

that the prospect of crossing Mount Hermon in a violent storm, was the matter just then of most vital importance to Dr. Withrow's party.

We had, of course, the alternative of remaining in the safe shelter of our tents, but we greatly desired to spend Sunday in Damascus, still distant nearly two days' ride, and, as this was Friday we had no time to lose. Therefore a pale gleam of sunshine about eight o'clock was eagerly welcomed, and we gladly heard the order given to saddle the horses, which were brought round as the last scattering drops were falling.

The clouds quickly disappeared, and if the unpleasant thought arose that they might only be in hiding behind Mount Hermon, we refused to entertain it for a moment, in spite of an ominous shake of the head and a muttered word or two in Arabic, which plainly expressed Abdallah's views. Next moment, however, he dismissed the subject with that eloquent gesture with which an Oriental shifts all his responsibilities on fate, and swinging lightly into the saddle gave the word to start.

After leaving Baniyas the path led up the stony bed of a little mountain stream, which the rain had filled with a yellow current of liquid mud, rendering the stones so slippery that our horses stumbled constantly and required so much attention that we had little to give the gradually unfolding view. An hour's steady climbing brought us to a wide natural terrace about two thousand feet above the level of the sea, on a level with the castle of Baniyas, though at some distance from it. The atmosphere was so radiantly clear that it seemed really distant but a stone's throw, and we stopped to admire the picturesque effect of the long, irregular outline, still very perfect on this side. The massive simplicity of form, and the rugged strength of the granite walls, suit well the wild grandeur of its situation among the everlasting hills.

There was a fascination about the beautiful old fortress and its long-forgotten history that enchained the eye and imagination and made one long to pierce the thick veil that hides the past, and learn the part it played in the story of this land. The light growing every moment more golden behind the cold white summit of Hermon warned us that we had no time to linger. Turning to the west we looked down upon the whole plain of the Upper Jordan flooded with the soft morning light, and sparkling with myriads of tiny streams. The distant hills of Naphtali flushed rosilily under the level sun rays, the mirror-like surface of the waters of Merom was like a turquoise in an emerald setting, and the park-like slopes below Baniyas were aglow with the warm