

women, and children stood forth to greet us with, perhaps, their only English word, "Morning."

We crossed several rapid streams hurrying on to the Jordan. One, the Dardara, we had to cross by a stone bridge of three arches. Its course was through a deep gorge, the basaltic walls rising to the height of perhaps six hundred feet on each side. The roar of the rushing waters announced their presence some distance before we reached them. The same was true of the Leddan, or Little Jordan, the principal source of the Jordan, which bursts out from the earth in a considerable volume at the site of Dan, the frontier city of Palestine on the north. Only a hill marks this old place, and from under this hill, now overgrown with trees, the Jordan may be said to spring forth almost a full-grown river at once, although it pours its waters, with those of the other streams in the valley, into the lakes, whence they find a common outlet in the Jordan proper. At Cesarea Philippi, where we camped for the night, other such springs burst out together from the very foot of Mount Hermon and become at once a large stream, whose waters hasten in numerous cascades to the lakes which supply the Jordan. Whence come these waters? Are they from natural springs, although of most exceptional size? or, are they from the melted snows of Hermon, which find for themselves immense reservoirs in the bowels of the mountain and seek this subterranean outlet? Whatever their origin, these are the sources of the Jordan. Clear as crystal they leap from the earth, although they pour a turbid flood into the Dead Sea. Larger than Abana and Pharpar, and the largest river between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean, the Jordan waters the most historic land in the world, and has for us the deepest interest which can attach to any water save the Sea of Galilee.

Baalbec, Syria, April 27, 1877.

### LETTER XXXV.

#### SNOWY HERMON AND HOARY DAMASCUS.

WITH the exception of one day's travel we have gone from Dan to Beer-sheba, as well as from the Jordan to the Great Sea. We did not deem it advisable to ride from Hebron to Beer-sheba, but with that aside we have seen Palestine from its southernmost to its northernmost limits. Our line of travel was that most frequented in our Lord's day and before, so that most of the historic places were within our reach. The cities of the Philistines and the place of Elijah's sacrifice on Mount Carmel we regret being unable to see; and it would have been most pleasant to cross the Jordan and look out from the mountains of Pisgah upon the land of promise. We did all, however, that it was safe to do in the present excited state of the country. Several parties were turned back from the land of Moab and the Hauran by the threatened danger from the lawless tribes, the true sons of Ishmael, who dwell on the other side of the Jordan. Even along the accustomed lines of travel in Palestine proper there was much annoyance from numerous thefts. As many as ten different parties have been robbed of watches and money during the time of our tour in the country. This, however, was perhaps mostly owing to carelessness, and to undue confidence in the soldiers who guarded the tents, and who were probably the thieves. This, at least,

appeared to be the opinion of the different Turkish officials to whom the cases were referred.

Dan, the frontier city of the Israelites, was quite near the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, and was, perhaps, in the time of our Lord's travels, just before he called out from Peter the sublime confession of his divinity. The former is now but a mound on which trees have grown, concealing all evidences of the city that once stood there, while the latter is as miserable a village as we saw anywhere in Palestine. Cesarea Philippi was once a proud Roman city, honored with the imperial name, and was the place chosen by Titus when he celebrated the capture of Jerusalem. Evidences of its former glory abound in the midst of its present degradation. Remains of immense towers, built as if to rival Hermon itself in point of endurance, are now overgrown with mold and weeds. A temple erected in honor of the Emperor Augustus has entirely disappeared, while of the worship of Pan, which gave the town the name of Paneas, now called Baniyas, only a few niches cut in the perpendicular wall of one of the spurs of Hermon are still to be found. A larger cavern seems to have been used as a temple in this worship, but even this has been destroyed by the falling rocks. Quite near it is one of the principal sources of the Jordan, almost as large when it bursts in numerous springs from beneath the rocky roots of the mountain as when seen last before mingling its waters with those of the other streams which supply the Jordan.

Leaving our camp near the cavern, we accompanied our guide up to the old castle which is built in and on the rocky summit of a spur of Hermon. As we passed through the wretched village we noticed on most of the houses a temporary summer-house, built mostly of boughs and leaves, and used by the people as a sleeping-place in the warm weather.

They are not much larger than a big dog-kennel, while the entrance is just such as is most common in that structure. The people need such a place of refuge from the Syrian fleas, which are more numerous and ravenous here than anywhere else. They deserve the palm over their Egyptian cousins. But we are soon above the town, climbing slowly and laboriously up to the castle. We reach it at length after an hour and a half's steady climbing, and the very first view of it pays for all our trouble. When and by whom erected does not appear, but here it stands, over two thousand three hundred feet above the level of the sea, almost impregnable, and commanding the mountain pass between Damascus and Palestine. The immense blocks of stone of which it is built make as profound an impression as the strategic point of its location. The top of the mountain has been leveled off in some places, while in others the original rock has been left to form part of the walls of the castle. Some of the stone of the walls was doubtless cut from the top of the mountain, but the oft-recurring question arises, How were others brought from a distance and lifted to their places in these walls and towers?

The castle follows the general shape of the summit of the ridge on which it is built, and is over seven hundred and fifty feet long by three hundred wide. It is said by those who have seen all the great castles of Europe that there are none in point of size or position to compare with it. What a startling story it could tell of besieged garrisons, of the eagerness with which the great reservoirs were watched lest the water-supply should fail, of victorious sallies, and of fatal defeat! No doubt these rocks have often run with human blood. The old stronghold was doubtless often taken, as men pressed their way up the almost precipitous cliffs, or waited below the signal of distress and surrender caused

by prolonged siege and famine. Its walls show the work of many hands and of many different countries. They are grand now, even in their ruins, and tell of what they must have been in their strength and glory. Well-nigh exhausted by our ascent, we find in one of the caverns cut in the rock a little pool of delicious water, made perhaps by the melted snows so recently fallen on Hermon. Here, on hands and knees, we each quaff the cooling draft, and wonder what knights in mail and helmet have knelt there in distant years.

Standing upon the dizzy height, we have a magnificent view of all the northern part of the Holy Land. I may call it our last view of Palestine, for while on the morrow we often looked back as we crossed the mountains, yet we had no view so fine, so memorable as this. We were now beyond the borders of the children of Israel, and in the land of the Hermonites. We were perhaps as far away as our Lord ever was. It may be that when in the coasts of Cesarea Philippi he stood upon some of those great rocks as he asked, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" and to Peter's answer, announcing the great truth of his divinity, he declared, "On this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Or, if Tabor be rejected as the Mount of Transfiguration, upon some one of these spurs of Hermon "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light," and Moses and Elias appeared talking with him of the decease which he should accomplish shortly at Jerusalem. It was a fitting watch-tower from which to look out upon the land in which the most momentous events of all time had taken place. Just beneath us were the numerous sources of the Jordan, bursting in full volume from the earth. All the upper valley of the river lay revealed before us, with the black tents of the Bed-

ouin farmers grouped in villages at the foot of the hills. Yonder was Lake Merom, where Joshua won the battle with the northern kings. Beyond that row of hills, just concealing it, was the Lake of Gennesaret, by whose waters, after his resurrection, our Lord ate with the disciples just such broiled fish as that which the Galilean fishermen had furnished for our table as we camped near Tiberias. It was a time for deep thought as we now left this historic land, perhaps forever. The dream of a life-time had been realized in this visit. We had followed our Lord's journeyings through all the land, save where he crossed the Jordan, or visited the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem, Olivet, Gennesaret, were names now charged with a meaning which they never had before. Faith had been tried, quickened, and confirmed, while love kindled with a fresh ardor at the new and deep consciousness of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the incarnate God. That he lived in human flesh, that he lived in this land, that he died here, and here conquered death by his resurrection, were facts made doubly real by visiting the scenes of his life on earth.

We spent all the next day in crossing the foothills of Mount Hermon, never once losing sight of its crown of spotless white. How fitting the psalmist's simile, "As the dew upon Hermon!" Its perpetual snow yields the vapor which is constantly returning upon it as dew. Brotherly love in its purity is thus fresh and unceasing. This snow looks so near and tempting that but for yesterday's journey, with its experience of deceitful distances, we might venture up the slope of the mountain for a handful. Pressed snow is the ice of this country. The natives, with their sure-footed donkeys, climb up to the snow-line and bring great bags of it to Damascus, while others gather it from Lebanon for

Baalbec and Beyroot. The supply diminishes, however, when most needed in midsummer. Those are not simple snow-banks that we see up in the gorges, but actual glaciers, as the melted snow has formed great layers of ice. Doubtless these Druses dwelling here near the mountain top could tell of avalanches of snow which have come down upon them. Hermon is the pride of the whole land, and being the only snow-mountain of Palestine it is called *Jebel-esh-Shekh*, "mountain of the white-haired." I had always supposed it a peak, but it is rather a ridge, its base being fully twenty miles long and having no less than three peaks. Its greatest height is a little less than ten thousand feet above the sea. It is visible for a great distance in nearly every direction. We first saw it before reaching Nablus, and during two weeks' constant travel we never lost sight of it save for an hour or two at a time. Like *Fuji-Yama*, in Japan, it is the one object in nearly every landscape.

There were abundant evidences of volcanic action on the summit of these spurs of Hermon. Great blocks of lava are scattered around, remains of eruptions from those extinct craters over which we rode during the day. If we had hoped to find a cooler atmosphere so high above the sea, we were doomed to a heat second only to that of the Valley of the Jordan near the Dead Sea. We finally reach the water-shed, and begin our descent toward Damascus. We stop for lunch on the banks of the *Pharpar*, one of the rivers of Damascus which *Naaman* thought better than all the waters of Israel. It is a rapid, shallow mountain-stream, its clear waters certainly more attractive than the turbid Jordan, where perhaps, near its mouth, *Naaman* went to bathe.

We were now in the *Hauran*, the home of the Druses, whither they were driven from Lebanon after

their terrible massacre of fully fourteen thousand Christians in 1860. They originally came from the Moslems, and shared the Moslem hate against the Christians, but especially hating the Maronites, a branch of the Latin Church. Supposing that by the treaty with the European powers Turkey had full control of all Christians in her territory, they attempted their wholesale massacre, and with fearful results. Even now there is a constant dread of the repetition of those bloody scenes, and with the declaration of war between Russia and Turkey the Christians are gathering in the mountains of Lebanon and arming for defense. The Druses have the reputation of being a very hospitable people, but their religion is of the nature of a secret organization, about which little or nothing is known. They appear to be monotheists. It is their custom never to avow their religion save when among their own number. When among Greeks they profess to be of that faith, and when with Latins they are Romanists.

The farmers pay more attention to irrigation on this side of the mountains. Irrigating streams run through nearly every field, and there is promise of plenty. The season was just begun in this higher latitude. The rude plows, with olive-wood handles and minute iron plow-shares, were busy scratching the rocky soil. The people know nothing save of the first few inches of the top soil. The German colonists at Jaffa and Kaifa, with their sub-soil plows, will have to revolutionize the agriculture of Syria. The conviction has grown upon me that the Japanese, with their knowledge of irrigating, draining, and fertilizing, could make nearly all Palestine as wondrously beautiful almost as Japan itself.

We camped on Saturday night at *Kefr Hawar*, where we found large numbers of silver poplars, a kind of tree which abounds in this region wherever