

□ Having struck our camp at Banias, we turned up the winding road—a very bad one—which trends steeply up its southern shoulder. Far above us, on our left, frowned the hoary walls of Khulat-es-Subeibeh, sharply defined in the clear morning air. Ere long we passed, still climbing, the white houses of the large Druse village of Mejdél, the inhabitants of which came out to sell us *terebratulæ* and other fossils found in the neighbourhood; then up and on to and through a rocky table-land, until at length, after some hours' monotonous riding, we gained a point commanding an outlook northward, and halted for awhile to take in the splendid view. On our left and close at hand rose the hoary head of Jebel-es-Sheikh; below us, stretching away, till lost in the distance, a great plain broken by low hills—the plain of Damascus. Far away to left and right swept ranges of hills, Anti-Lebanon on the west, the Hauran, on the east. Then on again, we rode down the slope, till at the brink of an abrupt ravine, we halted again to look far down upon the white houses of a village, embowered in vivid green, with a streamlet, rippling and dancing in the sunlight, among the trees. The village was Beit Jinn—the House of Paradise—and the stream one of the two main tributaries of Nahr-el'-Awaj, the ancient Pharpar.

It was one of those scenes which impress themselves forever upon the memory. The gray, bare hills rising on every hand, the ravine falling steeply to the very margin of the stream, the white houses of the village clustering far down in the mountain cleft, and the lovely trees fringing the gleaming water, as it swept through the glen, all went to make up an exquisite picture of quiet beauty—the more striking because of the rugged and dreary path we had for some hours been travelling. Framed by the bare hills on which we were standing, it had more the appearance of a picture than of a real scene, as the westering sun lighted up its varying colours with unspeakable brilliancy.

By the banks of the stream, we rode on to our camp, pitched at some distance farther along the plain, and in the early morning were again astir, and riding over the monotonous and here barren plain in the direction of Damascus. There was not much to interest until early in the afternoon, we met an old Roman highway, converging with the road we had ourselves been travelling. It was the old highway from Egypt and Palestine, and just here, so tradition affirms, is the spot where, "as he drew near to Damascus," St. Paul, going to arrest and lead captive the Damascene Christians, was himself arrested and led captive by the Christ.

"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there