

ber of Arabian villages perched on the mountain slopes; some of them are surrounded with extensive vineyards, olive groves and orchards. Many of the slopes are irrigated, and nearly everywhere are seen traces of a dense population in past ages, as the slopes are terraced for irrigation purposes nearly to the summits.

After travelling about 25 miles we reached the summit of Lebanon. The railroad here passes through a long tunnel right under the Kahn Mizhir, which stands on the top of the Lebanon Pass, 5,060 feet above the sea level. Standing on the top of the summit and looking back we see the Mediterranean for the last time; and as we now proceeded down a steep grade we soon obtained a fine view of the broad valley of the Bekaa. Beyond rises the Anti-Lebanus, and to the south the snowy peak of Mount Hermon, 9,050 feet above the sea level. To the north the eye ranges as far as the regions of Ba'albek, where interesting ruins exist. We soon reached Shtora, a town of some importance situated at the eastern base of the Lebanon mountains, and in the renowned Bekaa valley. This is a fine, fertile valley, resembling a table land lying between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanus. It is about 40 miles long from southwest to northeast and perhaps 8 miles wide on an average. Towards the southwest it is bounded by the spurs of the Tomat Niha (twins, of Niha) through the rocks of which the Litany, the main river of the valley, forces its way with difficulty on its run toward the Mediterranean, into which it discharges its waters at a point about five miles north of Tyre. The Valley of Bekaa was anciently called Coelesyria (Hollow Syria), a name which, however, is generally used by the classical authors in the book of the Maccabees, and in the third book of Ezra, to designate all the district to the south of Seleucia with the exception of Phoenicia. The Bekaa valley is much less richly cultivated now than in ancient times; still there are a goodly number of towns and villages in the valley, one of which is Zahleh, with about 1,500 inhabitants situated northeast of Shtora in the midst of exuberant vegetation, 3,100 feet above sea level. From Zebedani the railroad turns to the east across the valley, and after crossing the Litany we soon commence to ascend the slopes of Anti-Lebanus. Following the windings of a small stream through a canyon we soon reached the top of the range, which is less lofty than the Lebanon mountains and in descending we followed the headwaters of the Barada river which at first is very small, but becomes a stream of about the same size as the Ogden river before it leaves the mountains to water the thirsty lands of the great desert. As we travel down the valley of the Barada we pass through a number of villages surrounded by fruitful fields and fine orchards. Near one of these called Suk a tradition, dating back to the sixteenth century, points out the Neby Habil as the spot where Cain slew his brother Abel, according to the Koran version. We arrived at the Baramki station, immediately west of Damascus at 4 p.m., having spent 9½ hours in traveling the 197 kilometers or 122 miles from Beyrout to Damascus. By the wagon road the distance is only 69½ miles, which is still traveled by passengers in carriages in one day the same as in the railway cars. This is the only railway in the world that I know of where the horses can compete successfully with the locomotive engine in point of speed.

On my arrival at Damascus I put up at Hotel d'Orient, but took a long evening walk to the top of the noted mountain

Jebel Kaslum, which is situated back of the suburban village of Sallhiyeh, about four miles northwest of Damascus. I reached the top of the mountain just as the sun disappeared beyond the summits of Anti-Lebanus. The barren Jebel Kaslum, which is 3,940 feet above sea level, or 1,680 feet higher than Damascus, is held sacred by the Muslims, as they claim that Abraham here learned the doctrine of the unity of God. They also assert that Adam once lived here, and Mohammed is said to have visited the place, but not to have entered Damascus. The mountain consists partly of reddish rock, and its color gave rise to the legend that it contained a blood-stained cavern in which the dead body of the murdered Abel was hidden. The top of the mountain, where stands a small building called the Kubbet en-Nasr (dome of Victory), commands the finest view in the neighborhood of Damascus. The city lies stretched out at one's feet encircled by its broad green belt of teeming vegetation. To the west and north extend the barren heights of Anti-Lebanus; in the distant east appear the Tubul and the volcanic peaks of Lafa; to the south, in the extreme distance, are visible the mountains of Hauran, where the Druses are defying the Turks at the present time, and nearer are Jebel el-Hani and Jebel Aswad; to the northwest lies Mount Harmon.

After returning to Damascus, I lost myself in the labyrinth of narrow, crooked and irregular streets, but after wandering quietly about for a couple of hours studying the mysteries of the first real Oriental city I ever visited, I found my way to the hotel, and enjoyed a good night's rest. My cosy little bedroom, which was on the ground floor, opened to a magnificent inner court nicely paved; in the center played a beautiful fountain surrounded by trees and flowers.

Wednesday, June 24, I took a long morning walk through that part of Damascus which is called the Meidan, consisting mainly of one street about a mile long. The low one-story buildings lining the street, the long caravans coming in from the desert, and the noisy demonstrations of drivers and shop-keepers were all Oriental features new to me. The camels, donkeys, mules, and horses, seemed to be almost innumerable as they, with heavy burdens, passed up and down that long street, not to speak of shepherds leading their flocks of sheep and goats as in days of old, the barking dogs, the veiled women, the peculiarly clad Beduins, the ragged children begging for "bachshish," and many other things which made up a picture never to be forgotten. I next took a walk through the more central part of the city, going all through the Muslim and far into the Christian quarters; in trying to go over the grounds of the great mosque called the Omayyade Mosque, or Jani el-Umanio in Arabic, I was turned back by the soldiers who allow all Muslims to pass but no Christians. The mosque is partly in ruins, being much damaged by a fire in 1893. After visiting the American vice consul, who by the way is clerk of the British consul, I engaged a dragoman to pilot me around in the afternoon. In his company I visited the supposed house of Ananias, where there is a small Roman Catholic chapel; also the premises outside the city wall supposed to have once belonged to Naaman, the Syrian (2 Kings, 5). It is at present occupied by lepers, one of which ran after me, trying to lay hold of my coat-tail in order to get more "bachshish." We also visited the Greek cemetery, where I was shown the tomb of St. George, the man who being jailor at the time, according to tradition, helped Paul to escape from the city. Near by is the traditional

spot where Paul was let down over the town wall in a basket by the disciples. My guide also took me through the Jewish quarter, which seems to be the dirtiest part of the city and showed me the inside of a most elegant private residence in the Christian quarters. Finally I went through the street called Straight, which is over a mile in length and reaches two-thirds of the way through the main city from east to west; and I continued to ramble through the streets, visiting bazaars and other places of interest till a late hour.

Damascus is the capital of Syria and lies on the west margin of the great Syrian desert. Mountains are near on three sides, but eastward the flat desert extends as far as the eye can reach. From the mountain gorges of Anti-Lebanus on the west several brooks descend to the Ghuta, the most important being the Barada (cold), or, as it was called by the Greeks, the Chryorrhoas (golden stream). All the streams which water the plain of Damascus flow into the so-called Meadow Lakes, lying about 13 miles east of Damascus. In spring and summer these lakes are of considerable size and are visited by numerous Beduins. In autumn and winter they the mere morasses. The Barada corresponds with the ancient Amana or Abana, while the southern Crook El Awaj (the crooked) is the ancient Pharpar whose waters were considered by Naaman better than all the waters of Israel. (II Kings, 5: 12). At the outlet of its gorge, the Barada divides into seven branches, two of which are used for distributing water in numerous conduits throughout the city, while the rest are employed in irrigating the orchards. The numerous fountains in the interior of the houses are supplied from the Barada, besides which many houses have wells sunk with a view to obtain water for drinking purposes. In summer most of the inhabitants live on fruit; hence the number of fruit stands in the city at this time of the year I judged to be "legion." Most of the fruit was small as compared with American fruits of the same sort; melons and plums, however, being an exception to the rule. Owing to the lofty situation of the town, frost is not uncommon in winter, but fireplaces are unknown. The city contains several different quarters. The Jewish quarters, in the southeast part of the town still lies, as in the days of the Apostles, near the "street which is called straight," or as it is still called Derb el-Hustakim (Acts 9: 11.) To the north of this extends the large Christian quarter, where the lanes are narrow and poor and many of the houses are in a ruinous condition, partly owing to the events of 1860. The other parts of the town are Muslim, including the Meidan, which is occupied by peasants alone. The present form of Damascus is not unlike that of a spoon, the handle being the long Median street just mentioned. The ancient walls have been removed except on the east and southeast sides, where they still stand in a more or less perfect state of preservation. According to the government statistics Damascus had 120,750 inhabitants in 1883. Of these 105,017 were Muslims, 4,211 orthodox Greeks; 3,978 Greeks; 19 Armenians; 187 United Unitarians; 376 United Syrians; 306 Maronites; 91 Roman Catholics; 61 Protestants, and 6,326 Jews. It is computed that the Muslims have in all 243 mosques and colleges in Damascus, which was once a great center for learning; but is now far surpassed by Cairo, Egypt. Most of the Jews of Damascus are descendants of those who were settled here in ancient times, and are not recent emigrants like those of Palestine. They