. I poured water into his mouth but nothing availed to save the poor beast. When this was beyond doubt I used the opportunity to make a sketch of his head; as I did this he sank and died, much to my regret. These animals are seen browsing and flourishing all over the country where nothing but dry plants and stalks appear, in our wady there was more than usual of poor fare to be found by an enterprising animal, I could not therefore attribute its death to hunger.

I turned to the strange landscape I was repassing to revel in the wonders of the scene; but Soleiman once started in emulation of greed, from his greater intimacy with me outdid all the others; he was impatient to be told what I was intending to give in *backshish* to each of the party, dwelling much on his own superior claims, until I did not scruple to show my anger. In the afternoon we arrived at the encampment. By this time I felt little disposed for further appeals until after some refreshment and repose, so when the sheik came out, on saluting him I made excuses to defer the interview until dinner had been served. Then I was fortified to hear the long appeals for further payments but I would not answer the claims.

The night was so bitterly cold that I was obliged to have pity upon Nicola, and allow him to sleep half within the tent; still both for me and my men the coverings we had were so insufficient that all grumbled at inability to sleep.

In the morning I still refused to state the amount of *backshish* that each should receive in Jerusalem. It was but little after sunrise when with a hurried breakfast I had all packed and made the start, for I was in hopeful spirits and eager to get back to civilisation again, forgetting the fascinations of the promised bedouin bride. The sheik, in fact, seemed more bent upon increasing his perquisites than upon obtaining a son-in-law, and his men so pestered me as I rode along that they made it impossible for me to enjoy the scenery, until I grew angry and forbade any one of them to walk with me, and rode two or three hundred yards ahead. Soon in the variety of interest, and the fannings of the odorous winds of Araby, which gained fresh perfume from each step of my horse in the aromatic herbage, my vexed humours were allayed, and I enjoyed the very act of living.

The war had, ere I left Jerusalem, awakened in me the deepest concern; never during my life had England been engaged in contest with a European power. I thought of the horrors of the struggle, but I felt sure that our quarrel was a just one, for the inordinate claims of Russia had left us no choice. My private interests were also urgent; I had been persistently careful in my letters to treat the question of personal danger as not worth remark, and now my silence away from headquarters for so long might even cause alarm to my parents; I was eager to hear of them and others. As I rode I speculated both about my friends and the war. The sun had already made the day hot, and under such conditions (as with the eye when strained one may be uncertain whether an object that flits past is a minute grain of dust close by, or a distant leviathan, so it is with the ear in an attenuated atmosphere) it was not clear to me whether certain breaks

in the silence which I noticed were only some unusual irregularities in the concussion of my horse's hoofs on the rocks, or the shocks of far-away explosions, and only slowly I concluded they were musket shots far in front. We were now within a few miles of Hebron; I supposed that news must have reached the city of a great victory and that the people had come out into the fields to enjoy a wild fantasia.

As I advanced this idea seemed confirmed, for the firing proved that the people were between me and the town, and soon even shouting could be heard. I dawdled now for the whole party to come up, and when we ascended the road between two hills the firing was so near that it became a matter of wonder that I could not see the marksmen. Reaching the level between the two heads of the mount, and looking to the height on my left where there was loud talking, I saw a man advance, gesticulating wildly; he was followed by numbers of fellahin mad with excitement. The first man, pointing in my direction, shouted out, "Now go, seize them," and fifty men ran fast down the slope behind us. Later came others from a crowd concealed beyond the brow of the hill. I then turned and looked to the heights on my right, where a group appeared, who began to descend, but these were called back. For a second I thought these fellahin were engaged in a game, but as they reached the rear of my cavalcade they turned; the foremost wheeled and ran up to me. Immediately I saw plainly that it was useless to resist, and I was as reconciled to my chances as if no danger threatened.

Three men seized my horse by the bridle, and others, less nimble on their feet, increased the number of my captors and put their hands on my right arm. They were livid in the face, blackened with powder, with bloodshot eyes, worn with long watching and the strife and hatred of Cain. My close scrutiny offended them, clamour arose that there should be no delay, and they shouted, "Dismount!" I had my leg lifted half over

the horse, when a new arrival with evident authority said, "No; stop!" I reseated myself, and there was a babel of explanation and debate. The decision was expressed clearly, "Lead him on, and send him forward"; my horse was conducted some hundred yards, and left with the command that I should go straight on; but the screamings among the hinder party around my men, the glittering of swords, and the pushing and swaying about made me think that poor Nicola and the muleteers were being killed; I obeyed a sudden impulse and turned my horse, at which my captors were furious, but at the moment I saw the back crowd open and my companions emerge being evidently directed to follow me, the bedouin had disappeared.

In moving forward my men had to refix the lid over the canvas, which our captors had looked upon with contempt. I halted for them, the guard waiting to see the order for my advance obeyed. At this moment no other course seemed so desirable as to obey their injunction to go forward, but as Nicola arrived he vented a tedious torrent of reproaches. Our gaolers waited to see the result; in going forward I looked about to understand our position the better as we came to the opening of the hitherto screened road, this descended in divided tracks over unequal ground into the valley like the strands of ravelled rope. Looking over the valley I could see that there were two mounts which corresponded to the two crowns of the slope which I had passed between. These were occupied by large forces, and our road into Hebron lay between them; the defences on the hill summits led me to wonder whether the two bodies of men I had passed through were not the besieging army, and whether those in front of me were defending the town; the battlefield had evidently been on the low plain between, but at present the fighting was only with missiles at long distance. I was instinctively pausing a few moments to make sure of my course before choosing a path for the mules to lead the way, when I

perceived that the whistling of bullets was no longer distant, but screamed about my ears, and I saw from the rending of the ground on the bank beside me that the missiles had come from the forces in front of us.

There was nothing but the worst of danger in delay, so I jumped off my horse and commanded Nicola to do as I did, as I led the animal to shield me till we reached the shelter of ridges in the descending road. The man was too much possessed with a violent paroxysm of sobbing to do anything with alacrity, even his assurance that he knew I should be the death of him in the end was only uttered in gasps, and when beyond we saw a party of horsemen, twenty in number, with thirty or so on foot, zigzagging down the southern hill to intercept our passage, pausing for a minute in the rubbing of his eyes with his knuckles, he groaned out, "That is Abderrachman, and he hates the English because the Consul once put him in prison. If he finds you are an Englishman he will have no mercy. Pray, say you are an American or a German, and he may let us go." This provoked my patience, and I thought it wise to caution him against forestalling me with his words, and said, "If you dare say that I am anything but an Englishman I will ask them as a particular favour to kill you first." The valley resounded with his noisy despair as we remounted at the lower part of the road.

The party in possession had taken up their stand to the left. It was easy to distinguish the leader. I rode up to him and said, "I am an Englishman going back to Jerusalem. I have been for a fortnight at the Wady Zuara. The English Consul knows where I am, and if you stop me he will hold you responsible," at which his countenance beamed, and he said, "You are among friends now." "But," I said, "if so, why did your men attack us just now?" "It was a mistake; at the distance we could not see you were a Frank, and having horsemen with you, we thought you were coming to attack us." Then I asked, "Are you not Abderrachman?" "No,"

he said, "Abderrachman is trying to take Hebron. It was his force which you passed through just now. I am his brother, and am fighting against him." This amiable explanation deserved thanks, which I gave, with a "good evening," and we resumed our journey. Nicola gurgled with joyful surprise as we passed on.

In the road, just screened from shot, were children and women huddling up in little groups with sheep, goats, oxen, horses, and asses. There was a fire with cauldrons of hot water, and pots with coffee, and simple fare for the men engaged in defending the town, and there were litters at hand for carrying off the wounded. The women occasionally were giving their cries of distress. I thus entered for the first time into the experiences of beleaguered townsmen.

My return to civilised life was precluded by a visit to my Hebron acquaintance, the Prussian doctor in charge of the Quarantine. The place was cut off from professional usefulness as well as from the amenities of society. He was known to be somewhat of uncertain mood, nevertheless he seemed to enjoy the rare opportunity that offered of seeing a European, and I felt on my part it would be a pleasure and advantage to talk with him. Our interchange of civilities on my former visits made me feel sure of his friendly reception.

When I arrived, and was seated in his divan smoking a *tchibouk*, he expressed surprise at seeing me, asking how I had got into the town. In telling him that I had at first supposed the firing to be in fantasia for some Crimean victory, he shouted, "Jamais, monsieur, jamais, la misérable armée Anglaise ni celle de la France pourra gagner une victoire sur les Russes—les Russes sont très supérieures à tous les deux." I shrugged my shoulders, not caring to dispute so prejudiced a proposition, but it was evident that he did not want to abandon the argument, for after I had changed the subject he assured me that no provisions could be bought in Hebron, that if I liked to stay in the Quarantine for the night, I could do so; that I should

probably have bullets come into my window at all hours, but that I had the choice between that and worse in the open. He spoke most excitedly, with cantankerous spirit, telling how two Turkish effendis, with guards coming from Jerusalem, had that day been robbed of everything, including arms, and were only too glad to get into Hebron with their lives.

The doctor returned to the expression of his views about the war, and repeating something offensive about the incapacity of the English army, which I said history disproved, he got up and very defiantly declaimed, "Do you know what I would do if any one said so much of the Prussian army? I would challenge him to fight a mortal duel." "Well," I said pacifyingly, "aren't there bullets enough flying about here? Isn't ours a question which time will settle better than private duel could? I should be miserable at the idea of risking the killing of you, or at the greater danger of being killed myself for such a question, but if you will allow me I will call my man to give him his instructions." While I was yet speaking his two porters rushed into the room gasping, "Oh, Hakim pasha, Hakim pasha! Abderrachman's men from Doora have suddenly appeared on the heights; they are rushing down the hill into the town, and will be here directly." Jumping up, the doctor shouted orders to shut the gates, and standing in a very martial posture, with hand extended, he continued, "Et vous, Monsieur l'Anglais, que voulez-vous?" I asked, "What are you about to do?" "Pour moi," he declaimed, "personne n'entrera ici sans passer au dessus mon corps." "Very well," said I, "then as I am your guest at the moment, they shall have two dead bodies to pass over, but please lend me an extracting ramrod and I will change one of my barrels, which now has only duck shot."

In a minute more we were ready. There was a good stone parapet to a gallery above the gateway, made doubtless in anticipation of such needs, and I crouched down with my gun ready, as did the Prussian doctor and his

servants. My man was again in paroxysms of grief, but he was kept within. I could hear him sobbing and stamping through all the din. The sun was still high enough to shine on the men rushing downhill, sparkling with steel and rich colours as they appeared in and out of the fruit trees. The leader was mounted on a fine horse, and he was harking back a good gun-shot away to mass the force, which seemed to be about two hundred strong. One band was coming close to the front of the Quarantine ; another passed straight on to the town, and as they seemed to be taking it by surprise, it appeared likely they would enter without any effective opposition, for there was not more than a scanty sprinkling of men in their houses. These homestayers won my admiration by collecting together and with flashing swords and guns meeting the invading party of six times their number. The cries and confusion, mixed with the firing, made the meeting one on which I could only look with bated breath. In a few minutes the new-comers carried all before them, and as they advanced further I looked to see what dead were left, and was surprised that the ground was uncumbered. While thus absorbed, with only a side attention to nearer matters, the doctor recognised the horseman as an intimate friend, and the latter approached and explained that he and another brother had just resolved to abandon Abderrachman and to join the town. This explained the bloodlessness of the encounter I had watched. When we first emerged on the balcony a party of women were seated mourning in company, and uttering the death screech in turns about a large general open grave. In their distress they had not regarded the impending personal danger, but as the fellahin came in view they started up as if their cup of bitterness might even yet be increased, and hurried one another off the field. What a scene it was ! In front of me was the resting-place of Sarah and the patriarchs, and here were their descendants fighting against their brethren, and giving all that in this world was theirs for a sultan



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The Afterglow.

who was of one of the races their fathers had superseded, and whose soldiers in the meantime were smoking their pipes in the citadel, not venturing to open the gates to besiegers or besieged. I thought of the days, long past, when I had repined at my immured position in London, and I asked myself whether I was content at the change. I answered with thanksgiving that my desire for adventure had been fulfilled, and certainly that day I had had a liberal measure of it. My fate more than once had been of threatening nature in this region of Kirjath Arba.

Being free to attend to my own affairs, I sent off one of my party into the bazaar to buy a few necessaries for the canteen, but at the last the doctor declared that enough rice was added to his supper to serve for me also, and spite of his questionable cordiality, I was more at ease in accepting the place at table after having made common cause with him in peril. He had not been able for a week to procure meat, with pomegranates added to our mess and a cup of coffee, we fared better than many of the besieged did that night.

I determined to take my chance of the road on the morrow. There were no surprises in the night, and sleep under a solid roof was very acceptable. As we made our preparations to start before sunrise the Osmanli travellers who had been despoiled sent to say that hearing I was going, they begged permission to return under my escort. The request flattered and amused me, and I sent answer that their company would be a pleasure to me, but as none of the party but myself were armed, they must not suppose that I undertook to afford other protection than that which might come in guarding my own party. This they determined to accept, and soon two effendis appeared, accompanied each by servants without arms.

We thus made a considerable party as we sallied forth along the road through the walled vineyards. We had from the first to be on the alert. I, being ahead, peered through every opening to discover figures. I expected to

find a force quite near on this side of Hebron, but we passed the ancient ruin to our right and reached the country without having seen a single mortal. Ascending a slope with many cattle tracks among brushwood, there suddenly appeared against the sky-line in front a small band of fellahin coming towards us, some mounted; there were in all about seven or eight, the favourite number for a native expedition. The leader at once drew up and addressed his men, directing them to spread themselves out; he then turned in a marked manner to confront me. Determined at once to avoid all appearance of wishing to escape the contact, I turned directly towards him, and when there might have been the excuse of passing more conveniently by keeping the path to the left of that which he had entered, I chose his, and brought my horse's head against his. Using the left hand to hold my gun by the barrel, with a slight switch in my right I gently touched his animal on the nose, looking at him cheerfully, and saying at the moment, "Marhabba, welcome." His steed swerved, and I took his place and passed. He called out with a forced laugh to his followers, "Ah, ah, a friend!" "Yes," I remarked, "an English friend," and stopped now with my gun ready and trigger cocked, for he was repeating orders to seize the mules. "Ibrahim, go and take that mule; ya, Abdullah, go to that," and two men walked forward, one to the canteen, one to the picture. When they were nearly within reach he added, "Take hold." I said, "Ya, Ibrahim, don't touch the bridle; ya, Abdullah, don't put your hand on my mule's halter," and I turned the gun round, directing it immediately above Ibrahim's head. The leader then said, "Don't listen, ya Ibrahim, and, Abdullah, seize them." But when I added, "I will shoot the first moment your hand touches the halter," they hesitated, and the mules quietly marched along past them, the muleteers walking at their side. Ibrahim and Abdullah took up an altercation with their fellows as the animals passed me. I brought up the rear, looking

behind, and as we crossed the brow of the hill, catching the eye of the leader, I bent in my affablest manner with "Ma salame, ya Sheik." I had taken the right measure of these stragglers, as a party ready to get plunder if it offered on easy terms, and not otherwise. But I had not been sanguine enough to imagine that, these passed, I should find the road clear. When I scanned the new landscape before me no other company of Arabs was in view. Ordinarily this road had groups of camel drivers and of Jews going to and from Hebron and Jerusalem, but on this occasion it was deserted. Sometimes we could see men moving on the heights, but our party, now mysteriously rejoined by the bedouin, looked formidable from afar, and the fellahin kept to their villages, so that we reached the pools of Solomon and watered our beasts in peace, and passed Bethlehem still in close file. At Mar Elias and over the plain of Rephaim it was still needful to be watchful, but at the descent over Hinnom I took leave of my two mute Turkish friends, who touched their breasts ceremoniously, and I hastened on ahead to Jerusalem.

When I had reached the city and changed some circular notes, I was prepared for all my bedouin friends; their eagerness for the money overweighed their dread of entering the city gates. As I checked the paper drafts they had received from me, and handed them over gold and silver in return, and then gave each *backshish* beyond what they demanded, with enough tobacco to save diminution in the length of their pipes for many weeks, their relief was so great they forgot even to ask for more. Soleiman lingered after I had dismissed him with a grasp of the hand, to urge that I should now come back with them by another route and send on Nicola with the *writing*. He was really sorry to part from me, and I made promise, counted on at the time, to come back again soon after a visit to England.

The disappearance of the bedouin when we were in peril from the fellahin did not seem heroic, but

they were in greater danger than we were from the certain existence of some old blood-feud which would have been remembered, and this, if once raised, might have included us in the consequences, moreover, they had only undertaken to guard us in their own territory.

I had much to do. My first care was to open the case and wash my picture free from the stains of travel, and I was rejoiced to see it had received no harm. Letters were waiting me, and as the post went out that night, I had to hurry to assure my friends that my unusual silence had no serious cause. While thus engaged I was summoned to attend at the Consulate without a moment's delay. I went back with the messenger, and found the excellent Consul quite irate that I had not immediately on my return to Jerusalem reported the circumstances of my journey. It was not respectful, he pointed out, to leave these matters to be talked of all over the city by the muleteers and my servants, when he, established in his position to secure information, was left in ignorance by my neglect. He now required me to draw up a report to send to his official superiors by the parting post. This I did as best I could, leaving but little time for the completion of my private despatches.

Mr. Finn was an eminently energetic and scrupulously honourable official in all particulars, but he suffered in the estimation of the natives by the English system of the employment of Arab dragomen, a system already recognised as bad by other Governments which substituted officials of their own race.

I had now to take steps to find another goat. After my thorough change of work it was an excellent opportunity to sit in judgment upon "The Temple" picture, "to catch it on the sly," as John Linnell used to say of such chances, recognising truly that a picture is ever striving to take in the painter by appearing exactly what he wishes it to be, when it really is not. I was glad to get Sim and Graham to see my moun-

tains, and to note the impression the work made on them.

From the top of Dr. Sim's house I could look across to the mountains of Moab. While the season was yet furnishing the same character of clouds as those I had sketched, I used his roof as my studio to complete this part of the picture.

I made some riding excursions to discover a young white goat, but it turned out that such a beast could be found only at a great distance. Having until January searched in vain, I sent a man beyond the Jordan to find one, he delighted me after two or three days by appearing with a model which was nigh perfect; the price was a fancy one, the animal was tired with his journey, and it was petted in every degree as a precious possession, but the next day it died before I could do a touch from it. I then had to send off two venturesome lads for another, and in a week, in the middle of February, they returned with a kid without a trace of brown or black on his coat, save for a patch on the off side. This animal served me to the end of my stay, when I gave him to the children of a worthy missionary.

I was gradually overtaken by the penalty of becoming famous among the guides who acted for travellers visiting the city. When in the middle of my work in the courtyard, which now formed my studio for the goat, a party would be let in with the stentorian declaration of the dragoman, "My Gentleman, Lady come to see pictures." At first the name of Dr. MacGowan or the Consul would be used by the visitors, and I felt compelled to submit to the interruption; but soon the calls became so frequent that I hesitated, and when I discovered that the tourists, many of whom had come on from Rome, were "doing me" as among the sights of the place, I sternly refused to have my hours taken up by any one without a special introduction. It was time to do this, for not only did they often spoil my day, but asserted that the background had not been painted at the Dead Sea, since the writers

could prove from journalist witnesses, who had seen the painter at his house in Jerusalem, that it was executed there, and that the encrustation had been copied from salt spread over mud on a tray.

There was some warrant for the statement, for as I could not paint the goat at Oosdoom, and did not know precisely where the feet would be placed, I left a small patch to be represented at a later stage. I had, therefore, on leaving the sea provided myself both with the salt crystals and some of the connecting cakes of salt, and also a specimen of the black mud that underlay this crust. My artificial surface was made first with the black mud in a large tray, and when this was sufficiently baked in the sun, I poured my solution over it, which dried exactly as the natural encrustation does. When all was ready, I led the goat across the brittle surface, which broke precisely as I had seen it do down by the Dead Sea. The shallows, other than those round the animal's feet, were painted at Oosdoom.

The work did not progress so quickly as I had hoped, for I had my fits of discontent, and frequently, in the hope of some better arrangement, I undid work that had been painted. It was necessary to have some one to keep my goat in order, and when it was a matter of choice I employed a Jew, by which I hoped to improve the prospect of models for "The Temple" picture, and in fact I left off for a few days occasionally to take advantage of any sitter that could be got for that picture, but, as before, there was constant disappointment from their utter unpunctuality, and I was driven back to "The Scapegoat."

While I was thus engaged, news came of the battle of Inkerman which silenced our alien disparagers for a time, but as the winter approached, rumours of the soldiers' sufferings from cold and privations in the Crimea were of the most distressing character, and these were triumphed in by our foreign neighbours. There was no mail to furnish true intelligence, owing to the inability of the

ships to anchor in the roadstead at Jaffa; the natives, however, in some mysterious manner heralded the truth, and it was impossible not to see that the German Colony, instead of fraternal feeling, which I had thought was felt on either side, entertained a settled captious jealousy of the English. In Jerusalem, as in other places, men without honest occupation are given to invent fables, and it is not so frivolous as it might seem to be to show them their folly. One evening in a facetious mood I amused Sim by making a very neat drawing of a newly invented gun with posterior touch-hole, having movable lens to sight target, with forty-two telescope barrels running with wheels on rails as the gun was fired, each barrel to give a mile of range; the whole was drawn and lettered with description to look like an engraving. Having all ready, Sim and I on our evening walk began an altercation within hearing of a certain trans-Atlantic pro-Russian, I affecting to scout the story that the Russians could be persuaded that such an invention would act, and that they were about to bring it into the field against the Allies. Sim pretended to believe the story. The listener wanted particulars. I said that when he saw the absurd print he would recognise the utter impracticability of the gun. He said he strongly suspected it was true that the Russians had such a gun; and when he saw the drawing he exclaimed, "Yes, it is as I suspected. It is an American invention which I knew of from a similar print ten years ago, and they have sold it to the Russians." He added he should like to borrow it to show to some German friends. It was confided to his care, and soon we heard the old carriers of evil tidings delighting in this last news, and Bishop Gobat said that he had always feared it would be so, and that by it both the allied armies and navies would be destroyed. I then sat down another evening and invented a new gun. It carried a bomb, and had a seat for an intrepid aeronaut near the muzzle; the rider held reins fastened into the nozzle of the shot. On the explosion of the gun the shock vaulted the rider into

a saddle on the missile, and when it had done its work of destruction the rider could turn the shot round and return again. This "print" we sent after the other with great effect, for at last false Rumour saw that she was made ridiculous.

END OF VOL. I