

JENSON'S TRAVELS.

Sunday, June 21, 1896, will always be a day of a little more than ordinary importance in my life's history, for it proved a day of deliverance to me from a ten days' quarantine imprisonment off Beyrout, Syria. At 10:30 a.m. the quarantine doctor—a Frenchman—came on board and after passengers and crew had been "duly exhibited" before him, he declared everything all right; but true to Turkish and Austrian ingenuity combined an attempt was made to collect from the passengers the quarantine fees which we had already paid on the occasion of purchasing our tickets in Egypt. One of the passengers, however, stepped forth and explained the situation in pretty plain terms in Arabic, which had the desired effect, and we all escaped repetition of that extra tax of ten francs per head. Soon after the doctor had returned to the shore, the ship obtained its final papers for communicating with the land, and at 12 o'clock noon I left the ship, in company with Costa Abrahamides, an English speaking Greek, whose friendship I had gained during our ten days' "imprisonment." By his aid I got through easily in my dealings with the boatmen, custom house officers, passport examiners, runners, and the many sorts of Arabian "mobocrats" and vagabonds which lined the shore watching for a chance to fleece somebody and everybody. For the first time after leaving home my American passport did me good service.

After taking leave of my friend, Costa, I still refused the aid of the many unprincipled Arabians, who offered their services, and walked about half a mile, through the heart of the city to the office of the American consul, Mr. Thomas R. Gibson. How I found the way through the narrow and winding streets afterwards puzzled me; but I got there I believe without walking twenty steps out of the way. Mr. Gibson received me very kindly and subsequently assisted me in arranging a good traveling program for me through Syria and Palestine.

I put up at the Victoria boarding house, kept by an English-speaking Syrian lady, who made me quite comfortable in her rather elegant establishment and also gave me considerable reduction from the regular rates. I would recommend her house to my traveling friends.

My first act after retiring to my room was to render due thanks to a kind Providence, who had permitted me to land safely in Syria; and though I found myself alone, when I had expected to meet one or more Elders from Zion in the Turkish mission, I felt confident that I would get through all right. Before I left New Zealand, President Anthon H. Lund wrote me from Liverpool, England to the effect that he had instructed the American Elders in the Turkish mission to come to England; and Mr. Gibson had now informed me that they had left several months ago. Under those circumstances the good advice and aid of Mr. Gibson were doubly appreciated.

Later in the afternoon I took a long walk through the city, and found many things to interest me, if not always so pleasing to the eye or smell. After my return to the hotel I had a long and interesting conversation with Mr. Ohn, a young Swedish business gentleman who is visiting the Orient in the interest of a Swedish timber firm. He informed me that a great deal of the timber and lumber used in Egypt, Syria and Palestine for house building and for other purposes is imported direct from the great forests of Sweden; and that on account of its superior

quality it competes most successfully with timber imported to these countries from other parts of the world.

Beyrut is beautifully situated on the slopes of the peninsula terminating in the point called by the Arabs Ras Beyrout. The main part of the city faces the sea to the north. The plain to the east and southeast is covered with luxuriant gardens. Beyond them the mountains of Lebanon rise rapidly, overtopped by the snowclad summits of the Sannin and Kenelsch. The hills are furrowed by several deep ravines but are cultivated to a considerable height. "The rosy tint of the mountains contrasted with the deep blue of the sea presents a most picturesque scene by evening light." The climate of Beyrout is genial and seldom oppressively hot. Much rain falls in winter. The heat is generally tempered by a fresh sea breeze during the greater part of the year. Still many of the Europeans settled in the city remove to the heights of Lebanon for the summer months.

Before the slaughter of the Christians in 1860, Beyrout had about 20,000 inhabitants. The number now exceeds 100,000. The official statistics for 1889 give Moslems 32,000; Greek Orthodox, 30,000; Maronites, 28,000; Melkites (United Greeks), 9,000; Jews, 1,500; Roman Catholics (here called Latins), 1,500; Protestants, 900; Syrian Catholics, 600; Armenian Catholics, 400; Druses, 300; other religious communities, 300. Total, 105,400. There are 6 hospitals in Beyrout; 23 mosques; 36 Christian churches; 66 boys and 36 girls schools; of these 21 boys and 2 girls schools are Moslem institutions. There are about 2,000 Europeans in Beyrout. The Moslem element is gradually being displaced by the Christian.

The Christians of Beyrout are as a rule very industrious, apparently possessing a share of the commercial enterprise of the ancient Phoenicians. Many of the firms have branches in England, France and Syria. Italian was formerly the commonest language here, but it is now being displaced by French. The English language is also spoken by many and in most of the largest business establishments. The city has 13 printing presses, and 12 Arabic newspapers are published. One or more of them are partly French. No regular English periodical is published here, but lots of English literature is sold, Beyrout being the center of the Oriental book trade in Syria. The American mission (Presbyterian) has been laboring in Syria since 1821, and Beyrout is the center of its operations. The university in Beyrout, with its theological seminary, medical faculty, and training college, is one of the very best educational institutions in the Orient. The handsome new buildings containing the above named institutions with an astronomical observatory are situated immediately west of the town proper on high ground overlooking the sea and near Ras Beyrout. The influence of the great American institution of learning is felt throughout all Syria.

Beyrout is furnished with water from the Dog river, by the waterworks of the Beyrout Waterworks company, opened in 1888. In ancient days an aqueduct conveyed the water to the city from Magoras (Nahr Beyrout), but of that structure a few arches only are now standing. Since 1888 a French company has supplied the town with gas.

Beyrout is the chief seaport of Syria and occupies a central position in that particular part of the country which in the days of the Savior was known as Phoenicia, to which some of the brethren traveled in their dispersion on the persecution of Stephen (Acts xi:19). Phoenicia comprised a portion of the coast of the Mediterranean, ex-

tending from the neighborhood of Mount Carmel northward one hundred miles or more along the base and western slope of the mountains of Lebanon, and into the interior a few miles to the summit of Lebanon. The coast of Tyre and Sidon occupied anciently the central and most populous portion of Phoenicia. The mountains, towering to the regions of perpetual snow and ice, with the graceful sweep of their waving summits, sloping sides and mountain dells covered with the richest verdure, adapted to every clime, to Alpine frosts, to tropical suns, and the ocean sleeping at its base, or lashed into fury by the tempest, form a succession of goodly prospects, so grand, so beautiful, so endlessly diversified, as to charm the dullest eye and kindle into poetic fervor the coldest heart. Numberless mountain streams flow down to fertilize the narrow plain of the coast, and open harbors for a boundless commerce.

Phoenicia is believed to have been settled soon after the deluge; and it became the earliest and most renowned commercial region of antiquity. When the Israelites conquered the country this coast was occupied by powerful maritime towns, which, though given by the Lord to the Jews for an inheritance, maintained their independence through all the vicissitudes and aggression of the Jewish nation.

The town of Beyrout seems originally to have been unimportant, and although mentioned by the Greeks before Alexander, is not named in the history of the campaigns of that monarch. In the second century before Christ Berytus (the original name of Beyrout) is said to have been entirely destroyed in consequence of a rebellion against Antiochus VII; but the Romans afterwards rebuilt it, introduced a colony and named it Augusta Felix after the emperor Augustus. With a view to please his friends, the Romans, Herod Agrippa embellished Berytus with baths and theaters, and caused gladiatorial combats to be exhibited there. After the destruction of Jerusalem, Titus also caused numerous Jews to enter the lists against one another at Berytus. In the middle of the third century after Christ a Roman school of law, which afterwards became very celebrated, began to flourish here. The trade of the place was also considerable, and the Roman empire was at that time furnished with silk fabrics from Berytus and Tyre. In 523 Berytus was destroyed by an earthquake, after which the town was never rebuilt in its ancient magnificence, and its school of law was never re-established. In 600 it was still in ruins, and in 635 it was taken with ease by the Moslems. In 1125 it was captured by the Crusaders under Baldwin, and continued in their possession with little intermission down to the battle of Hattin in 1187. Beyrout was for a time the residence of the Druse prince Fakhr ed-Din. This able man by abusing the confidence of the Porte, succeeded in founding an independent kingdom for himself. He banished the Beduins and allied himself with the Venetians the natural enemies of the Turks. Beyrout was his favorite residence, and the environs are said to have been his gardens. He favored the native Christians and promoted trade. But he was finally captured by the Turks and strangled at Stamboul. The Druse control of Beyrout terminated about 1830 when Emir Beshir was defeated and banished, since which the Turks have been in possession. Under its altered circumstances it at length became an important seaport, while Sidon and Tripoli declined. Many of the Christians were murdered in Beyrout during the general massacre of Christians