

of the old wall, I am inclined to think that there may have been a slight angle at or near the point B, the wall beyond B, in the direction of A, turning to the left. If the question lies between Schick, Merrill, and the Engineer, I should say, were I appointed to decide upon it officially, that the Engineer's testimony should have the first consideration.

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NOTES ON A JOURNEY FROM ISKANDERÛN TO TRIPOLI.

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ON the 20th of November, 1886, I arrived by the Russian steamer at Iskanderûn, which, although an open roadstead, is, from its position, the only tolerably safe anchorage in Northern Syria. The small town of mean dwellings is beautifully situated under the steep but forest-clad range of Mount Amanus, which is an offshoot of the still higher mountains of the Cilician Taurus, whose towering heights are seen in the distance across the gulf. Iskanderûn is malarious and fever-stricken, on account of an undrained and pestilential marsh which festers immediately behind the houses of the town. Drainage would be easy, and would conduce enormously to the welfare of the place, which is almost uninhabitable in summer and early autumn; but the Turks are averse from improvements of any kind, so nothing is done.

In a wonderfully short space of time my excellent servant, Yusuf Basil, of Beirût, had struck a bargain for two horses and a mule for the journey to Tripoli, and by 3 o'clock I was in the saddle. My muleteer, Mohammed, had never before been beyond Antioch.

Crossing the marshy plain, whose stagnant pools abound with freshwater turtles, and their rushy banks with tree-frogs greener than the reeds to which they cling, I speedily reached the base of the mountain, up which a well-engineered road, constructed by a foreign company, winds on its way to Aleppo, and in three hours reached Beilân, a populous village of Christian Armenians, situated a little below the watershed. I found fair accommodation at a new Khân most picturesquely placed, its stone substructions being thrown across a rocky ravine, and supporting a wooden veranda, out of which the guest-chambers open. The view down the defile, with its precipitous rocky sides, to the tranquil gulf below, with the huge snow-capped mountains of Asia Minor, and in the neighbourhood of Tarsus, is beautiful in the extreme. Below the village the ravine is vocal with falling water, and is full of pomegranates and other fruit trees. The houses of Beilân are flat-roofed, with projecting wooden galleries, and are built in terraces one above the other. The village street

exhibits a condition of cleanliness and prosperity due to the superior civilisation of its Christian inhabitants, and is quite unlike that of a village of Muslim Turks.

Next morning I was off betimes, and in about an hour reached the top of the pass, some 1,600 feet above the sea. In places the road was well-nigh blocked by huge flocks of sheep, which, starting from vast distances inland, and changing conductors two and even three times, are led down to the coast at Iskanderûn for exportation. These animals travel slowly, being often several months upon the road, but they browse in passing where they will, and were all in fine condition. After passing the watershed a splendid view inland bursts on the eye of the Bahr-el-Abyad, the White Sea, or Lake of Antioch, situated in a vast marshy plain, bounded by mountains of fine outline, and studded with lonely Tels, which mark the sites of unknown and long-buried towns. Shortly after passing the summit we left the high road to Halep, and turning to the right, passed across and along numerous wooded ravines which intersect and drain the southern slopes of Amanus. The autumn tints of the deciduous trees on the limestone formation were extremely fine, but the plain below was burnt up to a dusty brown, even to the very edge of the great lake. To the right are seen the imposing ruins of a crusading castle on a precipitous rock overhanging a ravine. This fortress, now called Kulat-el-Bagrâs, is said to be the Mansio Pangrios of the old itineraries, and the Pagræ of Strabo, and was one of the defences of "the Syrian Gates." Descending for about an hour from a point opposite this castle, we reached a small village of miserable huts, named Karamurt, situated on the verge of the plain, close to the ruins of a large and finely-constructed ancient Khân. While resting for a few minutes at a wretched wayside café, a boy brought me a handful of Roman-Colonial and Byzantine coins, but was prevented from selling them by a dirty and ragged Turkish soldier, who was collecting taxes, and probably intended to confiscate them to his own use. The track across the plain from this place sometimes follows the track of the old Roman road, paved portions of which exist in places, and sometimes diverges from it. The soil of the plain is of extraordinary richness, and vast quantities of liquorice spring up spontaneously. It is cultivated in part only by wandering hordes of Turkomâns, Bedoueen, and Kurds, and I passed two or three villages of immigrant Circassians. Asking the character of these people, I received the answer, "*They are very good people in the daytime!*"

On approaching the Orontes, a little above Antioch, whose ancient fortifications had long been in sight, I found it to be an eddying river of a milky-white colour. The stream is impeded by numerous dams and weirs, and huge wooden water-wheels continually turn with a creaking sound like that of a magnified Nubian sakieh, and raise water for the irrigation of the neighbouring orchards and gardens. One of these wheels at Antioch itself is close on a hundred feet in diameter!

The situation of Antákia or Antioch is worthy of its ancient fame. The modern city occupies but a small corner portion of the ancient site at the

foot and on the lower slopes of Mount Silphius, and extends along the left bank of the Orontes, which is crossed by a single bridge. The ancient city ran high up the slopes of the mountain behind. The existing antiquities are strangely few. Earthquakes, and the still more destructive Turks, have combined to erase the noble features of the ancient capital of Syria, erewhile the second or third city of the Roman Empire. The streets and bazaars are mean and narrow, the centre being occupied by ditches, filled with black mud, dead cats, offal, and every kind of filth, beside which, like swine, the Turkish inhabitants take their pleasure. The bazaars, however, are well supplied with vegetables, and in places venerable plane trees overhang the streets. The lower portion of the city wall, near the river, which in part consists of large drafted stones, and the remains of a tower, seem to be of more ancient structure than the Roman and Byzantine fortifications above, and probably date from Seleucid times. It is harrowing to be obliged to speak of the walls of Antioch, once perhaps the most splendid and picturesque in the world, as monuments of the past. Originally they zigzagged up almost perpendicularly from the Orontes to the very top of Silphius, set thick with noble towers and bastions, some of which were no less than 60 feet in height. On the top the walls leap from rock to rock, crest huge precipices, and in one place stretch across a savage ravine, which they bridge over by means of vast substructions built up from the bottom to a height equal to that of the rest of their circuit. When perfect these walls enclosed a space of seven miles. Now, under Turkish auspices and Turkish rule, the whole of the walls on the slopes or face, as distinguished from the top of Silphius, with their towers and bastions, have altogether disappeared. Multitudes of the finest stones have been transported across the river, and appear as gravestones in the great Turkish cemetery; others have gone to construct a modern barrack. In fact, every one who wants a stone for building or for a memorial of the dead, resorts to the walls, and, without let or hindrance from the authorities, carries off whatever he desires. So the work of destruction begun years ago is still going on, and ere long what might justly have been regarded as one of the wonders of the world will be matter of history only.

It is strange that Antioch is so seldom visited by European travellers, for the scenery is beautiful, and the city has the paramount interest pertaining to it, that it was there that "*the disciples were first called Christians,*"¹ and thence it was that the Apostles SS. Paul and Barnabas started on their first journey to evangelize the Gentiles.² Antioch was likewise the Bishopric held by S. Ignatius, afterwards martyred at Rome in the Colosseum under the Emperor Trajan.

It is very injurious to British interests and to the character of the English as a nation that, in a place like Antioch, the Consular Agency should be confided to a Jew, who is unable to speak a word of any European language.

¹ Acts xi, 26.

² Acts xiii, 1-4.

From Antioch I made a pleasant excursion to Beit-el-Ma, "the House of Water," the Daphne of the ancients. The path led at first along the left bank of the eddying Orontes, and then, turning to the left, I passed along lanes whose high banks of reddish soil, garnished with ferns and trailing creepers, had all the appearance of those of Devonshire. Emerging at length upon an upland plateau, I found the sequestered Beit-el-Ma at the head of a beautiful ravine at the foot of lofty limestone mountains. All remains of the ancient grandeur of Daphne have disappeared; not a vestige of temple or shrine now remains. But the place is one of singular loveliness and seems the very abode of peace. There is "water, water everywhere;" water bursting forth clear as crystal from and out of the rocks above; water racing in little rocky runnels under ancient plane trees and thickets of evergreens; water turning little corn-mills, so ridiculously small that they might seem to be the mills of pigmies; water dashing down in splashing falls, and joining its rills to form a rushing torrent, which foams away half-hidden in bowers of verdure at the bottom of a deep ravine. Around and about the mills I encountered a few Nusaireyeh men and boys in their picturesque garb, and of a personal beauty rarely seen elsewhere. These people do not live at the mills, but at a village about a couple of miles down stream.

The distance from Antákia to Sueideyeh (Seleucia) can scarcely be more than 16 miles by the direct route—that, doubtless, which was taken by SS. Paul and Barnabas—but the course of the Orontes, which lies to the left of the track, winds to such an extent that its course is more than forty. The road is one of great beauty, passing through wild ravines along the base of the mountain called by the Macedonian Conquerors of the country Pieria, but now Jebel Musa, and crossing streamlets hurrying down to join the swift-rushing Orontes. When the highest point is reached and the corner of the mountain is turned, the sea bursts upon the view, with the mouth of the Orontes and the rich plain of Sueideyeh in the foreground. Off the mouth of the river, as I saw it, lay three large American ships of the United States, waiting for cargoes of liquorice, which is abundant upon this plain also, and which is largely used in the manufacture of tobacco. No town marks the sight of the once magnificent city of Pierian Seleucia, but a few houses and a Turkish custom-house stand a little above the mouth of the river, and the plain of Sueideyeh is dotted with a considerable number of cottages and houses of a better class, mostly embosomed in gardens of pomegranates and other fruit trees. In one of the best of these houses I was hospitably received by a beautiful and gracious lady, the wife of one Simon Panayôt, a Syrian gentleman of the Orthodox Greek Church, who is both a merchant and a cultivator of the soil. My host, who acts informally as agent under the British Flag, was absent on my arrival at the Goletta, but soon came home, and I had the advantage of his company when I rode to visit the remains of the ancient city about 3 miles distant, upon the steep scarp of Mount Pieria, and between it and the sea. These remains, which cover a tract some miles in circuit, are still of considerable

importance, and present a very picturesque appearance, being overhung and often overgrown with gnarled fig and other fruit trees. Overhead are steep and often precipitous rocks, some of which have evidently been artificially scarped. Everywhere they are perforated by innumerable tombs, some of vast size, and in addition to these I noticed many niches intended apparently for *ex votos*.

In some places are perched up huge stone sarcophagi, with wreaths, cupids, and other emblems sculptured upon their outer faces. Most of these have been rifled of their contents, but I saw at least two which are still intact. The remains of two of the city gates, of an amphitheatre, and of large and curious portions of the ancient fortifications can still be seen, and the ruins are everywhere strewn with broken columns, while in one place a headless statue of white marble still stands in its original position. In the low ground in front of the city are massive walls which now inclose a marsh, once the inner harbour of Seleucia. A canal, several hundred yards in length, now choked up, leads from this harbour to the sea; it was originally protected by bastion towers, of which some vestiges exist. The entrance from the inner to the outer harbour is marked by two magnificent piers formed of vast stones clamped together with iron, of which the southernmost, 120 yards in length, is still in admirable preservation, and vies with any existing work of the kind. It was probably from one of these moles that the Apostle Paul stepped on board the galley which was to convey him across to Cyprus.¹ The view from this spot is of extreme beauty and interest: the mountainous coast to the north, the sweep of mountains to the east and across the mouth of the Orontes, the stupendous limestone cone of Jebel Okra (Mount Casius), rising some 5,800 feet out of the blue waves of the Mediterranean—all these combine to form a picture never to be forgotten. Inland, to the north of the ancient harbour, is a wonderful series of galleries and tunnels cut in the solid limestone rock, and said to be 1,200 yards in length. They served the double purpose of supplying the city with water, and of carrying off the surplus water which accumulated at times in a rocky ravine, to the sea. The depth of these galleries reaches in places to 120 feet. This immense work would answer its purpose to the present day had not the Turks in sheer wantonness blown up the lower part of the excavation, and made a breach through which the water escapes and forms an unwholesome and malarious morass. Judicious digging on the site of Seleucia could not fail to be attended with the discovery of most interesting antiquities.

I rode back to Sueideyeh along the sandy beach which extends from the mouth of the harbour of Seleucia to the mouth of the Orontes, to a spit of sand, on which stands the chapel or wely of Mar Girgis, St. George. This small, whitewashed, domical building, although of Christian foundation, is much frequented by Nusaireyehs, who come from considerable distances inland to make their orisons, with a view to obtaining relief from various diseases. In like manner the Muslim

¹ Acts xiii, 4.

fellaheen of Central Egypt frequent the shrine of St. George, at Bibbeh, on the Nile.

I left Sueideyeh betimes in the morning, and was ferried across the Orontes near the Goletta, a little above its mouth, having engaged a young man to act as guide as far as Kesáb, on the further side of Jebel Okra. The path, if such it could be called, for it was often imperceptible led across a marsh at a little distance from the sea, near the supposed site of the ancient Nymphæum, and then under lofty and precipitous rocks of grey limestone, much perforated by caves, in one of which I was glad to take refuge with my little cavalcade during a tremendous shower of hail. From this point I gained the sea beach at an angle of the coast formed by the jutting forth of the immense mass of Jebel Okra, "the Naked Mountain," so called from the bareness of its towering cone. The maps of the Syria coast are most deceiving at this point, as they all of them give the impression that there is a tract between the mountain and the Mediterranean, whereas the very contrary of this is the fact.

Jebel Okra springs up out of the sea, and its steepness is so great that there is no track possible on that side, all passengers being compelled to make a long detour inland. The cone of this great mountain is to Northern Syria much what the cone of Hermon is to Southern Palestine, and from its more isolated position it is even more of a landmark than its more majestic rival. A path used by charcoal burners to convey their wares down to the sea side, leads up the side of the mountain at a point where, albeit it is covered with scrub, it looks from below all but perpendicular. It proved, moreover, so narrow, that my baggage was three times swept off the back of my sumpter-mule by rocks and stubby shrubs which impinged upon the track. This caused so much grumbling on the part of my surly muleteer, Mohammed, that I feared he would strike work altogether, and I thought it best to go on alone and leave him with my servant and guide to settle matters as best they might. I accordingly continued the ascent, holding on by my horse's mane as he clambered up the steep ascent like a cat. On gaining a level space some 1,500 feet above the sea, I waited for near an hour, enjoying the superb view until I was rejoined by my companions, whose voices I had long heard far beneath me. Below lay the pellucid blue sea, the mouth of the Orontes, the chapel of St. George on its spit of sand, the ruins of Seleucia, with Mount Pieria behind it, and beyond again the forest-clad mountains which line the coast towards Iskanderúm, the chain of Amanus closing the prospect. Truly a glorious view of a goodly land—a land which but for Turkish tyranny and misrule might be a very "garden of the Lord." I now made the discovery that my picturesque guide, who was armed with a rusty gun and a portentously long knife, knew absolutely nothing of the way, never having traversed it before. We accordingly strayed from the track until we reached an upland village of the Nusaireyeh, which, from the number of hewn stones and scarpèd rocks, I judged to be an ancient site. On regaining the path and passing the watershed of the shoulder of Jebel Okra, a

magnificent view presented itself, chiefly of forest-clad mountains, extending range behind range far as the eye could reach. Afar off, in a deep valley, could be descried the village of Urdeh, chiefly inhabited by Mohammedans. After resting an hour for lunch under a gnarled carob tree of great age and size, I commenced the descent on the Eastern slope of the mountain, and having passed a village on the left of the path exclusively tenanted by Muslims, I reached Kesâb an hour before sunset. Though I made several inquiries I failed to learn the site of the Temple of *Zeus Karios*, where Julian the Apostate went from Antioch to offer sacrifice, but it seems unlikely that its remains have entirely disappeared.

The Christian Armenian village of Kesâb, which is also the name of a considerable surrounding district, is built amphitheatrically on the side of the Jebel facing inland; the flat-roofed dwellings with projecting galleries of wood rising one above another like those of Beilân, and commanding an exquisite view of mountains and of valleys winding amongst them. I found the place in some confusion, for the Turkish tax-gatherers had been all day in the village, and the irregular soldiers—hang-dog-looking ruffians enough—were making their accustomed extra requisitions of bread, fowls, and other provisions. The Armenian community of Kesâb has been settled there for about 300 years, and up to a few years ago had stuck to their ancient faith, and there was one flock under one shepherd, the whole brotherhood dwelling together in unity. This steadfastness, however, proved too much for the equanimity of the Romish and protestant missionaries, who are for ever seeking proselytes from those who hold more ancient forms of Christian belief, and thereby add another element of disunion to poor distracted Syria. Accordingly a “mission” of the so-called “Reformed Armenians,” who acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope of Rome, was despatched to Kesâb, made converts and erected an opposition Church to the old one. Next the United States’ protestant missionaries of Beirût appeared on the scene, preached the New England gospel, made more converts, and built a conventicle at the other end of the village. In addition to these, an Irish presbyterian missionary makes his *villegiatura* with his wife in this healthy village in the summer months, but I did not hear that he had succeeded in establishing a fresh sect of his own. The inhabitants of Kesâb are now torn up by the dissensions of rival religionists.

I started before sunrise next morning with an excellent Armenian, named Cippa, as my guide and guard, passing through very beautiful wooded scenery. The country hereabout on the borderland of two pashaliks is unsafe and has a bad name, and I was assured that the natives who have occasion to go from place to place seldom venture to travel alone. About two hours from Kesâb the geological formation changes from the mountain limestone to volcanic rocks, which often come to the surface in the shape of broken masses of weathered basalt resembling lava. The vegetation changes as if by magic. The deciduous trees of the limestone in their gorgeous autumnal livery of scarlet, flame, and canary colour, which never elsewhere had I seen equalled or even approached in

splendour, suddenly give place to the beautiful, but somewhat monotonous, Aleppo pines. After winding through several rocky and wooded defiles, and crossing several "hills of prey," the path ascends to the summit of a forest-clad mountain, from which a superb view is obtained, and which trends down and ends at the promontory of Ras Buseit, near the ancient Poseidion,¹ whose site is seen on the coast far below. Looking southwards from the summit of the pass, the giant form of Lebanon is visible towering up in the extreme distance; while in the other direction the far-off mountains of Asia Minor can still be descried across the sea. A tolerably steep descent leads down into the Wady Kandeel, which I followed for many miles. This valley is cultivated by the inhabitants of several Nusaireyeh and Turkish villages, which appear perched up on the top of the whitish clay hills which bound it. The scenery hereabouts is comparatively tame and uninteresting, and seems especially so after the extreme beauty of Casius and its offshoots.

Rain was threatening, night falling, and my horses were knocked up when I was still far from Latikeyeh, my destination for the night, so I was obliged to ask shelter in the cottage of one of the Nusaireyeh in a tiny hamlet at a place to the left of the road, named Hirbeh. These strange people, as is well known, have an equal prejudice against Christians and Mohammedans, and I found Mohammed, my muleteer, who arrived first at the cottage while I was watering my horse at a spring, was already in the midst of a quarrel with the good man of the house; who, on my coming up, peremptorily refused me hospitality. An old woman, however, came out and spoke up for me, and permission was at last given me to enter. From that moment nothing could exceed the kindness and courtesy of Ibrahim, my host, but it was touching to observe his astonishment when I paid for what milk, and fowls, and fodder I required. After my dinner I brewed a quantity of tea, which I dispensed in three tin mugs to five women seated on a kind of clay dais on my left, and to twenty-four men and boys who sat in a triple semicircle in front of me on the mud floor. The same extraordinary personal beauty which I had observed at Beit-el-Ma, was characteristic also of the community of Hirbeh. They complained bitterly of the tyranny of their Turkish masters, of the exorbitant and illegal taxes they were called upon to pay, and of the requisitions of cattle, sheep, and other produce made by the officials. What weighed upon them most, however, was the ruthless conscription from which, until lately, in consideration of the unorthodoxy of their religious tenets, they had, on payment of a tax, been exempt, under which boys and men from 15 or 16 to 50 were carried off and doomed to serve in the army of the sultan. The harmony of the evening was only once disturbed, and that was when it chanced to be mentioned that a small kitten had recently been brought from Latikeyeh; whereupon my muleteer exclaimed, "Ah! it was born a good Muslim kitten, and now it will be brought up a bad Nusaireyeh!" It needed a lavish distribution of loaf sugar to quell the hubbub which ensued.

¹ Herod. iii, 91.

It was with some difficulty that, being dead-tired, I succeeded in getting the single room of the cottage partially cleared, and was able to prepare to go to bed. I slept that night in the single room of the house in company with five men, one woman, one vocal infant of uncertain sex, twenty-six sheep, fifteen goats, cocks and hens galore, a donkey, and the afore-mentioned kitten, which slept peaceably enough at my feet. In addition to these a strange cat came in in the night and consumed the greater part of a chicken destined for my next morning's breakfast. There were no insects!

The road from Hirbeh to Latikeyeh lies along a plain, sometimes cultivated and sometimes overgrown with thickets of lentisk, and a white and purple-berried myrtle, at no great distance from the sea. A flat track near the sea, where the grey rock crops out on the surface, is perforated by numerous tombs.

Latikeyeh, originally a Phœnician town, but restored by Seleucus Nicator, and named after his mother Laodice, was within a few years a tolerably flourishing city. Now its trade has been almost stamped out by the exactions and tyranny of the Government, and it is rapidly falling into decay. I was the witness of a highly characteristic incident. Going into the bazaars I found almost every shop closed, and scarcely a human being could be seen in the streets. I knew it was not the Sunday of the Christians, nor the Saturday of the Jews, nor the Friday of the Moham-medans. At length I found an old crippled jeweller squatting in his stall, and learned the reason of the depopulation of the city. A road (which no one expected would ever be finished) had been projected to go from Latikeyeh to Hamath, and the Turkish Governor had ordered the entire male population, irrespective of age, health, strength, or capacity to work, to turn out upon it. Even those who offered to provide four able-bodied men to labour in their stead were not exempted. Of course, no one was paid for his services, with the natural result that next to nothing was done.

The ancient monuments of Latikeyeh consist only of a few columns of a temple, and of a curious arch of late Roman date, which exhibits some unusual sculptures of shields and arms. Bits of old masonry of huge stones are seen on the edge of the now deserted harbour, and near it are some fine stone warehouses, apparently belonging to the epoch of the Crusades. The venerable Priest of one of the Greek Churches brought for my inspection a superb MS. copy of the New Testament in Greek, for which a very high antiquity was claimed. There is no doubt that the Emperor of Russia offered for it the sum of 2,000*l.*, but the Greek community unanimously refused to part with the precious volume. I do not profess to be a judge, but it did not seem to me that the book was of earlier date than the tenth century.¹

¹ It is possible that this splendid MS. is of the Gospels only, but I unfortunately lost the book containing the whole of the memoranda taken during my entire journey. I must plead this excuse for the baldness and poverty of the present paper.

Leaving Latikeyeh, whose name is probably most familiar to those who know what is *good* tobacco, I forded one of the numerous Nahr-el-Kebirs, and several other streams, and in five hours reached Jebeleh, the Gabala of the ancients, which gives its name to another splendid variety of the so-called "fragrant weed." This small town, or rather village, which with one single exception is entirely inhabited by Mohammedans, abounds in the remains of past ages, but is itself but a dirty and sorry place. At the northern entrance, near the fine old mosk of Sultan Ibrahim, who is buried within, and the crowded burying-ground, stand the grand ruins of a Roman theatre, whose vaulted passages must have rivalled those of the amphitheatre of Verona. Some of the huge stones of the old harbour may date even from Phœnician times, and the rock tombs are of very high antiquity. Broken columns and hewn stones lie about in every direction. Issuing forth from the walls of Jebeleh I saw the grand phenomenon of two perfect waterspouts, and several other imperfect ones hanging over the stormy sea. In about an hour I arrived at a small bay, near which, on its northern promontory, are the remains of ancient buildings with hewn stones lying about in great numbers. This place is called Tel Sukat. After fording several more streams, I came to another and much larger group of ruins, amongst which burrowed a few fever-stricken Christian inhabitants. It is called Baldeh, the Paltos of Strabo, and is situated on the top of low cliffs close to the sea, into which, hard by, flows a beautifully clear and rapid river named the Nahr-es-Sin, which is crossed by an ancient Arab bridge. At its mouth are the remains of an ancient harbour. To my surprise, my host at Banias, a Syrian of the Orthodox Church, informed me that this river derived its name from the French Crusaders, who call it the *Seine* in memory of their much-loved river in far-off France. In support of this apparently unlikely derivation, he cited the *fact* of certain villages near Latikeyeh being undoubtedly called after Saints of the Latin Church. On the other hand, the name of this river is supposed by some to be connected with that of the Sinites enumerated along with the Arkites and Arvadites in the Book of Genesis.¹

The path onwards from Baldeh leads along the sea shore, and across the bay is seen towering up above the few buildings of modern Banias the stupendous castle of Markab, El Markab, "the Watch Tower," seated on a crag of basalt rising some twelve hundred feet above the sea.

Banias, the ancient Balanæa, although formerly a place of great importance and an episcopal see, has so much dwindled down that within a few years past it was entirely without inhabitants. It now consists of a few houses, which line the beach of a tiny bay, in the midst of which rises the new konak of the Turkish Caimacan of the district, who has removed his seat of government from the inconvenient site of Markab, and the quarters of his irregular soldiers. Behind the town there is a romantic rocky ravine with precipitous sides, through which a stream

¹ Genesis x, 17, 18.

finds its way to the sea. There is also a beautiful spring of fresh water, and the numerous walls, foundations, and rock tombs show the ancient importance of the place. I copied an ancient Greek inscription on a stone lying in front of the konak, but the transcript was lost in my note-book.

Next morning I started to visit Markab, sending my muleteer on with the baggage by the direct route along the coast. The ascent is very steep, and the climb a stiff one for man or horse. On the northern shoulder of the hill is a tolerably populous Turkish village in a beautiful situation. I had hoped and expected to find that the Castle of Markab was built on Phœnician, or, at all events, on Roman or Byzantine, foundations, but careful examination convinced me that the whole building is Gothic, of the period of the Crusades. Apart from its superb situation, the Castle of Markab must be almost without a rival. Carnarvon Castle, perched on the top of Penmaenmawr would scarcely equal it in grandeur. The Castle walls rise up from the black basaltic rocks, which in places are scarped to increase their apparent height. On the land side is a deep dry moat and numerous outworks. Vast subterraneous chambers with vaulted roofs were apparently used as stables. Within the walls is a fine first-pointed Gothic chapel, desecrated indeed and neglected, but still in good preservation, and used as a mosk by the few Mahommedans who continue to infest the ruins. The view from the battlements, of sea, winding shores, and distant mountains, is of indescribable beauty. Descending to the coast, I joined it at the mouth of a pretty ravine, on whose edge, overlooking the waves, stands a grand outlying Burj or tower, evidently, like the Castle above, of the Crusading epoch.

The route northwards from this point lies sometimes on, and at other times close to, the sea coast, which is commonly bordered by low rocks often perforated by tombs. Along the whole of this ancient and lonely coast, which once "echoed with the world's debate," the traveller has constantly to dive down into picturesque wadies and to ford streams half-blocked with oleanders and marged with venerable oriental planes. Scarce one of these valleys fails to show one or more arches of a grand old Roman bridge, and in some instances of one of Arab construction, but nothing appears of more modern times. It is the rôle of the Turk to blast, to destroy, to lay waste, not to originate or to restore. Of course, after rains, these rivers, which have their sources in the neighbouring hills, soon become impassable, and passengers prevented from crossing would be left in a country without means of obtaining either food or shelter.

After a long and tiring day I arrived at Tartûs (Antaradus), which, with Ruad (Arvad, Aradus), I have already described in the *Quarterly Statement*,¹ and after some difficulty managed to hire a small room on the top of a house belonging to a kind and courteous young Christian of the Greek Church.

¹ *Quarterly Statement*, October, 1875, p. 218.

I was at first disposed to think that the ancient cemeteries of Tartús, the Isle of Ruad, and Umrit (Marathus) lay along the sea coast almost continuously from the southern gate of Tartús to the southern end of the ruins of Umrit, there being, in addition, numerous chambered tombs cut in the rocks above the last-named place. Since, however, it appears that the Aradians were for long time at variance with their neighbours of Marathus on the main land, it is perhaps more likely that, at all events in later times, they would have been compelled to bury their dead, not immediately opposite their island fastness between Antaradus and Marathus, but at a considerably greater distance towards the north, viz., near their land port, Karne, or Karnos, which lies nearly a mile northwards of Tartús, and still bears the name of Karnun,¹ and where rock tombs actually exist. Anyhow, the limited size of the Isle of Aradus would have rendered burials impossible within its circumscribed area. Excavations would probably determine this interesting point. It is worthy of note that, so far as I could ascertain, the massive bronze rings, apparently leglets, to some of which, in most inconvenient fashion, a second ring of bronze is attached, come from graves situated immediately opposite the island. These objects seem to belong to a very early period. The wealth of antiquities found in and about this neighbourhood is indeed surprising, and I know of no place in Syria where systematic excavations would be attended with more brilliant results.

Between Tartús and Tripoli I witnessed a beautiful sight. The autumn rains had fallen, and the sand-hills near the sea, near the Eleutheru, or Nahr-el-Kebír, at the "Entering in of Hamath," were covered with the black tents of the Bedawin, who had come down from the interior to sow their grain, and who were seen far and near turning up the rich dark soil of the plain with their primitive ploughs, to which sorry little black oxen were attached. The day was sultry and thundery, and I encountered and followed for some distance along the flat ground an immense black snake, which could not have been less than ten feet in length. A little further on I saw a Bedawin woman and her dusky imps stoning to death a small specimen of the same species. I should not have supposed from its appearance that this kind of serpent was poisonous, but my muleteer declared that it was so, and asserted that in the hot weather of summer it "stood on its tail," and with loud hisses struck at passengers who were unlucky enough to meet it. Near the Nahr-el-Bárid I struck into the new road which has been constructed by a foreign company, and leads from Tripoli to Homs.

From Tripoli I returned to Beirút by sea.

¹ *C.f.* Strabo, 753.