

# OUR FUTURE HIGHWAY



*V. Rosset Cameron*

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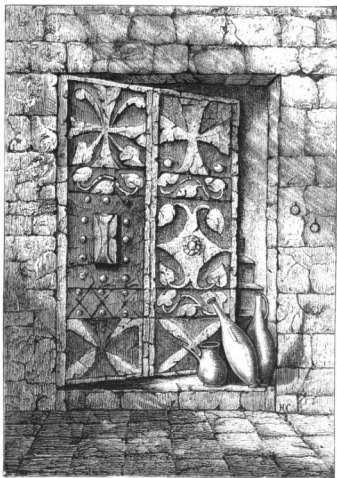
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OUR FUTURE HIGHWAY.









CARVED STONE DOOR.

VOL. I. P. 192.

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# OUR FUTURE IN THE WEST

BY  
WILLIAM DEWEY  
Author of "The Education of a Citizen," "The Education of a Soldier,"  
"The Education of a Statesman," "The Education of a Statesman,"  
"The Education of a Statesman," "The Education of a Statesman,"



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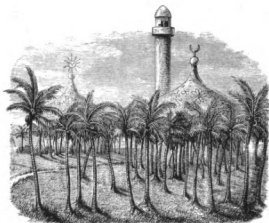
# OUR FUTURE HIGHWAY.

BY

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MOSQUES NEAR BAGHDAD.

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## PREFACE.

THE interest that is felt by all in the Eastern Question must be my excuse for publishing the following pages. In them I endeavour to describe the incidents of a journey through a district which, though now in many parts waste and desolate, is, I feel sure, destined, and that at no distant date, to become as it was in days of yore, the great highway between the East and the West.

For the historical notices of the places through which we passed, I am indebted to

the works of Canon Rawlinson, Gibbon, Ockley, and others, and if any errors are to be found they must be ascribed to my own want of knowledge rather than to any inaccuracies on the part of my authorities.



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OUR FUTURE HIGHWAY.







## CHAPTER I.

Sir Frederick Goldsmid—Railway communication—Admiralty leave—A Chaldean gentleman—Medical outfit—Heavy baggage—*Orontes*—A mixed multitude—Island of Venus—A welcome addition—Irish hospitality—Sea-sickness—A perfect Adonis—Passengers—Suahili stories—Gibraltar—Eucalypti—Malta—Church of St. John—Sir Harry Keppel—Fellows—Larnaca—An hotel—Over-zealous officials—A *table d'hôte*—Italian *trattoria*—Don Pasquale—A polyglot restaurant—Start for Nicosia—Greek village—Roads—Kismet—Huge doors—Sir Garnet's head-quarters.



JUST before Sir Frederick Goldsmid delivered his lecture on our communications with India at the United Service Institution, and the Duke of Sutherland formed his association for the promotion of the Euphrates valley railway, I had my attention turned to

the same regions, being persuaded that the course political affairs were taking in the East would, sooner or later, render the establishment of railway communication between the Persian Gulf (and ultimately our Indian possessions) and the coast of the Mediterranean more and more of an imperial necessity.

The acquisition of Cyprus, and the Anglo-Turkish convention occurring soon after I had begun to think seriously about the matter, decided me upon going myself to see what were the facilities which might aid, and the difficulties which might stand in the way of, such an undertaking. So in the end of September, 1878, having completed my arrangements for travel, and obtained the necessary permission from "their Lords Commissioners,"—still worded in quaint old English, and prohibiting me from taking service under any foreign prince or potentate,—I gave the rendezvous at Cyprus to two gentlemen who were to accompany me, and at Portsmouth to a much-praised individual, recommended to

me as a Chaldean gentleman desirous of travelling in the East, said good-bye to my family, and went up to London.

Here I met my old friend Bird who had kindly superintended all my medical outfit, besides compiling a small and handy book of instruction for my guidance in cases of illness or accident. I also met one of my would-be companions, and gave him full directions as to route, &c., so that he might arrive at Cyprus at the same time as myself. As his heavy baggage—heavy is the right name—was shipped with mine on board the *Orontes*, I made sure that he would turn up safe and sound and to time; but the fates willed it otherwise, as from that day to this I have heard nothing more of him.

After my farewells I went down to Portsmouth, where I found the Chaldean safely arrived, and next morning a quiet stroll of a few minutes took us to the *Orontes*, on board which ship their lordships had granted me a passage to Cyprus, and which was lying

with her steam up alongside the great troop jetty.

Here I found my baggage and ammunition was safely stowed on board, and everything ready for starting. A mixed multitude we were: drafts for Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus; naval officers for the Mediterranean squadron, amongst them a lot of youngsters and six Chinese sub-lieutenants; dockyard officials for Malta; two ladies and their children, the first to brave the pestilential (?) island of Venus; and also wives and children of officers for Malta and Gibraltar. Our first destination was Queenstown, where we were to add to our number, and where Dr. Moss, late of the *Alert*, came on board, and formed a welcome addition to our party.

Irish hospitality at the Yacht Club, and elsewhere, was, as usual, genially exercised, and it was with a feeling of real friendship for the acquaintances of a day that we steamed out of the Cove of Cork outward bound. The little time we had been at Queenstown had sufficed to put the Chaldean on his legs



again, he having been prostrate from the moment we left Portsmouth till we anchored, and keeping on sending for me to reiterate his assurances that he would die. As I have never heard of a death from sea-sickness, I did not put much faith in what he said; and when at the first glad heave of the ship as she emerged on to the wide Atlantic from between the protecting headlands of the Cove, he was again on the flat of his back, I was hard-hearted enough to tell him he should get up and walk about. A day or two saw him all right, and then he showed that the lines on which he was built were more adapted for stowage than speed.

A curious-looking little squat fat man he was with an enormous face, in which the mouth usurped the greater portion, swarthy complexion, thick lips, heavy eyebrows, snub nose, and pendulous cheeks, the vast expanse of which was occasionally shaved, showing on other days a stubbly waste like Hotspur's dandy lord. Round-shouldered and bow-kneed,

with enormous hands and feet, he still thought himself a perfect Adonis and a regular lady-killer. He attempted his captivating powers among the ladies'-maids, and when repulsed put down his want of success to their want of cultivated tastes. Like the semi-Europeanised Oriental generally, he was a failure, but his pretensions were so great that I still believed in him ; afterwards he was found out.

Enough of the Chaldean. Amongst the passengers and officers we had materials for a pleasant society ; one artilleryman was an artist, and had with him sketch-books filled with reminiscences from all parts of the world ; some comical and some serious, but which amongst a varied party like ours gave rise to many an interesting conversation. My old friend Hammick, going out as commander of the *Invincible*, was invaluable to the ladies and children, and equally welcome with the other sex on account of his dry humour and quaint sayings. Moss, with his store of reading and experience, led the way in all scientific conversation. Many

who fancy that among soldiers and sailors there is not much taste for such discussions, would have been astonished to hear how much was known, and how apt and true were many of the remarks.

I was installed as storyteller to the children, of whom there were many on board, and the delight with which they listened to quaint Suahili stories quite repaid me for the trouble of telling them. The difference between my little audience and the stately Arabs and wild negroes who had listened to the same anecdotes in many an African camp or village—between the surroundings of a man-of-war's quarter-deck, and the grass or mud huts where I was the only European, was sufficiently striking to make me think of what curious changes this little drama we call life, a mere speck in the infinite, is composed.

⚓ Gibraltar was reached without adventure, and we landed many of our passengers. Our stay was very short, and I was unable to see much of the changes which had been

effected since I had last passed by eight years before.

Moss and I went to see with what success the planting of the Eucalyptus had been attended. All the trees seemed drooping; the rocky hill-sides, exposed to the full force of the southern and western sun, did not appear adapted to the trees which have wrought such a beneficent change in other parts of the world.

On again to Malta, the ancient home of the Knights of St. John, and one of the bulwarks of Christianity against the encroachments of the conquering Moslem, and now one of those British strongholds which visibly show the strength and power of the little island in the north-western seas. The Church of St. John called upon me, as a pilgrim, to pay it a visit, and what thoughts of the past it recalled. There was no time to renew my acquaintance with other spots rendered sacred by their traditions.

At the Union Club I met Sir Harry Keppel,

luckily somewhat recovered from his accident, who hearing where I was going and what I proposed doing, gave me a hearty God-speed. Curiously enough, Fellowes, commander of the *Minotaur*, an old messmate, who, as first lieutenant of the *Briton*, had assisted me in my start from Zanzibar, and had welcomed me at Madeira in the *Minotaur*, on my way home after my tramp across unknown Africa, came out of hospital here to take passage to Cyprus to rejoin his ship.

A few more days and we arrived in the roadstead of Larnaca, still a scene of bustle and hard work for the navy, though strangely quiet considering the feverish energy which had accompanied the landing of the troops on the first occupation only three months before.

Here I found Schaefer, one of the two who had engaged to meet me, but of my other proposed companion not a word. Schaefer told me that he had got quarters for us at an hotel conducted on the most peculiar principles. When he reached the island he was

directed to the house, and on arriving asked for a room. "If you go up stairs and find one empty, you can have it," was the reply of the proprietor. I thought this very odd, but it did not prepare me for what I actually found.

Schaefer had brought off a boat, and we soon got our traps into it and landed. At first we had some trouble about the Custom-house, which was waking up into life after having slumbered so long under the Turkish rule, and over-zealous officials wanted to open my baggage on the beach. However, I dug out a superior officer, and soon convinced him of the absurdity of examining things only landed for a few days, and private baggage into the bargain.

I now found that no porters or carts were to be hired to carry the things to the hotel, so I had to fall back on the naval officer in charge of the beach, and got a party of blue-jackets from him and a cart from the Commissariat, and so went cheerily up to the hotel. Here I found matters as Schaefer had described.

Rooms there were with beds in them, and therefore to be called bed-rooms, but otherwise well-nigh bare of furniture. If one wanted to wash, one was told, "There's the well, and there's the bucket," and was forced to draw and carry one's own water up stairs for tub and everything. Meals at first were not provided; after a few days what was called a *table d'hôte* was established, but the cookery was detestable. At other times than those named for meals, which were not punctual, nothing was obtainable; if anything was asked for, the humble applicant was told "It's not the proper time for tea," or whatever he might want. No wonder if, under these circumstances, we fed at an Italian *tratoria* hard by, where all the waifs and strays of immigrants into Cyprus were wont to congregate. Don Pasquale, as the proprietor was usually called, was an original, and more nearly solved the problem of perpetual motion than any one I ever saw.

No coat or waistcoat, shirt-sleeves tucked

up, slipshod slippers and a touzled head, were what most struck one in his personal appearance. Waiter, accountant, and proprietor, his only assistants were his wife and cook. He had to answer six or seven different questions in different languages at the same time, and in consequence, when he did have a chance of talking less hurriedly, he still made a *pot pourri* of the languages he knew—Greek, French, Turkish, Arab, German, and English, would all be jumbled together in one sentence.

At times when his room was full, he would be seen scudding across, carrying half-a-dozen different people's plates, and dealing them out like a conjuror dealing cards, his body going forwards whilst his head would be turned backwards to shout some new order he had just received, to his cook, and in some extraordinary and indescribable way letting yet another fresh arrival know that he had heard and understood his wishes. Of course order and tranquillity did not exist in this polyglot restaurant, but the cooking, of its kind, was not



bad, and we soon found out the times when there was the least noise and company, and Don Pasquale and his wife looked upon us as people to be favoured, and I am afraid often served us out of our turn, and left other of their clients to wait till they had provided us with what we wanted.

After the tratoria, we used to go to a *café* on the quay a short way off, close to where Mr. Truefit has established himself, and have a cup of coffee and a nargileh. So far our lodging and messing arrangements, though not luxurious, were amusing and sufficient, and as soon as we were fairly settled, I looked about for means to go up to Nicosia to call on Sir Garnet Wolseley, to whom a firman from the Sublime Porte granting me permission to roam at will through the Turkish dominions, was to be sent.

I found that one could either go by diligence or on mules, and being told the latter were the quickest and best, we set about obtaining them.

On inquiry we found that the municipality

had established a tariff considerably in excess of what the animals would have been hired for before the advent of the British, but still doing away with the necessity of bargaining and chaffering over the matter.

We engaged a couple of mules, and their owner mounted on another to show us the way. We strapped the necessaries for a night behind our saddles, and started, leaving the Chaldean in charge of our baggage, though he seemed to think that it was rather beneath his dignity to be left behind, and that he would have added *éclat* to our *cortège* if he had accompanied us.

Cyprus has now been so well described that I will not inflict on the reader anything about our ride. At the half-way halting-place, though there was a *café*, our guide took us to his own house, where his wife prepared us a meal of eggs and a sort of sausage, which was not at all bad, grapes for dessert, and tolerable coffee afterwards. The people certainly seem well-to-do, and though their houses are not as clean or tidy as English cottages, I should fancy that

they were really much better off in all material matters. Many things of course which, owing to the march of civilisation, are considered indispensable in England, they had not, but never having even heard of them, they do not feel their want.

Man and beast having been refreshed, we proceeded on our way, and were not sorry when the towers and minarets of Nicosia hove in sight, as the day had been hot and the road dusty and monotonous. Signs of the English were, however, rife in gangs of men repairing and levelling the road, a thing which would never have been dreamt of under the Turks, who, in most cases, let any public work go to ruin before completion; and, even if they do find sufficient energy to complete it, consider that then they have done enough, and whatever happens afterwards must be ascribed to Kismet.

Entering Nicosia by a tunnel-like gateway guarded by huge doors plated with iron and studded with nails, we wound our way through

its narrow streets and arcaded bazaars to the further side; traces of its occupation by the marines and blue-jackets were to be seen in the names of the ships in the squadron painted up over the gates, and the signs of the places calling themselves hotels.

Passing out of the town by another gate, we found ourselves on an open plain and Sir Garnet's head-quarters in sight. All the offices were in the buildings of a Greek convent, whilst tents were pitched for mess and sleeping.

## CHAPTER II.

Firman—Matters civil and military—Laws—Fiscal arrangements—Percentage of sickness—Return to Larnaca—Chaldean ill—The old Guard—Castan Bey—Inducements to visit Limasol—Search for animals—An auctioneer—A diminutive tat—*Fambières*—Marketing—A night ride—A lunatic?—Arrival at a village—Quarters for the night—Halt for breakfast—Olive harvest—Quaint receptacles—Castan's coat—A comfortable meal—An ancient fountain—Carob harvest—Old ruins and metamorphic rocks—Dire disorder—Castan's wife—A friendly Greek—Collection of antiquities—Phœnician glass—Reckless destruction—Jeremiads—Fear and trembling—A night sail—A day's halt—Zie—Tired mules—Telegraph cable—Start for Beirut—Hôtel de l'Orient.

WE were kindly welcomed by Sir Garnet, Lord Gifford, and the rest of the staff, and obtained the firman which was to pass us through the Turkish dominions in Asia. If Cyprus was unhealthy and enervating, it certainly had not made its mark on Sir Garnet and those around him, who all seemed as

energetic as if only a week from England. He was fully occupied with all the thousand and one matters civil and military entailed by the occupation of a new country, and putting the ponderous machine of Government into motion and maintaining it in working order.

Cyprus had previously been as little governed as most other parts of the Turkish empire ; the laws, mostly good in themselves, had been allowed to remain a dead letter, whilst the fiscal arrangements had been such that it appeared as if they were intended to abolish revenue altogether instead of fostering it and causing it to increase. When the rearrangements proposed are carried into effect the island is sure to rapidly increase in prosperity, and with the abolition of bribery and corruption the industries which are now well-nigh dead will start into new life, and no statesman will have to regret, for financial reasons, the Turkish Convention of June 1878, whilst strategically it is the best point that could have been acquired for the defence of Turkey in Asia without

actually taking up a position on the main land.

No gloomy views were expressed at the head-quarters camp, and the scare about sickness, of which so much had been made in England, did not seem to exist; true, there had been illness, but the season of 1878 had been an exceptionally unhealthy one all over the Mediterranean; and if I am not mistaken, the percentage of sickness among the troops had been greater at Malta and Gibraltar than at Cyprus.

Next morning we were obliged to say good-bye to our kind host, as we expected the mail from Alexandria to arrive, and by it our absentee from England, and also Schaefer's kit which had been sent round by sea whilst he had come out overland.

The ride back to Larnaca brought nothing of adventure, but on arrival we found our Chaldean on the flat of his back and declaring he was going to die. He had a very slight cold, caused probably by having been rash enough to

wash his face, and like most Orientals he gave in at once to being ill.

The mail steamer came into port the next day but without the third member of the party ; so, though it brought Schaefer's luggage, we decided again to wait for another steamer in order to give No. 3 one more chance, and then start for Beirut.

In the evening we were rather amused whilst at our dinner by an ancient individual shaved like one of "The old Guard" who entered into the polyglot conversation of the *trattoria*, and asserted loudly that the name of Don Pasquale which we had given to our host "*était historique.*" "But," said we, "it's only a nickname, for fun, that we call him Don Pasquale." "*Mais Don Pasquale c'est historique,*" answered our old Guard. After a time, as he seemed an original, we got into conversation with him, and found out that he was a Swiss called Castan Bey who had at one time been a doctor to the seraglio at Constantinople and had for many years been exiled to Cyprus.



He had also served with the Turkish contingent during the Crimean war, and had received a sabre cut on the head, which in some measure accounted for the numerous eccentricities he indulged in. He told us that he lived at Limasol, and that if we would go there with him he would give up a visit to Beirut whither he was bound. He added as an inducement that he possessed a wonderful collection of antiquities he had himself dug up which were at his house, and which he would show us if we would accompany him. After some consultation, Schaefer and I made up our minds to go with him the next day, starting in the evening, so as to avoid the heat of the sun. Our first business in the morning was to find beasts to carry us, about which there was some little difficulty, no tariff having been established to Limasol and the Muleteers asking exorbitant prices. Whilst bargaining with one, a man who had set up as an auctioneer came and told us that he could let us have horses. After a bit we found out that the

horses he spoke of did not belong to him, but were some that had been collected for a sale, and which the owners naturally did not wish to hire out. The auctioneer, who was the worse for liquor, wanted to persuade us to take them, and said that they were all at his disposal; however, we were able to come to no arrangement about them, and thought we should have to give up all idea of the trip, when we found an Englishman who kept a sort of hotel and who had two horses left behind by one of the Indian Cavalry regiments, which he agreed after a little bargaining to let us have.

Castan Bey told us that by leaving at six o'clock we should arrive at a sort of half-way house about ten or eleven, and by starting early next morning we should reach Limasol before ten.

We got everything ready for the start, Castan appearing mounted on a most diminutive tat which he had bought for a few shillings from one of the Indian camp-followers, and

which was scarcely tall enough to keep his feet off the ground.

Just as we were going to start he discovered that he wanted a pair of "*jambières*," and went off again, but soon reappeared with a long pair of gaiters buttoned up inside his legs, the straps for keeping up which seemed to be very much in his way.

All preliminaries being now arranged, we got under way. While riding through the bazaar he discovered that we should want provisions, and so began bargaining at various little stalls for bread and cheese and coffee which he stuffed into his saddle-bags. This done, he discovered that his horse wanted the spur, and borrowed one of mine. Just as I had my foot cocked up on the saddle to take it off we passed one of the petty officers of the squadron, who knew me, and who, whilst he touched his cap, looked rather amused and perplexed to know where we were bound with our comical friend.

On we went into the shades of evening, and

soon after passing the Roman aqueduct which used to bring water to the town, it fell dark. Castan Bey was full of conversation, mostly about the corrupt state of the Greek Church in the island, the higher classes of which he averred were opposed to the English occupation, some because they were Russophiles, and others because they were afraid that their reign of extortion would be put an end to, and their immorality and ignorance unveiled.

We blundered along in the dark. About ten o'clock we heard the sound of the sea on our left, and thought that Zie, our proposed halting-place for the night, must be close at hand, and so it was; but Castan Bey declared that we must keep to the right. Following his guidance we did so. His conversation became wilder, and as we found no village and he declared himself lost, we began to suspect that we had entrusted ourselves to the guidance of a lunatic. However, about 3 A.M. we found ourselves near a village and

insisted on going to it. Of course everybody was dead asleep when we arrived, but after making a great row at the first house we came to, we succeeded in rousing a man who, though sleepy, seemed good humoured. He could lodge neither us nor our beasts, but took us to a larger house, where the people instantly turned out and did their best to make us welcome.

We got some fodder for the horses and then picketed them in the yard; the whole family, who were sleeping in one large room, turning out for us and making a fire. All they could produce in the way of food was some honey and eggs, but we soon had coffee, and with our bread and cheese made a fair meal. I had a waterproof sheet strapped behind my saddle, and Schaefer was similarly provided; we camped out in the yard, preferring that to the chance of unwelcome bedfellows inside, whilst our guide and would-be host, Castan Bey, turned into the master's bed.

By six o'clock we were on the road again

but the poor horses were very tired. At eight we stopped by a small stream and made a breakfast off the remainder of our bread and cheese, whilst the animals grazed at will. We attempted making coffee in a tin cup. Castan, who said he was a good traveller, capsized it in taking it off the fire, so that we had to be content with water. When we again started Castan declared we were within three hours of Limasol, and that the village Maroni, where we had slept, was scarcely more than that distance from it, and that we should surely arrive before noon.

The country was very broken and with many rocky torrent-beds, but in several places there were groves of olive-trees, and the people were busy collecting their crops. They used curious odds and ends for carrying the fruit. Handkerchiefs, gregos, and in some cases even boots, were pressed into the service. Near one of these groves Castan told us he had left a coat with some money and his Crimean medal. He was in a great state of

mind when he couldn't find them, and lost much time in vainly questioning the peasants who were about and threatening them with all the terrors of the law.

About one o'clock he told us Limasol was still a long way off, but that we were near a village, where we could get something to eat, and where there was a very ancient fountain well worth visiting. If he had been left to himself he might have been wandering there now, but luckily we saw cows and other signs of inhabitants near, so we rode straight for them across one or two ravines and grips which the old troopers managed bravely; but Castan could not bring himself to risk a fall and went a long way round by an easier road. The village was soon reached, and the head man took compassion on us and prepared a good repast—eggs, bread, cheese, meat, tomatoes, milk, coffee, and country wine, with grain for the horses. For all this we paid two shillings, not much certainly, but enough to satisfy our host. In the courtyard

were some beautiful almond-trees, and the house was quite clean and tidy, a great contrast to the one where we had halted during the night. The carob harvest was going on as well as the olive gathering, and all the storehouses seemed full to repletion. After our meal, we went to see the fountain where Castan had told me there was an ancient inscription.

It was a lovely little spot, with a broken-down arch and stone trough for animals to drink from, and a spout for the village girls to fill their water-jars; beautiful maidenhair and other ferns were growing in profusion. The inscription proved to be modern, the date being the latter end of last century, and it and the fountain were the last visible remains of an old convent.

When the poor horses were somewhat refreshed we got under way again and proceeded on our journey to Limasol. On the road we passed some old ruins and some huge detached masses of metamorphic rock, which Castan



asserted were the remains of some ancient Cyclopean race, but which I am very much inclined to think were natural.

Limasol was not reached till nearly eight o'clock, and when we did arrive it was to find everything in dire disorder.

Castan Bey's eldest son had taken advantage of his father's absence to start for Constantinople, and had persuaded his step-mother to give him all the money in the house. She, poor woman, was in bed with a toothache, and the only domestic was a half-witted peasant girl. We procured stabling for our horses at a sort of caravanserai close by, and when we came back found the aspect of things rather more cheerful. Castan Bey had been out to forage, and meeting a friendly Greek, vice-consul for some power, had prevailed upon him to provide a supper and a bottle of what was by courtesy called champagne. We discussed it with appetite, and were glad to take up our places on divans in the sitting-room, as there were no bed-rooms to spare. After our

long ride we were in nowise fastidious and soon were sound asleep.

We spent the next morning in examining the collection of antiquities which had been the bait that lured us to Limasol.

Very curious and interesting they were, but no idea of arrangement seemed to have ever entered the head of Castan Bey. Heads, torsos, pitchers, and glass were huddled together in confusion, and not even an attempt had been made at keeping the treasures-trove from different localities separate. He had large quantities of Phœnician glass, now rendered opalescent by the effect of age, and so light and fragile that it felt like so much paper. Much of this glass was found by the Crusaders and Venetians during their occupation of the island, and used by them instead of their clumsy *vaisselle* of horn and metal.

To the long occupation of Cyprus by the Venetians and the quantities of glass found there, may no doubt be attributed the introduction of the manufacture of glass at Venice,

which under free political institutions is again reviving after a slumber of a century and more.

We were sorely tempted to purchase Castan's collection, but had neither the time nor the means at our disposal, and I fear it is doomed to reckless destruction by the hands of his Cypriote wife, and still more blundering servant.

Of his wife, Castan Bey always speaks in terms of apology, and excuses himself for having married her. "But what can one do in Cyprus?" often comes in; the universal ending of these Jeremiads being, "*Si elle n'était pas honnête, je la mettrais hors de la porte.*"

Poor thing, when we saw her in the morning, she evidently stood in fear and trembling of her lord and master, whom she apparently regarded as a superior being, and who certainly treated her as an inferior, scarcely so well as he did the maid.

When we went to look after the horses, we found them so thoroughly tired, that we

thought it best to give them another day. Leaving them to be sent back in charge of a messenger, we arranged to return to Larnaca in a boat, the night wind being reported to be always fair, as indeed it had been ever since our arrival.

In the evening we started, but as next morning we found ourselves only half-way to Zie, and no wind to take us either backwards or forwards, we had to put into a little bay, where we were glad to find a cave which afforded shelter from the burning rays of the mid-day sun. The boatmen brought us a fowl and some eggs from a neighbouring village, with which I made a spatch cock and an omelette. Salt from the rocks and a loaf of bread completed our meal, for which hunger proved an excellent sauce.

In the evening we again made a start, but the winds were scarcely more propitious, and we found ourselves next morning off Zie, where we landed, as it was a dead calm, and there seemed no chance of making any better

progress in the boat than we had already done.

Here we found a sort of inn or *café*, where we got a meal of pickled beccaficoes, eggs and coffee, and after some trouble, mules and a guide were found to take us to Larnaca.

The mules had evidently, both from smell and appearance been employed in bringing in loads of carobs, the harvest being now in full swing, and were very tired and miserable, poor brutes!

However it was a case of Hobson's choice, these or none, so we were fain to make the best of them. After a long and tedious ride, we arrived at Larnaca, the unfortunate mules being almost brought to a dead stop by the trench cut across the road for the telegraph cable which was being hauled ashore when we came in. We bargained with our muleteer, that the poor animals should do no work the next day, and agreed to pay him in the evening in order to make quite sure he did not start off before they were duly rested.

The mail steamer coming in (*sans le troisième*) we embarked for Beirut, where we arrived the next morning. We landed without any trouble, our firman franking us through the Custom House, so that our baggage was not examined.

Once on shore we found comfortable quarters at the Hôtel de l'Orient, kept by Monsieur Baseul, and quite the best at Beirut.

### CHAPTER III.

Miracles of perfection—Mr. George Sabia—Frock coat and paper collars—A Russian baron—Political discourses—*Le grand ministre*—Treaty of San Stefano—June convention—Italian Consul-General—American college—Research collections—Horses—Muleteers—Assyrian and Egyptain sculptures—Their deterioration—Beirut water-works—Levantines—Varnish of European manners—Rustem Pasha—Russian invasion—State of the Lebanon—A mock Druse—His terror—A Druse and a Frenchman—Cutting off a beard—The Maronites—The monasteries—Missionaries—Naval demonstration—Usurers—Consuls-General.

ARRIVED at Beirut, our first care was to procure animals for our transport and riding, and many (miracles of perfection, if all their owners said was to be believed) were brought for our inspection. One fellow, who said he had to go off immediately to Egypt, came with an ancient broken-kneed and broken-down screw, which he was willing to sell cheap at 70*l.*, as

some milords were waiting at Cairo to go up the Nile with him. At the risk of delaying these milords he haunted the neighbourhood of the hotel until we left, in the vain hope of foisting his steed on us.

Our Chaldean had some friends among the missionaries, and one, Mr. George Sabia, a teacher in the British schools, was very useful to us, busying himself in finding us servants and arranging various small matters, whilst the Chaldean stalked about in all the grandeur of a frock coat, sun helmet, paper cuffs and collars, giving himself airs, and being utterly useless. If he had not been recommended as a good linguist, and that we hoped he might, when out of towns, lose some of his vanity, I think we should have sent him about his business on the spot. As it was, we found other friends who helped us in our preparations, notably a Russian baron who was stopping at the same hotel, and who placed his dragoman at our disposal. He also most kindly gave up to me a horse he had hired for his own use.



The baron, who for some reason did not live in Russia, had for several years made the East his head-quarters, and during the Russo-Turkish war had been to the Ionian Islands, whence he had lately returned. He used to speak his opinions freely. "*Parlez franchement,*" he used always to say, "if the politics of our two countries are not at present in accord, there is no reason why individuals should be unfriendly. *L'Angleterre possède la force morale, et nous autres, nous avons la force brutale.*" On this text he used to speak for hours, arguing that an alliance between the two countries would be of great value to both, and that we should frankly admit that the old times were passing away, and that in the new that were coming, England and Russia, both by their geographical positions and by the condition of their frontiers, should lead the van in the civilisation of the world. Like most independent Russians he seemed to dislike the Germans very much, and would say, placing his hand on Asia: "There is the most populous

portion of the globe, we are the masters there ; why should the policy of the world be directed by two comparatively small countries like Germany and France, who have no interests worth mentioning beyond their own immediate borders ? Why, if we were to join our forces, we could dictate the policy of the world." He also quoted against us the annexation of the Transvaal, the Afghan war, and the troubles with the Kafirs, in order to show how impossible it is for a civilised country to prevent extending her dominions when they are coterminous with territories occupied by unruly and savage tribes.

There was a great deal of shrewd sense and truth in what he said, but I am afraid that there was also a great deal that would be impracticable in the present state of the world ; and before other things of which he spoke can be accomplished, there must be a great change in the opinions of leading politicians.

Certainly two things which he said were very true, that it would be much better for each

country to believe that the other was acting honestly and for the best, instead of trying to ascribe everything to bad motives, and that the English opposition were as much to blame for the Turkish war as the Russians. He asserted, and I believe with much truth, that the Russian armies would never have crossed the Pruth if it had not been for the agitation got up by the atrocity-mongers in England, and that the cause of the failure of the Constantinople Convention was to be ascribed to the same reason.

The Berlin Conference, however, he looked upon as a great triumph for English diplomacy, and, like many other people who I met, called Lord Beaconsfield "*le grand ministre*," looking upon him as a greater and more able statesman than either Gortschakoff or Bismarck.

Russia, he thought, had gone to Berlin with the idea that the treaty of San Stefano would be virtually confirmed in its entirety, and that all the changes that would be made would be

merely verbal, not affecting its execution or spirit. The great alterations effected by Great Britain, and the support she received from the other powers, who all looked up to her as the leader, very much astonished the Russian Government; and the announcement of the June Convention coming at the same time, proved to them that they had reached the limit of what they would be permitted to do.

We met with much kindness from many of the residents, amongst others from the Italian Consul-General and the members of the American College, which is doing a great educational work, and is of immense use to the country. In addition to teaching, the professors employ themselves in research, and their botanical, geological, and other collections—especially one of the fishes of the limestone strata of the Lebanon—are very complete and interesting.

Schaefer found a very good horse for which he paid 13*l.*, and as I only paid 10*l.* for mine, we were fairly lucky in our purchases. Mine I called the Count, and Schaefer named his Masood (or

“the happy one”). For our baggage, servants, and the Chaldean, we hired mules, which were the property of men belonging to a Christian village called Zahlich, near Baalbek, for which we had to pay at the rate of fifteen piastres a day each mule. For this price, which was, as we found afterwards, too high—the muleteers had to feed their mules, load and unload them, and pitch the tents. We also engaged a groom for our horses, and a cook and two servants, so that altogether we made a large party.

With Mr. Cornish, engineer of the water-works, we rode out to see the old Egyptian and Assyrian sculptures near the mouth of the Dog river, and saw all the works for the supply of water to Beirut. The sculptures are carved on the native rock, and now, I am sorry to say, after having weathered so many centuries, are beginning to be obliterated by water soaking through the rock and forming a sort of deposit on their face. This deposit, after a time, scales off, and with it part of the stone crumbles away. It may seem Vandalism to recommend

their being cut out of the rocks where they have existed for thousands of years, but unless this is done, in another twenty or thirty years there will be only blurred and scarcely distinguishable marks. Much of the cuneiform writing which surrounds the figures in the Assyrian bas-reliefs is already rendered illegible from this cause. No shelter that could be contrived would stop the process of deterioration. If it is thought best that they should remain where they are, they should be carefully taken from the rocks and a small house built to place them in. I think, however, that they would be more readily accessible, and better cared for, if they were presented to the American College, which certainly, as the foremost educational establishment in Beirut, has most claim to be their resting-place.

From these monuments of antiquity to the waterworks was a step of over three thousand years, but the mills of the Maronite convents on the banks of the river might have been copied from the Ninevite sculptures.

The water for the town is taken from the river above a solid weir, and then by a leet, or small canal, for some distance to the pumping station; the pumps are worked by a turbine driven by the fall of a portion of the water, and five or six hours a day suffice to pump the whole supply for the town. The water is conveyed in iron pipes into the town from the station, a distance of nine miles. Many people who begged and prayed for the water before it was at their doors, and promised to pay for having it laid on to their houses, now that it is there are too apathetic to avail themselves of it, and these are not only among the poor.

One of the best things that could happen for the prospects of the water company would be a really serious epidemic of cholera, or some other sweeping illness, at Beirut. That it has not come is a wonder, for all sanitary and other regulations are neglected, notwithstanding the presence of many Europeans. The Levantines, who form the bulk, however, of the so-called European population, think

they have done enough for civilisation when they appear dressed to within an inch of their lives on the pattern of the Parisian *Gommeux*, with their wives attired in the latest French fashion lounging beside them in flashy carriages, harness and carriage alike overloaded with tawdry plating and dust and dirt.

Some of these Levantines are certainly both desirous and capable of a better state of things, but they are a mere sprinkling. The merest varnish of European manners is assumed by people who are still Orientals in their ideas, and the effect is very often ludicrous.

Before leaving Beirut we called upon his Excellency Rustem Pasha, Governor-General of the Lebanon, who was most kind and courteous. In the room where he received us were two enormous stuffed bears which he had killed, when he was Turkish ambassador at St. Petersburg, after a desperate struggle. He seemed to put great faith in the recuperative powers of the Turkish empire, and said, with some bitterness, that if it had not been for the mistakes—



“terrible mistakes”—which had been committed, he believed the Ottoman empire, alone and unaided, would have been strong enough to roll back the tide of Russian invasion. The condition of the Lebanon since the laws of 1860 had been enforced, he said, was most flourishing, every inch of ground that could be utilised on the mountain sides by means of terraces being cultivated, the only drawback being the jealousy between the Druses and Maronites,—which will always continue as long as they dwell together, and for which the former are not always to blame—and the very low rate of taxation, which did not allow enough funds to be collected for roads and other public works.

The Druses are regarded by many of the Christians with a sort of superstitious awe, and I was told one story, in all good faith, which was supposed to prove them to be blood-thirsty robbers. One of the Christian peasantry of the mountains was in the habit of trading in the Druse villages, and found it much better for

his purpose to adopt the Druse dress, though without any idea of denying his Christianity. One day he found himself among Druses where he was not known, and was invited to sleep in the house of an old man who was one of their priests. This old man seeing him lie down to sleep without saying his prayers, told him that it was very wrong, and asked why he did so. The Christian answered that he knew it was wrong, but that it was scarcely his fault, as he had been badly brought up, and did not know how to pray properly. On this the old man volunteered to teach him, and commenced by a series of imprecations against all who were not Druses, and vows to kill men, women, and children who were Jews, Christians, or Mohammedans. His frightened guest repeated all this after him, but took the opportunity of his host falling asleep to levant. Once in a Christian village he changed his clothes, and registered a solemn vow never again to appear disguised as a Druse.

This story was told originally to a missionary

by one of his converts, and very probably was intended to enlist his sympathies on the side of the Maronites. According to many people the Druses compare very favourably with their neighbours, though they are more quarrelsome and warlike. In truth-telling both races are on a par; a Druse, indeed, will swear by his beard (the most sacred oath that he can use) to a falsehood. One did so to a well-known Frenchman, who told the Druse that if what he said proved untrue, and he got him into his hands, he would cut his beard off. "On my head be it," said the Druse, and went away. Soon after the Frenchman found out that he had been deceived, and vowed vengeance; nor had he long to wait. The Druse soon came to his house, which was out in the Lebanon, and on being taxed with his false oath acknowledged it with a laugh, saying, "I saw I couldn't deceive you unless I swore by my beard, and therefore 'I swore by my beard,' and would do so again if it were necessary." The Frenchman, who was a big,

powerful man, waxed irate, and catching hold of the Druse, forced him into a chair and cut his beard off, telling him that he shouldn't have a beard to swear by for some time.

The trouble that was caused by this was immense; not only the man himself, but all his relations, took up the quarrel, and were furious. "What, cut off a man's beard! better have killed him; a man more or less does not matter much, but to render us all ridiculous is not to be borne." After a great deal of disputing, and many threats, the matter was at length taken before the French Consul-General, and a peace patched up on the condition of the Frenchman paying a hundred pounds to the man who had been thus unceremoniously docked. Many *habitués* of Beirut, however, said that some day or other the rash Frenchman would most probably pay with his life for having insulted a fiery Druse in his most tender point of honour.

The Maronites when aroused are not so fierce as the Druses, but they have so often found being persecuted a profitable speculation, that

they are fond of provoking their neighbours. Sometimes they succeed only too well, and then are loud in their outcries. A large and ignorant body of monks is also a blot upon the prosperity of the Lebanon, and as they own the most fertile portions of the province, pay no taxes, and get their lands cultivated for them by their peasantry, they are not likely to become fewer in number. Under the present arrangements about Mount Lebanon and its inhabitants, the Turk will never be able to do anything to the monasteries, but a law of mortmain is urgently needed, else one day the whole of the range will pass into their hands, and the peasantry be even more completely subject to them than they are at present.

The Jesuits and American missionaries are both striving to bring the Maronites into what each party considers the pale of true Christianity, and in this competition lies a hope for the future, otherwise the outlook would be gloomy indeed.

After the massacres of 1860 and the French

occupation, aided by the naval demonstration of all the powers interested in the question, much was done for the Christians, but the money indemnity which the Turkish Government had to pay to the sufferers did them, in reality, far more harm than good. The people who were to receive the money got advances on account of it from the usurers of Beirut, and once in their hands, they have never been able to free themselves from the toils, so that a very large proportion of the property of the lay inhabitants of the Lebanon is now subject to the claims of these harpies. All the powers who interested themselves in the settlement of the troubles of 1860 have through their Consuls-General at Beirut the right of seeing that the agreements then made are faithfully carried out, and it would not be too much to ask that they should inquire what measures would be advantageous both for the inhabitants and the Government, and to urge their adoption by the rulers of the province.

## CHAPTER IV.

A baron and a correspondent—The French road—Their painful way—Non-progressive nature—Summer retreats—Such cavalry!—Infantry—Ignorance of officers—Mountains of Cyprus—Chill air—Kopf's Erbwurst—Cœle-Syria—A curious mixture—Passengers by diligence—A narrow escape—Fools and fire-arms—Inn at Shtaura—Mr. Rattray—A plucky Englishwoman—A modern Turkish road—Extortion—Mualakka—Zahlich—Mr. Dale—Jesuits—Muleteers—Rope-makers—Poplars—Baalbek—Burton—Baksheesh—A locanda—French officers—Quarries—Parks and pleasure-grounds—Decadence—Prisoners of war—Steam-engines—Official visits—Telegraphs—Hôtel de Palmyre—A row—A reported murder—A wounded man—The serai—Cigarettes and apologies—Kurdish zaptieh.

HAVING engaged our muleteers and servants, we made our start from Beirut on Monday, 28th of October, leaving the courtyard of the Hôtel d'Orient at eleven o'clock in the morning. The Baron and Mr. Macdonald, correspondent of the *Standard*, came out in a carriage to a

café in the pine wood, a favourite resort of the inhabitants of Beirut, to see the last of us.

The French road to Damascus by which we travelled is a wonderfully good piece of engineering, the gradients by which the mountain is passed being remarkably easy when the height ascended for the distance is considered. The tolls which are exacted, however, prevent the peasantry making use of the road, and long strings of camels, mules, and donkeys, are to be seen wending their painful way along rough and broken ground at its side.

The non-progressive nature of the people is well shown by their adhering to the old means of transport by pack animals instead of taking to wheeled carriages. The only wheeled vehicles to be seen on the road are the diligence which runs daily to Damascus and mule waggons belonging to the Company.

As we ascended, the views were lovely ; here and there were perched little villas, embowered in trees and flowers, the summer retreats of consuls and merchants ; and nestling in the



valleys many a village which viewed at a distance looked smiling and peaceful.

2 On our way we met a detachment of cavalry on its road down to Beirut. Such cavalry! uniforms varied and patched, men slouching about, and no order kept on the march; but the Turk never has been, and, unless very differently commanded, never will be a good cavalry soldier. All their conquests were made and their authority established by their unrivalled infantry; and even in the present day they possess as good material for infantry soldiers as any nation in the world. Except indeed for the ignorance of the officers, many of their regiments would compare favourably with those of the western powers.

Just at sunset we lost sight of the sea, and, whether it were fancy or not, we thought we could trace the mountains of Cyprus on the western horizon, our last view of British territory. At the elevation we were above the sea the night air struck chill after Beirut, where the thermometer was over 80° in

the shade, and we were by no means sorry when our halting-place at Sofaa was reached, and our tent pitched.

With all our people new to the work things did not go very smoothly the first night, and the cook did not seem to have his wits about him more than sufficiently to boil water to make tea. Luckily I remembered the exact locality in the packages of some Kopf's Erbwurst, and in a few minutes we had some capital soup, which with cold meat we had brought with us furnished us with a very good dinner.

Next morning we were awake betimes, and soon on the move. Our camping place had been nearly at the highest point of the road, and we soon began to descend towards the fertile plain of the Boka'a, a level strip of alluvial land lying between the ranges of the Lebanon and the Anti Lebanon and known to the ancients as Cœle-Syria.

At about nine o'clock, when we were half-way down the mountain side, we met the

French diligence at a change house, a curious mixture of last century France and modern Turkey. A team composed of mules and horses, driven by a Frenchman in a great-coat with numerous capes, but with his head covered with an Arab *Kofia*. The passengers were staid turbaned Turks, or Arabs wrapped in their burnouses so that not a feature was visible except the piercing black eye. Here we got some coffee and oranges, and watered our horses, as it had been too cold to do so before starting. Soon afterwards we distinguished in the plain a grove of poplar trees which surrounded Shtaura where the half-way house between Beirut and Damascus is kept by a Frenchman and his wife.

We decided to let our mules go on to Zahlich, where we were to camp and to refresh our horses and ourselves at the Frenchman's hostelry. Having given the necessary orders we turned off the road to take a short cut, Schaefer and myself in front and our dragoon just behind us. Suddenly Schaefer and

I were astonished by a bullet whizzing close by our heads and the report of a pistol, and as we were turning round to see what had happened, another struck the ground close to us. Our dragoman was the culprit. He was brandishing his pistol in great glee, and exclaiming, "I did never fire a revolver before, and it did not shake my arm one bit." We had to give him a little lecture on the subject of fools and firearms, and told him that if he attempted to fire off his revolver again before he had been taught how to use it, it would be taken away from him, and that he was never to load it without permission.

At the inn, we got a capital luncheon and barley for our horses, and were glad to be able to add a good notice to the many already written in the visitors' book. Here we met Mr. Rattray, an Englishman, who is cultivating some of the ground in the neighbourhood, which, according to him, is wondrously fertile. His wife lives with him without any other Europeans in the house,

and when he is absent, as he often is, she has to trust to her own courage and wit for defence.

Once some Zaptieh were sent to make a levy on their property, on account of some disputed taxes, which Mr. Rattray had refused to pay until the matter had been referred to the English consul. He was absent, but his wife, nothing daunted, barricaded the doors and windows, loaded her firearms, and told them if they attempted to break in, she would fire. The Zaptieh thought discretion the better part of valour, and withdrew, saying that the English were all possessed, and their women worse than the men of other nations.

From Shtaura our route led along the valley by a road which had been commenced in imitation of the French road to Damascus, but never completed. A little show is being kept up of working at the necessary bridges, but in many places it has been ruined before it is finished. Scarcely any attempt has been made to metal it properly, and it is so rough

in consequence, that all the traffic passes on either side.

If the inhabitants are to be believed, for this road—which is supposed to reach Baalbek, a distance of twenty-four miles,—sixty thousand pounds Turk, or about fifty-three thousand sterling, have been extorted from the inhabitants. What has been done, has been accomplished by forced labour or *corvée*, the statutable amount of which is four days in the year. The completion of the road was now delayed purposely in order to extract more money from the inhabitants; nearly the whole of this extortion having fallen upon the Mohammedans, as most of the Christians have emigrated into the Lebanon.

Passing through Mualakka, a large Mohammedan village, we arrived at Zahlich and found our tent all ready for us. Soon after we arrived Mr. Dale, the American missionary here, came and called on us. Like the rest of his confrères he seemed a gentleman-like, well-informed, and pleasant man, his

greatest grievance being the progress which, in common with the other Roman Catholic Missionaries elsewhere, the Jesuits are making here. Zahlich is a prosperous enough place, surrounded with vineyards; and streams of good water flow through the town. A great number of the inhabitants are muleteers, and bear a very good character. All ours hailed from here, and of course were delighted to have a chance of seeing their families. Another trade which seemed to be flourishing was rope-making, much rope, I suppose, being required by the muleteers for lashing the loads on their animals. Like most other towns and villages where water is plentiful, Zahlich possessed large groves of poplar trees, which are used for rafters in building the flat-topped houses. As they grow straight and very quickly they are so far well fitted for the purpose, but the wood is soft and decays easily when exposed to the weather.

Our next march brought us to the far-famed ruins of Baalbek, certainly some of the most

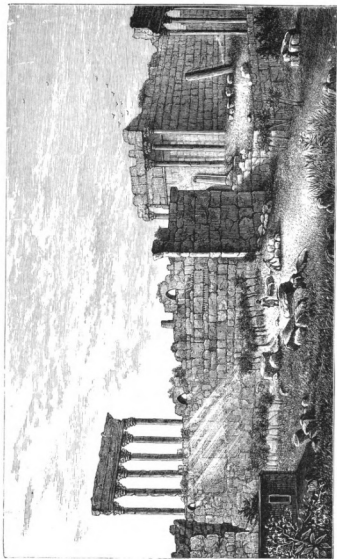
remarkable remains of antiquity still existing. When one gazes on the vast stones and columns and the magnificent proportions of the temples, one is tempted indeed to say, "There were giants in those days." Of the wonderful ruins and places that I have seen Baalbek alone surpassed my expectations. Burton and Warren have described these marvellous remains far better than I possibly could do. The history of ages is written in their silent masses, and they grow on one's spirit and impress one more and more the longer one gazes.

We had seen the line of columns towering in the distance long before we arrived, and were gradually getting into a proper excitement about them, when, on reaching the town, our reveries were rudely dispelled by a mob of urchins clamouring for Baksheesh, most detestable of eastern cries, and offering to show us the way to the locanda or hotel.

Shades of the departed! dwell in an hotel at Baalbek! perish the thought! We







BAALBEK.

pitched our tent in the midst of the ruins, near those of a party of French officers making a tour through Syria and Palestine.

Burton has done something towards awakening the interest of the world to the necessity of looking after the preservation of Baalbek, but more is needed ; during the last half century several of the principal rows of columns have disappeared and the ruins are looked upon by the inhabitants of the town as a quarry from which to take stone to build their houses and fence their fields. After Burton's visit iron cramps were put in in some places, to keep the stones from falling, but many of these have been removed by the people for the sake of the metal, and some of the enormous stones which form one of the principal features of the place, have been drilled and blasted to pieces by these vandals, who are too lazy to go to the quarries a little further off to get the stone for their daily needs. Built into their hovels, these stones are lost, the people apparently

enjoying the breaking up of carved capitals and sculptured slabs, and preferring it to taking stones from ruined houses of modern date which are closer to hand and already of the size required by these degenerate descendants of the mighty men of old.

A magnificent mosque was built in the early days of Mohammedan supremacy out of materials obtained from the ancient temples, but this is now completely in ruins, and the mosque used at present is as mean and dirty a specimen as could well be imagined.

Though the plains round Baalbek are now bare, except in the immediate vicinity of the town, it is easy to imagine what a delightful place it must have been when the country round it was clothed with woods interspersed with parks and pleasure-grounds. That it was of great importance for many ages is proved by the various styles of architecture visible in the remains, commencing with the Cyclopean stones. One over eighty feet in length lies almost ready for moving in the quarry, and

another sixty-four feet long forms part of the third course of masonry in the southern wall ; then the best forms of Greek and Roman art, followed by that of the decadence, and finally the work of the Saracen conquerors, bringing us down to the comparatively modern days of the Crusades. A history of thousands of years is told by those stones to those who have eyes to read it. One can imagine the spirits of the builders of these enduring monuments still hovering around and taking pride in the admiration of travellers of the nineteenth century ; but with these thoughts another mingles, the thought of the armies of slaves and prisoners of war who must have toiled and panted under the taskmaster's lash ere those huge stones and mighty columns were raised into their places.

The present inhabitants say that the steam-engine and all modern scientific engineering appliances were used in their erection ; the poorer classes, indeed, have an idea, which was retailed to us as a compliment, that the English,

whom they regard as the first of mechanics, lived here in some forgotten time, and that the ruins are the signs of their dominion.

At nine o'clock on the morning after our arrival, messengers came down to our tent, saying the kadi and mejliss (town council) were going to make a call on us, and almost immediately afterwards they arrived in all the dignity of turbans and furred gowns, anxious to know if railways were immediately to run past their doors to bring them the manufactures of the west and afford a ready outlet for their own products. Our dragoman, who had claimed an intimate knowledge with Turkish amongst other tongues, was soon stranded; in fact he could do no more than tell us that the people had come to call. Luckily, a doctor and telegraph clerk, who were in the train of the great people, could talk French, so that we were able to dispense with his services. The amount which these good people averred was produced yearly in the district of which Baalbek is the centre, seemed marvellous. Even after allowing

for exaggeration, and getting to more authentic figures, the results were astonishing, and amply proved how promising are the commercial prospects of the place.

Much of the trade at present is with other parts of the Turkish empire ; but although only about fourteen hours' hard travelling from the coast, Baalbek in ideas and customs is left behind in the Middle Ages. The telegraph which comes here is almost entirely used for official purposes, for which, in the eyes of the Turks, it is admirably adapted, as, in the first place, it does away with the bother of letter-writing, and in the second it is such an admirable instrument for blinding those dogs of Giaours. This is the usual way in which the dogs are rendered blind :—Some abuse is reported which demands instant redress. A despatch is dictated to the central authorities by a European consul or minister and sent off at once by special messenger to the official implicated, and the ire of the European is appeased. As soon as the Turk is left alone,

he offers thanks to Heaven for having enabled him to get rid of the infidel, and telegraphs additional instructions entirely altering the meaning of the despatch. If any complaint is made the central authority appeals to the terms of the despatch, and bewails that it should have been misunderstood. Thus, although the telegraph post and wires are to be seen everywhere in the Turkish dominions, they are by no means a sign of an advance in civilisation; they may have a tongue, but they have neither eyes nor ears.

When the notables left, a very respectable-looking and well-dressed man, in European clothes, and wearing the fez, put in an appearance. He spoke French, and after some conversation, in which he appeared both intelligent and well-informed, we found out that he was the proprietor of the Hôtel de Palmyre, which he had just established for the convenience of tourists to Baalbek. He had come to solicit our patronage, or rather to beg us to visit it, and give him our opinion on what he had done.



Whilst we were talking, some soldiers came to say that the kaimakan was about to pay us a visit, so we put all things in order to receive him, when one of our muleteers came rushing in, saying that there was a row between them and some zaptieh, and they were being taken to the serai unwarrantably. Thinking that very probably he was exaggerating, I sent our dragoman up with the soldiers who had come to announce the visit of the Kaimakan, to see what was the matter, and ordered our horses to be saddled to go up a little later ourselves, so as to avoid the appearance of haste and flurry.

The Chaldean seemed very much afraid to trust himself in the town, and it was only by decided orders that he was forced to go. Soon after he had started, another of our people came rushing in with a rabble rout of Christians, declaring that one of our men was murdered and that the Mohammedans were going to massacre all the Christians. As they all looked dishevelled and as if they had been in a free