

the multitude of the wares of thy making for the multitude of all riches; in the wine of Helton and white wool."

The history of the old city is one of continuous change. Hazael murdered Benhadad, and usurping his throne raised the kingdom to a high prosperity. Tiglath Pileser, King of Assyria, called in by Ahaz of Israel, to his help against its encroachments, laid it waste, killed its monarch, and led its people captive, according to Isaiah's prophecy, to the banks of the Kir. A century before Christ it fell to the share of Cyzicenus, in the division of the kingdom of the Seleucidæ and, soon after, was conquered by the Romans under Pompey. At the time of Paul's conversion it was temporarily under sway of the Arabian King Aretas, but reverted speedily to its Roman conquerors. The work of Paul and his successors in the preaching of Christianity obtained a strong and rapidly increasing hold upon the city. Ere long its temple was converted into the Christian Church of St. John the Baptist, and for three centuries the religion of Christ was predominant.

In 634 A.D., came the Mohammedan invasion, and twenty-seven years later Moawyah the first khalif of the Omeiyades made Damascus the capital of the Empire of Islam, and the centre of that tremendous and warlike enthusiasm and effort, which threatened to lay not only Africa and Asia, but Europe itself, under the sway of the False Prophet. Eastward it spread to India, and westward to Spain, and Damascus was the head of a mighty territory, sweeping from the Himalayas to the shores of the Atlantic. Under the Omeiyades, the city was adorned with many splendid buildings, and the Great Mosque, formerly the cathedral of St. John the Baptist, refitted and decorated at vast expense. Four hundred years later we find the Crusaders at the gates of the city, but repulsed disgracefully. Then came the reigns of Nureddin and the chivalrous and famous Saladin. Two centuries later, Tamerlane—*El Wahsh*—the wild Beast, as the Arab writers call him, devastated the city and butchered its inhabitants. The descendants of the one Christian family that escaped tell, to-day, the awful story, handed down through five centuries from father to son. A hundred years later it fell under Turkish sway, and under the blight and bane of Ottoman rule, it still groaned and chafes.

Six different races have held it, and its history is thus divided into periods of longer or shorter duration, extending from the remotest part to our own time. And still it flourishes, as of old, despite the oppression of the Turk, and the stagnation of Moslem superstition. Embraced in the vitalizing arms of the Abana and Pharpar, fair and fresh and full as in those far-off days when Naaman boasted of them as better than all the waters of Israel,