

A STORM ON MOUNT LEBANON.*

The snow began to fall in large flakes, obliterating all traces of the path, which our guides sought in vain; and we had some difficulty in supporting our weary horses, whose iron shoes caused them to slip on the steep ledge which we were obliged to follow. The magnificent prospect of the valley of Balbec beneath us, and the summits of Anti-Lebanon, with the noble ruins of the temples of Bka (lying in the full blaze of day), we could only catch glimpses of at short intervals through the flying clouds: we appeared to be sailing in the heavens; and our resting-place, from which we were viewing the earth, seemed not to belong to it.

And now the murmuring winds, that had slept in the deep and lofty defiles of the mountains, began to utter mournful, and, as it were, subterranean sounds, like the roaring of a heavy sea after a storm. The gusts passed like thunder-bolts,—sometimes over our heads, and sometimes in the lower regions beneath our feet,—driving before them, as dead leaves, masses of snow, quantities of stones, and even large pieces of rock, with the same violence wherewith they would have been thrown from the cannon's mouth. Two of our horses were struck by them, and rolled over the precipice: not one of us, however, was touched. My young Arabian stallions, that were being led, seemed petrified with terror: they stopped short and raised their nostrils; they did not neigh, but uttered a guttural cry, similar to the rattling in a man's throat. We marched on close together, both for the sake of mutual protection, and that we might the more easily afford each other assistance in the event of an accident. The night grew darker and darker; and the snow which beat in our eyes deprived us of the little light which might still have directed us. The whirlwind filled all the defile in which we were with snow, which, turning rapidly round, rose in columns to the sky, and fell again in immense sheets, like the foam of a huge wave, upon the rocks beneath. There were times when it was impossible to breathe; our guides stopped every instant, hesitated, and discharged their muskets as signals to us; but the furious wind would allow nothing to be heard, and the sound of our arms resembled the light crack of a whip.

"In proportion, however, as we advanced farther into this lofty defile of the highest regions of Lebanon, we heard, with considerable alarm, a deep, continued, low roar, which increased from time to time, and formed as it were the bass of a horrible concert of warring elements—we knew not what to imagine. It seemed as if a part of the mountain had fallen, and was rolling down like a torrent of rocks. The thick cloud, touching the very ground, hid every thing from us, and we therefore knew not where we were: we saw pass suddenly by us, horses without riders, mules without burdens, and several camels, that were flying towards the snowy side of the mountain. These were quickly followed by some Arabs, who, calling out to us, directed us to stop, shewing us at the same time with their hands, at forty or fifty paces beneath us, a ruinous cottage built against a rock, which the clouds had hitherto concealed from us. A column of smoke and the glimmer of a fire were to be seen through the door of this cabin, the roof of which of enormous branches of cedar, had just been half carried away by the hurricane, and was now hanging against the wall. This, the khan of Murat-Bey, was the only asylum that we could procure on this part of Lebanon. A poor Arab inhabits it during the summer, to offer barley and a shelter to the caravans of Damascus which pass by this route into Syria.

We descended thither with some difficulty, by means of step cut in the rock, but now covered a foot

deep with snow. The torrent, which flowed a hundred paces beneath the cottage, and which we had to cross, in order to ascend to the higher region of the mountains, had become all at once an immense river, hurrying along with its huge masses of stone, and the wrecks of the tempest. Surprised on its banks by the whirlwind, and half buried in snow, the Arabs whom we met had taken the burdens from their camels and mules, and had left them on the spot, to save themselves at the cottage of Murat. We found it, indeed, filled with these men and their beasts; no space was left either for us or our horses: nevertheless, sheltered by the projection of rock, which was larger than a house, we felt the wind less; while the clouds of snow, hurried from the summit of Lebanon, and passing over our heads in their progress to the plain, began to fall less heavily, and allowed us to perceive, at intervals, a small portion of the sky, where the stars were already glittering. The wind soon after altogether fell: we dismounted, and endeavoured to construct a shelter, in which we might pass, not only the night but many days, if the torrent, which we heard without seeing it, should continue to obstruct the passage.

Beneath the walls of the cabin and under shelter of a part of the branches of cedar which had formed the roof, there was a space of ten feet square covered with snow and mud. We swept away the snow, but there still remained a foot of soft mire, on which we could not place our carpets; we therefore drew from the roof some branches of trees, which we laid like a hurdle upon the saturated ground, and which thus prevented our mats from becoming soaked in the water; our mattresses, our carpets, and our cloaks, formed a second flooring. We lighted a fire in one corner of our retreat; and thus we passed the long night between the 7th and 8th of April, 1833. From time to time the hurricane, which had been hushed, again rose; the mountain seemed about to tremble in pieces; the enormous rock against which the cottage had been built trembled like the trunk of a tree shaken by a gust of wind; and the torrent seemed to fill all space with its continued roar. We contrived, however, to get to sleep at last; and were awakened at a late hour the following day by the dazzling rays of an unclouded sun upon the snow. The Arabs, our companions, had departed: they had made the passage of the torrent in safety, and we perceived them at a distance climbing the hills over which we had to follow them. We now set ourselves, and walked for four hours through a lofty valley, where, as on the summit of Mont Blanc, we saw nothing but the snow beneath our feet, and the sky above our heads. The dazzling effect upon our eyes, the dead silence, and the danger that attended each step as we advanced over these deserts of newly-formed snow (where not a trace of path was to be found), induced a solemn and religious train of thought as we traversed these lofty pillars of the earth—the spine, as it were, of a continent. We looked, involuntarily, towards each point of the horizon and of the heavens, and every phenomenon of nature attracted our attention; one, indeed, presented an appearance which I had never before observed. Suddenly, at the summit of Lebanon, against the side of a projection half shaded from the morning sun, I beheld a magnificent rainbow, not thrown up like an airy bridge, uniting the mountain-top with the heavens, but lying upon the snow in concentric circles, like a serpent of most dazzling colours: it was like a rainbow-rest surprised on the most inaccessible ridge of Lebanon. As the sun rose and fell upon the white projection, the circles of the rainbow, of a thousand mingling hues, appeared to be disturbed and to rise. The extremity of these luminous volutes springing, in effect, from the earth, mounted some fathoms toward heaven, as if it essayed to lance itself towards the sun, and descended again in light-coloured vapour and liquid pearls, which fell thick around us. In two hours we descended to the village of Humana, situated at the head of the magnificent valley of that name.

DEFILEMENT is inseparable from the world. A man can no where set his foot on it without sinning.

A haughty spirit is a symptom of extreme danger—'A haughty spirit goeth before a fall.'

*From De Lamarline's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

in general much approve of it, though some more warmly, some more coolly. Many of his gay and political friends admire and approve of it; though some do but dip into it. Several have recognised the likeness of themselves. The better part of the religious world, and more especially the Church of England, prize it most highly, and consider it as producing an era in the history of the church. Gilbert Wakefield has already scribbled something against it. I myself am amongst those who contemplate it as a most important work.

This was the universal feeling amongst those who looked seriously around them on the face of things. 'I am truly thankful to Providence,' wrote Bishop Porteus, 'that a work of this nature has made its appearance at this tremendous moment. I shall offer up my fervent prayers to God, that it may have a powerful and extensive influence on the hearts of men, and in the first place on my own, which is already awakened, and will I trust in time be sufficiently awakened by it.' 'I deem it,' Mr. Newton told him, 'the most valuable and important publication of the present age, especially as it is yours;' and to Mr. Grant he wrote, 'What a phenomenon has Mr. Wilberforce sent abroad! Such a book by such a man, and at such a time! A book which must and will be read by persons in the higher circles, who are quite inaccessible to us little folk, who will neither hear what we can say, nor read what we may write. I am taken with wonder and with hope. I accept it as a token for good; yea, as the brightest token I can discern in this dark and perilous day. Yes I trust the Lord, by raising up such an incontestible witness to the truth and power of the Gospel, has a glorious purpose to honour him as an instrument of rearing and strengthening the sense of real religion where it already is, and of communicating it where it is not.'

The aspect of the times, in which, says Mr. Hey, 'all seems broke loose in the most pestiferous doctrines and abominable practices which set the Albigensians at defiance, and break the bonds of civil society, led even the less thoughtful to look to its end with some anxiety. I sincerely hope,' wrote Lord Chancellor, (Loughborough,) 'that your book will be read by many, with that just and proper temper which the awful circumstances in which we stand invite to produce.' Its tone was well calculated to revive these hopes. There was an air of entire reality pervading its addresses, which brought them close to the heart and conscience of the reader. It was not the fine-spun theory of some speculative declaimer, but the plain address of one who had lived amongst and watched those to whom he spoke. 'Let me recommend you to open the last section of the fourth chapter,' was his advice to Mr. Pitt; and you will see wherein the religion which I espouse differs practically from the common system. Also the sixth chapter has almost a right to a perusal, being the basis of all politics, and particularly addressed to you.' 'I desired my bookseller,' he tells Mr. Newton, 'to leave at your house a copy of my publication; and though I scarcely suppose that your leisure will be sufficient to enable you to fight through the whole of it, you may perhaps look into it occasionally. If so, let me advise you to dip into the fourth or fifth chapters, and perhaps the concluding ones. I cannot help saying it is a great relief to my mind to have published what I may call my manifesto; and I plainly told my worldly acquaintance what I think of their system and conduct, and where it should end. I own I shall act in my parliamentary situation with more comfort and satisfaction than hitherto. You will perceive that I have laboured to make my book as acceptable to men of the world as it could be made without a dereliction of principle; and I have reason to believe not without effect. I hope that it may be useful to young persons who with general dispositions to seriousness are very ignorant of religion, and know not where to imply for instruction. It is the grace of God, however, only that can reach, and I shall at least feel a solid satisfaction from having openly declared myself as it were on the side of Christ, and having avowed on what my hopes for the well-being of the country bottom.'