

## NARRATIVE OF A SECOND JOURNEY TO PALMYRA,

including an exploration of the Alpine regions of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, and the southern half of the Nusairy Chain.

By Rev. GEORGE E. POST, M.A., M.D., F.L.S.

THE object of this journey was to examine and collect the midsummer flora of the higher mountain regions and the desert, and to complete the survey of the physical geography of these regions. My companions were Rev. Harvey Porter, B.A., Professor of History in the Syrian Protestant College, and Mr. Alfred Day, M.A., Instructor in the Natural Sciences in the same.

*Monday, July 7, 1890.*—Our first camp was at Khan Muzhir, on the summit level of the Damascus Road as it passes over Lebanon. From this point there is a beautiful view over the great amphitheatre of Ḥammána, with Jebel Keniseh and Jebel Šunnín for a background, and the Metn and Shúf on either flank. In the immediate neighbourhood of Khan Muzhir are numerous storehouses of snow. They are partly excavated in the sides of the hills, and partly built with thick walls, to prevent the heat of the summer's sun from reaching and melting the snow. The snow is collected from the adjacent hills, and shovelled in at a hole in the roof, and packed down until the storehouse is full. It becomes consolidated by pressure and freezing into a conglomerate, which is afterwards quarried out from the base by means of picks and spades, and carried down in carts to Beirút.

*Tuesday, July 8.*—At an early hour in the morning we were in the saddle, and rode around the hill above Muzhir to the fields at the base of Jebel Keniseh. Around our camp, and on the way to the base of the peak we collected *Cousinia Libanotica*, Boiss., *Bromus variegatus*, M.B., *Prangos asperula*, Boiss., *Vicia angustifolia*, Roth, *Onobrychis Cadmea*, Boiss. (new for Lebanon), *Salvia verbascifolia*, M.B.

Jebel Keniseh consists of an oblong mass, about 5 miles long, rising to a height of 1,500 or 2,000 feet above the pass of the Damascus Road. An extensive ruin on its top, which I hope hereafter to investigate, has given it the name of Jebel Keniseh (*Church Mountain*). The ascent is steep, but quite practicable on horseback. We rode to the summit from Khan Muzhir in less than two hours. The barometer at 9 a.m. read 23.6 at the western end of the ridge, which is several hundred feet lower than the eastern. Height, 6,600 feet.

While resting on the top we had a fine opportunity to study the physical conformation of Lebanon. Imagine a ridge 100 miles long, along the whole watershed of which, with the exception of a few miles, the writer of this article has ridden. For 10 miles the northern end of this ridge is over 10,000 feet above the sea. For another 10 miles it is between 7,500 and 8,000 feet. Then for 20 miles it sinks to an average of

from 6,500 to 7,000 feet. Then it rises in the grand truncated cone of Jebel Sunnîn to over 8,500 feet. Again it sinks to the plateau between Sunnîn and Kenîseh, to about 6,000 feet. The highest peak of Kenîseh rises again to nearly 7,000 feet. Then comes the pass of the Damascus Road at Khan Muzhir 5,022 feet. Then the ridge of Jebel Barâk and Jebel Niha, over 40 miles long, about 6,500 feet, the latter ending in the picturesque Twins (*Tomât Niha*). Finally Jebel Rihân, which sinks gradually to the level of the plateau of Merj 'Ayûn. Jebel Kenîseh and Jebel Sunnîn, at the centre of the chain, although not the highest, are, from their isolation, far the most imposing peaks.

From the main chain a series of spurs runs a more or less westerly course for from 15 to 25 miles to the maritime plain, or in some cases to the sea itself. These spurs form four magnificent amphitheatres of mountains—that of Sîr, of Besherrî, of Afqa, and of Hammâna—and a multitude of deep, often exceedingly wild, gorges, into which torrents leap from the heights, and rush in mad career to the sea.

As the strata of the flanks of these gorges dip slightly toward the sea, the water stored in the reservoirs of the main ridge finds its way in rocky channels along them, and breaks out at various levels into perennial fountains. By every considerable fountain is a village, often clinging to the almost perpendicular rocks, the roof of one house forming a terrace for the one above. Almost the whole population of Lebanon, about 200,000 souls, is found on these spurs, and in the valleys between them.

The watershed of the chain is near its eastern border, and thence the mountain descends steeply, in some places precipitously, to the valley of Cœlesyria. Where there are spurs they are short and rugged, and the ravines carry only winter torrents. There is, however, a wooded plateau half way from the Zohr-el-Qodîb to the Buqa', which encloses between it and the main ridge, the lonely valley of 'Ain-Ata, and the only two lakes of Lebanon, those of Yamûni and Zeintyeh. The valley of Zaḥleh is the only one which at all resembles those of the western slopes of Lebanon. There are few fountains on this face of the range, and very few villages, except at or near its base.

At the foot of the range of Zohr-el-Qodîb, and the succeeding ranges as far as Kenîseh, are immense numbers of funnel-like depressions, in which the snow lodges in winter, and from the bottom of which the water trickles into the great reservoirs in the heart of the range. The fertility of Syria depends on the wonderful provision thus made for collecting and storing snow, to be gradually melted and distributed in the fountains even of far distant parts of the land.

On our way up Kenîseh we noted *Berberis Cretica*, L., *Hypericum helianthemoides*, Boiss., *Cerasus prostata*, Koch. *Prunus ursina*, Ky., *Cotoneaster nummularia*, F. and M., *Sedum album*, L., *Astragalus deinacanthus*, Boiss., *A. cruentiflorus*, Boiss., *Eryngium Billardieri*, Lar., *Asperula breviflora*, Boiss., *Centranthus elatus*, Boiss., *Morina Persica*, L., *Chamaepeuce Alpini*, J. et Sp. *Scorzonera* (sp. near *Makmeliana*, Boiss.), *Gundelia Tournefortii*, L. *Cousinia Libanotica*, Boiss., *Centaurea Iberica*, *Podanthum*

*lanceolatum*, Labill., *Acanthotimon Libanoticum*, Boiss., *Vinca Libanotica*, Boiss., *Phlomis brevilabris*, Boiss., *Stachys Cretica*, Sibth. et Sm., *Teucrium Polium*, L., *Daphne Olœoides*, *Bromus variegatus*, M.B., *Melica ciliata*, L., var. *Nebrodensis*, Boiss.

From Jebel Keniseh we crossed to Jebel Barûk by the pass over which the Damascus road winds. Just beyond the pass we came upon a cool spring, 'Ain-el-Beïda, by the side of which we took our lunch. While we were thus occupied several woodmen, with donkey loads of brush, passed us. They had been cutting in the scrub, which goes by the name of forest, on the eastern flank of Jebel Barûk. Near this fountain we found *Phlomis rigida*, Labill. (new for this region), and *Stachys Libanotica*, Boiss.

From 'Ain-el-Beïda we zigzagged up to the top of the ridge of Jebel Barûk. Nothing could be more exhilarating than to ride a good horse along the ridge, 6,500 feet above the sea, for the most part over a hard gravel or shingle, with the mountain range unfolding before us, and to the east and west a panorama of magnificent proportions, changing with every point of view. The ridge is so narrow that in many places we could look down to its base on both sides. To the west, 2,500 feet below us, were the picturesque villages of 'Ain Zehaltah, Barûk, and Mukhtarah, and beyond them range after range of mountains, dotted all over with villages nestling among their mulberry orchards, and far away the dun-coloured sandhills of the coast, and the blue waters of the Mediterranean. To the east was the beautiful plain of the Buqâ', chequered with green patches of maize and sorghum, and the rich umber-coloured soil between, with Anti-Lebanon and Hermon for a background.

Every mile or two we came upon a grassy meadow, from which a snow-drift had lately melted, leaving a tuft of the dwarf *Phleum pratense*, L. var. *nodosum*, Boiss., *Lotus corniculatus*, L., var. *alpinus*, Boiss., (a lovely species with flowers variegated with yellow, orange, and crimson), and *Veronica Orientalis*, Mill. In one of them we found a quantity of the Lebanon Alpine Rose, *Rosa glutinosa*, Fl. Gr. (a species with pink flowers an inch broad, and deep crimson fruits), *Ranunculus Schweinfurthii*, Boiss., and the dwarf cherry *Cerasus prostrata*, Labill. (a whole tree of which is but six inches to a foot in diameter, and from two inches to six in height). In another, in which was an inundated meadow, but lately dried, we found *Barbarea minor*, C. Koch, *Podanthum lanceolatum*, Labill., *Melica ciliata*, L., var. *Nebrodensis*, Boiss., and *Thlaspi* sp. In still another we found *Astragalus emarginatus*, Labill. (so well figured in Labillardière's work a century ago), *A. pinetorum*, Boiss. (new for this part of Lebanon—we found it a month later at the Cedars), *A. coluteocarpus*, Willd., and *Evax Anatolica*, Boiss. et Held.

On the Qal'at-el-Bizzeh, a mamillary projection plainly visible from Beirût, and the most prominent peak of this part of the mountain, we found *Nepeta Cilicica*, Boiss., and *Atraphaxis Billardieri*, J. et Sp. On a rocky peak, growing in a cleft, we found a small tree of *Rhus Coriaria*, L. Among the rocks everywhere *Pimpinella Tragiium*, Vill., var. *depauperatum*,

*Boiss.*, *Pyrethrum tenuilobum*, *Boiss.*, *Achillæa odorata*, *Koch*, *Zizyphora clinopodoides*, *M.B.* Less abundant was *Leontodon asperimum*, *Willd.*, *Scorzonera Makmeliana*, *Boiss.*, *Scutellaria fruticosa*, *Desf.*, *Ballota saxatilis*, *Sieb.*, *Phlomis brevilabris*, *Ehr.*

We rode on for four hours on this breezy mountain top, breathing the invigorating air, feasting our eyes on the wonderful prospect, and filling our portfolios with rare and beautiful plants. As sunset drew near we made a somewhat breakneck descent of 2,000 feet down the shingly side of the mountain to where our tent was pitched for the night by the copious, almost ice-cold, fountain of Neba' Barûk. The fountain is a considerable brook, welling up through the gravel. It is the source of the Awwali river, which empties into the sea north of Sidon. The ground under our tent turned out to be a large ants' nest. As it was too late and inconvenient to change the position of the tent, we tried pouring hot water into the ant-holes, with little effect, however. After sunset they disappeared, and the next day we were away before they began their morning's work.

*Wednesday, July 9.*—We rode from Neba' Barûk straight up the mountain side to the Cedars. These trees, although far smaller and less picturesquely situated than those of Basherrî, are much more numerous, extending for several miles along the side of the mountain towards el-Ma'âsir. The largest of them measured 27 feet in circumference just above the ground. We lay down for a few minutes under the shade to rest ourselves and our horses, and then pressed on through the grove to the bare top. Among the shingle near the top we found *Draba vesicaria*, *Desv.*, and *D. oxycarpa*, *Boiss.*, and on a rocky hillside *Tragopogon buphtalmoides*, *Boiss.*, *var. humile*, *Boiss.*

The highest point of the ridge is flat, and paved with slabs of grey limestone. The barometer at 10 a.m. read 23.68; height, 6,500 feet. During this morning's ride we came across few of the green alps which had so charmed us on the previous day. Most of our way was over shingly rolling hills. Between the Barûk mountain and that of el-Ma'âsir is a depression several hundred feet deep. Halfway down the hill I encountered *Convolvulus Libanoticus*, *Boiss.* The ascent on the opposite side of the pass brought us to the top of Jebel-el-Ma'âsir, where the barometer read 23.6; height, 6,590 feet. A little farther on, among the shingle, we found *Dianthus Haussknechtii*, *Boiss.* (a wanderer from the alpine peaks of central Asia Minor, a small, white-flowered species with needle-like leaves), also a delicate species of *Allium*, perhaps *paniculatum*.

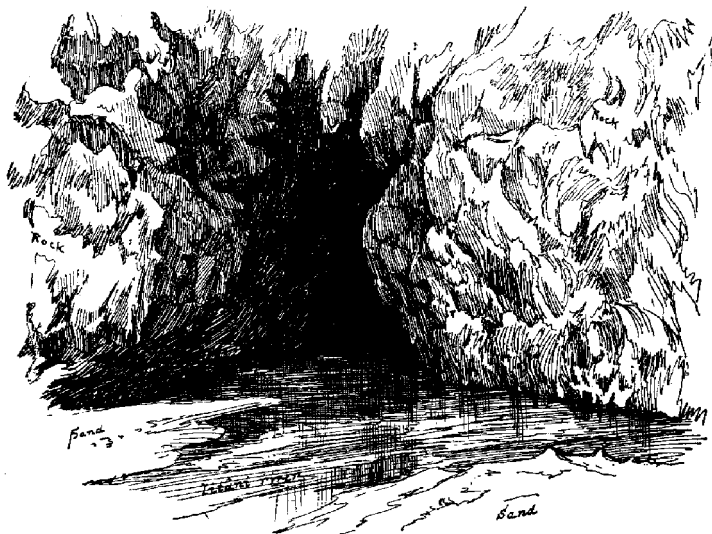
After eight hours' riding along this ridge, and exploring every part of its summit, we made our way obliquely down the eastern flank of the mountain to 'Aitanîth, where we had directed our muleteers to pitch for the night. 'Aitanîth is one of a range of flourishing villages, situated a few hundred feet above the Cœlesyria plain, where the air is free from the malarial taint of the lands along the Leontes.

*Thursday, July 10.*—After a refreshing night's sleep we made an

early start for Haşbeyah, by way of the Natural Bridge called *Jisr-el-Kuwwah*, and thence over the *Jebel-ez-Zohr*. The road out of the village of 'Aitanîth is as bad as it well could be. It consists of a dyke of loose stones thrown out from the gardens. The horses' hoofs sink in them to the fetlock joints at every step, and the motion is equally painful to the rider and to his animal.

On the plain we met with *Falcaria Rivini*, *Host.*, and *Centaurea onopordifolia*, *Boiss.* We passed some rock-hewn tombs near a small village.

The *Jisr-el-Kuwwah* is a couple of hours south of *Jisr-el-Qur'aun*. It is a dyke of limestone rock a few feet broad across the canyon of



The tunnel through which the *Liţâni* flows under the dyke.

*Liţâni*, under which the river has forced its way, and flows out of a cave-like opening. It is not by any means as impressive as the natural bridge near *Nahr-el-Lebben*. The dyke is not more than 80 feet high, and the opening under it not more than 6 or 8 feet broad and high. The canyon resembles that of the *Visp* above *Stalden*, being a deep, narrow channel with perpendicular or overhanging walls, at the bottom of a much broader valley with usually sloping walls several hundred feet in height, scooped out of the tableland of *Cœlesyria*. Barometer at 10½ a.m., 27.33; height, 2,400 feet.

Hangings to the face of the rocks were fine specimens of *Alyssum argenteum*, *Wittm.*, and by the water large quantities of *Maiden's Hair*.

We had heard much at 'Aitanîth of a *Mutawâli* highway robber

named *Dib*, who had committed unheard of atrocities. According to some he had made away with a flock of sheep, ruthlessly murdering the shepherds. According to others he had waylaid and robbed many persons, and was by no means particular about sparing the lives of his victims. We could not obtain accurate information of the whereabouts of the redoubtable Robin Hood, as he naturally would not issue bulletins that might assist in his capture. But it was generally thought that he lay in wait somewhere between this bridge and *Haşbeyah*. As we approached the bridge we kept asking those we met whether they had any news of him. The accounts gradually grew less and less formidable. The flock of sheep became a few lambs; the murdered men had only suffered from flesh wounds. The property stolen was hardly worth carrying away. The shepherd who acted as our guide at the Natural Bridge brought the outrages down to the theft of a single lamb, and he could not tell us when or where that one had been stolen. Although we kept a bright look-out all the way up from the bridge to the tableland above, we saw no robber and experienced no alarm.

After a bath in the *Liṭāni*, and taking a photograph of the bridge and the cavern, we wound up the steep ascent to the neighbourhood of the *Mutawāli* village of *Yaḥmūr*, and lunched under a wild pear-tree just outside the threshing floors.

We then rode through the fields, up a valley, into the heart of the *Jebel-ez-Zohr*, a long, chalky ridge which separates *Coelesyria* from the *Haşbāni* valley. In my botanical journeys through Syria I ignore as much as possible the regular roads, and ride through forests, over mountains, and into ravines, by any path which goats can traverse. Nature loves to conceal her beauties and reward her votaries by treasures not to be found along the beaten tracks of travel. Pursuant to this plan we rode through the wheat fields, and when half way up the retired valley came suddenly on horses picketed in the bushes, and a party of men lying in the shade. Remembering the story of *Dib*, we were at once on the *qui vive*, but we soon found that they were a party of harvesters, whom we saluted, and then passed on to the top of the *Jebel-ez-Zohr*, the height of which we unfortunately neglected to take. From this commanding eminence is obtained the grandest of all the views of *Mount Hermon*. It rises to a height of 7,400 feet above the *Haşbāni* valley, and every detail of its conformation can be studied at a distance which seems, in certain states of the atmosphere, not more than a mile or two. We sat down under a bush on the edge of a rock, and sipped our afternoon tea while overlooking this magnificent view. It was with considerable reluctance that we commenced our *dégringolade* from this eyrie into the *Haşbāni* valley.

We arrived in *Haşbeyah* at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. To our chagrin we found that our muleteers had pitched by the Christian cemetery, instead of on the *Midān*, as we had intended. On our arrival we called on the chief of the *Druzes*, *Salīm Bek*, to inquire into the state of *Haurān*, which we had intended to include in our journey. He strongly

dissuaded us from going there while the difficulties between the Government troops and the Druzes were still unsettled. His advice was afterwards confirmed by the Mohammedan Amirs of the Shehâb family.

After a surgical operation on the grandson of Salim Bek for harelip we went down to our camp. In the evening we went down to the seraglio, and had a pleasant visit with the Shehâb family. This family claims a pedigree going far back of the Mohammedan conquest, some of them claiming for it 4,000 years of unbroken tradition. It has certainly borne rule around the roots of Hermon for not less than 600 years. The largest branch of it is now in Lebanon, where they profess the Christian religion according to the Maronite rite. The family in Ḥaşbeyah now numbers somewhat less than 100 souls.

There is another family of some forty persons in Rasheya. These two branches of Mohammedans intermarry, and for many generations have intermarried only with each other. Here is a fine specimen of close breeding in and in. Of this small community in Ḥaşbeyah four are insane, several have scrofula, and hardly any are of fine physique.

*Friday, July 11.*—The next morning we spent in sundry repairs of horse-trappings, shoeing, an inevitable clinique, a call on Sit Naïfi, the chief lady of the Druzes (sister of Sa'ïd Jimblat's wife), and a dinner with Dr. Debaghi. At 2½ p.m. we started for Shib'ah.

At a distance of half an hour from Ḥaşbeyah we reached the Druze place of worship, called the *Bayyâdah*. It consists of a group of flat-roofed houses on a conical hill, commanding an extensive prospect in the direction of Hermon. The principal building contains their assembly hall, a large unfurnished apartment, in no way resembling a church or mosque, and is surrounded by dwelling-rooms and porches. The family of the guardian occupies one or more of these rooms, and the remainder are reserved for guests. The guardian was seated on a mat in one of the porches, reading, when we came in. He politely offered us a seat, and allowed me to glance at the book, but, seeing that I could read Arabic, he almost snatched the book from my hand, and put it away in a closet. I did not, from the brief glance that I had of the book, make out its scope.

Around the house are numerous trees, and around several of them are stone divans and paved areas. The remaining houses are of much ruder construction than the central one, and are used for the accommodation of guests.

From el-Bayyâdah we dropped down to *'Ain-el-Jerfah*, on the slope of the hillside, and crossed the rocky and wooded wadi to *el-Hibbariyeh*, where there is the ruin of a small temple. Thence we rode up the rugged Wadi Shib'ah to the village from which it takes its name. For the first half of the way the path passes over the rocks high above the torrent, along the course of which are planted many fine walnut trees. It then crosses the right bank, and soon after the valley makes a sharp turn to the left, and at once changes its rugged aspect, and broadens out into a series of fertile and beautiful gardens and orchards. Just below the

village is a cool, limped fountain, by the side of which a number of natives were enjoying their *keif*. Above the fountain is a fine grove of old walnut trees, among which, by the side of a swift-flowing brook, we encamped. This grove is a couple of hundred feet or so lower than the village.

Just before the sharp turn of the valley we met with *Phlomis chrysophylla*, Boiss., and at the turn *Acer Monspensulanum*, L., and *Rubia Olivieri*, Boiss.

*Saturday, July 12.*—At 7 a.m. the barometer stood at 25.23, height 4,700 feet. Our train took the direct road up to *Qaṣr 'Antar*, while we turned to the south, and gradually ascended the left flank of the wadi until we reached a shoulder over which the road passes, at a distance of about half an hour from Shib'ah. Here we turned to the left, and pressed up the face of the mountain. At this point we found *Phlomis chrysophylla*, Boiss. (Arabice *Musseis*), *Styrax officinale*, L. (Arabice *Libnah*), *Echinops* (Arabice *Shauk-el-Libbād*), *Centaurea Iberica* Trev. (Arabice *Dardār*), *Eryngium Creticum*, L. (Arabice *Qurs-'Annī*), *Rosa dumetorum Thuill.* (Arabice *Sureim*). As we mounted higher we encountered *Cousinia Hermonis*, Boiss., *Euphorbia erinacea*, Boiss., *Allium sp.*, *Astragalus gumamifer*, L.

After reaching the top of the ridge above Shib'ah we rode for half an hour over a rugged plateau, then down a steep descent, and then by a stony path up a shallow valley to the top of the main ridge of southern Hermon. Just over the crest of this ridge we saw our first snowdrift.

We then rode along the ridge until we came to a broad cleft which separates it from the mass of Hermon proper, and through which passes a well-travelled road, leading into the *Wadi-el-Mughannāyeh*. We made our way down to the pass, and took our afternoon tea under the shadow of some cliffs to the right of the road. There we found *Ferulago frigida*, Boiss. (Arabice *Sallū'*), *Silene odontopetala*, Fenzl., *Scutellaria utriculata*, Labill., *Scrophularia variegata* M.B., var. *Libanotica*, Boiss., *Erysimum scabrum*, D.C.

We followed this road westward for about a mile, and then turned sharply to the right, and ascended to the crest of the ridge, and made our way along it to the top. On our way we collected *Sideritis Libanotica*, Boiss., *Ranunculus demissus*, D.C., *Linum toxicum* Boiss., *Astragalus cruentiflorus*, Boiss., *A. echinus*, D.C., *A. hirsutissimus*, D.C., *A. lanatus* Labill., *Eryngium Heldreichii*, Boiss., *Potentilla geranioides*, Willd., *Asperula glomerata*, M.B., *Pyrethrum densum*, Labill., *Centaurea axillaris*, Willd., *Podanthum lanceolatum*, Labill., *Crepis Robertioides*, Boiss., *Phæopappus Libanoticus*, Boiss., *Nepeta glomerata*, Montb., *Acantholimon Libanoticum*, Boiss.

When we reached the last hollow below the summit, at 6½ p.m., we found to our dismay that the muleteers had pitched our camp in it by a snowdrift, instead of on the level place between *Qaṣr-'Antar* and the western peak, as we had directed. Late as it was, however, we made



them remove our tents to the top, and by 9 p.m., we were installed in our camp at a height of 9,700 feet above the sea. While we were awaiting our tent we observed the sunset, and the immense conical shadow of Hermon on the eastern table-land. We also collected *Fritillaria Hermonis*, Boiss.? *Teucrium Orientale*, L., var. *alpinum*, Boiss., *Paracaryum myosotoides*, Boiss., *Melica ciliata*, L., var. *Nebrodensis*, Boiss., *Verbascum Damascusum* Boiss., *Eryngium Heldreichii*, Boiss., *Papaver Libanoticum*, Boiss.

The barometer read 21.1 at the top of Qasr-'Antar as well as at the top of the eastern peak. The night was quite cold, and we were glad of all our wraps.

*Sunday, July 13.*—All around our camp was a blooming garden of *Alsine juniperina*, Fenzl., a lovely alpine flower, growing in tufts a foot in diameter. Several acres of the mountain top were covered with low bushes of *Astragalus cruentiflorus*, Boiss., *A. Hermoneus*, Boiss., *A. angustifolius*, Lam., *A. echinus*, D.C., and *Onobrychis cornutus*, L. In the evening the muleteers set fire to an acre of these bushes, making a grand effect of flame and smoke, which must have seemed quite volcanic from Damascus.

We enjoyed a well-earned day of rest on this lonely mountain top. During the morning a couple of goatherds brought their flocks to our tent, and we obtained from them a supply of milk for the day and the next morning.

Toward evening three well-appointed horsemen rode up to our tent, and the leader introduced himself as a sheikh from El Khfyam, in Merj 'Ayûn. He had come from his village, at a distance of fourteen hours away, to get the doctor to go down to see his brother, who had had a stroke of paralysis. As this visit would have involved a delay of three days, we concluded not to go. We had the good excuse that competent physicians could be had from Hâşbeyah, Judaideh, and other towns within easy call, while our journey was in part undertaken with a view to escape this class of responsibilities. Nevertheless, the sheikh was quite resolute in his urgency, and after he had actually gone several hundred yards on his return journey he turned back to beg once more that we would change our decision. It was with great reluctance that we finally decided not to accompany him. Seven months later the same sheikh called us to see another brother in the same village, and during the visit we saw our former would-be patient, quite restored to health, and received from his own lips a pleasant response to our apology for not having visited him in his hour of need. He seemed quite to understand the points of the case, and the fact that we visited and relieved his brother showed that we had no indisposition to serve him.

At sunset we had another opportunity of observing the conical shadow of Hermon over the eastern plain, and the wonderful play of light and shade over the mountains.

*Monday, July 14.*—We were up betimes in the morning, and saw the sun rise out of the great plain, and cast the shadow of the mountain, first

on the morning mists over Coelesyria, then on Lebanon. Early as we had risen however, we were not too early for a clinic above the clouds. Three men had come up from Shīb'ah, bringing with them on donkeys two sick men, who had ridden most of the night to see the doctor. Unfortunately, there was little to be done for them, except to recommend them to come to the hospital in Beirūt. One was so far gone with dropsy that it was doubtful whether he could receive any benefit whatever from treatment.

After taking one more look from each of the peaks we dismissed our train to follow the course of a valley down to Rasheya, and so to Deir-el-'Ashaïr. The watershed of the ridge of northern Hermon trends to the north-east. We followed it for a short distance, and then bore off more to the northward, crossing the road from Rasheya over Hermon, and then turning north-westward toward 'Aīḥah. Just as we crossed the Rasheya road, a hen partridge, with a brood of chicks, hopped up the rocks hardly a stone's throw from us. A little farther on we overhauled a man going the same way as ourselves, who accompanied us all the way to 'Aīḥah. While on the higher peaks we collected *Onosma Aleppicum*, Boiss., *Erodium trichomanefolium*, L'her., *Eryngium Heldreichii*, Boiss., *Acantholimon Libanoticum*, Boiss. As we descended to the level of the foot hills the air became oppressively hot. In the valleys of the foot hills we collected *Galium aureum*, Vis., *Pimpinella corymbosa*, Boiss., *Glycyrrhiza glabra*, L., var. *glandulifera*, Boiss., *Cephalaria stellipilis*, Boiss., *Lotus Gebelia*, Vent., var. *villosa*, Boiss., *Scrophularia xanthoglossa*, Boiss.

We arrived at 'Aīḥah at noon, parched with our long ride, and glad to find a cool spring where we could drink and water our jaded horses. We sat down to lunch under the shade of a large walnut tree. The Druze inhabitants brought us some poor lebben. The barometer at noon read 25.13, height, 4,860 feet.

After an hour's rest we started up the valley to the northward on our way to Rukhleh. Before clearing the vineyards we collected *Hippomarathrum Boissieri*, Reut. et Haussk., and a little way up the valley *Phlomis Nissolii*, L., *Alcea lavateriflora*, D.C., *Verbascum ptychophyllum*, Boiss. Three hours over spurs of the foot-hills brought us to Rukhleh.

The site of Rukhleh is fine, and the view from the temple on the hill is very imposing. Yet one wonders at the erection of such costly buildings in so lonely a spot. Such, however, is very commonly the case in the East, where men seemed to seek for retired sites for their shrines, far from the centres of population and worldly business.

NOTE ON THE RUINS OF RUKHLEH BY PROF. HARVEY PORTER, B.A., OF  
THE SYRIAN PROTESTANT COLLEGE.

There are several ruined temples at Rukhli, but the best preserved are two, one at the top of the village at the west, built into the hill-side, and facing Mount Hermon. The walls are very heavy, some of the stones measuring about 10×4×5 ft., some of them having fragments of

Greek inscriptions. The other temple is situated on lower ground a little to the north-east of the village and faces westward, an unusual circumstance for temples on this side of Hermon. Fragments of Ionic columns are here found and at the south-east corner there is a large medallion face sculptured upon the corner stone of the temple, about 5 feet in diameter. It has been photographed by the American Palestine Exploration Society. On a stone lying along the south wall is the figure of a large animal with outspread wings, resembling those of an eagle, but the head is quite different from an eagle's head, and it is doubtful whether it is that of a bird at all. Near the south-west corner of the temple is an inscription as follows:—

*Inscription on the wall of a Temple at Rukhleh, near Mount Hermon.*

[ΚΟCΥ] ΠΑCCTIXΩΝ ———  
 ΤΡΙΩNCΥΝΔΥCΙ ———  
 ΚΟΙΝΧΑΙCΕΚ —————  
 ΤΩΝΤΗCΘΕ[ΟΥ]  
 ΔΙΑΘΕΥΔΑΙΕ  
 ΡΕΟC

The letters in brackets are doubtful. The beginnings of the lines are pretty regular, but at the left the lines are irregular in length, indicating that letters may be wanting, especially in the three upper lines.

The barometer at Rukhleh at 4 p.m. read 24.5, giving a height of 5,550 feet. As the instrument had had a fall just before we entered the village, this reading is probably incorrect.

We collected *Hypericum nanum* Poir. on the vertical rocks just north of the village, and *Lonicera nummularifolia*, Jaub. et Sp. in a field near by.

After crossing the divide to the north of Rukhleh we entered a charming glen, down which we rode for two hours to Deir-el-'Ashaïr. In this glen grew a great variety of shrubs and trees, prominent among them *Styrax officinale*, L., *Pyrus Syriaca*, Boiss., *Prunus ursina*, Ky.

We arrived at Deir-el-'Ashaïr at 6½ p.m. The situation of the temple, overlooking a fertile plain with a background of lofty mountains, is singularly picturesque. Our camp at the fountain, overlooking both village and temple, commanded a prospect still more imposing. The barometer at 9 p.m. read 25, height 4,260 feet. This reading may also be a mistake.

At Deir-el-'Ashaïr we experienced a difficulty which illustrates the evil of the system of collecting the tithes. The threshing-floors were covered with heaps of winnowed grain, and yet because the harvest was not fully garnered the government inspector would not allow any grain to

be sold, as it is unlawful to do so until the whole has been threshed and winnowed, and the tithe collected. We were obliged to send a couple of hours away to another village, in order to buy barley for our animals. Thus the villagers were prevented from deriving a benefit or conferring one on needy travellers.

*Tuesday, July 15.*—Our way during the early morning hours lay down the Meisellûn Valley to the Damascus road. On our way we collected *Cousinia Pestalozzæ*, Boiss., *Onopordon heteracanthum*, C.A.M., *Ankyropetalum Cœlesyriacum*, Boiss., *Carlina corymbosa*, L. var. *Libanotica*, Boiss. At the station of Khan Meisellûn we posted letters home, and then pressed on up the hill north of the Khan. On its bleak sides we found *Centaurea Damascena*, Boiss., *Argyrobolium crotalarioides*, J. et Sp., *Sideritis Libanotica*, Labill., var. *linearis*, Boiss. Over the hill, approaching the Barada Valley, we collected *Euphorbia lanata*, Sieb., and *Verbascum Sinaiticum*, Bth.

After crossing the Barada we began to climb the ridge of Jebel Ruzmah, which overlooks the valleys of Zebedâni and Suq-Wadi-Barada. A few hundred yards above the valley we came upon *Verbascum simplex*, Labill., then *Jurinea Stæhelinae*, D.C., both in dry, chalky fields. We chose for our lunching place a shelf of rock overshadowed by a similar shelf a yard above the first, and overlooking the Zebedân valley, 1,500 feet below. Opposite us, 5 miles away, was the western ridge of Anti-Lebanon, and far away over Coelesyria the lofty chain of Lebanon, with the commanding peaks of Kenîseh, Sunnîn, and Makmel towering above them all. Below us lay the fertile plain of Zebedâni, with its numerous gardens and orchards, and the silver stream of the Barada, the main fountain of which was almost opposite our resting-place. From the clefts of the rock we collected *Pimpinella Tragium*, Vill., and *Parietaria Judaica*, L.

Soon after leaving this most charming eagle's nest, we began to meet the alpine flora again. *Acantholimon Armenum*, Boiss. et Huet., *Asphodeline Damascena*, Boiss., *Gypsophila Antilibanotica*, Post (a new species), *G. ruscifolia*, Boiss., *Onosma cœrulescens*, Boiss., *Zizyphora clinopodoides*, M.B., var. *canescens*, Boiss. At the top of the ridge are great quantities of *Cerasus prostrata*, Labill., then in fruit. It was a curious sensation to sit down over a tree, or rather a grove of them, and pluck the tart cherries by handfuls from above the grove. The fruit is about as large as an ordinary pea.

There is considerable discrepancy as to the names of the peaks of this ridge of Anti-Lebanon. The following is proposed as a reconciliation of these conflicting views. The high crest, surmounted by a few stunted junipers, which is seen for many miles while ascending the ridge of Jebel Ruzmah, and which crosses it at right angles, and cuts off the view of the peaks beyond is *Thellâjât-Ibn-Halâwi*. This crest, which is ascended from the ridge of Jebel Ruzmah by a valley trending to the north-west, is considerably to the north of Bludân, and a little south of 'Ayûn-en-Nusûr, at the head of the Bludân Valley. The

barometer read at 5 p. m., 22. This must be corrected to 22.65, owing to the fall which the instrument experienced near Rukhleh. This gives the height of the peak, 7,865 feet. Half an hour to the north of this is the jagged summit of *Jebel-esh-Shuqîf*, which we ascended the following day, and from which we will resume the list.

The view from Thehlâjât-Ibu-Halawi is extensive, and gave us a fine study of the physical geography of Anti-Lebanon. To the west the rich valley of Bludân opening out into the plain of Zebedâni, and beyond it the Zebedâni range backed by distant Lebanon. To the east and north the numerous ridges and peaks of the Anti-Lebanon series. To the south the long ridge of Jebel Ruzmah, with its numerous peaks, and far beyond them the towering mass of Hermon.

After enjoying this superb view for half an hour we descended by a breakneck path into the Bludân valley, and reached Bludân at 6½ p. m. We encamped in a plum orchard, near the upper part of the village. Professor West, who was spending the summer in Bludân, re-set my barometer to correspond with the mercurial. It read '62 too low. We spent a very pleasant evening at the hospitable house of Dr. Mackinnon, of the Irish Church Mission at Damascus.

*Wednesday, July 16.*—After some difficulty in obtaining a guide for our train to 'Asâl-el-Ward, where we proposed to encamp for the night, we started at 7 a. m. up the Bludân valley. On the way we met with *Heleocharis palustris*, L., *Ferula Hermonis*, Boiss., *Dactylis glomerata*, L., var. *juncinella*, Hackel = *D. juncinella*, Boiss. (a variety heretofore found only in Spain), *Daphne olæoides*, *Verbascum Cedreti*, Boiss. (new for Anti-Lebanon). A series of springs in swampy ground near the head of the valley is 'Ayân-en-Nusûr, and to the north-east of them is *Jebel-esh-Shuqîf*. The barometer at its summit at 9 a. m. stood at 22.48, making the height 7,900 feet. The top is rough and splintered. We tied our horses a little below the top, and went up on foot over the rugged rocks.

From esh-Shuqîf we followed a line a little below the ridge to a watershed over which we crossed in a north-westerly direction to *Jebel-el-Akhyâr*. We forgot to take the height of this peak. From its top we obtained a view of a savage gorge, seemingly closed by a conical mountain *vis-à-vis*. A shepherd called the mountain *Jebel-Merj-el-Khanzîr*. He did not know the name *Jebel-el-Akhyâr*. Near the top of *Jebel-el-Akhyâr* we started a covey of scores of partridges, which did not attempt to fly, but hopped and ran up the rocks, and were soon out of sight.

Turning somewhat to the north-east we crossed another watershed, and climbed the *Zohr-Abul-Hîn*, a crest trending north and south, and fringed with trees of *Juniperus excelsa*, M.B. We took our lunch under one of these trees, on a shelf of rock, from which we had a fine view of the Buqa' and Lebanon, as well as of the Anti-Lebanon chains. Near by we collected *Cotoneaster nummularia*, F. et M., and *Euphorbia Chesneyi*, Kl. et Geke. The barometer at 1 p. m. read 22.30, height 8,150 feet. Half an hour beyond *Zohr-Abul-Hîn* we reached *Harf-el-Barak*.

Descending from this peak we came to a ridge four or five miles long,

which connects it with *Harf-Râm-el-Kebsh*. Under the western edge of this ridge is a valley, in which are several springs of good water. The ridge is quite covered with bog-like hemispherical clumps of *Onobrychis cornuta*, and several thorny astragali. Just before we reached the end of the ridge we started a herd of eleven gazelles, which continued in sight for more than half an hour. They were more than once within easy rifle range.

On a sandy hillside, just at the base of the peak of *Harf-Râm-el-Kebsh*, we found *Helichrysum pygmaeum*, *Post* (a new species, with a pretty red involucre), and *Plantago carinata*, *Schrad.*

*Harf-Râm-el-Kebsh* is the last of the series of shelf-like summits of the comparatively level ridge of Anti-Lebanon. Further to the north the range becomes more rugged, culminating in *Tal'ât-Mûsa*, and trending thence northward in a series of conical peaks with steep sides and deep valleys. The *Wadi-es-Şohriji* separates this system from the one over which we had ridden. On the top of *Harf-Râm-el-Kebsh* we met with *Asphodeline Taurica*, *Pall.* and *Astragalus trichopterus*, *Boiss.* Our barometer at 4 p.m. stood at 22.62; height, 7,725.

From *Harf-Râm-el-Kebsh* we descended to the *Wadi-es-Şohrtji*, down which we passed by a gentle grade on a good, well-travelled road for three hours, until we debouched into the broad plain in which is '*Asâl-el-Ward*. In the *Wadi* we found *Ballota Antilibanotica*, *Post* (a new species near *B. saxatilis*). It was with great satisfaction that we saw our tent pitched by the village, and reached it after twelve hours of most laborious work for ourselves and our animals. Just before entering the fields about the village we started three gazelles, which continued in sight for several minutes, and then turned a corner into a side gully, and disappeared.

'*Asâl-el-Ward* is a wretched village of a few hundred people. It has, however, a spring of cool, refreshing water, for which we were very thankful.

*Thursday, July 17.*—Barometer at 7 a.m. 24.67, height 5,200 feet. Just by our camp we collected *Cousinia Dayi*, *Post*, and *Phæopappus longispinus*, *Post* (both new species), and *Isatis glauca*, *Auch.*, in fruit.

Our train took the direct road northward to *Yebrûd* and *Deir-'Atiyeh*, while we turned eastward to *Ma'lûlah*. Our road lay through a rolling tableland of good grain fields, filled with harvesters. We collected on the way *Verbascum Porteri*, *Post* (a new species of section *Blattaroidæ*). After four and a half hours' ride we reached the convent of *Mar Sarkis*, above *Ma'lûlah*. The barometer at 12 m. was 25, height, 4,800 feet. Our former observation had given us 5,500 feet.

The hillside above the convent is planted with Sumach trees (*Rhus Coriaria*, *L.*), used in tanning. Among them we found *Centaurea Balsamita*, *Lam.* (new for this region), *Hippomarathrum Boissieri*, *R.-ut.*, *Isatis glauca Auch.*, *Bupleurum Libanoticum*, *Boiss. et Bl.*, var. *oligactis*, *Post.*

(To be continued in July "Quarterly Statement.")