A JOURNEY IN THE HAURAN.

By Rev. W. Ewing.

(*Concluded from page* 294.)

Despatching Mohammed to attend to the horses, I rambled quietly through the village again, making friends with the people, who now were curious to have everything examined which they themselves did not understand. I was invited into a good many houses, without finding much more than bits of broken sculpture. This led to an experience, not uncommon, I suppose, but which I had never had before. I had just told the mistress of a house, a good-looking young woman, with dark shining eyes, and the whitest of glistening teeth, that there was nothing specially interesting about the columns with ornamented capitals she had brought me in to see, and was turning to go when she entreated me to stay for a moment. She approached in a ripple of smiles, but with an earnest look in her eye, and asked in a whisper if I could *write*. Of course, I said I could; did she want me to write a letter for her? O, no, if I would only write two words on a slip of paper for her it would be all right. She knew I was a حكيم literally "wise one," usually employed for "doctor." But of what use would a couple of words on a slip of paper be to her? There was no question about its utility. She was labouring under certain domestic disadvantages and consequent anxieties, barring her from the full confidence and favour of her lord. Would I not write the few words for her, so she might wear them about her person, when she was certain her troubles would soon vanish. Nor would she ask me to do it *for nothing*, as she had a *bishlik*—a piece of money worth about sixpence—which she had carefully prepared against such an occasion as this, and *that* should be mine the moment the words were written! It was difficult to resist such a temptation as this, but having no skill in the construction of the *hejâb*, I thought it better to leave the matter alone. Her disappointment was very apparent, so I recommended her to apply to Mohammed, *the ḥakîm* of our company, who, I doubted not, would be able to give her excellent advice. Unhappily, however, she was unable to come to our quarters that evening, and we were off very early next morning. I mentioned the matter to Mohammed, and had quite a lecture from him on the subject of *hejâbs*. From this superstition he was perfectly emancipated, and made no little game of its unfortunate victims. He was, however, always ready to oblige a client when anything was to be gained. He told me of two women whom he had made happy for life with a few strokes of his pen, he being profiter to the extent of three *mejedies*, about equal to ten shillings! It is pathetic to think of the trust reposed in these things by all classes in the country, especially among the poorer and more ignorant. Often a verse from the *Ḳor'ân* is

written ; in other cases simply a few alleged mystic signs. It is usual to have the *hejâb* sewn up in strong cloth or leather, then it is slung with a string round the neck, strapped on in the belt, or otherwise attached to the person. The number of things which are worn as amulets is bewildering : hair, teeth, leather, stones, bits of coloured glass, wood, metals, coins, bones of animals, &c., &c. Very high in favour are the bones from the vertebræ of the wolf, and you can seldom travel far without meeting with the ubiquitous blue bead. It is twisted into the hair of the pretty child, or hung round the neck of the weakly : a horse of which a man is proud will have the inevitable blue bead in mane or tail. It is held to be a sure protection against the malign power of the evil eye.

An old Cufic inscription on a stone beside the *beidar* detained me long, but little could be made of it, the weather had so worn the surface. Then I found a company of peasants from a place to westward which they called *Jibbeh*, with donkey loads of grapes, of which they disposed at very reasonable rates, so I was able to afford a treat for our host and his friends, which they thoroughly enjoyed, at but little cost. Money is not much used among the people there, and many of them have no approximate idea of its value. Barter is the rule among them, and these peasants hoped only to take back wheat in return for the produce of their vineyards. A few hearty muleteers from *Ḥasbeiyeh* joined the company in the *Meḍâfeh* towards evening, and their hilarious, not to say boisterous, merriment enlivened the last hours of day. These stout children of the highways have many dangers, and suffer more hardships, in the practice of their arduous calling, but, taking them as a whole, nothing seems to daunt them or to reduce their exuberance of spirit. There were also several workmen in the village, described as coming from *el Beḳa'*, "Cœle Syria," a pretty comprehensive term. The harvesting operations over in the north, they had come hither seeking employment. They could build houses, but in this respect might not be compared with the sturdy and skilful masons of *Schweïr*. They would also take a turn at threshing or winnowing, or whatever was going on. They and their families would be well contented if they might take back with them a load or two of grain as the reward of their toil during a few weeks in Jedûr or Haurân.

The conversation after supper turned on such diverse subjects as the management of wheat, the nature, manner, and efficacy of prayer, and the condition of roads in the country. One bit of information I set down here for any who may be able to take advantage of it. A youth who knew the place well assured me that Laṭîb is absolutely full of inscriptions.

El Mâl, "the fortune," name of sweet significance to Arab ears, lies not far to the north-west from 'Aḳrabah, at the eastern base of the hill bearing the same name. The house of the Sheikh being whitewashed, stood out in bold prominence among its dark neighbours in the clear light of the morning as we passed in the distance. *Kefr Nâsij* stands on a

rocky height, considerably above the level of 'Aḳrabah. There are only ten houses now occupied ; two years ago it was perfectly empty. The people had come from some of the villages in *el Ghauta*, the fertile plain of Damascus. In personal appearance they were the cleanest and tidiest we had yet met among the Fellahîn in these parts. They complained very bitterly of the sterile character of the soil around them, saying it was hardly possible, even with the immunities they enjoyed, to make a livelihood. Enquiring as to the immunities, they told me that to encourage men to settle in such districts, the Government declared that no taxes of any kind would be levied upon settlers for, I think, five years. This time should enable them to bring the land into subjection, and then the usual *'ashâr*, or tithe, would be taken. They had now the experience of two years behind them and, like my Sufsaf friend at Umm el 'Osij, were seriously thinking of returning home, the riches of the Ghauta, even with all its burdens, being preferable to the freedom and poverty of Kefr Nâsij. There is a considerable extent of ruins, but only one building of any size, towards the centre of the village. It seemed a likely enough place for inscriptions, but the people said nothing of the kind was to be found in the village. A pretty careful search disposed me to believe them, so taking farewell of the kindly settlers we mounted and rode for *Kefr Shems*.

Our way lay across the bottom of a wide valley which runs nearly north and south. The soil appeared much richer than the accounts received at Kefr Nâsij would have led us to expect. Great breadths of waving *ḍhurra*, the bright green of the blades contrasting with the white graceful feathery heads, lent a pleasing touch of colour to the sombre landscape. From the summit of the opposing hills, with a clear atmosphere, a splendid view should be obtained of all the country lying between this and Jebel ed Druze in the east, but, unhappily, a thick haze, which I have never seen absent, obscured the whole of el Lejâ' and the plains to the south—the serried peaks of the mountain rising into the sky beyond. Just under us, a little to southward, lay *Kefr Shems*—"the village of the Sun," and further off to the south-east rose the black towers of *Eṣ Ṣanamein*—"the two idols." Descending the eastern slope, we struck an ancient aqueduct which, coming from the north-west, pursues its course in an irregular line past Kefr Shems on to Eṣ Ṣanamein. The house of the Sheikh in Kefr Shems stands in the south-west quarter of the village. It is guarded by a wall, high and strong, and a huge stone door, swinging open from the street, admits to a court-yard paved throughout with dressed blocks of basalt. The under part of the house is built of the same material. A very rickety stair leads to the upper quarters, where the meḍâfeh is situated. This is adorned with marble columns, which look strangely out of place supporting the rude roof. The Sheikh proved most kind and hospitable, providing melons and grapes liberally for our refreshment. He then constituted himself my guide, and to his interest I owe the inscriptions I was able to copy here. A great part of the old town is now fairly underground. It may, perhaps,

savour of exaggeration to say of the lines of pillars, and the massive buildings now almost entirely concealed and built over, that if they were only on the surface they would present a display almost as grand as that of Jerash, but that was the impression made upon my mind as I followed my host among ranks of half-buried but yet stately columns, and through the gloomy passages beyond. How aptly this illustrates the transitory nature of earthly grandeur. These buildings are now used as stables, cattle sheds, and pens for the village sheep.

Here I had the first and only attack of fever during this journey, and this the good Sheikh sagely assured me was due to the melon he had so hospitably provided! But fever is always brooding over these villages, and we never failed to meet with earnest applicants for *kina*, as they call "quinine." This appeared to be the one medicine of the *Franjies* in which there was something like universal confidence. A very common way of taking it is to wrap up the dose in a bit of cigarette paper and swallow it with a mouthful of water. The cigarette paper is everywhere to be found; even in the most remote parts, where no other evidences of approaching civilisation were to be seen, the little packets of paper in their indiarubber bands and pictured boards were never absent. Fever notwithstanding, we started about midday and rode down to Es Ṣanamein, following pretty closely the line of the aqueduct, alongside of which we found traces of an ancient road. In some parts lines of stones on either side would seem to show that at one time it was guarded by walls. Taking a path which strikes off to the right, we reached the edge of the valley which runs to west of the village, and which here deepens almost into a gorge, the black bare rocks rising many feet on both sides. The horses with some difficulty scrambled down and struggled up on the further bank, then between perfunctorily built dykes that guard the ill-managed gardens we quickly approached the ruins. Just after entering the village there is on the right hand in the valley a deep pool which, earlier in the year, is tolerably fresh, but by this time it is rather strong for European taste. Rude stone steps lead up from the water's edge to a large rectangular enclosure, paved with badly fitting blocks of basalt, and surrounded by a low wall of the same stone. All the materials here used are taken from the ruins around. In the southern end of the enclosure there is a niche with shell ornamentation, which indicates the direction of the *Kiblah*. Hither come many of the pious Moslemin to perform their devotions, the water being specially convenient for ablutions.

This prayer place by the water reminds one of the Jewish *proseuchae*, which they were wont to have by the seashore, and on the banks of rivers (Acts xvi, 13). *Kiblah*—قِبْلَة is used in Syria for "south." It means, of course, the sanctuary in Mecca, towards which the Moslem turns in prayer. It seems to be an irregular infinitive of قَابَلَ—"to stand opposite to"—as the place over against which the worshipper stands. The dark towers which are so imposing when seen from afar, on closer acquaintance are a sad disappointment. The use of white and black

stones in their construction gives them a curious speckled appearance. Consisting of two or three storeys each, it is not easy to determine their original purpose: they may have been a sort of rude mausoleums. The building of the lower part is usually substantial, but it grows shaky towards the top. These towers look over a wide extent of ruin, which has perhaps yielded more inscriptions than any similar space in the Haurân; but it is impossible to say what riches may still lie buried under the enormous rubbish heaps that cumber the ground on every hand. The guide books give an account of the temples and reservoir in the eastern portion of the town. This reservoir, under the southern wall of the larger temple, affords the chief water supply of the villagers in summer. The temples are *not* built of limestone, as "Murray's Guide" asserts. Limestone never could have weathered the blasts of centuries as this carefully-dressed basalt has done. Whence its dark brownish colour on the surface I know not, but basalt it is beyond all doubt. Again, it is hardly correct to say that any of the houses here are "in the best style of Haurân architecture." Very much finer examples are to be found, *e.g.*, in Zora', and in Damet el 'Alyah. But a very good general idea of the ancient method of building, and the use of blocks and slabs of stone for all purposes—walls, roof, window shutters, doors, &c.—may be gathered from the structures now standing, many of them of old materials, and very roughly put together, but chiefly from the ruins. The mosque is an unpretentious building, with a very large paved courtyard. Like other eastern sanctuaries, it is open to afford welcome shelter to friendless and homeless wanderers, several of whom we found had taken refuge under its shadow from the fierce heat of the day. So it is also with the synagogues of the Jews in the Orient. He who reaches a Jewish town, if he has no friend, may claim a place to rest in the sanctuary of his brethren. If he be in penury, the authorities tell off a certain number of householders, who shall each give him a meal every day, or every second day, until such time as he may be otherwise provided for, or move further.

A little to eastward of the village I saw a number of tents, and beyond the tents a scene of bustle and activity, most *un*oriental in its character. The tents belonged to the engineers who had charge of the construction of the tramway from Damascus into the Haurân. In the course of their work they had reached Eṣ Ṣanamein, and the low embankment which here was necessary, a troop of native workers, under European supervision, were throwing up in great style. I found the chief in command, the *mudîr*, as the Arabs called him, a young Belgian,—a fine, frank, hospitable fellow, as much delighted to meet a new face from the west as I was to see a representative of civilisation in these wilds. I had hoped to reach Khabab that evening, but he would not hear of our going further, and with the kindly violence of the Orient he constrained us to make our abode with him that night. The clean comfortable tents were a great contrast to what we had been used with for some time, so I daresay we were not hard to persuade. The rest of the afternoon passed

pleasantly, inspecting the works, and more especially a bridge which was to span the wady south of the town, just below the ancient Roman bridge which has outlived so many centuries, and bids fair, though sadly dilapidated, to survive many more modern structures. The metals were laid as far as Ghubâghib, and a locomotive and a number of waggons having been at work for some time the people were beginning to realise some of the blessings of railways. Indeed, they had already a few accidents to boast of; and no sham affairs either, for several lives had been lost.

The line has now been completed as far as Mezeirîb, and opened only, however, for goods traffic. Still, if it is properly gone about, travellers may arrange for a trip into the Haurân from Damascus, and thus see in brief time, and at little expense, what not long ago would have cost a considerable amount of both. The line from Haifa will also open up a country of very great interest, but as yet very little progress has been made with it.

About sunset the company assembled in the dining tent of the engineers for supper, and a thoroughly enjoyable evening was spent, all the more so, perhaps, because the proceedings partook somewhat of the nature of comedy. The *mudîr* could make nothing of English, German, or Arabic, while I was equally at sea in French and Italian. His Arabic interpreter was therefore requisitioned, and the curious spectacle was seen of two Europeans who could make themselves mutually intelligible only through the medium of what, to western ears, must have seemed the barbarous jargon of the Arab. But men in such circumstances are not easily daunted, and the flow of converse was not stayed until far into the night, when a great stillness had fallen over the camp, the village, and the wide desolate stretches around us.

If the night fell in silence the morning broke in tumult. A Kurdish soldier, who had been told off to guard the camp, awoke to find that his 'aḳâl had disappeared—the fillet of twisted hair which holds the *kufiyeh* or head covering in place. Some had heard a troop of camels passing in the darkness, and opined that the camel drivers had visited the tents, and finding the 'aḳâl the most convenient thing, had quietly annexed it, while the valiant guard, like Saul of old, lay deep in slumber. Pursuit was hopeless; but the Kurdish tongue did ample duty, and if strength of epithet is of any avail, the thief's ears may well have rung. Thus it often is with the ships of the desert "that pass in the night." As the Arabs say, the camel drivers lift a thing and *yadullu mâshy*—"continue walking"—and in the morning "where are they?" The long swinging step of the camel, unresting for many hours, carries them well away from the scene of their depredations ere the dawn.

Looking out we found the face of the earth covered by a dense white mist; it seemed as if the atmosphere were packed full of soft cotton wool. Everything was drenched with dew. It was some hours ere the sun's bright shafts were able to penetrate the cloud. A remarkable inscription had been seen recently by the interpreter, so he said, just

newly uncovered. He volunteered to accompany me and point it out; but in some mysterious way it had disappeared! The people were very kindly disposed, and allowed me to wander around and through their houses at pleasure. I regret now that I did not copy several inscriptions which they said had been taken before, and which I thought, from the prominent positions they occupied, could hardly have been missed. But many of these stones are often moved about, and where no book of reference is at hand it is well always to secure them.

Only two temples have been traced among the ruins at Eṣ Ṣanamein. It has been suggested that the name may have been derived from the two figures cut on a block which lies by the gateway; but is صنم *ṣanam*, "an idol," ever used for a figure cut on a block? Does it not seem more natural to suppose that the two ruined fanes once covered the "two idols" to which the village in these latter days owes its name?

The *kedîsh* treated us to a display of agility of which we had never suspected him capable. 'Abdullah, rubbing his eyes open, was trying to arrange our goods and chattels on the back of the hitherto submissive animal. But he seemed to have grown utterly weary of those everlasting boxes, bags, &c., and suddenly the iron shoes on his hind feet flashed into the air high above 'Abdullah's unprotected skull, and the whole pile came rumbling over his head in magnificent confusion. For a moment he stood, amid the guffaws of the delighted camp followers, with ears and tail erect, staring at the result of his abnormal activity. 'Abdullah addressed him in a few sentences, remarkable for their brevity and concentrated strength, and the fit left him as quickly as it had come. He stood, apparently in deep contrition, until the burden was fairly placed and secured, and for the rest of the journey he seemed to have gained complete mastery of the evil spirit of insubordination.

The road to Khabab from Eṣ Ṣanamein pursues an easterly direction as far as Buṣîr. This village stands amid dark reaches of deep fertile soil, which run up to the rocky wall of el Lejâ'. It is fairly cultivated after the fashion of the rude husbandry known to the villagers, and yields enough to keep them in comparative comfort, in spite of the burdens imposed with and without the authority of the Government. The meḍâfeh of the Sheikh opening to northward commanded an extensive view of the plain, which three months before had been clothed with the waving gold of the wheat harvest, and over which a few cattle, set free from the toils of the threshing floor, now wandered, gathering here and there in listless groups to gaze over the dark acres. The Sheikh, Mousa Effendi el Fellouḥ, was a fine specimen of the well-to-do Fellaḥy. "Effendi" appearing in his title was doubtless due to contact with the life of Damascus, and evidently the good Sheikh felt himself under obligation "to live up to it." His *diwân* boasted a table of rough wood and a few chairs, besides the ordinary mats. He produced, with no little pride, a few coarse plates, on which he served us with melons and grapes. When bread and *leben* were brought, he had actually a couple of iron

spoons with which to eat the latter. A very poor-looking Bedawy occupied a corner of the *diwân*. He had made friends with the Sheikh of Buṣîr, and occasionally ventured beyond the rocky barriers that bound the territory of his brethren, to partake of the Sheikh's hospitality, where the fare was better than would be found in el Lejâ' at this season. Taking advantage of his momentary absence, Mohammed told me that the Arabs of el Lejâ' were a very bad lot. *Anjas ma yakûn*, he said, which may be freely rendered: "Greater rascals do not exist." From this text he preached continuously, seeking to inspire me with caution, until we were safely beyond their borders. It is only right to say that all along our route his opinions met with ample corroboration. This seemed a simple enough man, and I think, to the best of his ability, he gave us the information we asked about routes, &c., in el Lejâ'. I had hoped it might be possible to see something of the central districts of el Lejâ', especially to the north and north-west of Damet el 'Alyah. He assured me that to attempt this at present would be utter madness. No living thing was to be found there now; not even a bird would fly over it! It was, he said, *baṣṣ shol*—بص شول—"only a hot, rocky, waterless waste." It is interesting to compare this word شول (pl. اشوال—*ashwâl*) with the Hebrew שְׁאוֹל, *sh'ol*, which is translated by the Greek, *Hades*. In the spring of the year the thing might be done, but he thought it would be labour wasted. Nothing would be seen but dreary stretches of rock, an occasional shepherd, whose flock cropped the scanty and stunted herbage, and in the lonelier parts a fox or a jackal. There were no villages, and no ruins; these are to be found only in the لحف—*luḥf*, that is, along the borders of the district. While we sat at meat the Beduwy suddenly started, sprang to his feet, and peered anxiously into the distance across the plain to northward. Looking up, I could see only, as it were, two moving specks in the direction he indicated. First he muttered "horsemen," and, after a little, *ed Dowla*—"the Government." He shouldered his club, drew his 'abba closely around him, slipped out on his bare feet, and away through the stubble to southward. Ere the horsemen reached the village he must have been well on his way to the borders of the great natural fortress of his kinsmen, el Lejâ'. The Arabs of el Lejâ' will by no means face a soldier when beyond their own borders. The Arab, who is practically an outlaw, would almost certainly regret it, were he to trust the tender mercies of the Turkish soldier. The latter, it should be said, is equally chary of venturing within the rocky frontier of the Arab's territory. They regard each other as sworn foes, and miss no opportunity of showing how sincere their feelings are. A soldier who, on a former occasion, accompanied our party as far as Zor'a, could not be tempted, even by money, to go with us towards Damet el 'Alyah. A Christian guide whom we secured on that occasion led us by quiet paths to within sight of Dama, then seized with a violent trembling, he pointed out the place with his club, pocketed his *backsheesh*, turned aside into the rocky wilderness, and speedily disappeared. For his

own comfort it was well, as a troop of Druze horsemen who came out to welcome us, would certainly have given him some trouble.

When the horsemen from the north arrived, they turned out not to be representatives of the Dowla after all. It was the old story of the money-lender and creditors over again. The money-lender in this case was a strapping young Damascene, attired in gorgeous apparel of rustling silk. The second horseman was his attendant and guard. Probably the "Effendi" in his title secured for the good Mousa somewhat more respect from his creditor than is usual in such circumstances. But all the same, the arrival of the money-lender to collect capital or interest, was an event which quite obviously afforded no pleasure to any man in the village. While the reckonings of some of the smaller creditors were being pulled into shape, good Sheikh Mousa took me in charge, and we proceeded to explore the village. The one thing of interest we discovered was the stone No. 48, with inscription worn and mutilated beyond recognition. A few houses are built of dressed stone and lime, but most are of the usual type, rough stones and mud, while the passages between the walls are covered to a depth of many feet with all manner of rubbish. The round of inspection over, we left the villagers and the *Shâmy* making the best of a very disagreeable business, and, following the directions of the hospitable Mousa, struck out for Khabab.

The old city of Khabab is somewhat difficult of approach. It stands just within the border of el Lejâ'. Reaching the edge of the plain, we pushed on by the winding tracks leading through the splendid basaltic ramparts that guard the entrance to the fastnesses of the Arab. As we came nearer the city, by the wayside we saw signs of the industry for which the place has long been famous. Great circular millstones, skilfully cut from the hard rock, stood in pairs, steadied by means of a wooden shaft passed through the apertures in the centres, like huge solid cart wheels. One of these stones is as much as the strongest camel is ever expected to carry, and you may often see strings of the big ships of the desert, each with a dark mass of stone poised carefully on its back, swinging away to northward and westward. This is one of the industries with which the Arabs find it difficult to interfere, and as it means something for the villagers engaged in it, their masters can with a better conscience make free with their goods in other directions. The quality of the rock in this neighbourhood fits it peculiarly for this purpose, and the tradesmen of Khabab are called on to supply the needs of a very wide district.

Approaching the town, the most conspicuous object is the house of the bishop, *Dâr el Maṭrân*. It stands on a slight eminence towards the western quarter, and being whitewashed, is in sharp contrast with the sombre-hued hovels around. The sunlight gleaming on its white walls renders it a prominent landmark far over the dark, bleak tracts of el Lejâ'. I saw it again distinctly both from Harrân and from Tell 'Ammâr. Khabab is nominally the headquarters of the Bishop of the Haurân; but his lordship finds Damascus much more to his liking during

the greater part of the year, and the house, although distinguished by whitewash, is not kept in very excellent repair. The modern village is a good deal scattered, stretching along the bottom of a shallow valley and some distance up the opposing slopes. It is built almost entirely of ancient materials, and stones with carving and inscriptions that once adorned very different structures, are now found plastered with mud over the doors or in the walls of these wretched huts. Not content with the remains of antiquity around their own doors, several of the ruins in the interior, now deserted, notably Zubeir, had been laid under contribution, and many of the inscribed and sculptured stones which I examined had been carried hither by camels. Zubeir, Zubîreh, Ḳerâṭah, had each yielded tribute, and No. 51 had been brought from Melîḥat Ḥaskîn, whose bare walls we could see on rather lower ground, not far to the north.

Here we were among Christians. They belong to the Greek Catholic communion. Their isolation has delivered them from the bitterness of spirit too often generated in contact with other sects. But it is with peculiar pleasure I record the fact that among all Christian communities in Palestine, by whatever name they may be called, I never experienced anything but the greatest kindness. Some of my own best friends in Palestine were in holy orders in the three principal opposing communions, Greek, Greek Catholic, and Latin. The peasants soon discovered that I was a *masîḥy*—مسيحي—"Christian." This, of course, is the literal translation of the Greek χριστιανός. A word in more common use in Syria is نصراني—*Naṣrâny*, literally "A Nazarene" (pl. نصارى—Naṣâra'). But it is to be observed that among the Arabs while Naṣrâny may be and often is a term of reproach, combined with other opprobrious epithets, masîhy is always spoken with respect—"a gracious word on the lips of the Arab." There was no lack of willing guides to conduct us to the house of the Sheikh, where we were received with a warmth of hospitable welcome enough to delight the heart of travellers much more fastidious than we. Sheikh Diab el Ghannem was abroad attending to village affairs, but he was ably represented by his wife and daughters. The house is a great rambling structure built round three sides of a square, apparently designed to afford the maximum of accommodation with the minimum of comfort. But houses, save for security of stores, do not mean very much for these children of the open air. The *meḍâfeh* is a small room at the end of the south-western wing. It is plastered with mud—floor, ceiling, and walls—and is really the most comfortable part of the house. It opens on a square platform raised about 18 inches above the street and surrounded by a rough stone wall. Here it is that the villagers meet for their evening gossip. Being a man of common faith, as a mark of respect and confidence I was ushered into the room chiefly occupied by the family, in that part of the square protected by the two wings. The room was filled with the results of the skill and industry of the women. Those who came to entertain us brought their work with

them. Some were spinning yarn of goats' hair, and others were busy knitting it into cloth. The *hurj*—خرج—"saddlebags," so largely used by the Arab horseman, they make in great numbers. They also turn out the capacious bags in which the grain of the Ḥaurân is transported on camel-back to Damascus, and across the country to the sea; the rough-hair cloak or *'aba'*—عباء; small hair carpets; the *'aḳal*—عقال—or fillet of hair with which the Arab fastens his kufîyeh on his head; as well as hair cloth for tents. When the losses of the peasants in the fields have been heavier than usual, the earnings of the women during the winter months must often make all the difference between starvation and comparative comfort.

Several men from the Damascus district had come with camels, bringing loads of beautiful grapes. These it was their purpose to part with in exchange for wheat, and when I came across them they were doing a very fair business. They were easily persuaded to part with a few for money. A wooden half-midd measure—مدّ—*midd*, is the measure of capacity which, in dealing with grain, takes the place of our bushel—was nearly filled with the luscious berries; a stalwart youth set it on his head and bore it triumphantly before me to the Sheikh's house, where they met with an uncommonly warm reception.

The ignorance of the people has not been much affected by their Christian training such as it is. With the best intentions in the world they could guide me to only a few inscriptions. Some of those I found and copied, many had not recognised as inscriptions at all. No doubt there is much in the place to reward the patient searcher who has time to spend in the work. A very large كنيسة جديدة—*kanîseh jadîdeh*, "new church"—had been in process of erection for some time in the eastern quarter of the town. It was being built of basaltic stones without mortar of any kind. The walls, which were over 3 feet thick, must have been nearly 20 feet in height all round the square which they enclosed. The men of Shweir, in Mount Lebanon, are, of course, the builders to whom such work is entrusted. No. 49 was built in over the lofty doorway, resting on a broad lintel which projected a few inches, so that it could not be read from below. No ladder could be found, but a rope was brought and no small excitement was caused when, having fastened the rope round me, passing it over the top of the wall the trusty Mohammed held the other end, and swinging over the front I reached the lintel and made as good a copy of the inscription as circumstances permitted.

As the sun dipped low in the west the men began to gather in from their various vocations, and news of the strangers' presence soon secured for us a goodly company in the Sheikh's quarters. The Sheikh himself was a man of something under average stature, with bushy iron-grey hair, beard and moustache, and keen grey eyes. He was a man of very quiet

deportment, but evidently had secured the esteem of all the rough men around him. While supper was being prepared some of the younger men went with me to a lofty roof whence we commanded a considerable view of el Lejâ'. One of these men I had met in Tiberias, whither he had gone to visit his brother, the Greek Catholic priest, who is a native of this place. They use many peculiar forms of speech, *e.g.*, صن احتشي لك, *ṣinn iḥtashî lak*, which they explained to mean اسمع حتى احكي لك, *Isma' hatta iḥkî lak*—"Listen that I may speak to you." Again, جزّ ولا تحتشي, *Jizz, walâ taḥtashî*, which they freely rendered. اسكت ما بريد اسمع منك, *Iskat ma berîd isma' minak*—"Hold your peace, I don't want to hear you." They pointed out many of the ruins and villages within sight, mentioning particularly those where the water supply is good and plentiful. I led them on to give me the names of all the ruins and villages known to them in el Lejâ'. We had not made much progress when the summons to supper was heard, but that frugal meal over, we sat down again under the stars, with the light of a dilapidated paraffin lamp, and now we had the assistance of the assembled company. I fancy we had got pretty well through the list when the Sheikh, who had been growing uneasy for some time, suggested that it was a very useless bit of work. It is always well to take a hint of this kind from your host, so we at once desisted. Mohammed learned that he was afraid of getting into trouble with the powers that be for allowing a stranger to collect so much information about the district, and of course he could not know what political design might underlie the apparently innocent desire for the acquisition of knowledge.

The conversation turned upon indifferent subjects, and drowsiness creeping over us we did not think it worth while in the warm night air to change our positions, but even where we were we slept comfortably till the morning.

I give the names as the peasants gave them to me. *They* are responsible for the orthography. It may also be an advantage to transliterate them.

PLACE NAMES IN EL LEJÂ'.

El Khâlidîyeh	=	الخالدّية	Sûr	=	صور
Ḥâmir	=	حامر	Azra'	=	ازرع
Ḳôm Rômân (Good Water)	=	قوم رومان	Boṣor el Harîry	=	بصر الحريري
Zubeir	=	زبير	Et'ârah	=	اتعارة
Zubîreh	=	زبيرة	Ed Dawîreh	=	الدّويرة

Nejrân	=	نجران	Eib	=	ايب
Rîmet el Luḥf	=	ريمة اللحف	El Meliḥah	=	المليحة
Ṣalâkhid	=	صلاخد	Khabab	=	خبب
Umm ez Zeitûn	=	امّ الزّيتون	Maḥajjeh	=	محجّة
Tell Muḳdâd	=	تلّ مقداد	Tibneh	=	تبنة
Ḳaṣr Jenin (Good Water)	=	قصر جنين	El Mejeidel	=	المجيدل
Ḳaṣr Zobair	=	قصرزبابر	Ḳiraṭah	=	قراطة
Ḳaṣr Habîbeh	=	قصرحبيبة	El Wabeir	=	الوبير
Ḳaṣûr el Ḥormah	=	قصور الحرمة	En Najîḥ	=	النجيح
Ḳaṣûr Barghashah	=	قصور برغشة	Shaḳrah	=	شقرة
Bi'r Jafîr (Good Water)	=	بئر جفير	Waḳm	=	وقم
Damet el 'Alyah	=	دامة العلية	El Khirseh	=	الخرسة
El Jisreh	=	الجسرة	'Ahreh ('Ahry)	=	عهرة
Esûeimereh	=	اسويمرة	Eṣmîd	=	اصميد
Mrasras	=	مرسرس	Bûrt	=	بورت
Deir Nîleh	=	دير نيله	Mujâdel	=	مجادل
Ardhîmeh	=	ارذيمة	'Âsem	=	عاسم
Ḥadur	=	حدر	Jedul	=	جدل
Ḥâzim	=	حازم	Jarain	=	اجرين (جرين)
Ṣurat el Kebîrah	=	صورة الكبيرة	Lubbein	=	لبّين
Abrâḳ	=	ابراق	Ḥarrân	=	حرّان
Ḳôm Mâsik	=	قوم ماسك	Umm Sâtisah	=	امّ ساتسة
El Musmîyeh	=	المسميّة	Lubweir	=	لبوير
Esh'ârah	=	اشعارة	Dajâj	=	الدجاج (دجاج)
Esmâh	=	اسماة	Deir Damet el Barrâneh	=	دير دامة البرّانى
Ḳala'	=	قلع	Deir Damet el Juâneh	=	ديردامة الجوانى
Ekrîm	=	اكريم			

Khirbet er Raṣîf	= خربة الرّصيف		Ḍakîr (Dhakir ?)	=	ضكير
El Mtûneh	= المتونة		Khulkhulah	=	خلخلة
Lâhneh	= لاهنة		Umm Ḥârtain	=	امّ حارتين
Er Raṣîmeh	= الرّصيمة		Ṣûrat Eṣ Ṣaghîrah	=	صورة الصغيرة

RESULTS OF METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS TAKEN AT JERUSALEM IN THE YEAR 1889.

By James Glaisher, F.R.S.

The numbers in column 1 of this table show the highest reading of the barometer in each month; of these the highest appear in the winter, and the lowest in the summer months; the maximum for the year was 27·673 inches, in December. In column 2 the lowest reading in each month is shown; the minimum for the year was 27·047 inches, in March. The range of readings for the year was 0·626 inch. The numbers in the 3rd column show the range of readings in each month, the smallest, 0·166 inch, was in August; and the largest, 0·515 inch, in March. The numbers in the 4th column show the mean monthly pressure of the atmosphere, the highest, 27·489 inches, was in November; and the lowest, 27·236 inches, in July. The mean pressure for the year was 27·381 inches. At Sarona the mean pressure for the year was 29·834 inches.

The highest temperature of the air in each month is shown in column 5. The highest in the year was 100°·5 on August 1st; the maximum temperature on this day at Sarona was 90°. The first day in the year the temperature reached 90° was on April 20th; in May the temperature reached or exceeded 90° on 4 days; in June on 5 days; in July on 17 days; in August on 17 days; in September on 4 days; and in October on 6 days. Therefore the temperature reached or exceeded 90° on 54 days during the year. At Sarona the first day in the year the temperature reached 90° was on March 4th. The highest in the year was 102°, on April 20th. The maximum temperature on this day at Jerusalem was 94°·8; and the temperature reached or exceeded 90° at Sarona on 31 days during the year.

The numbers in column 6 show the lowest temperature of the air in each month; the lowest in the year was 28° on December 30th. The temperature was below 40° in January on 6 nights; in February on 6 nights; in March on 1 night; in November on 10 nights; and in December on 17 nights. Therefore the temperature was below 40° on 40 nights during the year. The yearly range of temperature was 72°·5. At